CANADIAN FACES OF REASON

PART I

In some way one is involved with the question of what reality is like, or with what it is not like.[1]

      Implying that philosophy is reflective of national culture, Leslie Armour and Elizabeth Trott start by suggesting that "to revive Canadian philosophy is, inevitably, to raise the possibility of the viability of a culture whose values in some respects clash with those of the cultures whose world views tend to dominate our affairs,"[2] a national culture colonized by Great Britain and, later and less formally, by the United States, the national culture – as the subtitle of their impressive study makes explicit – of English Canada. To explicate that culture they focus on philosophy, organizing their study of "events," in this research briefly the publication in 1850 of the first book of "professional philosophy" in Canada, a book written by James Beaven during a period "when the ideas which were to issue in Confederation were becoming quite firmly fixed and the notion of 'Canada' as we now know it was becoming intelligible."[3]

      That "notion" – as Armour made clear in his sole authored *The Idea of Canada* (briefed in #104) – is multivariate, what Armour and Trott call a "collection of French, Scottish, and Loyalist settlements,"[4] omitting for the moment the original inhabitants of the land on which they settled. What these "groups" shared, Armour and Trott suggest, is that they were "relatively untouched by, or actively resisted, the European upsurge of enlightenment individualism"[5] – a point Armour also makes in *The Idea* – after which (perhaps underscoring that point) they acknowledge the presence of "significant numbers of native peoples who are culturally what they are, in part, because they *were* included in Canada but who still have an ambivalent relationship to that culture (which worries many of them and the more thoughtful of us)."[6] "Canada is a place, however arbitrary," an observation Armour and Trott might have made of any nation-state, but here the observation functions to understate the significance of "English Canada," saying that it is "simply that part of the Canadian situation associated with the English language," adding: "And though there are very close relations between them, there are characteristic differences between philosophy in French Canada and in English Canada which warrant an initial separation,"[7] thereby justifying the subtitle of their study.

      Still introducing what is to follow, Armour and Trott advise us that they have been "concerned to locate the philosophers in a culture,"[8] emphasizing that "cultures change and evolve," a fact they think is particularly the case with 'Canadian culture,' [that is] young, open to the influences of the outside world, and subject to the changing

composition of the population." [9] Their challenge, they continue, has been "identify[ing] the coherent base from which one starts and the process through which change takes place." [10] I expected that "coherent base" to be historical but Leslie Armour and Elizabeth Trott are philosophers, so of course that base is philosophical, namely a "working concept of reason" which they consider "one of the most crucial features of any set of cultural determinants (or even cultural symptoms)." [11] Acknowledging their disciplinary expertise and interest, they position "the nature and uses of reason" as a "central concern" of philosophy. [12] They then suggest that "if philosophy is connected with reason and reason is connected to culture, then philosophy has unavoidable social implications." [13]

Perhaps to specify their point, Armour and Trott reference Julian Benda's *The Treason of the Intellectuals* (1927), [14] which critiqued (in their summary) intellectuals' abandonment of truth in search of practicality and power, thereby losing their moral authority, becoming "lackeys of the state and serv[ing] whatever political end is convenient for the moment." [15] They also attribute to Benda the observation that: "Our time is one of cultural imperialism. Politicians seek to impose their vision of a culture on as much of the world as they can influence." [16] Still summarizing, Armour and Trott then tell us that while the "Romans valued and respected the Greek culture as Alexander had valued and respected the cultures of the world he conquered," the great powers of our time seek cultural homogeneity," a fact they find unsurprising: "Perhaps in an era dominated by mass communication, when political power depends upon popular response and when the economics of mass production demand a mass taste, that is not surprising." [17] They then return to Benda, concluding that "understanding of one's culture is the intellectual's best defence against those who would obliterate it for political reasons, and one's best chance of coming to terms with one's own presuppositions so that one can seek the eternally true." [18] (On both counts they are more confident than I.) Concluding their claims to modesty, they acknowledge: "What we have achieved is only a beginning." [19]

Implying that philosophy – that all intellectual undertakings? – are epiphenomenal, [20] Armour and Trott tell us: "Philosophy's time had come because a pluralistic community needed a common strand of reason," and Canada's first professional philosopher - James Beaven – "symbolized the appropriate response." [21] Beaven's writing "reveal[s] a man sensitive to the situation in his adopted country," as "he remained an Anglican attached to his dogmas, but he understood the significance of the final abandonment of the dream of an 'established church' in Canada," [22] requiring him to realize that "his learning needed repair and his beliefs needed defence." [23] Still generalizing, they then tell us that "for the most part," those Europeans who came to Canada were without any "intention of building a brave new world but with the intention of preserving whatever seemed important to them" – does not the latter imply the former? - and "even now, across parts of Ontario there are patterns of alternating Catholic and Protestant villages – an arrangement which tends to promote

the inward-looking homogeneity of one's own cross-roads but gives the surrounding world something of an air of hostility," concluding: "Such a situation makes for a rather conservative outlook."[24] Parochial, too.

Such separatism seems to have been muted, at least in English Canada[25] – by a shared sense of the "English as effete and not worth listening to," one consequence of which was evidently a refusal to support "anything like a 'charismatic' politician," and confining "violence to the lacrosse box and (more recently) the hockey rink."[26] While their companion colonists to the south hardly confined their violence to sport, Americans also are often skeptical of their politicians, are decidedly ambivalent about the English, and, like their companion colonists to the north, regularly realize that the "remaining solution seemed to be to reason with one another."[27] Armour and Trott acknowledge that the "impact of such influences is not easy to trace," also admitting that the "concern with public education which the need for public reasoning … was not in any way unique to English Canada."[28] Their main point is: "Dominantly in English Canadian philosophy reason is used as a device to explore alternatives, to suggest ways of combining apparently contradictory ideas, to discover new ways of passing from idea to another," and "only rarely is it used as an intellectual substitute for force."[29] There is, in Canada, a "kind of philosophical federalism at work, a natural inclination to find out why one's neighbour thinks differently rather than to find out how to show him up as an idiot."[30]

Before they return to that first professional philosopher in Canada – James Beaven - Armour and Trott spend some twenty-five pages summarizing developments in European philosophy during the several centuries before the first official "chair" of philosophy was established – that in 1850.[31] I won't summarize those, recommending – as I do always – that you return to the original, not only to check the verisimilitude of this (of every) research brief – but to appreciate the erudition of the authors' achievement. Instead, I will quote passages that struck me as either interesting to a student of curriculum studies in Canada or germane to the pages to follow, attempting to link them (however loosely) to maintain some sense of narrative continuity.

After reporting that "in 1850, there was scarcely a subject in the curriculum in which religion did not figure prominently,"[32] Armour and Trott note that: "One *philosophical* position is that the proposed substitution of reason for faith and intuition just cannot be made."[33] The three became separate tracks, as it were, on which several thinkers tried to run simultaneously, although, Armour and Trott note, "it will only be, for the most part, when established intuitions and items of faith are called into question in some way that one will, after all, expect philosophy to get going and only where there is a strongly felt need to examine such matters in concert with others is there likely to be philosophizing as a public activity."[34] So is secularism a prerequisite to democracy? Not if ancient Athens is considered – although it was a democracy only relatively speaking – and Armour and Trott characterize "much of Plato's concern" as the role of the "rational order" in ordering the "chaos" of human life, as "only reason could

adjudicate (if anything could) the dispute amongst the partisans of many varied intuitions."[35] After referencing David Hume – casting him a "consistent High Tory" - Armour and Trott conclude:

> It is from this period in the eighteenth century that philosophy began to take on national colouring…. By the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, massive system building had become associated with the Germanic style…. But it is not far-fetched to think that the whole concern with systematic construction had to do with the fact that Germany itself was a fragmented culture which was only forged into a country with the utmost difficulty.[36]

Once again Armour and Trott flirt with rendering philosophy – intellectual life generally? – as epiphenomenal.

Apparently not noticing that danger, the two go on, undeterred, apparently ascribing the philosophy of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill to the fact that the "industrial revolution" and "empire building" made "middle-class British quite rich and worldly," as those two argued that "pleasure as not merely acceptable but bound up with duty."[37] At first "out of fashion" in Britain, "German system building" – in this instance Hegelianism – "arrived at Oxford and at the Scottish universities in the last third of the [nineteenth] century," its "original attraction was that it set out to take history seriously – to explain why we are where we are in the order of human events – to reconcile religion and science and to give a sense and direction to political reform."[38] Somewhat snidely (although it's not self-evident at whose expense, the Germans or the British, perhaps both), Armour and Trott allow that "Hegelianism emerged rather different and very British – decent and reasonable and without the rumbling Wagnerian overtones which come with Hegel's oracular utterances."[39] In America, about the same time, a "distinctively American philosophy" appeared, an "upsurge of Hegelianism (which reached its strongest domestic influence in Josiah Royce[40])," but which Armour and Trott appear to ascribe to a "straightforward prosperous society which had such faith in itself that not even the Civil War seems to have diminished its self-confidence."[41] Perhaps not "diminished" but certainly scattered it into still adamantly opposed camps, including North and South.

Except for that "self-confidence," no "distinctively American philosophy" yet, and, moreover, Armour and Trott make "Pragmatism" – the title given to what becomes a distinctive American philosophy – sound close to Canadian Hegelianism, insofar as they insist that "it is not subjectivist or individualist in its implications as they are developed by the American trinity, James, Peirce, and Dewey."[42] Instead, still summarizing, they assert that "they all claimed that, in the long run, what was confirmable by many would come to triumph over what was merely confirmable by a single agent and that a community might be defined by its collective and converging responses to experience and values. They thus established a priority of public over private values,"[43] that last conclusion making Pragmatism akin to the "public

reasoning" Armour and Trott located in English Canada (although, they admitted at the outset, not unique to it: see above). "Many of the American pragmatists were social reformers," they add, evidently driven less by ideals than by fear: "They feared rampant individualism and a crass and unquestioning respect for technology and simple success."[44] We still do.

Armour and Trott conclude that "out of such mixtures of uncritical assumptions and critical reconstruction, philosophies develop and come to have distinctive national characteristics," although – again stopping short of full-out national-cultural epiphenomenalism – "they are not mirrors of the national mind."[45] Maybe not, "but philosophy does often grow in response to some need – or, perhaps, the philosophies that attract attention are, not surprisingly, those which are responsive to some felt need."[46] Pulled to that end of the spectrum (ideas as autonomous being the other end), Armour and Trott offer that "if a great philosopher made for a national philosophy, there would have to be a Dutch philosophy with Spinoza at its head," back-tracking to say: "There may be a Dutch philosophy but, if so, it is perhaps a special kind of post-Husserlian phenomenology."[47] Skipping to the south, they suggest that "Descartes is very likely a greater philosopher than Bergson or Sartre but Bergson and Sartre represent different strands of French philosophy in a way in which Descartes does not," but "Descartes remains a major – perhaps *the* major – source from which French philosophy descends, but what is special about French philosophy is very likely the *way* in which it descends from Descartes."[48] Where are they going with this?

At first it appeared they are after the subjective and social prompts for philosophy to exist at all: "What we are looking for, then, is probably something subtle and special: the particular way in which reason develops as it comes to be substituted for insight and intuition in order that certain kinds of conflicts might be overcome in a reasonable way."[49] But then it seemed their interest is less the first part of that equation, i.e. epistemological ("the particular way in which reason develops as it comes to be substituted for insight and intuition") than it is socio-political ("in order that certain kinds of conflicts might be overcome in a reasonable way"), although for Armour and Trott the two are intertwined. Then we see what in fact they're after, what they name in the negative – ah, being so "Canadian" – by cautioning: "The reader must not expect to find some surprising new doctrine called 'the Canadian theory' or some great figure called 'the Canadian philosopher'."[50] What we can expect are "many doctrines, a variety of figure of more or less eight – frequently disagreeing with one another and showing their associations with their places and times in complex ways."[51] The relations among person, place, time (especially history), and thought are I sought to study in those projects on curriculum studies in Brazil, China, India, Mexico South Africa, the United States – and now Canada.

I pause here to point out that I title this project "Curriculum Studies in Canada" likewise (in the negative, as it were), as my hunch is that I'll find less of "Canadian curriculum theory" and more of curriculum studies *in* Canada, not precisely reflective

of the "national mind" (obviously "mind" should be plural) but "responsive" (this in-between location implied for philosophy in the Armour-Trott volume) to conditions "on the ground," at this historical moment, enacted by particular persons, in this place: curriculum studies – like philosophy *in* English Canada – is "showing their associations with their places and times in complex ways." That is the case not only geographically – curriculum studies in Canada show associations with many countries but especially the United Kingdom, the United States, and France – but also individually, acknowledged in the "Recent Writing" section of the Curriculum Studies in Canada website (www.curriculumstudiesinCanada.com), where I show where I am "coming from."

Back to Armour and Trott who cite Donald Creighton[52] - I'd add Harold Ennis[53] – both men associating "some important features of our history with the way in which the St. Lawrence system opens into the continent," "represent[ing] a reasonable use of the impact of geography on culture."[54] (In a footnote, they suggest that Creighton's emphasis on the distinctive features of Canadian geography and its influences speaks more to differences between Canadian and U.S. history than it demonstrates the relevance of "geographical theory" to "historical processes in general."[55] I should think it does both.) That issue set to the side, the point Armour and Trott want to make is that "given the conditions of life in the nineteenth-century west, one might see men as mutually dependent and as suffering from the lack of a traditional society which would give them security of place and function, or one might see them as essentially self-sufficient individuals for whom their independence and their isolation were conditions of virtue,"[56] the latter associated with the United States and the former with Canada – or so I suppose. Their conclusion, however, seems to fit both: "The great diversity of places produced a variety of sub-cultures and fed the notion that society must be held together by aims of great generality and of fundamental importance."[57]

And what would those be? Rather than "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," in Canada, Armour and Trott suggest, "religious notions of the sources of human obligation" were paramount, related to what they name second, namely "general welfare concerns – the interests of the sick, the feeble-minded, the blind," interests that are everywhere the same and thus offer "the possibility of unifying disparate parts of the population by appealing to these common needs."[58] Third is the "need for information," one of "the earliest and [what] has remained the most persistent of such concerns and has developed, by a natural extension, into the cultural concerns connected with broadcasting and the spread of the arts."[59] This "need to communicate across great distances could be turned into a virtue," they continue (again Ennis comes to mind), and so the "authorities dreamed of a new and national culture as an instrument of benevolent government."[60] Again mixing reason with morality, Armour and Trott use the interesting phrase "reasonable amity,"[61] its function to support their observation that "ideas may become general by becoming vague and

bland," but also may thereby become "comprehensive and fundamental," and Canadian "culture is apt to favour one as much as the other."[62] Those poles – vague and bland vs. comprehensive and fundamental – presumably prop up the "blandness" of "Canadian life," although Armour and Trott point to "all the components of the cultural and geographical milieu about which we have been talking," as they "tend toward a pattern of orderly and tranquil social change and this fact in itself has been an influence on the pattern of problems to be confronted."[63] This "strong communitarian tendency implies that social change must take a community with it as a unity."[64] Oddly (given Canada's determined understatement of the significance of the individual), Armour and Trott then assert that "in Canada, the individual has usually been able to evade the pressure to conform by merging with another community and to avoid the feeling of rootlessness by casting his lot with his new choice."[65] Rootlessness may be so avoided, but not conformity.

Once again the two distinguish between the U.S. and Canada, claiming that the latter is a place where the "development of society is continuous and is not made by one man or a dozen sitting down and drafting a plan on paper, even if they do so to the cheers of a thousand others standing outside, [and that] has been one of the distinctions between Canada and the U.S."[66] I hadn't realized the U.S. was "made by one man" (or even "a dozen") and I am very surprised to learn that my native land is the product of "drafting a plan on paper." Armour and Trott breeze past those puzzling implications of their statement, fastening instead on "attempts to paint our Fathers of Confederation and make them look the signers of the Declaration of Independence," attempts that have "generally provoked laughter even from generations of school children" (is survey data available?), as, speaking for everyone they write: "We have not seen them as very important because we have not thought, for the most part, that *anyone* could have the kind of importance which Americans assigned to their historical figures."[67] They go on: "We have not done much by the way of creating heroic leaders," but in our era Canadians have "done much" to create anti-heroes: think of the present status of Canada's first prime minister.[68] In the authors' time the "comings and goings of such men have seemed a mere surface activity,"[69] but in our era the present prime minister's separation from his wife captures the attention of many.[70] And while one can concur that "communities … are likely to have their own directions, patterns of change, and prospects," why qualify that with "unless they were deliberately created by men in the first place"[71]? Are all "communities" created by "men" (i.e. human beings)? And there are in fact cases of communities constructed by one man: think of Joseph Smith and the Mormons.[72]

That Armour and Trott are writing during a very different historical moment than ours is again made clear when they assert that "the Conservative Party (officially and splendidly *Progressive* Conservative) has held policies not far from those of their 'socialist'' rivals,"[73] not quite the case in today's politically polarized moment.[74] They say "hardly anyone was surprised when a philosopher like George Grant moved from

one to the other," as "both after all preached social responsibility, the containment of the most virulent kinds of individualism, orderly social change," as the "Red Toryism of popular legend (at least amongst intellectuals) is related to traditionalist communitarianism – a position which comes naturally once one accepts a certain view of social change.[75] They conclude: "The differences between political parties in Canada have, for the most part, been small-scale and technical."[76] Presumably that is always a good thing.

Once again Armour and Trott return to differences between Canada and the United States, associating the "Jeffersonian concept of constitutionalism" with "reason as arbitrary rule of one's own making," a notion of reason that "lies behind the individualist notion in modern theories which hold that the rules are what the winners of certain competitions say they are."[77] The Canadian face of reason, in contrast,[78] "with its roots in Plato and Aristotle, maintains that reason is primarily a function through which one may seek to expand one's experiences, to reconcile conflicting values and claims," and "it develops historically through a society with continuity and enables one, progressively but imperfectly, to see, as the facts accumulate, something of the real underlying structure."[79] A "communitarian, pluralistic society which has, for the most part, escaped violent change" – oh Canada – "tends to favour this … use of reason."[80]

Just as that distinction blurs, so too does the contrasting of the American exploitation of nature and (in apparent contrast) the "traditional Canadian insistence that the natural environment is to be regarded neither as sacred nor as something to be played with at will."[81] Armour and Trott admit, however, that this traditional view would soon be "forgotten and the (then) American view that nature is what you make of it was a common one side of the border as on the other."[82] The two topics – nature and community - converge in Armour and Trott's time, when a "later realization" demands a "new view of man's relation to nature," and "that continuity of community is, after all, not something one can take for granted or easily live without, and that the apparent conflict of human values is not a passing fancy, have all played a part in creating a new surge of nationalism."[83] They make these points to limit the scope of their study, stating that "this book is intended neither as inspiration for that movement, nor merely as record."[84] Like the project of which this research brief is a part, the Armour and Trott volume constitutes "an assessment of what we have achieved and a clue to what we might still need to achieve."[85] Also preparing us for what's to come, they add that they have limited their study to "all those thinkers who could reasonably be called philosophers in the traditional (largely but not wholly academic) sense and who met certain obvious conditions," among them living in Canada "for a substantial period of time" and did "their significant work here … sufficient work so that an extended analysis is possible."[86]

Setting the Stage

Armour and Trott will start with James Beaven, whose *Elements of Natural Theology* was published in London in 1850, a year after King's College, Toronto, in which he had been Professor of Divinity, had closed, and just prior to his appointment as Professor of Metaphysics and Ethics at the University of Toronto.[87] That year, Armour and Trott continue, also "marks both Beaven's personal transition from professional theologian to professional philosopher and the transition of academic philosophy in English Canada from a fiefdom of religion to an independent concern."[88] Armour and Trott pause here to reflect on that moment, an "interesting and crucial one in the development of what was to become Canada."[89] The "crucial issue" concerned "sectarianism," evident in Ontario, where "Methodists and Anglicans, led respectively by Egerton Ryerson and John Strachan, struggled for social, political, and educational power."[90] Despite sectarianism, what was shared was the "hunt for a rational agreement around which men of different sects could unite was on," a matter not only "that both politics and social life required an understanding – [but] the simple facts of economics forced it as well."[91] The threat of each sect starting its own university was averted by the reorganization of the University of Toronto "into colleges with a "secular" University College and a cluster of denominational colleges."[92]

Born in 1801 in England, educated at Oxford, the first forty years of James Beaven's life apparently passed "uneventfully," but "by 1843 when he came to King's College, Toronto, he was a conservative high churchman in religion and a conservative monarchist in politics."[93] Armour and Trott tell us that the "beauties of nature never eluded him, nor the brutality of the land with its bogs, stones, and occasionally ferocious weather."[94] Beaven emphasized neither: "Nature, to him, is a fact, to be enjoyed, worked with, treated with caution."[95] That is, "one can survive in it, but one had best measure, calculate, and stay watchful," an attitude, Armour and Trott conclude, that qualified Beaven as "becoming a Canadian."[96] Of "most interest to us," they continue, was Beaven's "attitude to the Indians" coupled with "his cool, unthinking elitism."[97] Before moving to Toronto, the native peoples had seemed to him just "objects of interest and curiosity."[98] Armour and Trott speculate that "he first felt a twinge of fellow-feeling for them when he began thinking about the complex affairs of the New England Company," a company that had been formed for the simple purpose of providing missions for Indians in the American colonies."[99] Those to whom it ministered proved loyal to the British crown and fled to Canada, and so the Company "used its money to support what were now Canadian Indians."[100] Beaven appreciated those native peoples who fled the thirteen colonies to the south, "if for no other reason than that they … felt loyalty to the Crown."[101] His "growing sympathy" for native peoples prompted "concern at the way in which his countrymen remained English despite everything," expressing his disappointment at the lack of their curiosity about the native peoples.[102]

That "elitism" that Armour and Trott referenced earlier laced Beaven's apparent appreciation that the native peoples are "capable of cultivation, as the children of our

own peasantry," and that, morally speaking, they are "pretty much on a part with that of Englishmen in country districts; in chastity, no doubt, much higher."[103] No nascent democratic feeling is in play here, as Armour and Trott reference "his pent-up wrath at American democracy."[104] Indeed: monarchy, Beaven thought, was no "species of tyranny but as a settled tradition in which it is the function of the monarch to govern not in his own interests but in the interests of all his subjects."[105] Nor will those disabled by their immersion in the (our) present be able to appreciate Beaven's gender politics. While it would not "be long in Canadian philosophy before John Clark Murray began to champion the cause of the liberated woman, but there is none of that for Beaven," and "he castigates the Americans for allowing liberty and license to creep into family life."[106] And to complete the contemporary trinity – race, class, gender – one can (if one thinks of the designation "Black Irish"[107]) fault Beaven for racism, as he "solemnly records that much of the problem of American democracy can be traced to Irish immigrants."[108] But Beaven was "quite capable of being persuaded to take Indians seriously as human beings," as he could "distinguish, almost always, between a good argument and his own bias. In short, he was neither blockhead nor bigot."[109] No "blockhead" surely, but the boundary between elitist and bigot can be porous.

"All of this is stage setting for his philosophical views," Armour and Trott tell us, adding: "*The Elements of Natural Theology* was not his only philosophical work though it is to it that we shall devote our attention."[110] That turns out to be premature, as Armour and Trott are not finished with "stage setting." After mentioning that Beaven considered Gnosticism[111] to be "kindred to many of the 'errors' … characteristic both of Roman Catholics and of 'those Protestants who have rejected the Apostolical succession' – characteristic, that is, of everyone except those who subscribe to the doctrines of the Church of England," and that he was "hardly prolific, but not lazy, … an accomplished classical scholar as well as a man with a firm grasp on the history of philosophy,"[112] Armour and Trott return to precisely that – stage setting. They mention, for example, that by the "late seventeenth century Quebec already had seminaries," that in 1789 King's College was founded in the Maritimes," their point being that these "institutions were under strong church control."[113] At the non-Catholic institutions, they continue, "theologians centred on the doctrines of the Scottish 'common sense' philosophies" as well as "moral intuitionism," and "there was little interest in social concerns, though the doctrines of the Manchester School (Adam Smith, David Ricardo, W.S. Gill) found their place on some curricula."[114] But, Armour and Trott caution,

> it would be wrong to dismiss "early philosophical teaching in Canada was mere theological oratory of a deadening kind," as the "powers of reason were always emphasized and encouraged," if "as a means to theological and moral truths."[115] It is via "reason" that "these truths would be revealed to all men," in play in "intuitionism," as "knowledge of such truths was right and morally good,"

meaning that "parishioners were not converted through faith, but convinced through reason."[116]

"Added to this emphasis on rational argument," Armour and Trott continue, "was the belief that all men, women, and children were entitled to an education," adding: "No one, whether rich or poor, was barred from Scottish universities if they had the proper schooling, and such schooling was made available to the poorest rural areas."[117] They remind that in "England it was only the rich and the super class that received sufficient schooling and it was assumed that universities were for the elite alone."[118] In such an ambiance of theology "mixed with intellectualism, philosophy began to make headway," even though philosophy had started as the "servant of theology, but soon established its own domain."[119] Returning – for the moment – to James Beavan, Armour and Trott tell us that it was "against such a background Beaven's work was inspired and, as we shall see, philosophy and theology were to receive an equal share of the credit in his thoughts."[120] Still in operation, the University of Toronto's Knox College[121] appears to be the first institution to have distinguished between philosophy and theology.[122] They reference the Reverend John Bayne,[123] whose admixture of philosophical argument and questions with the religious orthodoxy of the church" paralleled - might have even beckoned - Beaven to "loosen the ecclesiastical confines."[124]

Everyone wasn't in step over "loosen[ing] the ecclesiastical confines," as there was, Armour and Trott tell us, a "struggle to maintain church supremacy over political dogmas," evident in the writings of Henry Esson, Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy at Knox from 1844 to 1853.[125] In his pamphlet, entitled *A Plain and Popular Exposition of the Principles of Voluntaryism*, Esson "advocated a complete separation of church and state," as the "authority of the individual conscience was a sufficient ground."[126] Armour and Trott also cite an 1848 "feud" at Knox College between Esson and his colleague Robert Burns, a professor of theology, during Esson made "clear" his position that philosophy was "not as a means of justifying religious principles," but was in fact a "subject independent of theology and interesting in its own right."[127] Esson appears to have been in the first person in British North America to be designated a professor of philosophy, as "he upheld the autonomy of that discipline against criticism of his theological counterparts." [128] Again returning to Beaven, Armour and Trott report that "it was in this upheaval Beaven took root," as he had been appointed to teach theology at the University of Toronto's secularized King's College – long gone[129] – where Beaven "found himself (much to his concern, in a 'godless institution') Professor of Metaphysics and Ethics."[130]

Armour and Trott comment on "two other figures of interest," the first being William Turnbull Leach, whose "career at McGill coincided with Beaven's at Toronto."[131] Arriving in Canada in 1835, Leach, an ordained Presbyterian minister with an M.A. from Edinburgh, was no democrat, convinced as he was that "the majority in every community were wicked and only 'kept civil' by law," a fact that meant that "if

all had a vote, wickedness would increase."[132] His "authoritarianism" was not well received: he was "expelled from his church," prompting him to move to Montreal, where he became minister of the Anglican Communion Church, and then Professor of Classics at McGill in 1845."[133] Later named Professor of Logic and Moral Philosophy, a position he held until 1872, Leach was succeeded by John Clark Murray."[134] At age 67, Leach became Dean and Professor of English Literature, retiring in 1881.[135] Given "Leach's highly religious interests," Armour and Trott surmise that "speculative philosophy was probably greatly undernourished until Murray assumed his post."[136]

The second "person of interest" Armour and Trott identify is James George, Acting Principal of Queen's, at that time, we are told, controlled by the Church of Scotland.[137]As Acting Principal, James George opened each academic year with an address; in his 1855 speech he explored the "relationship between piety and intellectual labour," emphasizing "religion."[138] Later he criticized industrialism as "decivilizing" and degrading morally, that in his book *What is Civilization?* published in Kingston in 1859.[139] What captured his attention was less the advance of technology than its effects on those "left in its wake."[140] Of most interest to Armour and Trott was his "emphasis on reason" - not instrumental rationality but reason in service to "an enlightened conscience, not 'business know-how.'"[141] It was, according to James George, an enlightened conscience that characterizes the "truly civilized" person, and such a conscience "requires the cultivation of reason," as "only reason can grasp moral truths."[142] James George distinguished reason from the sentiments or the will, as only reason can be the "source of moral motives," as well as "assist[ing] us in both intent and action."[143] This emphasis upon reason would, Armour and Trott tell us, would "dominate philosophical positions for the next fifty years."[144] Dominance didn't obtain for James George, however, as he put religion first, and reason second, claiming that "only reasoned religion, not philosophy, produces good men," aghast at the "growing trend toward secularization " with its provision of a "non-religious basis" for morality.[145]

Given his emphasis upon religion perhaps it is unsurprising, then, that in James George there seems to be at least a trace of the earlier sense of the divine right of kings.[146] For James George, those "who govern have their powers ordained by God," but – here appears a democratic idea – "they are keepers of the common good, to which all men must subordinate their individuality,"[147] that last phrase parallel to the idea of "reason religion," as subordination marked the monarchy. For James George, the "chief political duty of subjects is obedience, not just to laws, but to men," for which "guidelines" could be "found in the British constitution under which the colonies were directly subsumed."[148] Despite that bow to the British, James George also claimed that nationalism – "national pride" in his parlance – was no more than the "arrogant estimate of a people as to their own superior worth, with a foolish and insolent contempt for others."[149] It was such "national pride" that "leads to ruin."[150] These two – James George and William Turbull Leach - plus Beaven, shared

"paternalistic conceptions of government in the new land," conceptions that would, Armour and Trott suggest, be becoming "outdated long before their works were published, for the union of the Canadas, the growth of the railways, and the cry of the unions were all mounting forces within which monarchical paternalism was rapidly floundering."[151] Floundering but not yet vanquished, eh?

James Beaven

Finally Armour and Trott make their way back to Beaven who, they tell us, "like Thomas Aquinas, sought to separate that part of theological knowledge which may be obtained on the basis of reason alone from that part which may only be obtained through divine revelation."[152] For Beaven, "reason and faith do not contradict but rather complement one another." [153] That complementarity must have informed Beaven's receptivity to Lamarck's theory of evolution[154] nine years before Darwin's *Origin of the Species* was published.[155] Moreover, Armour and Trott find "no hint" in Beaven's book that religious people might find a theory of evolution outrageous."[156] After all, finding "designs *in* the world" does not, by itself, require us to believe that the "*designed.*"[157] Beaven remained rooted in the world while looking "for threads of design running through it," threads that signal "signs of mind."[158] Apparent small "m" mind, as those threads – or "patterns" – "form the subject matter of such sciences as physics, chemistry, geology, and biology."[159] Is the very fact that such threads or patterns or "laws" occur at all suggest not science but "some other kind of inquiry,"[160] presumably theology. That these "laws" in fact "function together" and thereby "produce a phenomenon like life" points to the existence of a "high-order intelligence." [161] That threads are so interwoven could not, Beaven thought, "just happen," and so he concluded: "Life, in itself, is purposive." [162] And, Beaven also concluded, "there is one intelligence behind the universe and that it is appropriate to call it God,"[163] a deity, it turns out, "rather like a British monarch."[164] In a nod to the importance of education – or is it to physical maturation only? – Beaven suggests that "it is only well into adulthood that the human animal is able to grasp the sense of a thread to his life which is capable of judgement as a unity."[165]

What Armour and Trott treat as the "final point of the book" concerns Beaven's "distinction between rational theology and revealed religion,"[166] referenced earlier. For Beaven reason comes "first," as it makes thinking possible, thereby providing the very "ground upon which one can look at one's religious claims."[167] Moreover, reason is what unites us, not that everyone "will necessarily be persuaded by the same arguments, but in the sense that all men can take part in the give and take of the reasoning process," establishing the very "basis of a rational community."[168] And so Beaven casts reason as "independent, requiring us to acknowledge that "science stands on its own grounds." [169] It is the philosopher who shows us how "reason" can "umpire" disputes.[170]

I am struck by Armour and Trott's emphasis upon reason as the medium of negotiating difference in pre-Confederation Canada. I suspect they overemphasize reason's role in realpolitik, even adjudicating disputes among the various sects of settlers. Certainly vis-à-vis the Indigenous peoples – perhaps with the notable exception of Samuel de Champlain[171] – reason's role seems faint, and, specifically, its role as reasoned adjudication among competing, conflicting claims and interests. (The rule of law may be one relative exception.) As an aspiration their theorization is admirable, even one I adopt in this project, aware as I am of its embeddedness in – accompanied by its claims of transcendence of – culture, politics, historical moment. For it is faith in reason that inspires me to participate in the reasoned adjudication the conflicts that follow from the Indigenous challenge to curriculum studies in Canada.

REFERENCES

Armour, Leslie and Trott, Elizabeth. 1981. *The Faces of Reason: An Essay on Philosophy and Culture in English Canada 1850-1950*. Wilfred Laurier University Press.

Fischer, David Hackett. 2009. *Champlain's Dream*. Simon & Schuster.

Pinar, William F. 2019. *Moving Images of Eternity: George Grant's Critique of Time, Teaching, and Technology*. University of Ottawa Press.

ENDNOTES

[1] Armour and Trott 1981, xxi.

[2] 1981, xvii.

[3] 1981, xxii.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] 1981, xxiii. Many native peoples aren't ambivalent at all.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] 1981, xxiv.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid. Characterizing "reason" as a "determinant" or a "symptom" keeps open all possibilities, doesn't it? Maybe (after Aoki) both/and?

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/arts-letters/articles/treason-intellectuals-julien-benda

[15] 1981, xxiv. For a more extensive commentary and analysis of Benda's book, read the Mark Lilla essay reference in the preceding endnote.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid. It is also a point made emphatically by their contemporary George Grant (see, for example, Pinar 2019, 97).

[18] Ibid. I substituted "one" and "one's" for "he" and "his," although in passages I'll quote soon I leave the generic non-gendered masculine pronoun in place.

[19] 1981, xxv. Armour and Trott report they deleted a final chapter devoted to post-1950s developments in Canadian philosophy, saying only that they believe "the idealist movement continues" (Ibid).

[20] They then hedge their bets: "Philosophy, in its most general sense, is an attempt to use reason to establish what, without it, is most often established by emotion and intuition: a basic world view, a preference of one set of values over another, and a set of criteria by which knowledge may be distinguished from unfounded beliefs" (1981, 1-2). Agency – and with it, independent intellectual judgement - enters the picture.

[21] 1981, 1.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] 1981, 2.

[25] Armour and Trott include in this category Scots and Irish inhabitants.

[26] 1981, 3.

[27] Ibid.

[28] 1981, 4.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] 1981, 5 n. 3.

[33] 1981, 7.

[34] 1981, 9.

[35] 1981, 9. George Grant characterized himself as a Christian Platonist, devoted to both "reason and revelation" (Pinar 2019, 9), conjoining (at least by the conjunction "and") those separate tracks I mention in the main text. Armour and Trott appear to locate that concern even earlier: "The pre-Socratics seem to have turned, first, to the larger cosmic order – seeking principles of unity with which to make sense of the plurality and confusion that confronted them" (1981, 9-10).

[36] 1981, 11. Curriculum studies, too, take on a "national colouring," as this project underscores (and my previous studies of curriculum studies in Brazil, China, India, Mexico, South Africa, and the United States affirm).

[37] 1981, 12.

[38] 1981, 13.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Armour and Trott (1981, 13-14, n. 4) suggest that "Royce's Absolute may well be a cosmic version of the uniform and orderly society imagined by the Boston Brahmins amongst whom Royce spent much of his adult life. A rather more open-ended version of Hegelian doctrine is found in the writings of men like Peter Kaufman and J.B. Stallo and offers a more authentic American vision."

[41] Ibid.

[42] 1981, 14. For more: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/dewey/ Dewey preferred to "pragmatism" the concept of cultural naturalism, emphasizing a strong continuity between nature and culture, assuming that human intelligent behaviour arises from already existing organic and environmental resources in an entirely contingent manner.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] 1981, 15.

[46] Ibid.

[47] 1981, 17.

[48] 1981, 17-18.

[49] 1981, 18.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/donald-creighton

[53] https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/harold-innis

[54] 1981, 18.

[55] 1981, 18-19 n. 6.

[56] 1981, 20.

[57] 1981, 21.

[58] 1981, 21-22. There is reference to the United Church of Canada (1981, 22).

[59] 1981, 22.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

[62] 1981, 23.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid. I suppose as an example, Armour and Trott (1981, 23, n. 7) then say this: "The influence of the Scots on our language, accents, ideas, ambitions, drinking habits, religion, and dress is very great and this book will attempt to explain some features of that. It is worth noticing that the Scots, though dominant in Canadian business, education, and general culture, have usually managed to maintain their native posture as underdogs to the arrogant, effete, and slippery English and thus to retain the affection of the real underdogs. Even in Quebec, a Scotsman is not (quite) *Anglais*." Hmmm.

[65] Ibid.

[66] 1981, 24.

[67] Ibid.

[68] https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/01/world/canada/john-macdonald-statue-quebec-montreal.html

[69] 1981, 24.

[70] https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/justin-trudeau-privacy-separation-sophie-1.6942552

[71] 1981, 24.

[72] https://www.britannica.com/biography/Joseph-Smith-American-religious-leader-1805-1844

[73] 1981, 25.

[74] https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-political-polarization-maga-trudeau-poilievre-russia-1.6702856 Of course the cause is – you guessed it – the United States.

[75] 1981, 25. For more on Grant, see Pinar 2019, 60.

[76] Ibid.

[77] 1981, 26.

[78] I regard this contrast as simplistic and overstated, as reason in America has also been employed as it has in Canada. True there may be a greater emphasis on individualism south of the border, but not to the exclusion of reason as arbiter of difference.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid.

[81] 1981, 30. They associate this view with the Canadian philosopher George Blewett, whose work they'll examine later.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid. Already known for his 1959 *Philosophy in the Mass Age*, George Grant was catapulted to centre stage of Canadian nationalism upon publication of his 1965 *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism* (see Pinar 2019, 12, n. 1).

[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid.

[86] 1981, 31. I lived in Canada for only three years but have accomplished "significant" amounts of work while employed by the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. While I could claim to have contributed to curriculum studies in Canada, I did not become Canadian curriculum theorist. While my aspirations have long been cosmopolitan, I remain rooted in America.

[87] 1981, 32.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid. Armour and Trott (1981, 33) note that Ryerson proved to be a "dominant force in education in English Canada for a long time." They did not foresee his future shaming: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ryerson-university-name-change-1.6154716 For more on Strachan see: https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/john-strachan

[91] 1981, 33.

[92] Ibid.

[93] 1981, 34.

[94] 1981, 35.

[95] Ibid.

[96] 1981, 35-36.

[97] 1981, 36.

[98] Quoted in 1981, 36.

[99] 1981, 36.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid.

[104] 1981, 37.

105 Ibid.

106 Ibid. Armour and Trott treat John Clark Murry later in the book.

107 https://www.ireland-information.com/articles/blackirish.htm

108 1981, 38.

109 Ibid.

110 Ibid.

111 https://www.britannica.com/topic/gnosticism

112 1981, 39.

113 1981, 40.

114 Ibid. I found no entry on the Web as for "moral intuitionism" but "ethical intuitionism" did show up: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/intuitionism-ethics/ For the "Manchester School" I found this, apparently from Wikipedia: The Manchester School took the theories of economic liberalism advocated by classical economists such as Adam Smith and made them the basis for government policy. It also promoted pacifism, anti-slavery, freedom of the press and separation of church and state.

115 1981, 41.

116 Ibid.

117 Ibid.

118 Ibid.

119 Ibid.

120 1981, 42.

121 https://knox.utoronto.ca/

122 1981, 42.

123 http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/bayne_john_8E.html

124 1981, 43.

125 Ibid.

126 Ibid.

127 1981, 44.

128 Ibid.

129 https://exhibits.library.utoronto.ca/exhibits/show/uoft-snapshots/kings-college There is a reference here to Catherine Beaven, James' daughter.

130 https://exhibits.library.utoronto.ca/exhibits/show/uoft-snapshots/kings-college

131 1981, 44.

132 1981, 44-45.

133 1981, 45.

134 Ibid.

135 Ibid.

136 Ibid.

137 Ibid.

138 Ibid.

139 Ibid.

140 Ibid.

141 1981, 46.

142 Ibid.

143 Ibid.

144 Ibid.

[145] Ibid.

[146] https://www.britannica.com/topic/divine-right-of-kings

[147] 1981, 46.

[148] Ibid.

[149] Quoted in 1981, 46.

[150] 1981, 46.

[151] 1981, 47.

[152] 1981, 48.

[153] 1981, 49.

[154] https://www.britannica.com/science/Lamarckism

[155] 1981, 51.

[156] Ibid. Armour and Trott tell us that there were opponents of evolution in Canada but they were few and many of them were on the lunatic fringe" (ibid.)

[157] 1981, 53.

[158] Ibid.

[159] Ibid.

[160] 1981, 54.

[161] 1981, 55.

[162] Ibid.

[163] Ibid.

[164] 1981, 56.

[165] 1981, 57.

[166] 1981, 59.

[167] 1981, 59-60.

[168] 1981, 60.

[169] Ibid.

[170] Ibid.

[171] Fischer (2009) provides plenty of examples of Champlain's commitment to reason and morality in his conduct toward the Indigenous peoples he encountered.