

CANADIAN FACES OF REASON

PART VIII

“A century ago,” T.A. Goudge begins, “philosophers in English-speaking Canada all subscribed to the doctrines of Christianity,” in fact the “majority, in fact, were clergymen or priests” who regarded philosophy as primarily a device for protecting Christian dogmas from hostile attack and even providing them with rational support.¹ Protection from what and whom? Goudge answers: “The great enemies were J. S. Mill's empiricism, Herbert Spencer's evolutionary Naturalism, the positivism of Auguste Comte and the scientific theories of Darwin, Huxley, and Tyndall,” and “somewhat later, American pragmatism.”² Protection and “support” were indeed provided, Goudge continues, and from three “different groups of ideas: the Scottish philosophy of commonsense as modified by Hamilton, neo-Hegelian idealism as formulated by Caird and Green, and, in Roman Catholic circles, the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas.”³ Then Goudge invokes the names of those Armour and Trott surveyed, among them “James Beaven, George Paxton Young, James George, John Watson, James Clark Murray, Jacob Gould Schurman, and others,” whose activities had “established philosophy in the curricula of the young universities, and at the same time had a liberalizing effect on the interpretation of Christian dogmas.”⁴ Due to “their approach to the subject, however, early Canadian philosophers failed to develop any new conceptions of their own,”⁵ a judgment Armour and Trott would, I should think, dispute.

The “approach” that cast Goudge’s predecessors as unoriginal would appear to be fidelity to the intellectual history of the discipline of philosophy itself, namely working with – attempting to extend and revise – ideas inherited from others. As Goudge puts it: “they were content to use ideas which came from Europe for the defence of the faith,” a summarizing statement that review of the Armour and Trott text (admitted published thirteen years later) would likely disallow. (Even when ideas were imported from Europe, life in Canada altered them. And the analytic philosophy Goudge later endorses itself can be said to have been imported from Europe.) Goudge spreads the blame, moving from intellectual history to Christianity - and in doing so ignores the historic often symbiotic relationship between theology and philosophy - when he writes: “Indeed, the integrity and autonomy of the whole philosophical enterprise were imperiled by making it subservient to the defence of religion,” adding: “Instead of being dedicated to finding out the truth by following the argument in whatever direction it might lead, the early philosophers were committed in advance to their conclusions.”⁶

That last charge may be largely accurate, but it ignores that Goudge himself has – in that sentence – demonstrated that he, too, is “committed in advance to [his]

conclusion,” substituting for faith “argument,” what for theologians like George Grant – a contemporary of Goudge’s – would claim constitutes, in effect, an idolatry of reason, and a particular form of reason at that.⁷ Goudge would seem to conflate two different positions when he extracts a phrase from H. L. Stewart, to say his predecessors “would often pause in doing philosophy ‘to take theological bearings’.”⁸ Taking “theological bearings” is not the same as substituting faith for argument but is, instead, attuning oneself to what is extra-rational in human experience,⁹ what theologians like Grant called the supernatural, what more secular phenomenologists might term the preconceptual realm of lived experience.¹⁰

Goudge then belittles his predecessors by accusing them of succumbing to “the old “battlefield” conception of the subject, one “in which warring systems are supposed to struggle for supremacy with each other,” something of course Goudge would never condescend to do: “Having chosen the ‘ism’ that they deemed most favourable to Christianity, Canadian philosophers then proceeded to attack opposing ‘isms’ in order to demolish them.”¹¹ Moreover, “every philosopher, it was assumed, had to belong to a ‘school,’ and could be labelled as some sort of ‘ist’.” The worst offender, Goudge continues, was R. C. Lodge,¹² who argued “that a philosopher *must* be a realist *or* an idealist *or* a pragmatist - there being no other possible pigeon-hole in which to hide.”¹³ In yet another instance of the “pot calling the kettle black,” Goudge tells us that “nineteenth-century practitioners in this country, combined with the fact that most of them were clergymen, made it easy for them to adopt in their philosophizing what Ryle has called ‘the pulpit tone of voice,’” typified by “rhetorical phrases, purple passages, and edifying ‘uplift,’ frequently took the place of rational analysis and argument,” the “effect” of which was to “illustrate the principle that a conflating of preaching with philosophy seldom produces great sermons or original ideas.”¹⁴ Amen.

Goudge confers upon John Watson¹⁵ the status of “dominant figure” among “early Canadian philosophers,” citing his October 16, 1872 inaugural lecture at Queen's University entitled “The Relation of Philosophy to Science,” the opening sections of which contained a polemical attack on Huxley, Spencer, and Mill, that followed by a defence of the claims of religion, appealing to the doctrines of Kant and of Absolute Idealism.”¹⁶ Goudge then skips to Watson’s “concluding section” as an “illustration” of his “points”:

The three departments of Philosophy ... Logic and Metaphysics and Ethics were incomplete if they did not, as their final result, lead us up to the Infinite and to God. Philosophy elevates itself above all mere opinions, above all untested assumptions, above all caprice and impulse - in short, above all that is peculiar to this or that individual – and lives and moves in the realm of necessary truth. It shows that man is able to free himself from all unwarranted beliefs and to unveil the secret of the universe, by discovering the essential rationality that, however it may be concealed from those who seek it, shines through all the outward manifestations of Nature and of Spirit.¹⁷

In his commentary, Goudge assures us that “no Canadian philosopher now, at least in his professional work, would employ that style of writing, let alone make the sort of claims that Watson does.” Obvious to any reader is the elevation of the present over the past, Goudge over Watson, although the former attempts to disguise his condescension by adding that he’s not suggesting “that Watson was an inferior mind whose efforts are to be treated with pitying contempt,” as “in his day he was a philosopher of considerable consequence,” as “his rather loose arguments that he uses would have been accepted without question by the majority of his fellow idealists,” arguments that “do not pass muster now,” that fact showing “that standards of philosophizing in Canada (and elsewhere in the English-speaking world) are more exacting than they were a century ago.”¹⁸ Indeed: “We are expected to be tighter in our thinking about problems than were the men of John Watson's time¹⁹ Perhaps it’s true that Goudge and his contemporaries were “tighter in our thinking problems than were the men of John Watson's time,” but that’s not at all evident in that passage.

Then Goudge tries to play coy again, telling us that “there is another way in which our thinking has altered since then,” namely that “very few, if any, philosophers in Canada nowadays would feel comfortable about claiming to know absolute truths about ultimate reality, exclusively on the basis of individual thought.”²⁰ Perhaps Goudge is innocent of any charge of claiming - all by himself - that the state of the field is more advanced now than then; perhaps he and colleagues huddled together to assure themselves of their own superiority. However derived, Goudge continues with feigned incredulity: “It is hard to believe that anyone, just by sitting in his armchair or at his desk, and *thinking hard*, can ‘unveil the secret of the universe,’ and embody his results in a system,” as “such ‘one man shows,’ although they still occasionally appear, are hardly taken seriously,”²¹ except, of course, when they coincide with one’s own assumptions, for instance Goudge’s assumption that “the examination of special problems” is superior to “system-building”²² - however unimaginable it is that the former could occur without the existence of the latter (however tacit). Sheer “speculation,” he continues, has been replaced by “piecemeal analysis and description, high abstractness by particularity and concreteness of formulation,” developments, Goudge assures us, mean that “English-Canadian philosophy has thus grown more modest but at the same time more responsible in the claims it puts forward.”²³

Not sure how “more responsible” philosophy can be claimed to be when the “causes of this change of approach are complex, and lie for the most part in developments which impinged on English-Canadian philosophy *ab extra*,” forces such as the “steady progress and spectacular success of the sciences in understanding nature; the rise of modern logic; the anti-metaphysical arguments of logical empiricism; and the heightened awareness among philosophers of the way linguistic usages generate pseudo-problems.”²⁴ Responsibility requires agency, but from this list it would seem philosophy had none. So is philosophy – any field – epiphenomenal? Goudge backs off this cliff, telling us that there was a “native influence” that was “apart from these

factors,”²⁵ although he oddly does not specify how “apart” this influence was or even could be, hardly a “pseudo-problem” generated by linguistic usage, but embedded in the very question of autonomy.²⁶

Turns out “native influence” refers to an actual (if non-Indigenous) person, namely G. S. Brett,²⁷ who taught at the University of Toronto between 1908 and 1944 and with whom Goudge took his Ph.D. in 1937.²⁸ Acknowledging his relationship to Brett Goudge does not do – self-positioning²⁹ was not then considered an obligation – but instead presents as a disinterested judgment that “Brett provides a salutary example of a philosopher on whom it is hard to pin a traditional label,” something that – the cattiness continues – “must have been frustrating for R. C. Lodge to find that his Toronto colleague simply would not fit into one of the three pigeonholes and be docketed as either an idealist *or* a realist *or* a pragmatist.”³⁰ Without acknowledging where or how he heard, Goudge reports that “there was surely a strong temptation (and according to rumour Lodge did not always resist it) to conclude that since he was neither an idealist nor a realist nor a pragmatist,” Brett was actually not a philosopher at all, but “only” a historian of philosophy, a “conclusion,” Goudge adds, illustrating Morris Cohen's aphorism that “every label is a libel.”³¹ Goudge defends Brett by – oddly, given their relationship - speculating: “the bet is that Brett saw the philosopher's job as an investigation of particular problems in their historical contexts, rather than as the construction of an all-inclusive system.”³² Goudge belittles any effort at characterization, associating it with immaturity: “Instead of enlisting under one of the traditional ‘school-banners’ and doing battle against opposing schools, he kept himself free to make use in his philosophizing of contributions from various quarters - from Aristotle, Leibniz, Lotze, James, Bosanquet, Bergson, and others. In this respect, Brett helped to move English-Canadian philosophy towards maturity.”³³ *Sans* argument or explanation of the complexities of contextualization, Goudge moves from defence to offence, announcing “but this was not the only respect in which he did so.”³⁴

Without explaining why this didn’t constitute “system-building” – recall this was (Goudge alleges) the major failing of past philosophers, philosophers Goudge has just told us informed his mentor’s teaching and scholarship – we learn that “from the start of his career, Brett espoused the classical view that philosophy should aim at scope and comprehensiveness in its investigations,” a “point is dearly stated in the Preface of his first book, *The Philosophy of Gassendi*,”³⁵ from which Goudge then quotes:

This comprehensiveness makes for greatness; through it a man may be the spectator of all times and places. But he must not hope to gain this comprehensive outlook by occupying one solitary peak: he must nor flatter himself that there is an essence of all essences, that he can condense all life and thought into one magic formula. On the contrary, he must keep the original wealth of material undiminished, if he would have a world in which "life's garden blows." If he abstracts and simplifies the product is an "essence," a drop of scent in place of the living flower.³⁶

On – and apparently against - abstraction (a subject on which I wrote long ago³⁷ - Goudge does not comment, instead legitimating his mentor's preference for particularity (one I share) by associating it with present-day philosophers in Canada, "many" of whom, "particularly those influenced by existentialism, will share the sentiment expressed in that passage," adding: "For they, too, reject abstract essences and accept undiminished 'the original wealth of material' in the world."³⁸ No existentialist, Goudge reassures us: "Brett, however, was not disposed to sympathize with activist or irrationalist tendencies in philosophy."³⁹ And once again invoking that for which he criticizes past philosophers – John Watson in particular – Goudge tells us that "like the idealists, he [Brett] sought intellectual comprehensiveness. But he sought it not in an all-embracing system," instead turning "to the history of philosophy and science."⁴⁰

Brett's "*magnum opus*," Goudge continues - the three-volume *History of Psychology* (1912-1921) – is mistitled, or so it "has always seemed to me ..., for what is treated is really the history of philosophical psychology, i.e. the history of the concepts, assumptions, and explanation-schemes devised by Western man in the attempt to understand himself and his behaviour."⁴¹ He quotes from the Preface to volume II, a passage that reveals what he considers the "underlying ... theoretical orientation"⁴²:

A history of science is a unique species of history. For the content of the science the student may go to the latest textbook where he may learn the established truths without any reference to their genesis or to the men who established them. For those who require no more, a history is superfluous: it can add nothing to that knowledge.... But there is another and a different object for which it has a specific function. If the student is not to be left with the idea that knowledge is a fixed quantity of indisputable facts, if on the contrary he is to acquire a real understanding of the process by which knowledge is continually made and remade, he must learn to look at the movement of ideas, without prejudice, as a separate fact with its own significance and its own meaning for humanity. To despise forgotten theories because they no longer hold good, and refuse on that account to look backward, is in the end to forget that man's highest ambition is to make progress possible, to make the truth of today into the error of yesterday-in short, to make history.⁴³

Goudge considers Brett's "theoretical orientation exemplified here" as "quite different from that found among the idealists."⁴⁴ How?

Goudge answers by saying that Idealists "envisaged philosophy as separate from and superior to the sciences," but that "Brett refused to make any such distinction."⁴⁵ While Idealists thought philosophy provided "knowledge about an ultimate reality inaccessible to the sciences, Brett considered scientific and philosophical knowledge to be interacting parts of a single enterprise-man's progressive exploration of his world and of himself."⁴⁶ While Idealists "purported to find one, unchanging set of categories, Brett recognized alternative and historically changing sets appropriate to various

disciplines.”⁴⁷ Note that Goudge provides no detailed explanation why or how Brett broke with the Idealists, no (from Brett’s quoted passage above) “real understanding of the process by which knowledge is continually made and remade,” simply a series of statements, of contrasts, that denote “progress” presumably. I’m beginning to think Goudge was not Brett’s best student.

Then Goudge quotes from a section of Brett’s *History* entitled "Psychology without Metaphysics?" where Goudge’s inadvertent and unselfconscious contradiction of his mentor’s work continues. Brett believed that psychologists were also philosophers, even those who rejected philosophy’s contemplation of metaphysics. In fact, Brett believed that “a rejection of metaphysics is the most metaphysical of all positions,” as the “term ‘metaphysics’ merely denotes ontology; it implies, therefore, ontologism. or the manipulation of data under the category of substance,” for psychologists, “the explanation of psychic phenomena by assuming an underlying substance or ‘soul’.”⁴⁸ Referencing Kant’s critique of such “rational psychology,” and calling it a “problem” of “method,” Brett asks: “Is psychology a branch of physiology or a department of metaphysics?... Is metaphysics necessarily the antithesis of science? The answer depends on the most fundamental of all sciences - the science of categories.”⁴⁹ What happened to history here?

This “new point of view, as opposed to a discovery of detail,” what “is essentially a reform of the categories,” Goudge admits is not “wholly clear,” but never mind: “Brett had a subtle mind. But its subtlety sometimes acted like the protective colouration of certain animals, and blended his own views so completely with the environment that their details remain in doubt.”⁵⁰ That’s “subtle” alright. But wait – there are, Goudge assures us, “two basic points there is no doubt where he stood,” the first one “that philosophy cannot be solidly based if, like Narcissus, it contemplates only its own image,”⁵¹ not that I thought it ever did. Odd for a man who embraced the history of philosophy to insist that the field “must reflect widely and deeply on knowledge which comes from outside itself, especially from the sciences,” but not only: “It must also take seriously the insights presented by literature - poetry, drama. and fiction,” the latter belief Brett shared with H. L. Stewart,⁵² a name known to his audience, as Goudge’s article was first a lecture presented at Dalhousie. For “many years” Stewart taught a course at Dalhousie titled “Philosophical Ideas in Literature,” during which he “brilliantly analyzed the writings of Hardy, Meredith, Carlyle, Mrs. Humphry Ward, H. G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw, and others,” providing “an educational experience that had few equals in the country,” adding (rather gratuitously) that “Brett never did anything so effective.”⁵³

At this point Goudge moves onto the “other point” on which Brett “was clear,” namely “his conviction that a philosopher was uneducated and incompetent unless he had an exact knowledge of the history of his subject,” knowledge not derived “from the ‘potted learning’ found in histories of philosophy,” but “obtained only from close study of texts,”⁵⁴ a curiously ahistorical conviction I must say. Like Mortimer Adler,

“Brett believed that such study could provide valuable training, for if students tried to ‘think the thoughts of great minds after them,’ some particles of greatness might ‘rub off’ in the process,”⁵⁵ as if thought were somehow analogous to dandruff. No one can advise against reading the original, but “to learn what a philosopher had thought or said”⁵⁶ sometimes requires the assistance of a teacher, a so-called secondary source. And if one wants to learn the historical context in which a philosopher is philosophizing, secondary sources are indispensable.

Not only does reading the original rub off on the reader, there is, apparently, a second somewhat salutary effect, as Goudge believes that “this emphasis on the study of texts had a maturing influence on English-Canadian philosophy,” although, he admits, “in another sense it was inhibiting.”⁵⁷ I can’t help but wonder if Goudge is writing autobiographically when he confides: “For it was all too easy to make the study of texts a substitute for thinking independently,” and that his teacher – Brett himself – was “not sufficiently alert to this danger,” as “he often limited himself, and permitted his students to limit themselves, to mere *explication des textes*.”⁵⁸ It’s as if Goudge is remembering sitting in Brett’s class, where “whether what a philosopher said was true or false, whether his arguments were valid or invalid, whether his conceptual framework was consistent or inconsistent, were questions insufficiently discussed.”⁵⁹ Could Goudge be ruing what might have been when he asserts: “But it is precisely by coping with such questions that students develop their own philosophical skills and make the study of dead thinkers a living intellectual enterprise.”⁶⁰ He concludes that “the evolution of English-Canadian philosophy, while it owed a very great deal to Brett, had to go beyond him in important respects.”⁶¹

Goudge appreciates that this talk of “evolution” is itself questionable – never mind the questionable Darwinian association and Darwin’s reactionary revision into Social Darwinism – when he moves onto “one group of philosophers, those who consider themselves to be the exponents of *philosophia perennis*,” a group [that] became prominent in the late 1920s, when the powerful figure of Étienne Gilson arrived from France to serve as Director of Studies at the newly-formed Institute – later the Pontifical Institute – of Mediaeval Studies in Toronto.”⁶² A “great impetus in Canada to the study of scholastic thought,” Gilson “also tirelessly advocated the view that the first principles of all philosophy were formulated by Thomas Aquinas.”⁶³ He called upon philosophes “to learn those principles, and to teach, interpret, and apply them in relation to the contemporary world,” underscoring that a “proper understanding of Thomistic philosophy requires that it be kept closely tied to Thomistic theology.”⁶⁴ Goudge then quotes Gilson’s *The Spirit of Thomism*:

True enough, Thomas introduced a clear-cut distinction between reason and faith, philosophy and theology. But far from inferring from this distinction that they should be kept apart, Thomas always thought that the best thing for them to do was to live in a sort of symbiosis in which each profited from its association with the other. I know that many philosophers refuse to have

anything to do with religion ... but I also know that from the point of view of Thomism they are certainly wrong.⁶⁵

Goudge considers that last sentence as illustrating Gilson's tendency to take "the short way" with opponents – a way Goudge himself seems to be taking with Gilson (and earlier with R.C. Lodge) – following this accusation with, well, hearsay, telling us that Gilson “is reported to have said on one occasion that since philosophy must begin with ‘an intuition of being,’ any thinker who denied that he had such an intuition was simply not a philosopher - a saying that seems a little hard on Hume, Kant, Bergson, Russell, and others.”⁶⁶

Next Goudge relegates Gilson to sideline, telling us that “Gilson's voluminous writings do not form part of Canadian Philosophy in the strict sense, but they have profoundly influenced students and colleagues at the Pontifical Institute,” then citing Fr. Joseph Owen's *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics* which, Goudge reports, “owes much to Gilson's Gifford Lectures, in which the attempt is made to establish the existence of a Christian philosophy.”⁶⁷ (Recall that Goudge has already criticized Watson and his contemporaries as Christian, so I'm unsure why a “Christian philosophy” would not be judged as already in “existence.”) Gilson’s “central point,” Goudge tells us, “is that revelation provides the Christian philosopher with ‘a principle of discernment and selection which allows him to restore rational truth to itself by purging away the errors that encumber it,’” errors apparently attributable to the “Speculative Idealists.”⁶⁸ For Gilson, Goudge concludes, “it was Thomas who discerned and formulated the eternal first principles of wisdom, and thereby brought philosophy and Christian faith into harmony.”⁶⁹

While “this position still has many advocates in Canada,” Goudge reports that “it no longer commands the assent of all Roman-Catholic philosophers,” as “a number of younger scholars within that tradition have turned away from Thomism, and are tackling philosophical questions not in the light of eternal first principles, but with the devices of modern logic and of conceptual and linguistic analysis.”⁷⁰ While not necessarily “reaching results incompatible with Thomism,” Goudge does judge “their arguments ... more tightly and effectively formulated, their use of words more self-consciously controlled, and their conception of philosophy closer to the twentieth-century secular view of it as a reflective enterprise which does not have to be based on a set of first principles. Moreover, these scholars are disinclined to accept the idea that philosophy should live in a symbiotic relation with theology, recognizing no doubt that one form of symbiosis is parasitism.”⁷¹ Sounds “incompatible with Thomism” to me.

Goudge then tries to pin “this development” on Gilson himself, quoting from the final chapter of *The Spirit of Thomism*, wherein Gilson (apparently unaware of industrialization’s impact upon the natural environment) allows that “although in itself nature has probably changed but little since the thirteenth century, our knowledge of it is very different from what was in the mind of Thomas Aquinas,” even allowing that “our mental universe, as William James would call it, has long ceased to be the same,”

as “modern physics has deeply transformed traditional notions of matter, mass, energy, and the like.”⁷² Gilson even allows that “there never was a time when the reflections of scientists themselves on the nature of causality provided as much food for philosophical thought as the controversies among leaders of scientific inquiry in our own day,”⁷³ quoted passages that do not substantiate Goudge’s assertion that Gilson himself affirmed “devices of modern logic and of conceptual and linguistic analysis.” He quotes Gilson again, namely that “in all these fields, modern Thomists are confronted with problems unknown to their master, and for which no answers can be found readymade in his writings.”⁷⁴

In addition to Brett and Gilson, Goudge cites “two recent books” that “illustrate how English-Canadian philosophy has contributed to the understanding of other disciplines,” the first being William Dray’s 1957 *Laws and Explanation in History* that tackles “the old controversy about whether history (i.e., historiography) is a science or an art,” a controversy that – for a reason left unspecified – Goudge considers as belonging to the philosophy of history not to history proper,” as the former is self-evidently an important specialty within the former. Of course, it can be of interest to academically-trained philosophers, of which Dray was obviously one, as Goudge tells us he applied “logical pressure is the topic of explanation.”⁷⁵ Dray argued that “historians [not] only narrate or tell stories about the occurrences of the past,” they “also offer explanations of them,”⁷⁶ a distinction that seems to miss the fact that stories are often in the service of explanation. I’ll refer you to the original for details which I find technical in a logical sense, evident in this passage from Dray’s book that Goudge quotes:

This is a very common procedure where conclusions assume narrative form, as they do so often in history. Certain expectations are aroused by a train of events: an institution working well gives every promise of weathering a crisis but suddenly breaks down: a policy that appears to be the rational course for an individual to follow is suddenly abandoned. In the face of such an unexpected train of events, the historian’s question rather than “Why did this happen?” (meaning “What *made* it happen”) may well be “How could this have happened?” And such a question can be completely answered by rebutting the presumption that it could not have happened: by showing that, contrary to first appearances, there was no reason why it should not have happened.⁷⁷

Goudge quotes another such passage I won’t copy here, moving on to what Goudge considers “the upshot of the analysis,” namely that “history is an explanatory discipline, not just a descriptive or literary art; but that historical explanations, while different from scientific ones, are formally complete in their own right and do supply answers to questions that historians ask.”⁷⁸ I’m relieved to learn that’s settled.

The second book Goudge cites as making “a contribution to the analysis of another discipline is Charles Taylor’s 1964 *The Explanation of Behaviour*. In this his first book, Taylor – who will become a renowned philosopher whose works have been

studied worldwide⁷⁹ – “selects for investigation a limited but central problem in the science of psychology and explores it in depth,” namely the problem of providing an adequate explanation of animal behaviour, including the behaviour of humans,” adding: “Like Dray, he seeks to uncover the limitations of a theoretical model which has had wide currency in the discipline.”⁸⁰ Goudge credits Taylor with showing “that classical stimulus-response theory is highly ambiguous,” that the “notion of stimulus ... easily slides over into that of a *situation perceived* by an animal, and the notion of response easily slides over into that of an *action performed* by the animal,” an ambiguity that, Taylor concludes, “has set psychology on an altogether wrong track.”⁸¹ If “psychology” is to “get ... back on course, it is not enough to repudiate the behaviouristic model of explanation,” it must, “Taylor contends,” adopt “the model of purposive or teleological explanation used by Aristotelianism. which he thinks can be formulated in such a way as to be scientifically acceptable.”⁸² Goudge quotes Taylor:

To say that a system can only be explained in terms of purpose ... does not involve making an unverifiable claim, any more than it involves postulating an unobservable entity. The element of purposiveness in a given system, the inherent tendency towards a certain end ... cannot be identified as a special entity which directs the behaviour from within, but consists rather in the fact that in beings with a purpose an event's being required for a given end is a sufficient condition of its occurrence.⁸³

What very different work from what would follow! Goudge finds Taylor's distinctions among teleology, purpose, and intentionality “interesting” but says it's “too soon to say whether Taylor 's book will substantially advance discussion of the subject.”⁸⁴

The dominance of analytic philosophy⁸⁵ at this time is obvious not only in passage from Taylor Goudge cites but also in Goudge's claim that “these two works illustrate both in form and content the distance that English-Canadian philosophy has travelled since the days of Beaven, Young, Watson, and Murray ... how the subject has evolved during the century.”⁸⁶ He summarizes “what has happened in this way”:

A hundred years ago, Canadian philosophers assumed that the truth on ultimate matters had been disclosed by the Christian religion. Their job was to support by intuition and argument what they already accepted as true, and to expose the errors in all non-Christian views of the world. Each man attempted to do this job in his own way according to his lights. For the majority of philosophers at present, the task is to *find out the truth* by patient, piecemeal inquiry into manageable issues, recognizing their complexity and difficulty, and seeking through the application of reason to dispel the mists of confusion, misconception and over-simplification which continually threaten to becloud human thinking.⁸⁷

That seems a fair summary, except that Goudge fails to grasp that “piecemeal inquiry into manageable issues” is itself another form of supporting by argument what is already accepted as truth, namely that “there is no royal road to truth,” that “what we

know is infinitesimal, compared to what we do not know,” a truth that “means that the philosophical enterprise must be carried on by the combined efforts of many minds.”⁸⁸

Curiously, given his focus on English-Canadian philosophy, Goudge enlists the American pragmatist Charles Pierce to support his assertion, quoting him as saying: “We individually cannot reasonably hope to attain the ultimate philosophy which we pursue; we can only seek it, therefore, for the *community* of philosophers,”⁸⁹ community a concept crucial to curriculum studies (as the index of these research briefs confirms). In the next sentence – which Goudge also quotes – the constitution of community as persons is nowhere in sight, as Pierce substitutes for community the metaphor of “chain,” concluding that “philosophical reasoning should not be like a chain which is no stronger than its weakest link, but should be like a cable whose fibres may be ever so slender, provided that they are sufficiently numerous and intimately connected.”⁹⁰ Goudge seems not to notice the mechanistic metaphor, concluding (immodestly modest) that “most Canadian philosophers today are content if they can add a few lasting fibres to the cable which represents the on-going evolution of their subject, and which they hope will increase in strength during the century ahead.”⁹¹ One wonders who would judge? It must be someone outside the chain – God perhaps? Watson would suspect so.

As you no doubt noticed, I found this article irritating. The dismissal of the past, the presumption that the field has “advanced” by elevating logical analysis over other forms of knowing (specifically spiritual forms), unaware that this “master narrative” or “grand narrative” of “progress” would come under attack not soon after.⁹² Of course, that post-structuralist⁹³ critique has devolved into a pervasive social-political cynicism that threatens Western forms of constitutional democracy.⁹⁴ Despite the smug temporal parochialism of the article, it is of interest to the CSinC Project due to his effort to summarize the intellectual history of a discipline, and its focus on four texts to do so. While I would not presume to identify only four texts as illustrative of the intellectual history (a term I prefer to Goudge’s “evolution” to avoid not Darwin but those who misunderstood the concept as vindicating the victorious: Social Darwinism) of curriculum studies, I am obligated to acknowledge many. But, like Goudge, I will confine my inquiry to “manageable issues,” the first being “present preoccupations” and the second The Indigenous Challenge, a glimpse of which is evident in the foreword to Ehaab D. Abdou and Theodore G. Zervas’s *Ancient and Indigenous Wisdom Traditions in the Americas: Towards More Balanced Curricular Representations and Classroom Practices*.⁹⁵

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ENDNOTES

¹ 1968, 537.

² Ibid. Notice that this contextualization emphasizes ideas as well as those who espoused them, in contrast to contemporary curriculum studies in Canada which often start with reference to social or political problems. The second strategy can be strengthened by increased reference to the first.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. See Armour and Trott 1981 and research briefs #105-110. For philosophy in French Canada, see research brief #111.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Pinar 2019.

⁸ 1968, 538.

⁹ See the section on attunement in Pinar 2019 (chapter 6).

¹⁰ See Pinar et al. 1995, 447.

¹¹ 1968, 538.

¹² <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/rupert-clendon-lodge>

¹³ 1968, 538.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ See research brief #109.

¹⁶ 1968, 538.

¹⁷ Quoted in 1968, 538.

¹⁸ 1968, 539.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ For a history of the concept (as it has been used in aesthetic practice but relevant to this discussion as well), see Kester 2023.

²⁷ <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/george-sidney-brett>

²⁸ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T. A. Goudge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T._A._Goudge)

²⁹ Simpson 2002.

³⁰ 1968, 539.

³¹ 1968, 539-540.

³² 1968, 540.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid. Concerning Gassendi, see: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/gassendi/>

³⁶ Quoted in 1968, 540.

³⁷ Pinar 1994 (1979), 101-113.

³⁸ 1968, 540.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Quoted in 1968, 540-541.

⁴⁴ 1968, 541.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Quoted in 1968, 541.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ 1968, 542.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid. <https://digitalexhibits.library.dal.ca/exhibits/show/lives-of-dal-volume-2/chapter-2-6/herbert-leslie-stewart>

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid. Concerning Adler: <https://www.britannica.com/summary/Mortimer-J-Adler>

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ 1968, 542-543.

⁵⁸ 1968, 543.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

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- ⁶⁰ Ibid.
- ⁶¹ Ibid.
- ⁶² Ibid. Re: Gilson, see: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Etienne-Gilson>
- ⁶³ Ibid.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid.
- ⁶⁵ Quoted in 1968, 543.
- ⁶⁶ 1968, 543.
- ⁶⁷ 1968, 544.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid.
- ⁷¹ Ibid.
- ⁷² Quoted in 1968, 545.
- ⁷³ Ibid.
- ⁷⁴ 1968, 545.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid.
- ⁷⁶ 1968, 546.
- ⁷⁷ Quoted in 1968, 546.
- ⁷⁸ 1968, 546. Five years later, Hayden White would contest Dray's dismissal of historiography as narrative: [https://www.historians.org/research-and-publications/perspectives-on-history/september-2018/hayden-v-white-\(1928%E2%80%932018\)](https://www.historians.org/research-and-publications/perspectives-on-history/september-2018/hayden-v-white-(1928%E2%80%932018))
- ⁷⁹ <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/charles-taylor>
- ⁸⁰ 1968, 547.
- ⁸¹ Ibid.
- ⁸² 1968, 547-548.
- ⁸³ Quoted in 1968, 548.
- ⁸⁴ 1968, 548.
- ⁸⁵ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/analytic-philosophy>
- ⁸⁶ 1968, 548.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid.
- ⁸⁹ Quoted in 1968, 548.
- ⁹⁰ Quoted in 1968, 548-549.
- ⁹¹ 1968, 549.
- ⁹² See, for example:
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781444337839.wbelctv2m003> or
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095903493>
- ⁹³ <https://www.britannica.com/art/poststructuralism>
- ⁹⁴ <https://literariness.org/2018/10/12/post-truth/>
- ⁹⁵ In press at Routledge.