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Philosophy and Beliefs

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Philosophy and Beliefs

A discussion between four Oxford philosophers

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ANTHONY QUINTON It appears to me that most of the strong feelings that have been generated about contemporary analytic philosophy – what its opponents delight in calling ‘logical positivism’ – arise from a confusion which is common to both parties in the dispute. A kind of revolutionary illusion prevails, which imposes on the practitioner of analytic philosophy as much as their critics, both inside and outside philosophy. What has taken place, it seems universally to be agreed, is the elimination of metaphysics. Both analytic philosophers and their critics believe that the kind of philosophy now practised and taught at this University is something quite different from, or at any rate only a minute residue of, what has traditionally gone by the name of philosophy. The critics, of course, regard this as a disastrous state of affairs, and call for a return to what they take to be the great tradition of the subject.

The key word here is ‘metaphysics’, and there is good reason for people to think this is the central point at issue. After all, the most widely read book of the most widely read analytic philosopher, *Language, Truth, and Logic*, by Professor A. J. Ayer, was presented as, primarily, an attack on traditional metaphysical philosophy. Nowadays Ayer is more circumspect – he wrote recently: ‘My present view is that much of what appears as metaphysics involves the discussion of important points of logic’; and five of the essays in his latest book are described by him as concerned with problems of ‘logic and metaphysics’; they are not about but in metaphysics.

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The fact is that what analytic philosophers want to extrude from philosophy, and what their critics want to see put back into it, is *Weltanschauung*: recommendations of a moral, political and religious order. But both sides are labouring under a misapprehension. For *Weltanschauung* has never been the principal concern of those who would generally be agreed to be the greatest philosophers. I don't want to deny that there have been great men, great thinkers, and so in a very wide sense great philosophers, who have been essentially propounders of *Weltanschauungen* – Montaigne, Pascal and Nietzsche, for example, and the Hellenistic philosophers who flourished after the great age of Greek philosophy. Nor would I want to deny that many philosophers securely in the great tradition – Plato, Spinoza, Kant – held attitudes to life, and gave public expression to them as appendages to, or even parts of, their philosophy. But these attitudes to life are not what gives these men their importance in the history of philosophy. This can be clearly seen if we consider that there are equally great and traditional philosophers in whose work *Weltanschauung* does not appear at all – Aristotle, Duns Scotus and Descartes, for example.

In the philosophy of the great tradition, then, the presentation of attitudes to life is either secondary or absent. But what they did discuss is still discussed by contemporary analytic philosophers – substance, universals, truth, the nature of logical and mathematical truths, our knowledge of the external world, the nature of mind, and the logical character of moral thinking. There has been a revolution all right; but it lies in the method of approach to philosophical activity and not in the subject-matter of the activity. What was formulated and discussed in psychological terms is now more commonly treated in a more linguistic fashion. Instead of attending to the actual process of thinking, philosophers now concentrate on the way in which thoughts are expressed; the results of processes of thinking. But to this transformation, which is of the greatest technical importance, the conventional objections to analytic philosophy have practically no relevance at all.

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STUART HAMPSHIRE But surely the great philosophers were concerned in their philosophies with questions of *Weltanschauung*, almost without exception? And it was certainly more than a separable appendage to their philosophies; at least in their intention. Admittedly they also wrote about questions of logic and of logical analysis; largely the questions which we still discuss now. But they certainly thought of these questions as essentially connected with *Weltanschauung*, in any natural sense of this word. Personally I think they were right and that there is this connection between logic and *Weltanschauung*. It would be a very large change if philosophers now no longer thought there was, or should be, such a connection.

QUINTON *Weltanschauung* was never their central concern; or, at any rate, whatever may have been their ultimate intentions, it was never what they spent most time on, and is not what they are famous for. And there was, generally, no necessary connection between their technical philosophy and the *Weltanschauungen* they sometimes expressed.

I think that what the critics of contemporary philosophy often have in mind as an ideal is what I shall call 'the great liberal philosopher'; that is, a man who is both a professional philosopher and vigorously concerned with the principal moral and social questions of his time. The great liberal philosophers of the twentieth century have been Russell, Dewey, Croce and Bergson. Looking further back, Kant and Mill can certainly be put in this class. These thinkers were all on much the same side in social issues; all of them have taken a more or less liberal, permissive, stand in moral, political and educational matters. But their philosophies (in the technical sense) are all utterly different. Dewey is perhaps a kind of link between Russell and Bergson; and again Bergson, seen from a distance, has some affinities with Croce; but it would be hard to find two philosophers more utterly opposed, in a technical respect, than Russell and Croce.

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IRIS MURDOCH I think you are defining ‘*Weltanschauung*’ rather too narrowly. It’s only very roughly and in relation to a few general issues that the philosophers you mention are ‘all on the same side’. These general ideas may be what we would consider important ones – but it is also important that the terms in which these philosophers argue, and encourage others to argue, about morals and politics, contrast in striking ways. Their agreements on practical issues are narrow by comparison, and flimsy in so far as they emerge from conceptual backgrounds of a different type. Followers of Croce and followers of Russell see the world differently; and one would expect such people, even if they were in practical agreement at certain moments, to develop differently. In a shifting situation one could not rely on their agreeing.

HAMPSHIRE I think that the point is that those whom we now recognise as the great philosophers, in our sense of ‘philosophy’, make their attitudes to life, their moral attitudes in the widest sense, rest on a groundwork of logical doctrine. This is the respect in which they differ from Nietzsche, and from other, possibly inspired, thinkers whom we would not now recognise as philosophers.

QUINTON Consider the matter historically. Let us take the case of Kant. The historical consequence of Kant’s philosophy was Romantic German idealism – Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. These Romantic idealist philosophers were politically reactionary and obscurantist; they put their technical inheritance from Kant to work in support of Romantic nationalism. But Kant himself was a liberal. I don’t think myself, I admit, that he was quite such a milk-white progressive as Dr Popper makes him out to be: not just because of the concealment and disguise that the dismal political conditions in which he lived made necessary, but because of his rather hearty insistence on antagonism and conflict as indispensable conditions of human progress. This breezy activism comes out in his ethical writings, too, where he characterises the happy and indolent South Sea Islander (who is perhaps more an

ideal than an anthropological reality) as ‘immoral’ in neglecting to develop his capacities. For all that, Kant was more of a liberal than anything else; and his philosophical successors were certainly not.

ISAIAH BERLIN I cannot agree with Quinton. Of course there are thinkers whose general attitude – what you have called *Weltanschauung* – is stated in language so vague and ‘emotive’ that it does not, at least prima facie, seem to follow from any clearly held beliefs about the world which can be stated in definite propositions. But one cannot possibly generalise. Kant’s liberalism (in particular his doctrine that one is forbidden to use other human being as means to one’s own ends: that exploitation and degradation of others is against the moral law) follows from his ethical doctrines; and these are certainly capable of being stated in lucid philosophical prose; can be examined from a logical point of view; are susceptible of rational argument; and so on; they aren’t just attitudes capable of being conveyed but not stated in lucid terms. And the same, I should have thought, is true about Spinoza or Hobbes, whose moral and political views directly follow from their beliefs about the world. For if the latter are false, the former are affected directly: are logically undermined to some degree. So that I cannot see that a *Weltanschauung* is always and necessarily logically independent of the ‘professional’ doctrines of a philosopher. Indeed, this dependence is particularly notable in the case of the great classical philosophers from Plato to Russell. As for Kant’s relation to Fichte and Hegel: no man’s views can be made responsible for the use to which they are put. And anyway Kant might well have regarded the arguments of the Romantics as not merely abhorrent to him but fallacious.

HAMPSHIRE Yes, I don’t think we ought to judge a philosopher’s intentions by his historical consequences. Fichte, Schelling and Hegel each had to modify Kant’s logical doctrines in a characteristic way in order to arrive at their different *Weltanschauungen* – their different moralities, their different political beliefs, their differences in aesthetics.

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But the real point at issue is this. Kant, like his successors, did draw political, and other, conclusions from his philosophy – in the narrowest, most technical sense of ‘philosophy’. If in the present state of opinion Oxford philosophers do not draw moral, political and other non-specialist conclusions from their philosophy, then your thesis, Quinton, that contemporary Oxford philosophy is in the main philosophical tradition will not stand up. It would be a great change if philosophy were now thought to be ethically neutral by philosophers themselves. And I think it would be a change for the worse; because I think it would be an intellectual error, and also a self-deception.

QUINTON I admit that in the past differences in philosophical viewpoint clearly did have important practical consequences. The different opinions of Thomists and Scotists in the later Middle Ages – differences about the respective provinces of faith and reason, of theology and philosophy – were connected with the principal political issue of the time: the controversy over the respective authorities of Church and State. William of Ockham, after all, who was a follower of Duns Scotus on the philosophical question about the limitations of reason in theology, was one of the most vigorous political pamphleteers on the anti-papal side; while Aquinas committed himself, without anything like the same degree of political engagement, to papal supremacy. I don’t think there is any doubt that the philosophical views were normally associated with certain regular political consequences; and these proponents usually believed the philosophical views to entail these consequences. On the other hand, it was not necessary to draw anti-papalist conclusions from Scotist premisses; I don’t believe that Scotus himself did so; and the same conclusions could have been drawn from quite different premisses.

HAMPSHIRE Leaving the historical point for a moment: are you saying that acceptance of the commonly accepted logical doctrines of contemporary philosophy has no relevance to one’s moral

beliefs or attitudes? That is, that no moral beliefs are excluded by logical doctrines, and that none are supported by them?

QUINTON I think – and I take it that this is the view of many contemporary philosophers – that there is no logical connection between philosophical doctrines and moral or political attitudes. What is more: I should want to argue that there is plenty of evidence to show that there is a practical gap between the two things as well. Generally speaking, furthermore, this lack of any uniform connection between a given philosophical standpoint and a given *Weltanschauung* has always been evident if the examples taken are not too close together in time. Over short periods the mere fact of their being all held by one forceful and admired person will lead people to accept or reject as a group a set of opinions which are, logically, quite heterogenous.

Thus Hegelian idealism was very often associated with its founder's patriotic authoritarianism. But T. H. Green was an intellectual ancestor of the Labour party, with his pleas for State intervention; Bosanquet was a philanthropic liberal; and McTaggart took a low view of the State altogether. And Marx, after all, began as a Hegelian, and retained many of Hegel's doctrines intact in a system which was thought to have political consequences diametrically opposed to the political outlook of Hegel.

MURDOCH I still think your view seems true only when one divides people into groups roughly, and on the basis of their attitude to a few simple issues. But the differences can't be treated as if they were of no practical importance. Your notion of the 'practical gap' is, I suspect, partly suggested by a powerful philosophical belief in the 'logical gap'.

This method of division, which overlooks deep ideological disagreement, is also implicit in 'liberal' procedures. We take a vote on a practical point, and what lies behind people's overt decisions is private and their own affair. But this is a sort of political norm and not a fact. Differences of conceptual approach, even though

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combined with perhaps temporary practical agreement, are ignored at our peril. In the Labour Party, for instance, it makes just the greatest difference in practice whether someone is a socialist of a T. H. Green type or of a Benthamite type.

QUINTON I will readily admit that certain philosophical views are more psychologically consistent with some moral and political attitudes than with others. But this is a contingent matter; and the psychological connection is usually less enduring than the philosophical view in question. This is a non-logical – but not by any means illogical – association which might be explained, as I suggested before, by the powerful but impermanent influence of great men. So I do not think that this connection, being a contingent, temporary and psychological one, affects my point.

BERLIN But it is not just a question of psychological compatibility. If you think (like the French materialists) that men are nothing but material objects in space, determined wholly by fixed natural laws, your notions of value – of, say, what is good or bad – which you may trace entirely to, and even define in terms of, physical appetites of an unavoidable kind, will be very different (and properly so) from [the notions of] those who identify such values with the commandments of a revealed deity, or of one's own immaterial soul – commandments which may be disobeyed – or alternatively which you regard as unalterable in principle by education and environment. Ethical, political, aesthetic views seem to me capable of being logically connected with beliefs about the universe, or even with beliefs about logic itself (e.g. whether there can, or cannot, be a priori ethical proposition); even if they are not always so connected.

HAMPSHIRE I agree. For the holders of certain philosophical views, certain alignments, as Berlin says, are altogether excluded, since for anyone thinking as a philosopher in certain particular terms, certain attitudes would be inconceivable, in the sense that there would be no place for them in that particular system of

thought. They could not even be formulated. It is not merely a matter of logic; nor of psychological idiosyncrasy.

But may I now go back to one point in Quinton's original thesis? As I understood it, he was saying that modern philosophers, whatever some of them may have thought or said, were not really overthrowing 'metaphysics' – in the sense of overthrowing the traditional problems of philosophy. They were really limiting the scope and claims of philosophy, and particularly overthrowing the claim that there is, or can be, a connection between logic and *Weltanschauung*.

QUINTON I should prefer to put it like this. The so-called philosophical revolution was a real revolution; but it was primarily a *technical* one. There was not a change in the subject-matter of philosophy, but rather in the manner of formulating and discussing it. This change brought with it a clearer realisation of the relation – or more properly the lack of relation – between philosophy and *Weltanschauung*. A clearer realisation, but still not clear enough; since the metaphysics that the more polemically-minded philosophers thought they had eliminated was not very noticeably there to be got rid of. So they were not so much extruding *Weltanschauung* as they thought; but rather trying clearly to demarcate philosophy so as to exclude it.

But since they failed to distinguish *Weltanschauung* from metaphysics, they thought they had done a great deal more than this. Nevertheless, they continued in fact to concern themselves with the traditional problems of philosophy.

HAMPSHIRE So analytic philosophers were really still dealing with metaphysical problems?

QUINTON Yes; though these were framed in slightly different terms.

BERLIN I think the analytic philosophers' claim – if they make it – to have divorced philosophy and *Weltanschauung* is a false one.

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QUINTON There was no divorce because there had never been a marriage; at most, a series of impermanent liaisons.

BERLIN I really see no reason for believing this. Psychologically almost any view may be held together with any other view, I suppose; but that does not mean that this is justifiable; and one of the tasks of philosophers is, precisely to examine compatibilities of a given logical or metaphysical or scientific doctrine with ethical or political ones.

HAMPSHIRE If, as Quinton seems to be saying, the analytic philosophers were concerned with removing the basis of other people's *Weltanschauungen*, how is it that they left thinkers like Nietzsche alone?

MURDOCH These people are not interfered with because they don't use what we would call philosophical arguments. Rightly or wrongly, they are not regarded as 'doing philosophy'. Whereas a thinker like Hegel, whose world outlook is supported by philosophical arguments, or rather is presented in terms of recognisable philosophical concepts, would be an object of attack.

HAMPSHIRE You mean that sages like Nietzsche did not attempt to give any logical demonstration of their views.

BERLIN Yes; to the rigorous analytic philosopher they would be merely an intellectually harmless form of literature. And I believe that here the rigorous analytic philosopher would be mistaken. Napoleon (who invented, I believe, the opprobrious sense of the word 'idéologue') showed more insight, when he decided that what the positivists of his own time thought was positively dangerous to the security of his regime – whereas the Catholic doctrines of Bonald, who looked on him as a vile usurper, he thought were, if anything, favourable to his rule.

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MURDOCH But I don't think that Quinton was saying that the analytic philosophers dismissed *Weltanschauungen* as not worth bothering about.

HAMPSHIRE No; his point was rather that they objected to the logical manoeuvres designed to support *Weltanschauungen*.

BERLIN But I am still not clear, after all this talk of *Weltanschauung*, just what we have in mind: what counts as one. Let me take some doctrine at random. Phenomenalism, for instance; I mean the view that the world ultimately consists of systems of experiences, that there are no non-empirical lumps of stuff behind the scenes. Well: is phenomenism a *Weltanschauung*?

HAMPSHIRE Lenin thought it was. Or rather, he thought that a phenomenalist would have grounds, in his phenomenism, for rejecting certain interpretations of history, and for accepting others. And therefore he attacked phenomenism.

BERLIN But he attacked it because he thought it was simply untrue, not because it was a rival *Weltanschauung*; and as fallacies in one province might lead to denial of what he thought true and important in others, it must be refuted.

HAMPSHIRE Surely Lenin saw it, and attacked it, as a rival *Weltanschauung*. The point of his assault on Mach was that acceptance of Mach's kind of phenomenism would have made it impossible for people to talk in a Marxist way.

QUINTON But isn't Lenin's attack on phenomenism just the clearest case of his astonishing crudity as a philosopher? His train of thought seems to have been this: phenomenists like Berkeley deny the independent reality of the material world; this is to divert the attention of the working-class from their real, material interests to pie in the sky; therefore Berkeley and those who agree with him are enemies of the working class.

BERLIN I don't believe – indeed it is obviously not true – that phenomenals always have been so very other-worldly; but I think that for Lenin it was a matter of nipping in the bud what he detected to be latent 'religious' tendencies among Marxists; he thought that the materialist propositions which he derived from Feuerbach, Marx and Plekhanov were not compatible with the (crypto-Kantian) tendencies of some Bolsheviks to divorce questions of ultimate ends from those of historical materialism. I should have thought that he was quite right. His 'refutation' is a poor intellectual performance; but his own motive for compiling it seems sound enough.

HAMPSHIRE Surely the episode we have been discussing is itself enough to throw doubt on Quinton's original thesis.

MURDOCH May we go back a bit? I think that what lies behind Quinton's view is a current assumption, which I should call a 'liberal-scientific' assumption, to this effect: that there is the world of clearly established facts on the one hand, about which we are all in agreement, and there is the world of private personal attitudes on the other, about which we attempt to be tolerant. (Agnosticism here is a form of tolerance.) The early analytic philosophers were, as we know, particularly fanatical in insisting that we should take as real only the world recognised by natural science. The more austere forms of the Verification Principle condemned much of what we thought. We think that our philosophy has never entirely got over this prejudice, which is reflected in the recent and current uses of the word 'attitude'. Contemporary ethics, for instance, no longer connects moral judgments with emotions, but it connects them exclusively with consistent practical choice. Moral differences then are seen as differences in attitude in the sense of differences of overt choice, and not as differences of moral concept. But, as I suggested before, this determination to see differences as differences in voting is itself part of our liberal *Weltanschauung*.

BERLIN I still am not really sure what a '*Weltanschauung*' is supposed to be. I should have thought that the term usually meant general attitudes to life: such as optimism or pessimism; sensing purpose in all things, or the lack of it; monism or pluralism; what William James distinguished as 'tough-' or 'tender-'minded attitudes; and the like.

HAMPSHIRE But apparently what the logical analysts want to say is either (1) that moral, political and aesthetic opinions are not subjects for rational argument, or (2) that arguments which would be recognised as philosophical, in the new and narrower sense, do not, or should not, occur when we are defending them.

I do not know whether most Oxford philosophers do now hold either or both these views. If they do, they seem to me to be wrong.

QUINTON These two views are very different. The technical revolution in philosophy is only relevant to the question in that it emphasises the independence of the 'opinions' mentioned from philosophy.

But my original argument was that whatever the relation may be between technical philosophy and *Weltanschauung* – and here, against Hampshire and Berlin, I would maintain that the analytic philosopher's insistence that there is no logical connection between the two is correct and helpful – a change of view about this relation does not constitute a revolution in philosophy of the kind which some philosophers, and critics of philosophy, believe to have taken place. The logical detachment of philosophy from *Weltanschauung* is not specific to analytic philosophers; it was made clearly enough by for instance Dilthey, who was by no means of that school; and it does not constitute a rupture with the great tradition of the subject, because those who are generally recognised to be the chief ornaments of this tradition do not depend for their places in it on any *Weltanschauungen* they may have expressed. Professor Ayer is not, in this very wide sense, a new kind of philosopher, he is essentially interested in the same sort of things

as Descartes. And if Descartes is a metaphysician, so is Ayer. Equally those who criticise Ayer's conception of philosophy will not find what they are looking for in Descartes.

HAMPSHIRE I disagree with you both about Descartes and about earlier logical positivism – the philosophers of the Vienna Circle, whom Ayer followed very closely in *Language, Truth, and Logic*.

Descartes was concerned to reconcile the new mathematical physics with Catholic theology. His philosophy entailed a particular doctrine of the human soul, its relation to the body and its possible immortality; and of the relation of faith and reason. He was a distinctively Catholic philosopher.

The philosophers of the Vienna Circle were campaigning anti-clericals and rationalists, explicitly excluding whole systems of belief as empty, void of content, as scarcely statements at all, susceptible either of belief or disbelief. All rational discourse, in their philosophy, must approximate to scientific discourse – unless it is mere expression of feeling.

Wittgenstein, I admit, is an entirely different case; in his later teaching he explicitly repudiated the philosophy of the Vienna Circle. He made a wider and more emphatic separation between philosophy, in his narrow sense of the word, and *Weltanschauung* than any philosopher had ever made before. And I admit that he has had more influence in Oxford, and in English philosophy generally, than the Vienna Circle. But this separation is itself a logical doctrine, and one which entails important consequences outside philosophy. The way in which one discusses, and states, religious, moral and aesthetic opinions will change, if one agrees that philosophy is irrelevant to them. And the status of one's religious, moral and aesthetic opinions will change, in the sense that one will believe that there are compartments, walls dividing different kinds of enquiry, which one did not believe to be there before.

But I should have thought that the usual complaint about Oxford philosophy was that it is trivial in its subject-matter – all about grammar and words.

MURDOCH Aren't we dealing here with two quite different lines of attack on contemporary philosophy? The analytic philosophers of the 1930s were supposed to be undermining religion and morals, because they seemed to suggest that there were no rational arguments which could be used to support religious or moral conclusions. Their activities, and those of the logical positivists proper, were not trivial. It was rather that their views had the important consequence of making morals and politics seem trivial, in the sense of non-rational. Linguistic philosophy, which descends from G. E. Moore's philosophy of common sense, and which goes in for a minute study of ordinary language, gives an appearance of being in itself a trivial activity, in that it involves detailed discussion of small points of actual usage.

QUINTON And the point on which the philosopher of ordinary language should seize here, in order to defend his procedure, is that this triviality is only apparent. Outsiders, after all, are not in the best position to judge the significance of specialists' researches. The points at issue between Locke and Berkeley might look pretty trivial; but their disagreement about material substance is connected with a quite untrivial-looking difference about the nature of scientific knowledge: does it give us a true understanding of the nature of things? or does it merely provide us with a set of convenient, since practically useful, schemes for the prediction of experience? And this is important because quite different views of the nature of admissible scientific hypotheses flow from it.

In one form, at any rate, these charges of triviality may be no more than ignorant philistinism; and as such are by no means peculiar to the domain of philosophy: though they seem to be specially frequent there. Historians, too, are exposed to the same kind of futile carping from those who seem to conceive the historian's function to be that of providing patriot-fodder, of lifting up our hearts by celebrating the glories of our national past. The same sort of criticism is recurrently made against theoretical economics.

Behind these naive complaints there is sometimes a serious point. And indeed current Oxford philosophy of the 'ordinary language' variety, could be seen as making just such a serious point against the classical logical positivists, the Carnapians with their simple faith in the absolute fidelity of *Principia Mathematica* to the implicitly recognised rules of valid thinking. But such points are best made by professionals; as put forward by uninformed persons they merely exasperate.

MURDOCH I think there is, or can be, point in the attack on the philosophy of ordinary language. We know how colossally important and valuable this method has been; but it does run a risk. The risk is that it may deter us from philosophical exploration in cases where this exploration is proper.

Moral and political philosophy, for instance, have not, I think, so far, been well served by the 'linguistic' method. The result has too often been that we are offered, as fundamental concepts definitive of moral or political thinking in general, such watered-down conceptions as have become fixed in the everyday language of our society.

This is the kind of criticism that personally I would want to make. But I suppose the more general criticism is that the philosophy of ordinary language deals in problems that seem more 'verbal' than 'real'; that there is a deliberate evasion of problems with serious human consequences.

HAMPSHIRE Certainly the linguistic sorting-out can be tedious; but something important may be discovered in the process; and this sorting-out of the provinces of the use of words is a very important aspect of modern philosophy.

QUINTON And after all, any serious intellectual discipline runs the risk of falling into a kind of pedantic frivolity. This is not at all peculiar to analytic philosophy. Consider Renaissance objections to Scholasticism; or the abuse of Aristotle and Aristotelian logic that is strewn through the pages of Hobbes, Descartes and Locke.

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For this tendency to decadence there are a number of explanations, none of which is uniquely applicable to analytic philosophy. In the first place there is the commonly devastating effect of a man of genius; followers tend to follow the words rather than the example of a great thinker. Secondly, fiddling about is an occupational proclivity of academic persons – the outcome of diffidence, habituation, a narrow and perhaps rather smug environment, the sort of pompous self-sufficiency I am afraid I may have given expression to a little while ago. This, after all, is the inevitable concomitant of professionalism; if you provide the conditions in which learning and exactness can flourish, you also inevitably provide the conditions for scholasticism and aridity.

BERLIN I have no objection to pedantry or even ‘aridity’ as such. All true forms of scrupulous professional activity seem to involve this to some degree – it is almost a criterion of such professionalism. And philosophy is no more for amateurs than any other serious intellectual discipline. But I do think that modern positivists have done themselves unnecessary harm, in the eyes of the uninstructed, by advertising their methods as ‘linguistic’. No doubt this was a tempting and perhaps necessary weapon in the early days, when the current philosophical jargon – and the vast inflation of language by Hegelians and their allies – needed a sharp and immediate antidote. But the impression has undoubtedly been given to the general public – or to those of them who wish to know what philosophers are saying – that whereas in the past philosophers dealt with important questions – moral, metaphysical, political – they have now peacefully abdicated from all this, and have retired from the dangerous open sea of public debate to the remote inland lake (some say an artificial pool for paper boats) of harmless verbal analysis; and are about as deeply concerned with the ‘great problems’ that trouble people, as philologists or grammarians.

This withdrawal never, in fact, occurred: or, if it did, only through very temporary misunderstandings of their task by natural pedants among philosophers, who really did become obsessed by

an interest in words (like a lexicographer's) purely for their own sakes. It seems to me that what the radical revolution in philosophy during the last half-century did make clear – and there has been a great (and I should say, beneficent) revolution – is the proper subject-matter of philosophy. Thus one can now say much more confidently that what philosophy does not deal with are questions which are either empirical or formal. Empirical questions are dealt with by the special sciences, and, at its own level, by common sense; formal questions, by logical or mathematical techniques and the like. I think that we really are clearer today about the nature of philosophy.

One of the distinguishing marks of empirical questions – and formal ones also – is that they contain the indications of the kind of method by which they are to be answered, within themselves. An empirical, or a formal, question may be difficult to solve; but its very formulation makes clear what kind of method is called for – nobody looks for solutions to equations or chess problems in green fields, nor for questions about the composition of soils in books on mathematical logic.

The mark of specifically philosophical questions is that the way to solve them is not obvious at all. The questions look genuine enough – questions like 'Are there real material objects or just subjective impressions?' or 'Had the world a beginning in time?' or 'Is there an immortal soul?' But one does not quite know how to set about looking for answers. Sometimes the questions do turn out to be in part factual or formal: when this becomes clear, the formal and empirical issues are gradually 'sloughed off', as it were, into special sciences (e.g. psychology or biology, astronomy or mathematics, as the case may be) and leave philosophy proper. This successive shedding is the history both of philosophy and of the genesis of the sciences. But what is left is philosophical: is neither a pure matter of '*Weltanschauung*' nor of its opposite.

Sometimes the problems are mere linguistic muddles – due to abuse of language; as logical positivists thought, and perhaps still think, all philosophical 'problems' are; at other times they are genuine, and soluble, questions. The ground under the

philosopher's feet need not necessarily always be a quicksand. But of course what philosophers are talking about is not words qua words, but about concepts and categories: the most general and pervasive among them which particular uses of words constitute (for thought is largely a matter of using words). Words are not distinguishable from the concepts they express or involve: but it does not follow that all there is before us is 'mere words' – trivial questions of local usage.

Two fallacies have been uncovered in our day. First, it is now clear that philosophy is not (because all knowledge is empirical), therefore, as Hobbes and Hume and Mach supposed, and possibly Russell once thought, a kind of science. But neither is it a formal – a quasi-logical – activity. It consists in trying to clarify and to answer, questions too general and pervasive to be treated by the textbooks of the sciences; and too much taken for granted to be examinable by common sense.

These problems alter as words and concepts alter. But their treatment cannot possibly be formalised and mechanised – i.e. turned into easily teachable 'techniques'. They must be dealt with as they come. Vast progress has been made in our day in throwing light on some of the most persistent and central of these great issues; especially by, for example, Russell; who nevertheless, despite his genius, seems to me mistaken about the nature of philosophy – his own most fruitful activity – since he thinks it helps or supplements or continues the work of the sciences. It does not do this: the most characteristic questions that philosophers try to unravel are not solved by discoveries of facts, as scientific problems are; they are not solved either by inductive or by deductive methods. No factual discovery, and no deductive exercise, will help me to understand why I cannot 'return' to the seventeenth century, or how I can be sure that I am not the only conscious being in the universe. But philosophical thought can, by examining and analysing ways in which we use symbols, i.e. the ways in which we think and communicate, answer just such questions; and so alter both someone's specific beliefs and his

Weltanschauung, too. Which is exactly what Kant did for the nineteenth century.

HAMPSHIRE I am sure that Berlin is right in saying that the term 'linguistic', as a label for modern philosophy, has been unfortunate.

QUINTON It may have been unfortunate, but I would defend firmly the main difference between the empiricism of the present day and the classical British empiricism of Locke and Hume. Where they, and the Mills, discussed thinking in psychological terms, as a manipulation of ideas, the modern empiricist treats it as the manipulation of words. Thought as expressed, and not thought as 'felt', is what they conceive their subject-matter to be.

HAMPSHIRE But surely Berlin is right. It is not just words that the analytic philosopher is properly concerned with, the more or less contingent facts of language, but with concepts. And not just with any concept, but with those most general concepts or notions on which all thought and language depends. As philosophers, we are interested in the most general features of the whole apparatus of concepts, in the different categories of thought and knowledge. If we exhaustively analyse some particular concept, it is generally as an example of a type of concept, with a view to showing the place of this type in the system of our thought, its peculiar function, and its difference from other types. We want to arrive at a general view through the particular case.

There is, of course, always the possibility of mistaking the means for the end. Minute verbal analysis is only the means; although one may, for pedagogical purposes, fall into the habit of discussing this or that particular expression, and forget why one is interested in it, and what philosophical question one is trying to answer. Linguistic analysis seems to me philosophically boring when it becomes a routine, applied to any expression which is suggested, disinterestedly; there must be a philosophical question first, which will be by definition a question of great generality; and then we may pin it down, and render it more tractable and less

vague, by examining a particular case of linguistic usage very carefully, as a specimen. And surely Wittgenstein and Moore have shown in their practice that we do become clearer about the traditional issues of philosophy in this way. But this method cannot be made a routine. It demands some insight, the selection of the right example and counterexample, the instinct for what is relevant.

But it might still be right to use the word 'linguistic' in explaining what has happened in the last fifty years. Although many of the questions which we try to answer are very much the same as the questions asked by Aristotle, Leibniz or Kant, we have a means of making these questions much clearer than they were before. To put it crudely, we are able to distinguish more firmly than earlier philosophers the difference between (1) talking about the use of words and concepts and (2) using words and concepts to talk about other things. The elaboration of this distinction in the last fifty years seems to me of immense importance, comparable with the development of mathematical logic, and with the new insight into the status of mathematics which the new logic has brought.

Now this distinction, in one of its forms, has wide importance outside philosophy itself – in ethics, political theory, in aesthetics and criticism. So I should certainly say that it must affect one's *Weltanschauung*: that is, the terms in which one states moral, political or other problems, and the way in which one approaches them, and distinguishes them from each other.

This is a revolution, when all its consequences are taken into account. Whether one says that we are still discussing the same questions in a different form, or that we have replaced the old questions by new ones, seems to me simply a matter of how we decide to use the word 'same' here.

And there are other elements in the revolution, which also have large consequences outside philosophy. For instance, the approach to philosophy through the traditional question 'What can we know with certainty?' has now, I think, been abandoned and disposed of. We have seen through it and now have other problems.

QUINTON I should like to supplement that by a little history. We must clearly distinguish between two kinds of analytic philosophy, both of which owe a very great deal to Wittgenstein, and both of which are, in quite different ways, ‘linguistic’.

In the first place there is the formalist view of Carnap, and the Vienna Circle. They saw their task as the purification and reconstruction of language on the model of the *Principia Mathematica* of Russell and Whitehead. This is the specially ‘anti-metaphysical’ kind of analytic philosophy, and the proper bearer of the name ‘logical positivism’.

In the second place there is current Oxford Philosophy – the philosophy of ‘ordinary language’ – which is literal rather than formal in its bias; which seeks to remove philosophical perplexity by the achievement of a fuller understanding of the language we actually use.

Many opponents of analytic philosophy don’t realise that there is a vigorous conflict going on between these two wings of the analytic ‘movement’. What they have in common is the belief that philosophy is essentially critical (but then they share this with Kant); a concern with words; and the influence of Wittgenstein. But that last factor is not simple. For two, rather different, Wittgensteins are involved: the ‘formalist’ of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*; and the ‘literalist’ of the *Philosophical Investigations*; the pre-1914 Wittgenstein who was under the influence of Russell, the great logical constructor, and the post-1929 Wittgenstein who was under the influence of Moore, to whom more than anyone, I think, the insistence on the ordinary meaning of words must be traced. Moore’s main contribution was, so to speak, a posture; a method of approach to philosophical theses. It was left to the extraordinary intellectual fertility of Wittgenstein to put this method of approach effectively to work.

Moore and the later Wittgenstein constitute one main source of the philosophy of ordinary language as it is now practised at Oxford. But there was another, and to my mind less desirable, influence; one which may have something to do with those aspects of present-day philosophy which its opponents are most justified

in disliking. This influence is that of the Oxford 'Realists' of the Edwardian epoch; Cook Wilson, Prichard and Joseph; who were the objects of some of Collingwood's most brisk invective. And back behind these can be traced the continued obsession of Oxford philosophers with Aristotle's *Ethics*: a tradition which goes back to the fourteenth century and is not extinct today.

This Cook Wilsonian flavour may account for the vein of 'scholarly', construer's hair-splitting which does give some cogency to the critics' charge of triviality. But I would urge again that this is not a necessary, as it certainly is not a universal, character of analytic philosophers. It is rather to be attributed to certain peculiar local conditions; the most important of which is the fact that nearly all professional philosophers in Oxford are, and have been, classicists. The only first-order disciplines in which they have had any advanced education are the study of classical languages and history.

HAMPSHIRE I do not agree that the effect of classical learning has been bad, or has produced pedantry. there is an evident advantage is starting philosophy at the beginning; and the beginning is with the Greeks. It is pleasant and useful to see the terms we still use (some of them) first coined, before they arrive in later centuries – the seventeenth, for instance – used, chipped and discoloured.

And I agree with Berlin at least that there is no simple or straight-line progress in philosophy, as there may be in a science: I think myself that there is an undulating, or wave-like motion forward, like that of the tide coming up; but we always need to draw back to earlier insights, after any wave of advance. It happens that some of the insights needed now, as a corrective to Russell's logic and to an obsession with British empiricism, are to be found in Aristotle: and particularly in Aristotle's *Ethics*.

A philosopher's discussion of morality must always fall within the framework of the logic which he recognises and which he has set out analytically in his more technical philosophy – in his philosophy in your narrower sense, Quinton. If you think, as I do,

that Aristotle gives a truer and less superficial account of practical reasoning than is to be found in Hume, or in contemporary empiricists, then you will suspect that there is some serious deficiency in the logic, in the theory of language, and in the theory of knowledge of empiricism. Practical thinking is, after all, one half of our thinking, and it cannot be thrust into a corner when we are discussing the theory of knowledge or the concept of mind; any analysis of mental concepts, of the nature of thinking and feeling, or of the logical relations between behaviour and the inner processes of the mind, must be tested in its implications for morality: how do I, or should I, think of people in any actual moment of difficult decision? It seems to me, incidentally, that the French existentialists have been right to bring questions of ethics into the centre of the so-called theory of knowledge, and to consider questions of personality, and of our knowledge of other minds, and of self-knowledge, in the contemplative or speculative sense. And what one finds in Aristotle is an unbiased and analytical dissection of choice, decision, deliberation, and of the relation of thinking to acting; also, he makes just those untrivial verbal and grammatical distinctions, both in the *Ethics* and elsewhere, which we now expect from a philosopher. In that he is also, among other things, a great analytical philosopher.

It seems inevitable that innovators in philosophy, Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle no less than Descartes and Kant, should claim to discard all previous philosophy in the first moment of discovery; and then one goes back and lays the new discoveries alongside the old. Something of the old survives, something is also eliminated, appears now irrelevant and unnecessary. I suspect that it is particularly the more rationalist philosophers – Aristotle, Leibniz, Frege – with their more formal arguments about existence and identity, who will seem least irrelevant or superseded in the near future; while the theory of knowledge coming from British empiricism – from Locke, Berkeley, Hume – will seem comparatively irrelevant, at least to contemporary interests. You will admit that there is this other strand in contemporary analytical philosophy?

QUINTON I was not, of course, objecting to classical learning or to the study of Aristotle's *Ethics* as such, but rather to the narrowly philological frame of mind to which the former sometimes leads and to the habit of treating the latter as holy writ, a kind of obsessive fundamentalism which still has distinguished adherents. And I quite agree about the 'other strand' which you identify in recent philosophy. This is perhaps a return, under Wittgenstein's influence, to the highest issues of traditional metaphysics: a return from our native preoccupation with epistemology; a return in particular to the oldest of philosophical problems, that of substance. But a classical background is hardly ideal for the appreciation of Leibniz and Frege; while some knowledge of mathematics and of natural science and its history is essential.

The aim of my historical remarks, however, was to introduce a little more articulation into the idea of analytic philosophy; and perhaps this could be done more effectively by considering analytic philosophers as they are, rather than what has brought them into existence. For we have been talking as if there were one fairly clearly defined sort of person to whom the label 'analytic philosopher' applied. But if a closer look is taken at the people who are analytic philosophers in Oxford today, and at the kind of views they hold on what I still want to describe as essentially non-philosophical matters – I mean religion, politics and, in a wide sense, morals – my original thesis of the logical independence of technical philosophy and *Weltanschauung* is confirmed. For if we review the moral, political and religious standpoints of our colleagues and ourselves we must surely be struck by their variety. It is certainly at least as great as the variety to be found in donnish, or graduate, circles in general. There are atheists and Christians (Anglicans, Roman Catholics and others); Bevanites, and people who regret the abandonment of the Suez canal; pacifists, and people who would welcome a 'stronger' foreign policy – with all that that entails. It seems to me that we must either hold that analytic philosophy is compatible with any *Weltanschauung*, of that

(say) our Christian colleagues are hypocrites, or the dupes of their own wishful thinking.

MURDOCH But you overlook the extent to which ‘liberal’ assumptions – those assumptions which underlie discussion in a tolerant society where views are expected to be supported by arguments, and arguments of a certain type – are shared by all of us. From this particular point of view we are all as alike as peas, and our common philosophy is a symptom of our likeness – though we may also be alike in ways which may or may not show in our philosophical preferences, within the general framework of agreement. The sort of rootless, uncommitted enquiry which we consider to be valuable is itself one of the organs of a liberal society. But we do no service to philosophy if we fail to recognise the points at which what the analysis brings to light are our own values. Equally we do no service to liberalism if we take our similarity of outlook for granted; as if it were preserved automatically by the use of the reason, instead of being something perishable and precarious.

QUINTON But I think you in turn are not admitting the range of attitudes that seem in practice to be compatible with our philosophy; still less, the range that is perfectly possible. Admittedly, Oxford philosophers do not display the whole range of attitudes to life. Anti-Semitism, Baudelairean moral experimentalism, and Fascism have no adherents here to the best of my knowledge. But then there are very few anti-Semites, Baudelaireans and Fascists in the University, since to hold such views is to invite contempt or dismissal.

Or just consider for a moment our comparatively non-analytic philosophical colleagues. They seem to me to exhibit as many kinds of attitude to life as their philosophical opponents. Certainly there are more religious believers among them; but then I don’t deny that there has been a psychological connection between analytic philosophy and ‘rationalism’ in the more comic sense of that word.

Here the personal, extra-philosophical influence of Russell is perceptible.

To put the point in terms of an example. I could, as an analytic philosopher, idealise the State: on the ground that most people were weak, foolish and easily deluded; that there were ineluctable differences of political capacity between men; and that it was therefore desirable that political institutions should be so ordered as to take account of this. My philosophical views would prevent me from arguing from this position in terms of the Real Will of the Nation; but it's the opinions that matter here rather than the reasons produced for the purpose of justifying them.

HAMPSHIRE But could a positivist be a Fascist? Or a Marxist? Not without inconsistency, I think. Of course he might support Fascists or Marxists for his own reasons. But this would not make him a Fascist, or Marxist. His general beliefs – what we earlier called his *Weltanschauung* – would be different; that is supposing, for the purposes of this argument, that Fascism, like Marxism, does involve general beliefs.

QUINTON I think a positivist could be a political authoritarian; and yes, perhaps, even a Fascist.

BERLIN I cannot believe that. Surely positivists, qua positivists, are committed to a kind of free, unhampered analysis of concepts and beliefs which Fascists must forbid.

HAMPSHIRE There is, it is true, the example of Pareto, who used positivistic methods of argument to support authoritarianism. But it would be inaccurate to call him a 'Fascist', without qualification; even if he collaborated with Fascists for his own peculiar reasons, which were not theirs.

QUINTON To take up Berlin's point: in the case of such a conjunction of principles, their upholder would have to argue for

the limited circulation of truth, the restriction of rational discussion to the elite.

BERLIN That is not enough to support your position. Here is one instance that occurs to me, which seems to make it untenable. The belief that there exist personal natural rights – sacred and inviolate – is philosophical enough; but it is not compatible with extreme outlooks like fascism or communism; nor with specific views of what ‘existence’ is – or how the word ‘exists’ is, or should be, used.

MURDOCH I agree, though I would not put it in this way: for what philosophical concepts we use will be a function of what we regard as real and important.

BERLIN To be historical again: the Churches have certainly thought philosophical doctrines dangerous to orthodoxy; the cases of Bruno, Spinoza, the existentialists show this sufficiently.

Attempts are sometimes made to prove that philosophical doctrines – if they are purely philosophical and not factual, or to do with *Weltanschauung* – cannot clash with theology. But these efforts are seldom convincing. Take the case of Osiander, the editor of Copernicus. Copernicus was dead, but his orthodoxy had apparently been impugned. Osiander tried to prove that Copernicus had not wished to say what ‘really’ occurs in space – that was a matter for metaphysics and theology – but only to improve methods of astronomical computation; a mere matter of mechanical technique, which could not clash with any view of what happens. And this seems an unpalatable piece of obvious special pleading. Osiander may well have been a sincere son of the Church; but such attempts to show that one set of truths, being philosophical, cannot, in principle, contradict another – because they are theological or metaphysical or *Weltanschauungen* – never carry conviction.

QUINTON Yet Christianity has survived the general acceptance of Copernicus’s hypothesis, and a great many other scientific

discoveries which are literally incompatible with statements in the Old Testament.

Philosophy can have the sort of disconcerting effect on religious belief that nineteenth-century geology had on the Biblical doctrine of creation – though it will bear on methods of argument rather than on actual beliefs. Thus many philosophers of an empiricist persuasion have argued that no proposition asserting the existence of anything is capable of being demonstrably proved; and this rules out the proof of God's existence by the ontological argument. But Locke, who opposed the ontological argument, was a perfectly sincere Christian; and Christianity has survived the general abandonment of this mode of proof.

HAMPSHIRE Discussing philosophical and theological questions in a certain vocabulary is itself enough to conflict with certain religious beliefs; we may show, in the manner and method of our discussion of them, that we do not take religious beliefs to be the kind of beliefs which ordinary believers believe them to be. The way in which religious (or political) doctrines are argued for is itself an integral part of a whole system of beliefs. That is why an analytical philosopher who is a Catholic may have less in common with a Thomist, or existentialist, Catholic than with another analytical philosopher who is an atheist. The two analytical philosophers may agree to disagree in the same terms, and in the same tone of voice; intellectually they live in the same world. I think you underrate the degree to which Oxford philosophers sound strangely, even comically, alike, even if they think that they are different.

QUINTON You spoke, Hampshire, of 'the way religious beliefs are argued for'. I don't think this quite brings out, what I believe to be the case, that the purpose of arguments in religion is explanatory, or defensive, and not designed to effect conversions. They are a part of the polemical armoury, rather than means designed to entice the sceptic from his unbelief.

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BERLIN But people may have been converted by religious 'proofs'. At least I do not see why they should not have been.

QUINTON Well, of such people I would have to say that as far as the validity of the proofs is an indispensable foundation for their beliefs, their religion, is really a sort of bad philosophy.

But is this a common case? 'Proofs' may effect a conversion, as Berlin says; but do they ever sustain the convert in his belief thereafter?

HAMPSHIRE Surely Quinton would agree that, if you separate religion and morals from philosophy, it makes a difference to the way in which you meet the people who are defending a religion or a morality. If you deal with a religious opponent by saying 'We can't argue this, we are just made differently' – or if you say 'We must settle all moral questions for ourselves' – to assert or accept these as truisms is itself a challenge to certain moral principles and religious beliefs.

BERLIN Like the case of a man who says 'I am politically neutral'; for that is itself a political attitude. And to the statement 'I am morally neutral' some moralists would reply that neutrality in some circumstances was morally indefensible.

QUINTON They very well might; but does this matter for the point at issue? I don't decide whether a man is my co-religionist by seeing how he argues, but by whether I find him kneeling beside me at church.

BERLIN But the religious believer might accuse the analytic philosopher who attends his church, but argues that his subject is neutral towards religion, of insincerity. Thus if the philosopher says 'Nothing I say clashes with your beliefs', the believer might reply 'Let me be the judge of that. Your analysis of my words is not that of someone who believes what I believe.'

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QUINTON The resolution of this dispute would depend on a decision as to whether the believer's last remark was a religious or a philosophical one. In a way, indeed, that is what their dispute is about. And my own view would be that the question, into what sort a belief should be classified, surely is a philosophical question.

BERLIN Confusion arises if you try to separate religious and philosophical beliefs too strictly. One might suppose '2 plus 2 equal 4' was neutral enough. But suppose a religion forbade adding; and, going beyond the Biblical veto on 'numbering the people', forbade the people even to think of numbers. Then '2 plus 2 equals 4' might count as a religious belief – or an anti-religious one.

Of course that is an extreme case – ludicrously so – but there is no telling what a religion might not forbid, or ordain. To circumscribe its sphere in advance is often only a self-protective device adopted by philosophers who want to guarantee themselves some minimum freedom of thought or speech.

HAMPSHIRE We must remember that this rigid division of beliefs into independent spheres or compartments is relatively new. Perhaps this is part of the 'revolution' we have been talking about. I think that, as a matter of historical fact, it is largely due to Wittgenstein's influence, although it may be a misunderstanding of him. In any case, it is a philosophical thesis which needs to be defended by argument. From what logical doctrines is the principle of division derived? I have never seen anything like a sufficient demonstration that religious beliefs, moral and political attitudes (to use this question-begging word) and philosophical opinions should each fall tidily into their own compartment, each supported by their own kind of reasons, with no interconnection between them. Persons cannot divide themselves, and they must find some standard of rationality and honesty somewhere; they will want to connect, to fit together, what they believe, and to test their beliefs in every sphere. The evidence of history shows that they will always knock down barriers and compartments, from mere self-respect, or respect of reason and honesty.

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People who are not philosophers have become more interested in philosophy in the last twenty years, because they know that, if there have been new insights in philosophy, these must have their importance elsewhere – in discussions of politics, of scientific method, of literary criticism and aesthetics, of psychology, of the interpretation of history, and so on. And such people are right: these insights are relevant, as the insights of Descartes and Kant were relevant; they suggest new and, as it now seems, clearer terms in which politics, literary criticism and aesthetics, psychology, history and so on, can be discussed. If we say ‘There is philosophy on the one side: my attitudes on the other’, we make philosophy a private game, or part of the syllabus; and at the same time we trivialise our beliefs by calling them ‘attitudes’.

QUINTON Oh, but I must make it clear that it’s quite wrong to think that analytic philosophers mean to suggest that attitudes or beliefs are unimportant when they separate them off from philosophy.

I’d better say at once that for my own part, my moral and political views are much more important to me than my philosophical ones. To change the former would involve a much greater disturbance than to change the latter!

MURDOCH Perhaps it might help a little towards resolving the dispute if one emphasised that there were two quite distinct contentions here. We should separate the contention that there are no barriers to the use of philosophical methods – so that philosophy could, for instance, help to establish or discredit religious beliefs – from the different contention that in taking up a philosophical position we are frequently, or to some extent, taking up a moral position. One could maintain the second without maintaining the first.

QUINTON Certainly I would insist that one must distinguish ‘positions’ from the kind of argument that is used to support them.

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If I may speak personally again: I am more in sympathy with the conclusions T. H. Green reaches, by a method of argument I reject, than those which G. E. Moore reaches, by a method of argument I am more inclined to accept.

MURDOCH So do you hold that all political differences are merely empirical or concrete?

HAMPSHIRE Just differences about actual measures of policy?

BERLIN And do you really believe that all differences of what you call *Weltanschauung* are merely differences of character, temperament, disposition to act or feel in this or that way; that they involve no beliefs and assumptions which can be, and have been for centuries, analysed by philosophers?

QUINTON I believe, at any rate, that what sort of philosopher a man is does not tell you much about what he is like as a man. The differences between Mill and T. H. Green were philosophical rather than political; while the differences between Green and Bradley were political rather than philosophical. Yet, though Green and Mill were very different as philosophers, they were much more like each other, as men, than were Green, with his public spirit and his nobility of character, and Bradley, with his invalid's savagery and his ornate arrogance. And the Oxford philosopher today is no more one type of man, with one set of attitudes to the world, than he was in the late nineteenth century. There is not much more common to the analytic philosophers of Oxford beyond their living in Oxford and practising analytic philosophy.

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