Nova et vetera.
Prospects for the Application of Thomism in the Philosophy of Psychiatry in the 21st Century
Plan of presentation

- Aims
- Rationale
- Historical background
- Examples of implementation
- Summary
Rationale

- Philosophical system = technology
  - To organize thoughts,
  - To resolve doubts,
  - To provide guidance on behavior,
  - To seek wisdom.

- It can facilitate or hinder progress in a given field.

- There have been many systems in history – it is worth comparing and applying them in a creative way to solve contemporary problems.
Thomism – historical background 1

before

Reception of Aristotle

Disciple of Bonaventura
Thomism
– historical background 2

St. Thomas Aquinas and his works

- Approx. 1225-1274 (Roccasecca Castle, Kingdom of Sicily – Fossanova)
- Student and professor in Italy, France and Rome
- Philosopher, theologian, OP
- Doctor angelicus
- Main works
  - Scriptum super Sententias
  - Questiones dispotatae de veritate
  - Summa contra Gentiles
  - Summa Theologica
The main characteristics of Thomism

- Dualism of God and world
- Beings consist of elements (hylemorphism)
- Objectivism
- Empiricism
- Universalism
- Moderate realism
- Intellectualism
Thomism – historical background 3 reception and impact on philosophy

- **Opposition – old scholastics**
  - S. Tempier (France)
  - R. Kilwardby (England) – 1277
  - Peckham

- **Disciples and followers**
  - Dominicans (Ptolemy of Lucca), Augustinians (Giles of Rome), Carmelites (Gerard of Bologna) XIII-XIV
  - Francisco Suárez (SJ) XVI
  - Leo XIII, pope, encyclical letter Aeterni Patris (1879)
Thomism – modern schools

- Transcendental Thomism
  - K. Rahner
  - An attempt to combine the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas and Kant

- Louvainian Thomism
  - D. J. Mercier
  - Modernization of Thomas’s thought through contact with contemporary philosophical schools and sciences.

- Phenomenological Thomism
  - A. B. Stępień

- Analytical Thomism
  - J. Salamucha

- Traditional Thomism
  - Tongiorgi

- Existential Thomism
  - Gilson, Maritain, Krąpiec
  - Understanding the world, man, culture
  - The priority of the object of cognition, improvement of cognitive tools
Technique in medicine

- Branches of meanings:
  - Equipment
  - Rules
  - Science
  - Definition – systematic application of scientific knowledge or other types of knowledge to practical tasks (J. K. Galbraith, 1967)
Basic typology of philosophy of science

- Platonic-Aristotelian
  - Why? Dia tei
  - Know to know

- Subjective concept of Kant
  - What are the a priori conditions of cognition?
  - Know to use, utilize

- Sensationalist concept of Comte
  - How?
  - Discovering laws

- Synthesis of the last two concepts of Popper
  - Hypothetico-deductive method
  - Cognition has a temporary value
  - Science as a system of hypotheses
  - The aim is to detect and eliminate errors in cognition
Thomistic concept of a human being

- This concept indicates that a person expresses oneself in action, in the aspect of efficiency and purposefulness.

- This underlines the importance of virtue ethics. By developing virtues, it is possible to fully realize humanity.

- This approach finds application in the concept of mental health as the art of maintaining or restoring homeostasis.
Universals

- General concepts reflecting the understanding of things
- They may decide about individual beings
- ante rem: all general concepts exist as patterns in the mind of God
- in re: universals exist as beings of specific things contained in their individual substance (universale directum)
- post rem: universals appear as a result of abstraction, a product of the mind.
Disease as a lack of health

- Disease – being?
- Dualism: disease and health as an inseparable element of life (plant, animal, human)
- Disease as a lack of a constitutive element of being
  - This lack concerns one of the perfection elements that integrate being (e.g. lack of sight, lack of limb, lack of intellect).
  - The recognition of "lack" depends on our understanding of being, its constitutive elements.
Essence and existence

- Every being consists of:
  - essence (the most important, essential part of reality)
  - existence (actual manifestation)

- This distinction indicates the importance of finding relevant circumstances, e.g.
  - the most important symptoms, causes
  - to conduct more effective diagnostics and therapy
Metaphysical separation

- The method of metaphysical separation consists in reaching these elements, e.g. a disease process or action, without which they can not exist.

- It can be used to discover the most important symptoms of diseases and find optimal therapy.

- Examples:
  - What constitutes schizophrenia, depression, etc.
  - Which symptoms are crucial to diagnose these disorders
  - What method of therapy is optimal
The analogy of being and cognition

- The analogy of being and cognition = it shows the actual unity of what is diverse, and the whole of what is complex, the similarity of the dissimilar.

- Things are complex in many ways, but they are one in existence and action.

- This concept allows us to overcome the tendencies of reductionism and is conducive to the systematic recognition of reality, which is useful in the bio-psycho-social understanding of mental disorders’ causes.
Thomism, in existential terms, can be a promising method of philosophy in medicine.

It can be applied both to shaping the ethical attitudes of health care professionals (in accordance with the virtue ethics), as well as to searching for methods of diagnosis and therapy.

It is also important to compare different philosophical systems and the effects of their application in the philosophy of medicine, especially psychiatry.
Selected references