# PHILOSOPHY IN FRENCH CANADA: ITS PAST AND ITS FUTURE*

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IT IS DIFFICULT TO SPEAK of French Canadian philosophy because there are no truly great names around which to organize an account of philosophical thinking. The history of our philosophy thus tends to be rather a history of the teaching of philosophy. However, philosophy and the teaching of philosophy are but part of a wider cultural context embodying philosophical principles and ideas the evolution of which underlies the development of society. Apart from the formal philosophy professed in the schools, attention must be focussed on the philosophy which animates the literary, religious, political or economic activities of a community. In a relatively self-sufficient or autonomous society, formal philosophy follows closely upon or influences more directly the concrete embodiments of philosophy in culture, whereas a society such as our own tends to be mesmerized by the philosophical traditions of other countries.

Without excluding the salient names and contributions underlined by historians belonging to other influential societies, the historian tends to organize the data of philosophy according to conceptual models which reflect the situations obtaining in his own society. We may compare, for example, the French, British, and American histories of philosophy such as those of Chevalier, Brehier, Collins, and Copleston, or the history of medieval philosophy as seen by an Arab, a Jew, and a Christian. It is not suggested that this can be avoided, but we should at least approach even the best histories of philosophy with caution.

A small developing society such as Canada or French Canada has no chance at all of imposing its own abstract model of the development of philosophical thought even if we tried to devise one on which basically all of us agreed. The result is a certain alienation of our formal philosophy, which tends to root itself in alien traditions rather than uncover and develop its roots

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in the past and in the concrete problems of our own society. This is to say that it very often becomes artificial and unreal. The problem here seems to consist practically in deciding which foreign trend to latch on to.

There do exist, however, an Anglo-Canadian and a French Canadian society with their own languages, their own religious, social and political experiences, their historical backgrounds, their economic structures and problems. Implied in this are conceptions of man, of his insertion in the North American environment, of his destiny, and of his potential for progress. We need to uncover the meaning of our past and to become conscious of the philosophical principles underlying the complex society in which we live and think. More than anything we need to develop faith and confidence in our inherent worth, in our ability to think through to the basic issues of human experience and to make genuine contributions to the progress of thought.

French Canadian philosophy may be divided into six periods: I, the beginnings, 1635-1725; II, growth, 1725-1760; III, trial and uncertainty, 1760-1800; IV, hope, 1800-1880; V, dogmatism and illusion, 1880-1940; VI, pluralism and increasing self-affirmation, 1940 to the present. Such divisions tend to be somewhat arbitrary, since they reflect changes in culture and society generally rather than in philosophy alone.

## *The beginnings*—1608-1725

Secondary education and the teaching of philosophy during the French régime centred around the Collège des Jésuites in Québec, which was founded in the year 1635, a few years before Harvard in New England.[1]

Mgr de Laval, the first bishop of Quebec, provides a direct link between the Collège de la Flèche and the Collège des Jésuites at Quebec. Descartes had attended La Flèche from 1604 to 1612. Mgr de Laval entered the college at the age of nine in 1631 and stayed there until the year 1641. During the final years of his education at La Flèche (i.e. from 1637 to 1640) the college was presided over by Father Noel, a mathematician and friend of Descartes. These were the years of François de Montmorency Laval's philosophical training. Now one can scarcely fail to note that the *Discours de la Méthode* was published in 1637 and the *Meditationes de prima philosophia* in 1641. Mgr de Laval was consecrated bishop at St-Germain-des-Prés in 1658, at the age of 36, and took possession of his see in 1659. Father Jérôme Lallemant, an uncle of Father Gabriel Lallemant who was put to death by the Iroquois near Georgian Bay in 1649, and former rector of the Collège Royale de La Flèche, accompanied

Mgr de Laval to Quebec and held the post of rector of the Collège des Jésuites from 1659 to 1665.[2] Thus in more ways than one, the Collège des Jésuites is a direct offspring of the most famous educational institution of that time. According to such outstanding authorities as Descartes and Bacon, the Jesuits were generally considered to be the great educators of Europe; and at Quebec, philosophy was taught according to the methods and programs set forth in the Jesuit *Ratio studiorum* which was the document governing education in all Jesuit Colleges.

The Jesuit Relations[3] record that on July 2, 1666, more than 300 years ago, the first public disputation in philosophy was staged at Quebec. Intendant Talon took part in the discussion, which was held in Latin. One of the students being examined in philosophy was Louis Joliette, the future explorer of the Mississippi, who was later to hold the chair of mathematics and hydrography at the college. The basic authors taught were Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and scholastic philosophy in general. But some manuscript notes and courses indicate that Cartesian influence was not absent. Philosophical training consisted of formal lectures coupled with weekly, monthly, and annual disputations in Latin on pre-determined questions.

Unfortunately, many of the Jesuit professors merely resided at the college long enough to learn the Indian dialects before going on to the missions. In later years this apparently led to complaints and may have brought about the establishment of lectures in philosophy at the Séminaire de Québec towards the end of the French régime. The teaching of philosophy alternated with that of theology, two years being devoted to philosophy and two years to theology. In the 1720s or 1730s the governor and the intendant both requested that this periodical interruption in the teaching of philosophy be stopped, but nothing was done about it.

### *Growth*—1725-1760

By 1725, the old College had become too small for the needs of New France. A new impressive building was constructed "to last for centuries".

It seems that the Collège des Jésuites was the only institution under the French régime, in eighteenth-century Canada, which gave a complete course of classical studies, including philosophy.[4] Many schools taught Latin. The Séminaire de Montréal offered courses in hydrography and mathematics as well as those leading to the study of philosophy, but the students had to go to Quebec to study philosophy. There is some doubt concerning the course of

studies at the Séminaire de Québec, which served as a boarding school for future diocesan priests attending classes at the Collège des Jésuites. A comment by Mgr de Pontbriand in 1748 implies, however, that the Séminaire offered lectures in philosophy which might be considered equivalent to the philosophy taught at the college.[2]

Father Guesnier, who had taught philosophy at Caen in France, became professor of philosophy and theology at Quebec in 1731. He is known to have written a *Cours de Morale générale*. He died prematurely at the age of 40 in 1734. There is some reason to believe that the quality of the teaching of philosophy in the years immediately preceding Guesnier's coming may not have been very good.[5] In 1757, Father Labrosse wrote a logic text of 424 pages which has been preserved in the archives of the Séminaire and in which Cartesian influence is noticeable.[6]

It is interesting to note this prudent shift away from the purely scholastic approach recommended by the *Ratio Studiorum*. But we must remember that France was in the throes of a philosophical upheaval which was to contribute to the French Revolution. Montesquieu, Rousseau, Diderot, Voltaire were the prophets of the day, and the elegant society of Quebec, and in particular the administrators and the military newly arrived from France carried the intellectual ferment of the old continent to the shores of the St. Lawrence.[7]

The libraries of New France were well stocked with the latest philosophical books. Benjamin Sulte is of the opinion that there were some 60,000 volumes in the libraries of New France. Antoine Roy (*op.cit.*, 64-75) believes this figure to be too conservative. Some private collections contained as many as 3000 and 4000 books. Among these the philosophers of the eighteenth century were well represented. Voltaire's influence on French Canadian thought continued through the change of régime and increased well into the nineteenth century. Thus there arose in French Canada a spirit of opposition to Church influence and authority which has been an important aspect of French Canadian society and thought ever since.

### *Trial and Uncertainty*—1760-1800

The dire poverty resulting from corrupt administration and interruption of commerce with the mother country, the threat posed by the British invaders to the language, laws, and customs of the people, the desertion of its political and religious élite, demoralized the French Canadians.[8] Bishop Inglis of Nova Scotia, whose Anglican diocese now extended to Canada, made elaborate plans

to establish an English protestant university in Quebec. This university was to be financed with income derived from the Jesuit properties which had been confiscated along with those of the Sulpicians in Montreal. He was irked at opposition encountered from the Canadians. "I fear", wrote Bishop Inglis to Lord Dorchester, "that Canadians act like spoiled children. They seem to look upon themselves as different from the English.[9] No method seems better adapted to making good subjects of them than to instruct them in English, to establish an English school in each parish". He believed that, by transforming the College at Quebec into an English protestant school and setting up English schools in the rural regions with the income derived from the confiscation of the Jesuit properties, the French language and culture could be eliminated in a period of from 15 to 20 years.[9]

Other difficulties plagued the educational system and the Collège des Jésuites. Most of the professors returned to France after the conquest. To make matters worse, the Jesuit order was banished from France in 1764 and suppressed entirely in 1773.[10] Recognizing the impossibility of staffing the college anew, Father Glapion closed the last classes in 1768. Two years later a rather pathetic petition was addressed to the British government through Governor Carleton asking that the College at Quebec be reopened, and that the properties of the Jesuits be restored to their original purpose which was to support the College. The British government was asked to allow "pour une fois seulement" the entry into Canada of six competent professors capable of teaching the higher sciences. The petitioners even offered to re-name the institution the Royal George College. But the petition went unheeded.[11]

The Séminaire de Québec and the Séminaire de Montréal took on the task of secondary education which the Collège des Jésuites could no longer accomplish, but they lacked both the financial support and the personnel required to do a competent job. The Séminaire de Montréal had also been weakened by the departure of twelve Sulpicians after the conquest and by the confiscation of their own properties in Montreal.[12] In 1785, Mgr d'Esgly wrote to the bishop of Cork that "philosophy had degenerated considerably in Canada, because of a lack of teachers". Mgr Briand was repeatedly denied permission to import professors from France. The philosophy taught at the Séminaire de Québec was somewhat eclectic. It wavered between Locke, Malebranche, and Descartes. The library of the Séminaire featured works by Leibniz, Malebranche, Bayle, Locke, Rousseau, Voltaire, and Descartes.[13] For a time philosophy continued to be taught only in Quebec, but in 1789 a chair of philosophy was established at the Séminaire de Montréal. The yearbook

for 1790 offered the following courses in philosophy: "logic, metaphysics, physics and mathematics".

The year 1789 witnessed a world-shaking event in France, the French Revolution. The opposition to the Catholic Church and the suppression of the monarchy deeply revolted a great many French Canadians and affected their attitude towards France for over a century. One important side effect of the Revolution, however, was the expulsion of the French clergy, many of whom made their way to England and thence to Canada, where they contributed much to the renaissance of classical studies and philosophy which marked the beginning of the nineteenth century. There is an interesting Master's thesis in history by Marc Lebel bearing in part on the teaching of philosophy at the Séminaire de Québec during this period.[14] The author mentions a five-volume course in philosophy, first published in France in 1763 and sent to the Séminaire de Québec in 1766, entitled *Institutiones philosophiae ad usum Seminarii Tullensis* and commonly referred to as the *Philosophie de Toul*. This textbook sought to expound in an objective manner the different theories advanced by modern philosophers since the time of Descartes. Another influential work published in France in two volumes in 1784, l'*Abrégé latin de philosophie* by Hauchecorne, "though respectful of Descartes, in the words of Lebel, abandons the system of innate ideas in favor of Locke's empiricism". Father Raimbault, one of the priests exiled from France at the time of the Revolution used Hauchecorne in his philosophy classes at the Séminaire de Québec. The Compendium of Metaphysics by Father Robert in 1792 and Father Castanet's course in 1795 both follow Hauchecorne. Their students' notebooks show that they presented in succession the three proofs of the existence of God, a discussion of atheism, long refutations of the systems of Strato, Epicurus, Spinoza and the Immaterialists, and finally a study of the attributes of God". The political philosophy was inspired by Bossuet who defended the divine origin of power and condemned rebellion even against a prince who was cruel and hostile to religion.[14]

## *Hope—1800-1880*

Around the turn of the nineteenth century, Canada underwent a tremendous surge of activity. The population had multiplied many times since the conquest. The old Colleges were strengthened and new vigorous institutions were founded in which the teaching of philosophy flourished along with the arts, letters, and sciences. Canadians increased their pressures to substitute representative government for the oligarchical colonial administration. The

philosophy curriculum, spread over a period of two years, included mathematics and the sciences. The logic class or first year of philosophy also covered courses in metaphysics and ethics. The second year, given by the same professor, was devoted to mathematics and the sciences. In the year 1834, the teaching of philosophy proper was distinguished from the sciences at the Séminaire de Québec, and philosophy was henceforth designated by the expression "intellectual and moral philosophy".[15]

In the year 1800 there appeared an outstanding figure who was to dominate the philosophical scene in French Canada for the next half-century.[16] Jérôme Demers was born in 1774, and probably studied philosophy in Montreal under the private direction of his uncle, Jean Demers, who was a Recollet priest. His biographers generally praise his profound and almost universal knowledge. He was an architect who designed the Séminaire de Nicolet and wrote a treatise of architecture. He composed a treatise on physics which kept abreast of the science of his day. He was interested in astronomy and was considered the outstanding mathematician in French Canada.[17] In 1835, he published a textbook of philosophy which contained the substance of his teaching over the years and which was still being used at the Séminaire de Québec in 1847.[18] The work, entitled *Institutiones Philosophicae ad usum Studiosae Juventutis* (Philosophical principles or doctrines for Students) contained over 300 pages.[19]

Demers divides philosophy into logic, metaphyiscs, ethics, and physics. Physics, he warns, is to be treated in another work written in French. Logic is divided into four parts according to the Cartesian division of the operations of the mind into (1) thought or perception, (2) judgment, (3) reasoning, and (4) method. On the question of the origin of our thoughts, Demers considers all knowledge as originating from God. But how is it communicated to us? He expounds at length Descartes' theory of innate ideas and Locke's doctrine of the origin of ideas in sense experience. Condillac's modification of Locke's empiricism is brought in along with the tradionalist De Bonald's rejection of Condillac. He quotes approvingly De Bonald's theory of the innateness of the ideas in society, i.e. in language, which is absolutely necessary if we are to form a mental representation of the idea. Apart from a few other fundamental questions which are treated at great length, Demers glosses over the rest of traditional logic with a series of definitions and divisions. The most elaborate chapter (pp. 56-101) deals with the seven criteria of infallible judgments which are the inner sense, evidence, the testimony of the senses, the testimony of men, memory, divine revelation, and analogy. On the question

of sensation, he refers to Descartes, Malebranche, Bayle, Berkeley, and Kant. This is one of the few places where Kant is mentioned. Thomas Aquinas, on the other hand, so far as could be made out, is never mentioned or quoted. Demers divides metaphysics into general metaphysics or ontology, and particular metaphysics or pneumatology. Ontology deals with being in the abstract, whereas pneumatology studies beings separated from matter or spirits. Pneumatology is divided into two parts: theodicy or natural theology, and psychology.

The three standard types of arguments, i.e. the moral, the physical and the metaphysical, are given to prove the existence of God. None of this appears to be very original. The lengthy developments which follow on atheism, on the systems of the Academics, of Epicurus, of Spinoza, and of the Immaterialists, as well as the section on the divine attributes, are reminiscent of Hauchecorne's *Abrégé latin de la philosophie,* mentioned above, which was in use at the Séminaire de Québec as early as 1784. It does seem, however, that Demers introduced abundant texts from modern and contemporary philosophers to illustrate and develop the terse, arid formulation of philosophical doctrines contained in the student notebooks of the early years of the nineteenth century.

Demers' psychology stresses the active nature of the human mind. His second chapter expounds five proofs of human freedom. He quotes in behalf of his thesis the article on liberty in the *French Encyclopaedia.* On the problem of body and mind, he inquires into the nature of their union in man and concludes that "haec quaestio, sicut innumerae aliae, plurimas habet difficultates, quae nostram ignorantiam solummodo demonstrant. . . ." "This then must the physiologists conclude," he writes, "that there exists a most strict, albeit unexplainable connection between our body and the thinking substance within us". Demers then goes on to devote 14 pages to the Cartesian conception of animals as automata.

The last part of the *Institutiones* bears on ethics. General ethics treats of human acts, their properties and rules, the end of human life and happiness. In special ethics, Demers deals with man's obligations to himself. On political society, he rejects Hobbes's theory of man's enmity towards man, the so-called *status belli,* because, on the contrary, social life is natural to man (p. 308). On the subject of political authority, he firmly holds that political power is of divine origin and not from the people. He quotes La Mennais at great length in refutation of Rousseau's social contract theory (pp. 323-326). "Therefore," he affirms (p. 328, n. 206), "it is never permitted (nunquam licitum esse) to

rise or rebel against the ruler, or against political authority". "To rise against the ruler is to rise against the power established by God. . . ." (p. 329).

How original is the formulation of doctrine in Demers's book? What I know of the main divisions of Hauchecorne's treatise and of the Philosophy of Toul makes me suspect that Demers may have borrowed rather heavily from these sources. Mgr Paquet refers to a manuscript by Demers (?) dating from the year 1800 and similar to the 1835 publication in basic content.[19] A manuscript compendium of a course dictated by Messire Houdet at the Séminaire de Montréal in 1814 is also very similar to Demers in content and formulation. Another course professed and dictated by John Holmes in the 1830s either at Nicolet or at Quebec is identical in every way to the Houdet compendium except for a 100-page section in French on the application of logic to grammar in French. It seems hardly possible that Demers could have given such definitive formulation to his course in 1800. On the other hand, how can we explain the high regard for Demers as the outstanding exponent of philosophy in Canada if his book contains so little that is original?

In any case, Demers thought best to omit from his textbook the traditional section on the figures and modes of the syllogism and the ontology which both the Houdet and the Holmes compendia include.

Some years after its publication the *Institutiones* was superseded by Bouvier's *Institutiones philosophiae* which contained some Cartesian elements.[20] Then twenty-five years after the appearance of Demers' text, philosophy professors returned to the practice of dictating their courses at least in the Séminaire de Québec.[14]

Another outstanding teacher of this period was Monsieur Isaac-Stanislas Désaulniers (1811-1868) who taught philosophy at the Séminaire de St-Hyacinthe, a famous institution founded at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Little research has been done on Désaulniers. After a first period of some twenty years (1831-1855) in which his philosophy was influenced by La Mennais and to some extent by Cartesianism, he became increasingly convinced of the value of Aquinas' thought and of the "uselessness" of modern philosophy. He considered St. Thomas to have been a "gigantic thinker", "the greatest philosopher" who ever lived. However, a cursory examination of his students' notebooks of the 1860s reveals a Wolfian division of metaphysics into general and special metaphysics, the latter being further subdivided into cosmology, neology (a term found in the Philosophie de Toul), and theodicy. He actively engaged in philosophical polemic, particularly against Dessaules, a member

of the Institut Canadien, whom he accused of being unpatriotic and anti-catholic, and of adopting Lamarckist doctrines.[21]

Around that time, the eclectic nature and the inadequacy of the different philosophies taught in the colleges began to be felt. Taschereau, the future cardinal, had quoted Thomas Aquinas on the origin of society and of political power in 1848. In the 1860s Laval University adopted a textbook by the Jesuit Tongiorgi whose teaching was largely Thomistic.

In 1853, a small book entitled *Essai de Logique judiciaire* was published by a professor of law named François Bibaud in Montreal.[22] The author proposes to apply logic to a reformation of the judicial process. He deplores the confusion of English and French laws in Canada, and goes on to examine the definition of law. In so doing, he quotes from St. Thomas and Bentham. On the problem of the equality of women, he quotes Kant. He considers the thesis of the inferiority of women to result from medieval prejudice.

Before discussion of the Thomistic period in French Canadian philosophy, reference should be made to the existence of philosophical trends which were not prominent in the Colleges but which nonetheless had great influence on men, events, and institutions.

The rebellion of 1837 was primarily motivated by a desire for representative government which was quite at odds with the formal political philosophy taught in the schools. The political leaders of the time were imbued with the ideas of the French Encyclopaedia and of the French Revolution which stressed freedom and democracy and gave short shrift to the divine rights of kings. Another philosophically significant event was the foundation of the *Institut Canadien* by two hundred young men in 1844.[23] Its purpose was to diffuse liberal ideas, to set up a learned library and to arrange lectures. Its newspaper, founded in 1847, favoured separation of Church and state, and advocated a form of socialist democracy and freedom in all matters.[24] Given the temper of the Catholic church in Montreal in the 1850s, the actions of the Institut and its stand on many concrete problems soon ran up against direct opposition from Mgr Bourget. Its members were threatened with excommunication and they were ordered to rid their library of books condemned by the Church.[25] Upon the refusal of the Institut to abide by the bishop's order, many members resigned. Eventually the rest were excommunicated. One of them named Guibord died and was refused burial in the Catholic cemetery. His widow brought suit against the Church and won a first decision, but lost when the bishop appealed to a higher court. Finally the widow

obtained a favourable judgment from the Privy Council, and many years after his death Guibord was buried in the Catholic Cemetery. However, the *Institut Canadien* ceased to exist soon after its court victory.

*Dogmatism and Illusion*—1880-1940

The successful recovery from the effects of the conquest, the numerous colleges, the increasing population, the growing participation in missionary activities gave rise to messianic delusions in French Canada. In the eyes of many, the fall of New France had been an unmitigated blessing, a God-sent grace by which French Canada had been saved from the impiety, wickedness, and anarchy of post-Revolutionary France. In an article entitled "Our faith", Mgr Louis-Adolphe Paquet, whom Stanley French dubs French Canada's national philosopher, states that the French Canadian situation makes the powers of hell jealous with envy.[26] Thomism, according to H. Bastien, is the instrument by which we can hope to come to the aid of a troubled civilization, despite our relatively small population.[27]

The philosophy of St. Thomas, which had begun to make its influence felt in French Canada, received tremendous support from the publication in 1879 of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical letter *Aeterni Patris* recommending the teaching of Aquinas' philosophy in Catholic schools. In a document published the following year and entitled *Cum hoc sit,* the Pope stated that "St. Thomas had known everything that had been truthfully said or disputed with wisdom before him . . . he seems to have left us only the possibility of imitating him, but taken away the power to surpass him." Pius X even goes so far as to put the faithful on guard against the other "Catholic doctors". As a result the religious structure of our educational system made it practically mandatory for the colleges to teach the philosophy of St. Thomas. The other philosophical interests or viewpoints simply could not develop, and this was to the detriment of Thomism itself.[28] This is the spirit and the atmosphere which Mgr Louis-Adolphe Paquet did much to create and to propagate. Stanley French's assessment of Mgr L.-A. Paquet in *Cité libre* as French Canada's national philosopher went unchallenged merely because very few people in French Canada have bothered to read Paquet or have felt the urge to continue reading once they have started. Paquet's view of philosophical dialogue is distressingly naïve. In a long study devoted to Anglo-Canadian philosophy, he evaluates differing philosophical views in terms of their degree of incompatibility with Thomas Aquinas. He urges Anglo-Canadians to extend their search for national unity to the field of philosophy by switching to Thomism. His views

on social problems such as the rights of women, slavery, and the relevance of modern philosophy are quite disconcerting even for his time. In criticizing modern thinking, he hardly ever quotes anything but the statements of their philosophies in the histories of philosophy. His contempt for Kant and German idealism may have considerably hampered serious study of German philosophy in French Canada during the first half of this century.[29] On the whole Mgr Paquet should definitely not be considered a true representative of Thomistic thought or of philosophy in French Canada.[30]

Leo XIII had sought to obviate the ill effects of philosophical eclecticism and to provide a firm foundation for theological studies by imposing Aquinas' philosophy in the Seminaries and pontificial universities. But the net effect was to weaken the competitive strength of Aquinas by curtailing serious study of contemporary and modern philosophy and by divorcing philosophy from the problems of the day. This was due to the fact that the only schools in existence in French Canada were subject to the authority of the Church. There was no independent lay system in which philosophy could develop unhindered by the dictates of the church.[31]

It is not intended to imply, however, that the imposition of Thomism by the Church, though philosophically speaking ill-advised, had no positive effects. Apart from stimulating considerable interest in the large corpus of Aquinas' works and in medieval and ancient philosophy generally, it brought about the definition of rigorous norms for faculties of philosophy in Catholic universities. The papal document *Deus Scientiarum Dominus* required the universities to provide at least one professor for each of the major divisions of philosophy and of the history of philosophy. To conform to Church requirements, the universities had to increase the number of their philosophy professors beyond the number they would normally have had without papal inducement.

### *Self-affirmation*—1940 *to the present*

In recent times there has been growing opposition to the scholastic approach to philosophy. Textbooks had never been used at the more specialized levels, but in the colleges philosophy had long been taught according to predetermined programs which were the same for all institutions affiliated with a given university. In the last twenty years the detailed common programs of study have disappeared. The pendulum has swung in the other direction. There has been a considerable surge of interest in contemporary

French and German philosophy. The methods recommended and used in the teaching of philosophy have become Socratic rather than expository.

In some quarters there exists a tendency to look upon philosophy as a mere tool for sharpening the mind. The recent Report of the *Parent commission on education* overstresses this utilitarian aspect and fails to acknowledge the importance of philosophy as a search for solutions to man's fundamental problems. This shortcoming was forcefully brought out in a book published by André Naud in 1965 on the new humanism proposed by the Parent Commission.[32] Naud insists on the importance of the spiritual component in man's nature and on the necessity to define education in terms of the ends of human life rather than solely in terms of efficiency, material comfort, economic advancement or technical proficiency.

A more careful study of the works of Thomas Aquinas and of other medieval thinkers served to enhance the conviction that no philosophy can be considered a definitive statement of man's nature or of the world in which he lives. It became evident that St. Thomas propounded his philosophy in response to a concrete situation and in terms of problems which are not our own. Much of this work to put medieval thought in proper philosophical perspective has been done by the Institut d'Etudes médiévales which was founded in Ottawa and became a department of the Faculté de philosophie at Montreal in the early 1940s. The publications of this Institute are among the best in the field of medieval studies.

Two major changes that have taken place in the last twenty years are the acceptance of the idea that all levels of education must be open to everyone according to ability, and the vast increase in the number of lay professors in all fields and the consequent declericalization of the schools and universities. The economic weakness of French Canada since the fall of New France had made it practically impossible for the task of education to be assumed by any but the clergy. But with the urbanization of French Canada and the increase in the number of students applying for education, it became necessary for the clergy first to ask the support of lay teachers, and then to relinquish the direction of most educational institutions.

The net effect of all this is that the teaching of philosophy has ceased to be, as it had often been in the past, a temporary activity which was part of larger pastoral duties: it has become a life-work. In late years, the number of scholarly philosophical books published in French Canada is too great even to enumerate here. Most of them, I believe, are at least equal in quality to the philosophical literature produced in other countries of the world.

Philosophers have become increasingly wary of old distinctions such as that between object and subject. There is a tendency to frown upon any systematic attempt to categorize man and the world. There is an inner reality which it is the function of philosophy to unveil. Science stays at the surface of things. The phenomenological approach is generally considered the best way of attaining authentic philosophical knowledge of the concrete. The need for a transcendant reality, if posited at all, is believed to be discoverable only from the standpoint of human consciousness and finiteness. Proofs of God's existence, however logical and formally acceptable in a theoretical context, carry little weight. The approach to the problem of God in metaphysics tends to proceed more and more from an experience of the sacred as manifested in the positive religions of the past and the present.

After a period in which a philosophy was more or less imposed upon the schools by official examinations and programs, academic freedom is now valued as one of the most essential requirements of philosophical teaching. A code of ethics recently adopted by the *Association des professeurs de philosophie de l'enseignement collégical* stresses the freedom of self-determination that must be assured to students in the teaching of philosophy. On the other hand, long contact with ancient and medieval philosophy tends to render most people sceptical of the claim that worthwhile philosophy is restricted to the modern period.

An application of philosophy to the problems of modern French Canadian society has led many young philosophers to adopt Marxist viewpoints. Such tendencies express themselves forcefully in the new monthly periodical *Parti-pris* and particularly in Pierre Vallières's recent book, *Nègres blancs d'Amérique*. The latter, along with much philosophical pedantry and Marxist dogmatism, presents an impassioned plea against religious and political institutions that breed poverty and oppression.[33]

Mention must also be made of the first major efforts to effect a rapprochement between the entirely independent philosophical traditions of French and English Canada. In 1957, the Canadian Philosophical Association was established to provide a forum for meaningful philosophical exchange between philosophers of the two cultures. In 1962, the Association established a quarterly which has been well received throughout the world and has made known beyond the borders of Canada our philosophical capabilities.

In conclusion, stress should again be laid on the need to acquire a better knowledge of our philosophical past. This constitutes a real problem for

small societies such as our own. The philosophical histories and traditions of more influential societies usually omit or by-pass significant elements which are necessary to understand our present needs and personalities. We should be able to receive outside influences in terms of the needs of our concrete situation in Canada. Otherwise it is to be feared that our philosophy will tend to get out of touch with our own personal problems or the problems of the community in which we live.

It would appear that the philosophical trend is towards a more concrete phenomenological approach to our own reality. And this reality involves at least two important dimensions which have been present from the very beginning of our history, though relatively unexamined, the political and the religious. The task of philosophy appears to consist primarily of evolving a philosophy of religion and a political philosophy, rooted not in the problems of other times or other places, but in the situation that is developing in French Canada today. With respect to religion we need to redefine the manner in which it is to affect our lives, and the function which it can fulfil alongside art, science, and philosophy in our new society. In politics, we need to examine realistically the requirements for our continued life and growth. Whatever the outcome, may our two cultures not forgo the advantages that can accrue in the future from a close association in mutual respect and dignity!

## NOTES

1. See P. Camille de Rochemonteix, S. J., *Les Jésuites et la Nouvelle-France au XVIIe siècle,* Tome I, Lètouzey et Ané, Paris, 1895, pp. 205-207; II, p. 239; I, 211-215, 224.
2. See Abbé Amédée Gosselin, *L'Instruction au Canada sous le régime français (1635-1760).* Québec: Typ. Laflamme et Proulx, 1911, p. 270, 278, 259-60.
3. *The Jesuit Relations . . .* , Vol. L, pp. 191, 212; see Léon Lortie, "La Trame scientifique de l'histoire du Canada", in *Les Pionniers de la science canadienne.* Colloque présenté à la Société Royale du Canada en 1964, éd. par G. F. G. Stanley, University of Toronto Press, 1966, pp. 15-16.
4. A. Roy, *Les Lettres, les Sciences et les Arts au Canada sous le régime francais. Essai de contribution à l'histoire et à la civilisation canadienne,* p. 19.
5. See A. Roy, *op. cit.,* p. 2; A. Gosselin, *op. cit.,* p. 274.
6. Hermas Bastien, *L'Enseignement de la philosophie.* Ed. Albert Lévesque, Montréal, 1936, p. 21; A. Gosselin, *op. cit.,* p. 304.
7. Bougainville, one of Montcalm's aides, was a fervent admirer of Voltaire and of the Encyclopaedists. Cf. Marcel Trudel, *L'Influence de Voltaire au Canada.* Montréal: Fides, 1945. Tome II, p. 253.

8. The king of France owed £41,000,000 to the inhabitants of Canada for their material contributions to the war against the British. Of this sum only £12,000,000 was ever repaid, and most of this slid into the pockets of French and English profiteers. With the defeat of New France, commerce and industry fell into the hands of English merchants from New England. The fate of the language, religion, laws, and customs of French Canada hung in the balance. All direct commerce with France, even the importation of books, was prohibited, and the prohibition continued for approximately 85 years, that is well into the nineteenth century. See L.-Ph. Audet, *Le Système scolaire de la Province de Québec. 2e édition.* Québec: Editions de l'Erable, 1951, tome II, p. 106; A. Gosselin, *op. cit.,* pp. 37-38; A. Marinteau "Programme des études au Canada durant la période 1760-1790", in Revue de L'Université d'Ottawa. Vol. 37 n. 2, 1967, p. 223; M. Trudel, *op. cit.,* tome I, p. 130.

   Many of the political and religious élite of Canada emigrated or returned to France. But for the bulk of the population Canada was their only home and they remained behind. They withdrew or were forced to withdraw to a large extent from administrative posts and from many economic activities. (Gosselin, *op. cit.,* pp. 40-41).
9. Audet, *op. cit.,* tome II, p. 183-190.
10. See Armand Martineau, "Programme des études au Canada durant la période 1760-1790", in *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa,* vol. 37, n. 2, avril-juin 1967, pp. 209-215.
11. See Lionel Groulx, *L'Enseignement français au Canada.* 2e édition. Montreal: Granger, 1934, p. 118; Audet, *op. cit.,* tome II, pp. 130-132.
12. See Audet, tome II, p. 128; A. Gosselin, *op. cit.,* pp. 39-43.
13. See Audet, *op. cit.,* tome II, pp. 238-239; L.-A. Paquet, *Etudes et Appréciations. Mélanges Canadiens.* Impr. Francisc. Missionaire, Québec, 1918, p. 153; Groulx, *op. cit.,* pp. 416-417.
14. Marc Lebel, "L'Enseignement de la philosophie au Petit Séminaire de Québec (1765-1880)" in *Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Française,* I, dec., 1964, pp. 405-424; II, mars, 1965, pp. 582-593; III, sept., 1965, pp. 238-253, 241, 245.
15. L. Lortie, *op. cit.,* p. 24; Lebel, *art. cit.,* II, pp. 584, 585, 592.
16. Lebel, *art. cit.,* p. 592; Paquet, *op. cit.,* p. 155.
17. See E. T. Paquet, *Fragments de l'histoire de St-Nicolas.* Typographie de Mercier et Cie, Lévis, 1894, pp. 13-82 on Jérôme Demers. Also L.-A. Paquet, *op. cit.,* pp. 156-157.
18. See L.-A. Paquet, *op. cit.,* pp. 159, 163; 156-158; 168-9.
19. *Institutiones Philosophicae ad usum Studiosae Juventutis.* Quebeci: ex typis Tho. Cary & socii. 1835. 395 pages comprising a defence of revealed religion (pp. 339-395) taken from a *Cours élémentaire de Philosophie* de Lyon (1823). Demers' name does not appear on the title page.

20. Demers had quoted from an earlier edition of Bouvier in his *Institutiones.* The Cartesian elements in Bouvier should not be overstressed. Bouvier designates his second proof of the existence of God as Descartes' ontological argument (T. I, pp. 238ff). However the main body of the proofs seeks to establish the existence of God as the cause of the idea of the perfect. But the answer to the third objection ("[actualis existentia] in idea entis summe perfecti necessario includitur . . .") does formulate the ontological argument (p. 241). On page 239, he sends his readers to Descartes: "Qui hanc demonstrationem fusius expositam videre cupierit, adeat opera *Descartes,* praesertim meditationem tertiam. . . ." See also H. Bastien, *op. cit.,* p. 27, Marc Lebel, *art. cit.,* III, p. 240.
21. Fonds Désaulniers. Archives du Séminaire de Saint-Hyacinthe. See also Lucien Beauregard, "La Part de M. Isaac Stanislas Désaulniers à l'introduction du thomisme au Canada français vers l'époque de la renaissance religieuse de 1840 à 1855", in *Rapport de la Société Canadienne d'Histoire de l'Englise Catholique* (1941-1942), pp. 77-88.
22. Frs-Marie-Uncas-Maximilien Bibaud, *Essai de Logique judiciaire.* Montréal: De Montigny et Cie, 1853.
23. See T. Hudon, *L'Institut Canadien de Montréal et l'Affaire Guibord.* Montréal: Beauchemin, 1938, p. 13.
24. See Marcel Trudel, *L'Influence de Voltaire au Canada,* tome II, pp. 20-21.
25. For a list of the books owned by the Institut, see *Catalogue des livres de la bibliotèque de l'Institut Canadien.* Par A. Boisseau. Montréal: Impr. de A. Doutre et Vie, 1870.
26. L.-A. Paquet, *op. cit.,* pp. 323-337. Stanley French, "Racines du thomisme au Canada français", in *Cité libre* XVe année, n. 68, juin-juillet 1964, pp. 20-26.
27. H. Bastien, *op. cit.,* p. 196, 76-80.
28. I have called this era the period of dogmatism and illusion not because Thomism became practically the only philosophy, but because it was not allowed to increase its influence by normal philosophical means as a result of a rational dialogue with competing philosophical doctrines.
29. L.-A. Paquet, *Etudes et Appréciations. Fragments apologétiques.* Québec: Impr. Francisc. Missionnaire, 1917, p. 236.
30. St. Thomas was most unorthodox in his day. He sought truth where he could find it, in Aristotle, Plato, Plotinus, in Judaic or Arabic philosophy. On such basic problems as knowledge, the analogy of being, the foundations of metaphysics, the relations between faith and reason, the basis of morality, the nature of physical reality and of scientific method there exist a wide range of interpretations among so-called Thomists.
31. In France, such Catholics as G. Marcel, M. Blondel, E. LeRoy, and Teilhard de Chardin could develop their thought independently of Thomism, thus

making possible more vigorous and original forms of Thomism as evidenced by the works of Maritain, Forest, Gilson, Rousselot, and others.

32. André Naud, *Le Rapport Parent et l'humanisme nouveau.* Montréal: Fides, 1965.
33. Montréal: Editions Parti pris, 1968.

## THE SMILE

*Myrtle Reynolds Adams*

How natural he looks, they said to her,
dropping soft words on the velvet silence,
sliding kindly inquisitive eyes
over the casket smothered in lilies and roses,
over mahogany, pink satin, the embalmer's artistry.

He is asleep, they said,
trying the garment of comfort on her
who was broken by waxen face, folded hands,
immobility and finality.
And still her illusive smile
braved the rain of platitudes,
the barren comfort of the worn-out lie.