

Philosophies at the margins and forgotten philosophies

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It is an honour to speak to you today as President of the Canadian Philosophical Association. I believe that this is just the second time that the President has been selected from Atlantic Canada, and one of the very few times that the President has come from a smaller, primarily undergraduate university.

Ce contexte a influencé – au moins de façon indirecte – le choix du thème spécifique de mon discours d'aujourd'hui, qui se veut un regard posé sur la philosophie d'une manière qui est un peu éloignée du centre, un regard aussi vers les philosophies qui se trouvent sur les marges ou qui sont peut-être aussi grandement oubliées ou ignorées, et une réflexion sur ce qui peut influencer la façon dont nous pouvons faire la philosophie et comment nous pourrions percevoir les options à notre disposition.

The Presidential Address is, by custom at least, to provide a comment on "the state of philosophy in Canada." In recent years, many of the addresses have dealt with such matters as teaching philosophy (2007 - Luc Langlois: "Teaching Philosophy in the University of the 21st Century"), the place and value of philosophical research in society (1999 - François Duchesneau: "How Much Is our Research Worth?"), our engagement in moral and civic education (2005 - Philippe Constantineau: "Philosophy in the Age of Democracy: Moral and Civic Education"), a demographic survey of philosophy in Canada (2000 - Steven Davis: "Philosophy in Canada: Past, Present and Future"), participation in learned or scholarly societies (2003 - Paul Dumouchel: "What Are Learned Societies For?"), as well as with our engagement on practical questions, such as politics (1998 - Frank Cunningham: "Could Canada Turn into Bosnia?"), theories of consciousness (2002 - Andrew Brook: "What Was Old Is New Again: A Representational Theory of Consciousness"), and the method and importance of philosophy (2001 - Thomas de Koninck: "Urgence de la philosophie"; 2004 - John Thorp: "In Search of Hypatia"; 2006 - Gerard Naddaf:

"Allegory and the Origins and Development of Philosophy from the Presocratics to the Enlightenment").

Interestingly, many of the previous addresses acknowledge that philosophy is influenced by, and responds to its environment – and that this environment may lead philosophers to focus on specific philosophical options. Yet such an influence (I would add) may also lead us, and has led us, to overlook certain options.

In my address today, I want to develop this element of earlier presidential addresses – about what the intellectual and cultural environment may lead us to include or overlook – and I want to do this in three stages.

First, I want to say something, briefly, on the environment in which philosophy is done at universities in Canada.

Deuxièmement, je veux parler de ce qui est enseigné dans les programmes de philosophie au Canada et dans la plupart du monde occidental (et d'où vient notre compréhension de l'histoire de la philosophie et des traditions philosophiques). Et je voudrais suggérer qu'il semble exister une tendance (sans doute involontaire) de comprendre la philosophie moderne et même la philosophie contemporaine, de sorte à ignorer, à cacher ou du moins à laisser de côté des éléments importants de la philosophie.

Finally, I want to suggest that these elements or features, which seem to lie forgotten or on the margins in philosophy, should not only be better recognised in our histories of philosophy, but also be included or referred to in doing philosophy today.

I.

D'abord, je voudrais parler brièvement du contexte dans lequel la philosophie est étudiée et enseignée au Canada. Ceci m'oblige à vous parler au sujet des philosophes – c'est-à-dire, qui nous sommes – en donnant des notions démographiques au sujet de la philosophie au Canada et de commenter ce qui est enseigné de façon plus détaillée.

Laissez-moi d'abord dire quelques mots sur la situation actuelle.

En 2000, Stephen Davis a présenté un compte rendu détaillé de l'état de la philosophie dans les universités canadiennes couvrant une période de dix ans, soit de 1989 à 1999. Il

observa la distribution de la faculté par rang professoral, par sexe, et par le secteur de recherches, ainsi que l'inscription d'étudiants à temps plein, le nombre de diplômes accordés, et les niveaux de financement universitaire.

Lorsqu'on regarde, huit ans plus tard, les données fournies par Davis, bon nombre des tendances persistent et, somme toute, peu a changé. Lorsqu'on repasse le *Directory of American Philosophers* (2004-05), et quand on consulte les sites web des départements, on note quelques différences, mais le nombre de philosophes et la diversité des spécialisations demeurent à peu près semblables. (Par exemple, Davis identifie un total de 895 philosophes aux universités et collèges (i.e., 512 [aux universités/BA+] et 383 [aux collèges / non-BA]); aujourd'hui il semble y en avoir seulement un peu moins, environ 835.)

Ceux-ci sont certes des facteurs importants pour comprendre l'état de la philosophie au Canada aujourd'hui.

But there is another feature of philosophy in Canada that we ought to consider, and that is the environment or context in which philosophy is taught.

For example, it is true that some things have changed since Davis's survey. The pursuit of external funding to support research, for example, has increased, and it has led, in part, to the establishment of a separate adjudication committee to evaluate SSHRC standard research grant applications in philosophy.

Moreover, in his 2000 address, Davis distinguished degree-granting institutions from those that may have programmes but do not award degrees – e.g., CEGEPs and community colleges. But I think that there is a further distinction that we might make – and that is about the size of departments and the kinds of degree programmes they offer.

Through most of my academic career, I have taught at smaller, predominantly undergraduate universities – in Departments of six or fewer. There are many such Departments or programmes in Canada – 37, not counting those in colleges and CEGEPs. Of the some 835 philosophers in colleges (including CEGEPs) or universities in Canada, 163 – about one-fifth – teach in Philosophy Departments of six or less. [415 teach full-time in Departments of 14 or larger; another 257 teach in Departments of 7 to 13] For example, of the 12 public universities in Atlantic Canada that offer a philosophy programme of some kind, 9 of them fit into the

category of 'smaller primarily undergraduate,' only 3 have active graduate programmes, and only one offers a programme leading to a PhD in philosophy.

This feature invites several questions.

On a very practical level we might ask: Do the interests – philosophical and professional – of philosophers teaching in the smaller Departments and programmes differ from those in larger Departments?

On pourrait aussi se demander si l'enseignement de la philosophie dans un tel environnement -- où l'on enseigne surtout des étudiants de premier cycle, sans la présence d'étudiants de deuxième et troisième cycles -- a une influence sur le choix d'auteurs ou les sujets dont on discute, sur la sorte de philosophie qui est enseignée, sur l'engagement dans le travail interdisciplinaire, et ainsi de suite.

De plus, en observant l'étendu du corps professoral dans ces départements et les ressources disponibles, comment ces dispositions affectent-elles les enjeux pratiques tels que le taux de réussite pour les subventions de recherche, la productivité de la recherche, les possibilités de collaboration et d'échange, et ainsi de suite?

But there is a further question that is raised, albeit indirectly, by this issue of the size of Departments, and that is whether our focus on some aspects of our discipline may leave hidden, or overlooked, or ignored other aspects of what we do – specifically, whether there are aspects of our discipline which may easily escape our notice concerning our understanding of philosophy, of the history of philosophy, and of philosophical traditions.

II.

This leads me, then, to the main question of this Address, and that is whether what is taught in philosophy – in Canada, but also in much of the western world – negatively influences the way in which we look at, and do, philosophy. I want to suggest that (as I say above) there seems to be a tendency to understand the modern period, and even the contemporary period, in a way that may [– though certainly not intentionally –] discount, hide or, at least, overlook significant elements of the field, – and so exclude them from active consideration and engagement.

Let me turn to this, now.

II.a By way of introduction

Some of you have likely read a recent tribute to the late Richard Rorty by Raymond Geuss, in the journal of humanities and the classics, *Arion*¹. This tribute, entitled, “Richard Rorty at Princeton: Personal Recollections,” was also widely circulated on the Internet.

Geuss mentions a pet project of Rorty’s – of Rorty’s interest in giving an undergraduate course that would be called “An Alternative History of Modern Philosophy,” starting with the end of the Middle Ages and proceeding up to the beginning of the twentieth century. It would focus, not on the major canonical figures, but on some of the lesser known – though, from Rorty’s perspective more philosophically powerful – figures. Thus, Rorty would begin with the French humanist Pierre de la Ramée (or Petrus Ramus, 1515-1572), but not Descartes, give some background by talking about Paracelsus, and then continue through the Cambridge Platonists, Thomas Reid, up to John Dewey.²

I do not know what might have inspired Rorty to have embarked on such an enterprise. (Geuss makes some suggestions, but they do not bear on the present paper.) Yet this anecdote illustrates well the interesting questions of how we look at the history of philosophy; of which figures we should (or needn’t) look at; of whether this has an effect on how we understand the philosophical options available to us; and of whether this influences what we do in philosophy and how we do it.

I suspect that if one were to go to most Canadian or American or European philosophy departments and ask a student or faculty member to describe the history of philosophy, one would likely hear that there is Greek philosophy, then mediaeval philosophy, and then a shift in the 16th century. At this point, philosophy divides into two principal traditions: The first is rationalism, and it is associated with Descartes, Malebranche, Leibniz, Spinoza – and, perhaps, Wolff and Kant. The second is empiricism, and it is associated with Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley³, and Hume. Many textbooks and courses in the history of modern philosophy (from the 16th to 19th centuries) present philosophy in just this way.

Ou encore, si on demandait à bon nombre parmi nous de décrire la philosophie contemporaine, je soupçonne que nous commencerions encore par dire qu’il existe deux grandes traditions: l’anglo-américaine analytique et la continentale. Nous pourrions trouver

peut-être difficile de placer quelques-uns des figurants principaux dans l'une ou l'autre catégorie; cependant, la plupart d'entre nous n'auraient aucun doute à trouver cette façon de rendre compte de la philosophie actuelle assez juste ou raisonnable.

Yet if we pause for a moment, we would likely see that there is something striking and, perhaps, troubling about these accounts.

II.b Modern philosophy and forgotten philosophies

Consider the above 'standard' account of philosophy, beginning with the late Middle Ages, up to the modern (i.e., 16th to 19th centuries) period.

To begin with, we would note that the rationalists come from 'the continent' – indeed, from rather small slices of the continent: from France, the "Low Countries" (i.e., the Netherlands), and German-speaking countries. The empiricists are found principally in England, Scotland and, to a lesser extent, Ireland – and had, as Anthony Kenny ironically notes, the good sense to write in English.⁴

What may trouble us, however, is that much seems to be missing in this 'standard account.'

La carence la plus évidente, peut-être, est l'Asie, l'Afrique, et les Amériques. Toutefois, cette lacune peut être expliquée : on connaissait peu des philosophies autochtones américaines ou africaines avant l'ère moderne. Les discours philosophiques là-bas se situaient à quelque distance des discussions qui avaient lieu en Europe, et les approches entreprises ont très peu en commun avec, et encore moins d'influence sur, la pensée européenne moderne. Et quoique les écrits ou traditions des plus grands penseurs asiatiques aient été mieux connus à cette époque, on pourrait se demander toutefois s'il s'agit des exemples ou des approches de la « philosophie » telle qu'on la définissait en Europe à cette époque.

There is, however, more missing in the above account than that. The history of modern philosophy obviously must take account of the history of universities. (I do not mean to say that philosophy was done only at universities; it wasn't. Still, universities did have, as a major task, the teaching of and the carrying out of scholarship in, philosophy.)

If we looked at a list of *European* universities in the period up to the 19th century, we would see them in Scandinavia (in Uppsala in 1477 and Copenhagen in 1479), in central Europe (in Vienna from 1365 and Buda from 1389), in eastern Europe (in Krakow in 1364 and in Vilnius in 1579), but also throughout western Europe (in Italy – at Bologna [1088], Rome [1303], Naples [1224], Siena [1240]); in Spain (at Seville [1505] and Salamanca [1134/1218]) and Portugal (Lisbon [i.e., Coimbra, from 1290]); and in Switzerland (Basel, 1459). As we move into the late modern era in the 18th and 19th centuries, there are universities in Russia (at Moscow [1755] and St Petersburg [1724]), but also – as the Ottoman Empire receded – in Greece [Athens, 1837], Bulgaria [Sofia, 1888], Romania [Bucharest, 1694/1864], and so on.⁵

The question that comes to mind, then, is, What was going on in philosophy in the various European universities outside of France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the British Isles during the modern period? What philosophical traditions or schools are to be found there?

The short answer is that it was not just rationalism and empiricism – and, in many places, it was not either. Instead, in those universities, there were very different currents of philosophy – most importantly, scholasticism and Platonic or neo-Platonic idealism.

Let me say something about these different currents of philosophy.

II.b.1 Scholasticism

Le scolastique, est, à proprement parler, non pas un corpus rigide de doctrine philosophique, mais plutôt une façon d'aborder la philosophie (et la théologie) qui prend ses origines au neuvième siècle. C'est une méthode pour résoudre un problème en mettant en opposition les autorités traditionnels, et qui cherche la résolution du problème par un maître : le *magister scolae* ou *scolasticus*. (Plusieurs philosophes scolastiques ont fait référence aux autorités telles que Platon, Aristote, les commentateurs arabes, ainsi qu'aux textes des Écritures Saintes.) Certes, il existe des thèmes récurrents dans les œuvres des auteurs scolastiques, tels que l'existence et la nature de Dieu, la nature et la diversité des êtres, la loi morale et les vertus, la description de ce qui existe et les débats épistémologiques qui s'en suivent, ainsi que les rapports entre la philosophie et la doctrine théologique. Néanmoins, les positions prises sur un grand nombre de ces sujets sont très variées.

Les philosophes scolastiques ont travaillé à partir des hypothèses voulant que l'être humain soit capable d'arriver à la vérité et à la certitude en ce qui concerne des sujets en deçà des expériences des sens, que toute existence reflète un ordre et une bonté, et que les vérités à propos de Dieu et de l'existence après la mort pourraient être connues par l'entremise de la raison et de l'argument rationnel.

Et bien que les philosophes scolastiques aient certes un intérêt dans la nature et l'objet de la religion, plusieurs d'entre eux ont voulu préciser que la philosophie est autonome en autant qu'elle puise uniquement dans la « raison ». Par conséquent, on s'intéresse aux sciences naturelles aussi qu'aux questions métaphysiques telles que le problème classique des universaux, c'est-à-dire, le problème d'expliquer comment divers particuliers peuvent être perçus comme étant du même genre, ou peuvent être désignés par les mêmes noms universels (ex., genus).

Le meilleur exemple du scolastique est sans doute le thomisme, qui emploie l'approche de résoudre ou de réconcilier les points de vue des autorités opposés, portant sur une grande diversité de questions philosophiques. [Autres traditions scholastiques sont le scotisme et le molinisme.] Alors que le thomisme prend racine dans la philosophie de saint Thomas d'Aquin, il puise aussi dans des traditions philosophiques antérieures, telles que celles de la Grèce, du Rome et du monde arabe médiéval. Ainsi, il prend les arguments et les conclusions de saint Thomas comme étant un encadrement dans lequel des questions peuvent être entretenues et, jusqu'à un certain point, résolues.

Le scolastique n'a pas pris fin à la fin du Moyen Âge. En Angleterre, après le seizième siècle, il a été en déclin (dans une certaine mesure à cause de son association avec l'allégeance avec Rome). Toutefois, il n'a pas disparu complètement ni tout à coup. Ici nous avons des personnages tels que John Case (m. 1600), John Sanderson de Cambridge (m. 1602), Richard Hooker (1553-1600), et Everard Digby (c.1551-1605) – dont les discours sur la logique ont peut-être été entendus par Francis Bacon.

Sur le continent (et surtout dans la péninsule ibérique), le scolastique a connu une renaissance au seizième siècle – qui est parfois nommé le 'second scolastique'. Par l'entremise des philosophes qui ont été influencés par l'œuvre de Duns Scot et de Thomas d'Aquin – tels

que Francisco de Vitoria (1485?-1546), et Luis de Molina (Portugal 1535-1600), ainsi que Thomas Cajetan (1469-1534), Gabriel Vasquez (1551-1604, qui a enseigné à Rome et à Alcalá), et Francisco Suarez (1548-1617) – nous retrouvons des influences importantes sur l'œuvre de Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) et Samuel von Pufendorf (1632-1696), surtout dans les domaines de la théorie économique et la théorie politique, tel que le développement de l'entreprise et l'expansion du commerce pour le bien-être social.

Le scolastique a prospéré à travers la plupart de l'Europe – en Italie, en Grèce (jusqu'au période de l'Empire ottoman), et dans ce qui est maintenant appelé la Belgique. Parmi les personnages principaux figurent le jésuite flamand Lenaert Leys (Leonardus Lessius, 1554-1623), l'Italien Cesare Cremonini (Caesar Cremoninus, 1550-1631), et le philosophe grec Andronikos Kallistos (1400-1486, qui a passé une grande partie de sa vie à Constantinople, mais aussi – après 1456 – à Bologne (1464), à Rome (1469), à Florence, à Paris et à Londres (1476)). Le scolastique s'est épanoui aussi en Pologne à partir du treizième siècle jusqu'au début du dix-huitième siècle. Par exemple, des historiens de la philosophie polonaise avaient tendance à commencer avec le philosophe scolastique (et le scientifique) Erazmus Ciolek Witelo (ca. 1230; m. après 1280 et avant 1314), puis Jan Szylling et Grzegorz of Stawiszyn à Cracovie à la fin du quinzième siècle et au début du seizième siècle. Le scolastique a retenu sa dominance en Pologne jusqu'au dix-huitième siècle (par exemple, aux universités de Cracovie et de Wilno et dans divers collèges d'ordres religieux). Il a continué de jouer un rôle en Allemagne; on constate qu'il y avait un lien entre la notion d'un être « supertranscendentale » dans le scolastique du dix-septième siècle ainsi que le concept de « transzendent » chez Kant.⁶

As the influence of scholastic philosophy started to wane in France, Germany, Switzerland, and Belgium, it came to have a strong presence throughout the Americas. We not only find scholasticism as a dominant tradition in North America (e.g., at seminaries and colleges in Quebec [from 1663] and in much of francophone Canada, and at Catholic colleges and universities in the United States), but also at Latin American universities from their beginnings in the 16th century to at least the late 18th century – at the University of St Thomas in Santo Domingo (1538), the University of Lima (1551), and in Quito (Ecuador, Universidad San

Fulgencio, 1586), Bogotá (Colombia, Universidad Santo Tomas, 1580), Santiago (Chile, Universidad San Felipe, 1738), and Havana (Cuba, Universidad San Gerónimo, 1728).⁷

Scholasticism revived in England in the nineteenth century. Following the conversion to Catholicism of a number of leading personalities, such as John Henry Newman, and the re-establishment of the Catholic hierarchy in England in 1850, there was a renewal of the study of scholastic authors, particularly Aquinas; this revival is sometimes referred to as “Neo-Scholasticism.” Newman’s disciple John Dobrée Dalgairns (1818-1876), the historian Walter Waddington Shirley (1828-1866), and the philosopher William George de Burgh (1866-1943), among others, were all influenced to greater or lesser degrees by neo-scholasticism – though neo-scholasticism was not without its opponents.

In short, in scholasticism we have a philosophical tradition in the West that carried on into, and through, the early, middle, and even late modern periods. It had a mark on the history of much of Europe and of many of its colonies around the world. Yet it is little known and is rarely mentioned in many philosophy departments today.

II.b.2 Idealism

An account of what was going on in philosophy in many universities in Europe at least to the middle of the last century – i.e., who was writing, and what they were writing about – needs to include not just scholasticism, but also neo-Platonism and idealism.

Admittedly, the term ‘idealism’ is ambiguous. By idealism I mean the view that there is no rigid distinction between the material and the mental, and that material objects, as we describe them or conceive of them, do not exist or have an essence independent of and outside the mind – or, at the very least, that there cannot be an adequate account of any aspect of reality without including a reference to mind or consciousness. (Neo-) Platonism would be, then, a kind of idealism, and it is clear that neo-Platonism did influence a number of idealists.

There is, of course, some recognition of the place of the idealist tradition in modern thought.

En toute justice, la plupart des philosophes reconnaissent que, à la fin du XVIIème siècle et au début du XIXème, certains efforts ont été réalisés en vue de surmonter cette dichotomie

du rationalisme/empirisme – ce sont principalement les philosophes allemands tels que Kant, Fichte, Schelling, et Hegel – et que ces derniers sont largement décrits comme étant idéalistes.

De toute façon, « l'opinion reçue » dit peu de choses sur les diverses formes de platonisme, néoplatonisme, et d'idéalisme – qui n'existaient pas uniquement en Allemagne et qui battaient aussi leur plein entre le Moyen-Âge et l'époque moderne.

Cet idéalisme néo-platonicienne avait pris racine chez Platon, et il paraît chez les personnages tels que Plotin, Porphyre, et aussi le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite, Hypatia d'Alexandria, Augustin, Boèce, Jean Scot Érigène, et Bonaventure. Aux XV^{ème} et XVI^{ème} siècles, on le voit en Italie, en Allemagne et ailleurs.

For example, the German mathematician, philosopher and priest, Nicholas Cusanus (1401-1464) challenged Aristotelianism (or the "Aristotelean Sect"), pursuing a 'mystical' approach to philosophy⁸ that led to the accusation that he was advancing a form of pantheism. Italians, such as Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499 – who provided a major translation of Plato from Greek to Latin, published in 1484) and his student, Count Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), based a number of their ideas on the work of Plato.

If we look at England in the seventeenth century, we see the idealism of the so-called Cambridge Platonists, such as Henry More (1614-1687) and Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688). In the 18th century, at Oxford, we have John Norris (1657-1711) and Arthur Collier (1680-1732). (Norris attempted a 'synthetic' approach of Plato, the late classical philosophy of Augustine, and the Cambridge Platonists, in developing a criticism of Locke. Collier was a contemporary of Berkeley, with whose views Collier has been compared, though he seems not to have read Berkeley's work.⁹) We have the idealism – or, arguably, radical empiricism – of George Berkeley (1685-1753) as well.

As noted above, the presence of Idealism in Germany in the late 18th and early 19th centuries – be it the transcendental Idealism of Immanuel Kant, the objective Idealism of G.W.F. Hegel, or that of Goethe, Fichte, and Schelling – is rather well known, and their work gave impetus to idealism throughout Europe. Idealism in Italy is, however, much less known. Certains ont perçu Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) comme précurseur d'un mouvement idéaliste en Italie, mouvement comparable à la tradition d'Hegel. Des figures du dix-huitième siècles, tels

qu'Antonio Rosmini-Serbati (1797-1855) et Antonio Labriola (1843-1904), peuvent être perçus comme d'autres interprètes de l'idéalisme italien. Cependant, c'est le représentant italien du Hegelisme, Augusto Vera (1813-1885), qui a fait partie du contexte sur lequel se sont inspirés des auteurs ultérieurs, comme Benedetto Croce (1866-1952) et Giovanni Gentile (1875-1944).

Admittedly, the idealisms that these various authors represented were not all of a kind. Berkeley's subjective Idealism is of a very different order than Kant's or Hegel's. Nevertheless, this does not vitiate the fact that much of the 'received' account of the history of modern philosophy overlooks, ignores, or deliberately excludes the tradition of neo-Platonism and idealism that was present in philosophy in many parts of Europe up to the end of the nineteenth century.

The preceding sketch illustrates that the dominant, 'received' view of the history of modern philosophy ignores significant traditions and authors, and it supports the view that, to understand correctly the modern period and the philosophical traditions that shaped it, this dominant view needs to be resisted. The description that many give of philosophy after the Middle Ages up to the end of the nineteenth century is far too narrow. The point here is not just that the 'received' view is inaccurate – that it squeezes certain figures into particular traditions so that, for example, it ignores complexities in their views (as when we are challenged by the question whether Berkeley is an empiricist or an idealist). Nor is it that there is a tendency to focus on just some texts of an author or aspects of their philosophies at the expense of their other, less traditionally consulted, texts. It is, more substantively, that the 'received' view tends to leave out at least two traditions or schools of thought which had a value and role in the history of modern thought in their own right.

It is, of course, the case that there is some serious scholarly work being carried out on some of the authors and traditions mentioned above. Nevertheless, such work is proportionately rare. When one looks at the way in which the story of modern philosophy is told, one needs to ask not only which authors and which of their texts are to be read, but whether there are whole traditions that are forgotten or are placed on the margins. To put it slightly differently, it is one thing to say, in describing philosophy, that it is about those

philosophers who have influenced *us*; it is quite another to say that our view broadly expresses what philosophy is.

Thus, the history of modern philosophy that we find in many university courses and most textbooks is a rather abridged one.

Yet perhaps one will say that to be concerned about this is to ignore the limited time scholars and students have to cover a large range of material, and that to ask scholars and students to consider a broader range of authors and traditions, is to insist on an odd antiquarianism about matters that are just historical curiosities. Before responding to this remark, however, I want to ask whether the situation is any different in how we look at contemporary philosophy.

II.c The twentieth century and forgotten philosophies

Lorsque nous abordons le XXème siècle, l'image de la philosophie est quelque peu modifiée. Tel que noté plus haut, nous ne cherchons plus à savoir si quelqu'un est un rationaliste, un empiriste, ni – même – un idéaliste. La façon dont la philosophie contemporaine est habituellement présentée repose plutôt sur le fait qu'elle est divisée entre le courant anglo-américain analytique, d'un côté, et de l'autre, la philosophie européenne continentale.

Encore une fois, cependant, quand nous nous arrêtons pour réfléchir sur le sujet, nous pourrions remarquer qu'un élément manque à notre analyse.

To begin with, philosophy in Asia (including India, China, Japan, and Southeast Asia), Africa, Latin America, and much of Eastern Europe again simply does not seem to be part of the discussion. The focus is, instead, on philosophy in United Kingdom, France, Germany, and the United States (and, though to a much lesser degree, in countries such as Australia and Canada) – countries that constitute much of what is called 'the industrialized world.'

Indeed, if we look closely, the way in which philosophy is presented in many texts and in many philosophy courses is much narrower than that. Philosophy in the industrialized world tends to be focussed on that done in a relatively small number of cities and universities. In a relatively recent volume entitled *Key Philosophers in Conversation*, Andrew Pyle reprints some twenty interviews that appeared in that journal between 1987 and 1996. The book professes to

provide “an excellent introduction to philosophy in the English speaking world at the end of the twentieth century.”¹⁰ What is striking, however, is the homogeneity of background and narrowness of the general research areas of the subjects. Half of the subjects work in the area of philosophy of mind or philosophy of language; another half dozen write in what might broadly be described as ethics and social philosophy. Of the twenty, some ten are graduates of Oxford; four of Harvard. While there is some diversity in the particular specialties of the authors interviewed, there is no representation of the large number of contemporary philosophers trained or working in phenomenology and post-modern thought, feminist thought, classical systematic metaphysics, idealism, Asian thought, and so on. So, we might well ask, again, what is going on in philosophy in the world outside these few cities and universities?

Ici, encore, on pourrait postuler que les philosophies asiatiques, africaines ou autochtones ne cadrent pas tout à fait avec les styles ou les méthodes de la philosophie européenne ou anglo-américaine. Mais il me semble beaucoup plus difficile de trouver des arguments qui militent en faveur de ceci, et il serait encore plus difficile de soutenir ce raisonnement. De ce fait, depuis le début du XXème siècle, les philosophies européennes et anglo-américaines étaient connus par les philosophes de l’Asie, de l’Amérique latine et certaines régions d’Afrique et retenaient l'attention de plusieurs d'entre eux. En effet, depuis la fin du XIXème siècle, de nombreux écrivains et savants de ces pays ont abordé la philosophie d'une manière qui devait être facilement reconnaissable aux philosophes de l'ouest.

In any case, there is much in philosophy, within the ‘industrialized world’ itself, that is neglected or overlooked if we seriously maintain the ‘standard’ view.

One should, for example, make room for pragmatism – which was not well received by many of the early twentieth century Anglo-American philosophers, such as Bertrand Russell.¹¹ There is also a tradition of Marxist philosophy, which is neither distinctively continental nor analytic, though it claims to have a strong realist and scientific approach and method. Further, while what is called postmodern thought may draw on authors who have their roots in Western Europe, it cannot be easily reduced to any preceding tradition.

More substantially – to follow up on the remarks made earlier – the traditions of idealism and Thomism remain excluded.

II.c.1 Le Thomisme

Entre la fin du XIX^{ème} siècle et le milieu du XX^{ème} siècle, le neo-scholasticisme thomiste a occupé une place importante dans plusieurs pays. Suite à l'encyclique *Aeterni Patris* du Pape Léon XIII en 1879, dans qu'il conseillait l'étude de la philosophie de saint Thomas d'Aquin, il y a eu un renouveau d'intérêt pour le thomisme, surtout dans les pays où le catholicisme romain était la religion dominante.

En Belgique, le philosophe thomiste, Maurice De Wulf (1867-1947), a été professeur pendant longtemps à l'Université catholique de Louvain. En Allemagne, parmi des penseurs thomistes reconnus, on comptait les théologiens Karl Eschweiler et Michael Schmaus (1897-1993), ainsi que le philosophe Josef Pieper (1904-1997). En dépit de la force dominante de l'idéalisme en Italie, le thomisme ou néo-scholastique est retrouvé au XIX^{ème} siècle dans les écrits de Gaetano Sanseverino (1811-1865) à Naples, et de Matteo Liberatore (1810-1892) à Rome, jusqu'à nos jours avec Vittorio Possenti (b. 1936). En Angleterre, on repère des philosophes qui ont enseigné dans les collèges et les universités catholiques, tel que Joseph Rickaby (1845-1942), M.C. d'Arcy (1888-1976), et F.C. Copleston (1907-1994), mais également ceux qui sont en dehors des traditions catholiques, tel que E.L. Mascall de King's College, Londres (1905-1993). De plus, on peut trouver des traces de thomisme chez les auteurs tel que le natif d'Australie, John Finnis (b. 1940), professeur de droit et de la philosophie du droit à University College Oxford, surtout dans son livre, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (1980), dans lequel Finnis ravive un compte rendu des droits naturels selon la tradition de la loi naturelle retrouvée chez Aquinas. Et au Canada et aux Etats-Unis tout au long du XX^{ème} siècle nous retrouvons des thomistes éminents tels Louis Lachance, OP (1899-1963) et Cornelius O'Brien (1843-1906, l'Archevêque de Halifax, mais qui était natif de l'ÎPE), R.J. Henle (1909-2001), John Courtney Murray (1904-1967), W. Norris Clarke (1915-2008), et Ralph McInerney (b. 1929).

The 'renewal' of scholastic, particularly Thomistic, philosophy in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries was not a matter of resurrecting a dead philosophy, but an attempt to bring Thomism into contact with modern (primarily, Kantian and post-Kantian) traditions in philosophy, and to engage the modern sciences. Joseph Maréchal (1878-1944), Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984), and Karl Rahner (1904-1984), attempted to address philosophical issues

in a way that took account of Kant's critique, and they are identified with what some call Transcendental Thomism. Others took an approach that emphasized natural science and natural philosophy over metaphysics; this approach is represented in the work of figures such as William H. Kane (1901-1970), Benedict Ashley (1915-2013), James Weisheipl (1923-1984), and William Wallace (1918-2015).¹² But some of the best known philosophers in the Thomistic tradition have come from France: Jean-Baptiste Henri-Dominique Lacordaire (1802-1861), Reginald Marie Garrigou-Lagrange (1877-1964), Etienne Gilson (1884-1978), and Jacques Maritain (1882-1973). Maritain is particularly interesting because, here, we have a philosopher initially trained in the natural sciences, specifically, biology, and who was initially influenced by positivism but also by Bergsonian 'idealism'. After his conversion to Catholicism, Maritain sought to bring the philosophy of Aquinas into contact with the sciences and the social sciences – particularly anthropology, ethnology, and psychology.¹³

When we look at European philosophy in the post-mediaeval period, then, it is at least unduly narrow, if not misleading, to see it as moving from scholasticism to rationalism and empiricism – and then to what we call today the Anglo-American analytic tradition, on the one hand, and the Continental European tradition, on the other. Scholasticism not only continued at many of the major European universities throughout the modern and contemporary period, it developed, and those engaged by it responded to challenges from figures like Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Kant, and Wittgenstein. And so, when we read or review the early modern and modern period, there is an entire discourse and approach to philosophy that needs to be recognised.

II.c.2 Idealism

The idealist traditions described above (II.b.2) had a broad reach, and they extend up to the present day. It is true that idealism – specifically, German idealism – waned through the late 19th century, so that by the beginning of the 20th century we have phenomenology largely taking its place. Yet this is not the whole story.

In the late 19th and 20th centuries, idealism continued to flourish quite apart from Germany – in Italy, France, the United States, Britain and much of the British empire (and, thus,

to varying degrees, in Canada, India, and Southern Africa) – and even in parts of Asia. In Italy, well-known idealists include, as noted above, Benedetto Croce (1866-1952), Giovanni Gentile (1875-1944), Armando Carlini (1878-1959), and Leone Vivante (1887-1970). There are also figures who championed idealism in Spain (e.g., José Ortega y Gasset (1883-1955), who was influenced by the neo-Kantianism of Hermann Cohen and Paul Natorp) and in France (e.g., Léon Brunschvicg (1869-1944), Jean Wahl (1888-1974), and Francois Houang (1911-1990)). In the United States, one finds a lengthy engagement with idealism beginning with Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), the so-called St Louis Hegelians, Josiah Royce (1855-1916) and, perhaps, G.H. Howison (1834–1916), up through Elijah Jordan (1875-1953) and J.N. Findlay (1903-1987), to Nicholas Rescher (b. 1928).

In Britain and its empire, idealism was represented by Thomas Taylor (1758-1835, known as “the English Platonist” who translated the complete works of Plato and Aristotle into English), but more powerfully by S.T. Coleridge (1772-1834), James Hutchison Stirling (1820-1909), and Edward Caird (1835-1908), T.H. Green (1836-1882), F.H. Bradley (1846-1924), Bernard Bosanquet (1848-1923), A.C. Ewing (1899-1973), R.G. Collingwood (1889-1943), Michael Oakeshott (1901-1990), and G.R.G. Mure (1893-1979), up to Timothy L. S. Sprigge (1932-2007). Similar trends are found in Canada [from John Watson (1847–1939) to Leslie Armour (b. 1931)], Australia [Francis Anderson (1858-1941), Mungo MacCallum (1854-1942), and William Mitchell (1861-1962)], and South Africa [R.F.A. Hoernlé (1880-1943), J.C. Smuts (1870-1950), A.R. Lord (1880–1941), and A.H. Murray (1905-1997)].

Further, there is a long tradition of European-influenced idealism in Asia. India had major twentieth-century representatives in P.T. Raju (1904-1992), J.C.P. d’Andrade (1888-1949), and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975). Indeed, idealism has arguably even had an influence in China and Japan with such figures as Yang Ch'ang-chi (1971-1920)¹⁴, Nishi Shin'ichirō (1873-1943), and – one of the greatest thinkers of modern Japan – Kitarō Nishida (1870-1945). (Let me parenthetically add just a quick word on this latter influence of idealism: What may have made western schools of idealism attractive in Asia, at least at the beginning of the 20th century, was that idealism professed to be open to all experience – ethical, religious, and aesthetic – regardless of culture.)

In the late twentieth century, one finds a resurgence of views that reflect an idealism, though they do not use the word itself. Some of those writing in the areas of ecology and animal rights have come to adopt panpsychism. Also defended by idealists such as Bradley and Sprigge, this view holds that not just non-human animals, but also plants and even non-animate forms, can be said to be the subjects of experiences. Contemporary anti-realism, perfectionism, and communitarianism as well reflect ideas that many idealists would have found congenial.

In short, once again, the standard or default picture of the history of philosophy and philosophical traditions seems to leave out, or forget, or place on the margins, vital traditions that characterized and determined philosophical discourse in much of Europe, but also Latin America, Asia, Africa, and even parts of North America.

My point here is not, as some may think, simply that we should add certain figures to the list of those considered in studies of contemporary philosophy. It is, more substantively, that we may be leaving out important alternative traditions or schools of thought which have had a value and role in their own right in the history of modern thought. Now, I am not claiming that there is no serious scholarly work being carried out on the authors that I have mentioned. There is. Still, when we look at the way in which the story of contemporary philosophy is usually told, it is not just a question of which 'canonical' texts are being read, but that whole traditions seem to have been forgotten or relegated to the margins.

III. The Contributions of Forgotten Philosophies

Cependant, un critique sceptique pourrait réagir en demandant exactement quelle est l'importance de ces traditions philosophiques. Même si on accepte qu'il existe d'importants courants ou traditions qui ne trouvent pas leur place dans notre 'récit' de philosophie après le Moyen Âge, en dehors de leur intérêt historique, pourquoi les philosophes de nos jours doivent-ils s'en préoccuper? On pourrait dire que l'histoire de la philosophie est ce qu'elle est. Dans ce contexte, la possibilité que l'histoire de la philosophie ait été différente de ce qu'elle est si certains auteurs avait été disponibles est, tout au plus, d'intérêt purement spéculatif.

In response, I would argue that knowing that there are other traditions, and understanding their contributions to philosophy, does make a difference to *doing* philosophy. It affects how philosophers are to understand the history of philosophy, and get the story of philosophy right. It says something about how one understands the nature of philosophy, what it is, what it isn't, and what is of value in philosophy. (Is it solving certain problems? Is it the love and pursuit of wisdom? What methods or approaches are appropriate?) It affects the nature and character of the philosophies we are familiar with, for it tells us, at the very least, how they were received and, if they were significant outside of their place of origin, why they were so. It allows us to see better our own philosophical assumptions by contrast, and enjoins us to respond appropriately. It affects how we pass on our understanding of philosophy and of philosophical positions. And knowledge of these other traditions provides us with additional intellectual resources to engage in philosophy.

I would add that: if certain traditions are absent from the discussion, it may affect how we frame the questions we ask and, even more likely, how they are to be answered. If certain traditions are absent from discussion, we exclude diversity. Some scholars have argued that philosophy needs diversity – i.e., that, given diversity of experience, the more diversity one acknowledges, the more comprehensive and coherent a philosophical view one will be able to have. Finally, the recognition of forgotten or marginalized traditions reminds us of something important about philosophy – that philosophy is not done in a vacuum; the more we understand the philosophical questions we pursue, what they presuppose, and what counts as a satisfactory answer, the more we understand what philosophy is.

To show this and to support these claims, I will refer again to two of the 'forgotten' traditions mentioned above – Thomism and idealism – but also make a few comments on an approach that is, today, still largely on the margins – comparative philosophy.

III.a. Le scolastique et le thomisme

Je veux premièrement parler de la place possible et du rôle de la tradition scolastique – et en particulier du thomisme – dans la philosophie contemporaine.

Quoique le Thomisme semble occuper une place plutôt marginale dans la discussion philosophique contemporaine, il a eu – tel que je l’ai décrit ci-dessus – une histoire du moins aussi longue que le rationalisme et l’empirisme, et il se perçoit comme étant un critique tranchant des deux. Par exemple, l’*Antimoderne* de Jacques Maritain, écrit en 1922, critique la philosophie ‘moderne’ en utilisant des raisons semblables à celles des philosophes post-modernes.¹⁵ A vrai dire, si l’on considère les traditions philosophiques d’Espagne, du Portugal, de l’Amérique latine et d’une grande partie du sud de l’Europe, le thomisme était vraisemblablement la théorie philosophique dominante jusqu’aux années soixante.

Néanmoins, on pourrait se demander, qu’est-ce que le thomisme peut-il contribuer aujourd’hui? J’aimerais proposer qu’un domaine évident se trouve dans l’étude de la théorie éthique.

Lorsqu’on fait un survol de ce qui est enseigné aujourd’hui dans les cours relevant de la théorie de l’éthique – particulièrement dans le cadre des programmes pré-doctorales – on retrouve le conséquentialisme (J.S. Mill, d’habitude, et parfois Jeremy Bentham ou Henry Sidgwick), l’éthique déontologique (Kant), la théorie de la vertu et, peut-être, les éthiques féministes, les théories contractariennes, et les discussions généralisées portant sur le relativisme et l’égoïsme.

Ce que le thomisme pourrait contribuer à cette liste serait la théorie de la loi naturelle.

Si elle est du tout mentionnée dans les discussions de l’éthique, la loi naturelle est rarement présentée comme option vivante. Elle est parfois amalgamée à une théorie de commandement divin et parfois avec la théorie de la vertu. Lorsqu’elle est présentée comme une théorie propre à elle, c’est d’habitude par l’entremise d’un texte-source assez difficile, c’est-à-dire le traitement retrouvé chez saint Thomas dans la Question 94 de la Prima Secundae de la *Somme Theologique*. Tout de même, la théorie de la loi naturelle chez les thomistes comprend un certain nombre de partisans distingués au cours du siècle dernier. Déjà, parmi les philosophes du monde de langue anglaise et française, on peut compter Jacques Maritain, John Finnis, Germain Grisez, Yves Simon, John Hittinger, et Ralph McInerny

L’omission des théories thomistiques de la loi naturelle – et il en existe différentes versions – est frappante, même si l’on maintient, en fin de compte, qu’elles soient

insatisfaisantes. On s'attendrait, du moins, à ce qu'elles soient remises en question comme d'autres théories de l'éthique influentes l'ont été.

Une des critiques des théories modernes d'éthique est qu'elles reflètent un point de vue trop étroit ou trop mince de la personne humaine – c'est-à-dire, une perspective de la personne humaine comme un être purement rationnel, ou comme un être motivé, dans le fond, par l'intérêt personnel et le désir (par exemple, la recherche du plaisir ou - tel que Hobbes le dirait – de "pouvoir recherchant pouvoir").

L'approche thomiste offre un point de vue plus robuste de la nature humaine et rend compte de l'être humain comme un être rationnel, mais qui est encadré socialement et qui a une histoire. Ainsi, il va de soi que les êtres humains sont des êtres de sentiments et de penchants en plus des êtres de raison, qui poursuivent naturellement un nombre de biens ou de 'fins' qui contribuent à leur croissance et épanouissement, tels que la vie, la santé la sécurité, la connaissance, les relations avec d'autres en général et en particulier (c-à-d, l'amitié), la vie 'spirituelle', et la paix. The Thomist natural law view also takes account of both motive and consequences in moral action, recognizes the place of proper self-interest, provides a context in which virtue is defined and justified, and provides an objective and universal standard of morality that is external to the agent. To this extent, then, Thomism addresses some of the challenges to other moral theories.

C'est ici que les écrits de Jacques Maritain nous apprennent beaucoup. Maritain fournit effectivement une version modernisée de la théorie de la loi naturelle – c'est-à-dire, il voit le moral comme étant enraciné dans la nature téléologique de l'être humain, un être qui cherche à réaliser certaines fins par l'entremise de ses actions. Maritain maintient que nous ne pouvons pas avoir un portrait complet de la personne humaine sans que nous la percevions, non seulement comme un individu, mais aussi comme une personne, et ceci requiert la connaissance de la psychologie humaine, de l'ethnologie et aussi du caractère spirituel de la personne. C'est ce que Maritain nomme son compte rendu 'ontologique.'¹⁶

Mais Maritain souligne – et voici ce qu'il a contribué de particulier à la théorie de la loi naturelle – qu'il existe aussi une dimension épistémologique (ce qu'il qualifie de dimension 'gnoséologique') de la loi naturelle. La loi naturelle est naturelle puisqu'elle peut être connue de

façon naturelle. Maritain reconnaît que le jugement de ce qui est la nature de l'être humain n'est pas donné *a priori*, et qu'il nécessite plutôt beaucoup d'observation, de réflexion et de discernement pendant un bon moment. C'est ce qu'il nomme la connaissance par l'entremise de l'inclination ou la connaissance connaturelle.

Maritain souligne également que la connaissance de cette loi est influencée par les circonstances historiques et le contexte – quoique ce ne soit pas de façon arbitraire. Ainsi, Maritain dirait que notre acceptation des autres êtres comme étant 'comme nous' se soit située à un certain moment au cours de l'histoire humaine, mais que cela ne signifie pas que le fait que nous en sommes venus à cette connaissance d'une manière purement arbitraire. (De cette manière, il cherche à éviter des accusations d'historicisme). Et il suggère qu'en mettant ces lois en vigueur, nous devons tenir compte, du moins largement, de l'environnement ou du contexte dans lequel on se retrouve. Par exemple, le comportement éthique et l'action dans un camp de concentration ne sont pas pareils à l'action éthique dans une société stable et établie. Cependant, cette reconnaissance de la diversité et de la variabilité des coutumes, des mœurs et de la pratique éthique ne vicie pas l'objectivité de l'éthique ni l'existence de la loi naturelle.

Ainsi, comme la plupart des théories de l'éthique, la théorie de la loi naturelle de Maritain propose un ensemble de principes du bien et du mal – des principes qui sont normatifs et obligatoires pour tous les êtres humains en raison de leur nature en tant qu'êtres humains.

Thomistic natural law theories, moreover, have provided arguments for, and defend the existence of, principles of international law. They also supply arguments through which values, such as human dignity, are recognised and defended; Maritain, for example, used such arguments to provide a justification of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

Thus, it seems as though Thomism may provide an alternative to a number of major ethical theories, and the tradition as a whole may have resources that can address at least some of the standard criticisms of it.

In short, whether one is persuaded by arguments for a natural law theory or not, Thomism clearly is an alternative to other theories, one which has been influential, and one which recognises a number of values to which many people are at least intuitively committed.

The Thomistic account provides a rationale for ethical principle, and with an opportunity to determine whether alternative accounts actually fare much better.

III.b. Idealism

As noted earlier, when many philosophers hear the word ‘idealism,’ they tend to think of the subjective idealism of Berkeley, or perhaps the idealism of Plato or Plotinus, or possibly that of Kant, or of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. If one were to pause a little, perhaps the names of Bradley, Bosanquet, Green, McTaggart, or Collingwood would come to mind. There is, as noted above, a long tradition of idealism in the western world, and there is just about as long a tradition in Asian thought typified by the Advaita Vedanta – of the non-dualistic Vedanta of Gaudapada in the 7th century CE and of Sankara in the 8th century.

There are reasons why it might be useful to know about this tradition today.

For many – and it was certainly the case for me as an undergraduate student in the 1970s – it has been thought that idealism was largely put to rest by G.E. Moore’s 1903 paper ‘The Refutation of Idealism.’¹⁷ Moreover, as the late David Stove alleged (expressing a sentiment echoed by many), idealism depended on “the worst argument in the world” – what he called ‘the Gem’: that “We can know things only as they are related to us or under our forms of perception and understanding, and so we cannot know things as they are in themselves.”¹⁸ Finally, to assist in its demise, idealist metaphysics was also pilloried by figures after Moore, such as Bertrand Russell and A.J. Ayer.¹⁹

Interestingly, in political philosophy and political theory, the critique of idealism occurred some time after Moore’s essay. Some believe that the First World War, during which idealist political philosophy was associated with Prussian imperialism, sounded the death knell of (German-influenced) idealist political philosophy. Stefan Collini writes that up to the 1920s, “[a]n attack on the neo-Hegelian theory of the state became almost a rite de passage for the budding social scientist.”²⁰ For some, the rejection of idealism in political theory came a bit later, still. In the 1950s, Idealism’s advocacy of what has come to be known as “positive liberty” was mentioned – only to be ardently rejected – by Isaiah Berlin in his 1958 inaugural lecture as Chichele Professor in Social and Political Theory at Oxford, *Two Concepts of Liberty*.²¹

Many of these criticisms were, I have argued elsewhere²², unfair but, regardless, the analyses of authors such as Green, Bosanquet, and, to a certain extent, Collingwood, have disappeared from many accounts of modern political philosophy.

What, then, would a more careful study of philosophical idealism – for example, of late 19th and early 20th century British idealism – have to offer?

First, idealism addresses arguments in logic.²³ Fred Wilson has argued that the account of scientific inference given by Bosanquet succeeds in replying to empiricist accounts of lawful or causal necessity in a way in which those of more recent critics (such as Fred Dretske and David Armstrong) do not – though Wilson does not, in the end, find Bosanquet’s view persuasive.²⁴ Second, idealism provides an account of religion and religious belief that focuses on the practical and on practice rather than on creeds or propositions focussing on beings or events in the history of the community of believers – a view that not only had a profound influence in its time, but is held rather widely now.²⁵ But further, and more significantly, idealism provides valuable insights that bear on questions of contemporary political philosophy.

One of the standard questions discussed in contemporary political philosophy is how to balance the liberty and independence of the individual with responsibilities and obedience to the community. This problem is, of course, not new. Idealists such as Bosanquet, however, sought to resolve this by, on the one hand, addressing various forms of individualism (e.g., the natural rights egoism of Herbert Spencer, and the utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill), while, on the other hand, avoiding various forms of collectivism (including both the Fabian socialism of Sidney and Beatrice Webb and Sidney Ball,²⁶ and the more thoroughgoing socialism of Marx) – views that, in many respects, are present today.

Is it possible to have a genuinely liberal political philosophy that allows for a substantive guarantee for welfare and positive liberty? Can we construct an account of society where the state provides the material conditions for liberty, social institutions, and the development of individual moral character, while nevertheless ensuring a substantive respect for and a guarantee of human rights? We find, in idealist philosophers, the development of “non-individualist” liberal thought, that combines a thoroughgoing emphasis on community with a

(perhaps unique) strong defense of economic individualism.²⁷ Jerry Gaus, for example, sees British idealism as providing a model of a “substantive liberalism.”²⁸

The influence of British Idealism on social and public policy (through the late 19th and early 20th century) is widely recognised, and several of those who went on to be Liberal or Labour MPs were themselves idealists or the students of idealists. Idealism was, in short, one of the major responses to utilitarianism and to various forms of individualism of that time, and it therefore arguably continues to provide resources to address contemporary issues.

For example, the British idealism of Bosanquet includes not only an account of, but provides a defense of, group rights and positive rights. It recognises the importance of individual rights while, at the same time, acknowledging that rights themselves have to be understood in relation to a common good (and so does not require that one adopt a liberal individualist political philosophy). It provides a model for the relation of the individual to the community that is an alternative to both communitarianism and individualist libertarianism.²⁹

Today, in a period in which liberals are faulted for ignoring or for failing to appreciate fully the social embeddedness of the human individual, idealist political thought is inviting.

As an alternative to many standard and current liberal accounts of political philosophy – and as one that has been influential has been a useful critique of collectivism and individualism – idealism, at the very least, provides options and resources that make a difference to doing philosophy – and not just the history of philosophy – today.

3. Cross-cultural or Comparative Philosophy

A third tradition or current of philosophy that I wish to mention before concluding is not so much forgotten as simply left on the margins – perhaps because many are not quite sure what to do with it. This is Cross-cultural or Comparative Philosophy.

L'étude des philosophies asiatiques est établie depuis longtemps, bien que dans le monde anglo-américain elle ait fait partie des programmes des départements d'études religieuses. Plus récemment, les philosophies africaines et autochtones ont fait leur entrée aux programmes d'études universitaires mais, encore une fois, ce sont des domaines étudiées en dehors des départements de philosophie. (La situation semble être en train de changer au

Canada; plusieurs départements de philosophie au Canada offrent maintenant des cours de philosophie asiatique. Il y a également une grande ouverture à l'enseignement des philosophies, autre que celles de l'Europe ou de l'Occident, dans de petites universités et des cégeps.)

This increasing awareness of Asian philosophy should, I think, open us to what we might call cross-cultural or comparative philosophy – though comparative philosophy is much more than the study of non-western philosophies.

Les origines de la philosophie comparée ou interculturelle sont peu claires. Une des approches est fondée dans la tradition phénoménologique de l'Europe, et se trouve chez Paul Masson-Oursel (1882–1956), professeur à l'École pratique des Hautes Études et pendant longtemps directeur de la *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger*.³⁰ Masson-Oursel définissait la philosophie comparée comme étant « l'examen général des façons selon lesquelles les êtres humains de toutes les races et de toutes les cultures réfléchissent sur leurs actions et agissent sur leurs réflexions. » (traduction libre³¹) « Le véritable problème de la philosophie comparée consiste, non pas dans la détermination de son concept, mais dans la poursuite d'une méthode rigoureuse. »³²

Another approach to comparative philosophy is a result of the contact between British and Indian philosophers in the early and mid 20th century, such as Alban Widgery, P.T. Raju, and – most famously – Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. Radhakrishnan and Raju not only sought to engage philosophies outside of India and the Hindu traditions, but proposed the development of a “comparative philosophy” that would involve philosophical traditions from the West, from China, and from India. For example, Raju held that, in Chinese thought, we find an autonomous, social ethics based in human nature; in Indian thought, the reality and autonomy of the inner spiritual life; and in Western thought, a view of life as rooted in physical nature. These traditions, Raju writes, are distinctive, yet complementary. The complementarity of each tradition provides, according to Raju, a means by which each can “widen its scope” – but he also suggests that “they can be brought together.”³³

There have been other, more recent, approaches, such as the work of Ram Adhar Mall³⁴ and Franz Martin Wimmer.³⁵ For Wimmer, intercultural philosophy is “the endeavour to give

expression to the many and often marginalised voices of philosophy in their respective cultural contexts and thereby to generate a shared, fruitful discussion granting equal rights to all”, and its aim is “to facilitate and develop a new and timely culture of a plurality of philosophical dialogues between thinkers from around the world” – what he calls a polylog.³⁶ Like Masson-Oursel, then, Wimmer wishes to open up philosophy by promoting exchange and rejecting an external, normative standard of philosophy.

Given these varied approaches, the objective of comparative philosophy may seem somewhat vague. Does it simply aim to bring philosophical traditions into contact? *or* into dialogue? Is it simply to compare concepts or arguments or traditions? Or is the ‘comparative activity’ more substantive; is it, for example, to aim at some “integrative” outlook based on assumptions about “a common platform” from which philosophical reflection is to begin, namely certain common interest and aspirations of humanity?³⁷ While these, and related questions are germane, one can say that, generally, comparative philosophy is an approach to philosophy whereby philosophers seek to set into dialogue different cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and philosophical traditions. It aspires to include, and draw on, all philosophical traditions from across the globe and, at the same time, avoid using any one of these traditions as normative. Moreover, it goes beyond a mere catalogue of different opinions and philosophical perspectives, and seeks an exchange whereby traditions learn from one another and draw on one another in addressing shared philosophical questions.

On pourrait penser que, depuis le début, il existe des défis appréciables dans les études de la philosophie comparée. Dans certaines traditions, l'étude de la philosophie est pratiquée sous forme de commentaires sur ce que nous pourrions définir comme des textes religieux, ce qui ne correspond pas à *nos* conceptions de la discipline. Il y a des différences notables entre les styles et les méthodes des traditions asiatiques ou autochtones et ceux de la tradition européenne. Effectivement, un des défis reconnus est celui de savoir comment comprendre des traditions philosophiques différentes lorsque nous abordons les questions d'une autre façon, selon des traditions et des cultures différentes de celles où on a formulé les questions.

Still, these concerns may not be all that novel. Much of the philosophy done in the West is already, in some sense, cross-cultural if not intercultural. Most of the philosophical texts and

traditions we study and respond to have migrated from the cultures and traditions in which they were initially expressed.³⁸ Thus, when it comes to matters of methodology, we may consider turning to what Collingwood called the method of “question and answer” in philosophy – of “asking questions and answering them.”³⁹ This recognises that philosophy is written in a context, in answer to specific questions, and that we need to know those questions and that context before we can assess the quality of the philosopher’s answer.

Still, a critic might ask, what would the study of comparative philosophy offer philosophy today?

Premièrement, elle nous ferait comprendre que nos questions philosophiques sont, au moins dans une certaine mesure, un produit de la culture autour de nous ou bien une réponse à celle-ci, et que nos cultures sont de plus en plus pluralistes. Ces constatations nous obligent à répondre à cette diversité et à y participer activement. Ceci est certainement le cas lorsque nous enseignons la philosophie ou lorsque nous présentons nos recherches au grand public. Nous pourrions essayer de nouer le dialogue avec nos étudiantes et étudiants ou avec des membres de la communauté en portant un regard sur les questions conceptuelles ou philosophiques qui s'ensuivent de leurs cultures et de leurs intérêts. En fait, les questions soulevées et les façons d'aborder les questions pourrait intervenir non seulement sur notre réponse mais aussi sur la façon de savoir ce qui constitue une réponse; “le philosophe comparatiste tient compte des facteurs qui produisent et qui transforment le raisonnement, ainsi que ceux qui les subvertissent.”⁴⁰

Second, while the study of comparative philosophy encounters a number of challenges, it also offers opportunities. In some areas, such as aesthetics, the contact with other traditions may stimulate and be inviting. As Keith Lehrer has written in the context of a discussion of Vietnamese and Western art, “Art changes us by changing how we autonomously think about our world and our place in it.”⁴¹ In other areas, such as political philosophy, the effort to acknowledge and respond to differences of culture and tradition will encounter challenges – and the scholar of comparative philosophy may need to go some way into those traditions in order to understand why there are such challenges – but, by doing so, one may also acquire a

broader or a deeper understanding of questions about the nature of the state and the individual.

In some areas, comparative philosophy may require philosophers to call into question how they approach the subject matter entirely, as in the philosophy of religion. When one encounters a religion without God – which is arguably the case of Buddhism – a number of the classical problems of the philosophy of religion would seem to be altogether irrelevant, and the philosophy of religion may need to be rethought – to become, perhaps, more of a phenomenology of religions.

Troisièmement, l'étude de la philosophie comparée pourrait nous dire quelque chose à propos de la nature de la philosophie, et des relations que la philosophie entretient avec la culture. La philosophie et les questions philosophiques viennent de la culture, des préoccupations et des enjeux qui existent dans la culture, et elles viennent aussi des philosophes que nous lisons et auxquels nous répondons.

Interroger d'autres cultures et d'autres traditions pourrait aussi nous obliger à revoir les nôtres; il nous obligera, certes, à prendre conscience de nos présupposés et, comme c'est le cas chaque fois que nous sommes confrontés à de nouvelles informations, nous pourrions être obligés à remettre en question nos propres perspectives et à nous pencher sur des points de vue alternatifs.

To ignore traditions of philosophy rooted in other cultures, then, would seem to be difficult to justify. If we are tempted to continue to do so, is it because we think that there is little or nothing philosophically valuable that is going on in those traditions? Or is it that it is simply more comfortable to be interested in the traditions of our philosophical 'ancestors' than consider someone else's?

What the conditions would be for a genuinely comparative philosophy and whether we should engage in it are questions that are challenging, but they are challenges that we should at least be open to addressing.

Conclusion

Le but de mon intervention aujourd'hui a été de nous inviter à réfléchir sur notre façon de lire l'histoire de la philosophie et sur notre façon de comprendre les traditions philosophiques, de puiser dans ces sources et d'y donner suite.

J'ai voulu également nous rappeler qu'il existe peut-être une tendance de comprendre la philosophie et les traditions philosophiques selon des perspectives et des méthodes qui pourraient finir par occulter, sous-estimer ou faire abstraction des éléments importants ou des courants de pensées de grande valeur.

Finalement, mes commentaires soulignent la pertinence d'une plus grande ouverture envers d'autres traditions, de l'importance de nous ouvrir afin d'accueillir des traditions qui ont été jusqu'ici oubliées, écartées ou marginalisées.

I would argue, then, that we need the resources of as many traditions as possible. If certain traditions are absent from philosophical consideration, then either we fail to understand and learn from the history in terms of which philosophy is done, or we run the risk that we will not have the resources to challenge our own views and assumptions, or we will find that we do not completely respond to key philosophical questions. The more comprehensive the understanding of philosophy and the history of philosophy that one has, the more likely that one's own philosophical views are comprehensive and coherent. To continue to relegate certain philosophies to the margins, or to forget 'forgotten philosophies', is to risk a situation where we continue to do philosophy in a way that is comfortable or convenient, and to deprive ourselves of what might enable us to do philosophy better.

NOTES

¹ "Richard Rorty at Princeton: Personal Recollections," *Arion*, Vol 15, No. 3 (Winter 2008), 85-100.

² Apparently Rorty did carry out a part of this project, according to Brian Leiter, in a course on "Kant to 1900" that covered "bad and misguided reactions to Kant (Fichte and Hegel) and good, i.e., proto-pragmatist reactions to Kant (Marx, Nietzsche, and, of course, James)." See Brian Leiter, "In Memoriam: Richard Rorty (1931-2007)," http://leiterreports.typepad.com/blog/2007/06/in_memoriam.html

³ That Berkeley is generally grouped with the empiricists is interesting, although one might say that his idealism is simply an empiricism taken to its logical conclusion. For example, Berkeley holds that what we perceive are ideas, and not external objects; this is a view that we find in Hume as well. See Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, in *The Philosophical Works*, ed. M. R. Ayers (London: Dent, 1975), 61–129, Part 1, 1, and Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. and intro. S. Buckle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), Section 2, 12.

⁴ See Anthony Kenny, "Introduction," in *Rationalism, Empiricism, and Idealism: British Academy Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, ed. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁵ Some argue that, some centuries before, there was a university at Constantinople in the Byzantine Empire; for some, this is the Pandidakterion, established in 425, for others this is the University of the Palace Hall of Magnaura, established in 849. In any event, by the late 15th century, no university institution existed in Constantinople.

⁶ See John P. Doyle, "Between transcendental and transcendental: the missing link?" *The Review of Metaphysics* 50 (1997): 783-815

⁷ Many of these universities were secularised in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

⁸ "...the Aristotelian sect now prevails." See Nicholas Cusanus, *Apologia doctae ignorantiae*. tr, Jasper Hoskins, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: The Arthur J. Banning Press, 1988), p. 463.

⁹ An indication of Collier's idealism is that he was the author of the paradoxical 1713 *Clavis Universalis [The Universal Key], or A New Inquiry after Truth, being a Demonstration of the Non Existence or Impossibility of an External World* (London, 1917); reprinted Samuel Parr, DD (London, 1837). For the comparison to Berkeley, see C.J. McCracken and I.C. Tipton (eds.) *Berkeley's Principles and Dialogues: Background Source Materials* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), ch. 11.

¹⁰ Andrew Pyle, ed., *Key Philosophers in Conversation: The Cogito interviews* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999).

¹¹ See, for example, Jane Duran, "Russell on Pragmatism," in *Russell: the Journal of the Bertrand Russell Archives*, n.s. 14 (summer 1994): 31-7.

¹² These Aristotelian Thomists were called the "River Forest" Dominicans. They were associated with the Dominican House of Studies, at River Forest, Illinois, in the 1950s and 1960s. For a description of this neo-Thomist camp, see Benedict Ashley, "The River Forest School and the Philosophy of Nature Today," in *Philosophy and the God of Abraham*, ed. R. James Long (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1991): 1-16.

¹³ For a survey of Maritain's work, see, for example, my "Jacques Maritain", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2013/entries/maritain/>.

¹⁴ *Xiyang lunli zhuyi shuping* (Exposition and critique of western ethical thought), published in the magazine *Dongfang zazhi* (February to April, 1916), and later, in Shanghai, in 1923. For further background on Changji, see Frederic E. Wakeman, *History and Will: Philosophical Perspectives of Mao Tse-tung's Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

¹⁵ Jacques Maritain, *Antimoderne* (Paris: Revue des Jeunes, 1922)

¹⁶ Jacques Maritain, *Natural Law. Reflections on Theory and Practice*, Preface and editon by William Sweet (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2001).

¹⁷ G.E. Moore, "The Refutation of Idealism," *Mind* n.s. 12 (1903): 433-53. Moore's rejection of idealism is an interesting one, for many reasons. Russell's extended correspondence with F.H. Bradley up to the latter's death is certainly noteworthy in taking account of the usefulness of drawing on the idealist tradition.

¹⁸ James Franklin, "Stove's Discovery of the Worst Argument in the World," *Philosophy* 77 (2002): 615-24.

¹⁹ Ayer, for example, used a sentence – misquoted – from F.H. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* as an example of a 'meaningless' statement. See *Language, Truth, and Logic* (New York: Dover, 1952), p. 36. Similarly, Russell referred to Bosanquet's metaphysics as vague and obscurantist – "unspeakably disgusting" "Hegel's rotting carcass infecting the air." See "The Philosophy of Good Taste / Letter of 25 April 1912," in *Bertrand Russell, Logical and Philosophical Papers, 1909-13*, ed. John Greer Slater and Bernd Frohmann (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 366.

²⁰ Stefan Collini, "Sociology and Idealism in Britain: 1880-1920," *Archives européennes de sociologie* 19 (1978): 3-50, at p. 27, n. 27.

²¹ *Two Concepts of Liberty* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958).

²² See, for example, my *Idealism and Rights* (Lanham, MD, 1997), my *Bernard Bosanquet and the Legacy of British Idealism* (Toronto, 2007), and my *The Moral, Social, and Political Philosophy of the British Idealists* (Exeter, UK: Imprint Academic, forthcoming).

²³ It is interesting that, after Wittgenstein's (unsuccessful) 1914 BA thesis for Trinity College, Cambridge – which Wittgenstein had dictated to Moore – Wittgenstein wrote to Moore that "As to a Preface and Notes; I think my examiners will easily see how much I have cribbed from Bosanquet." See "Letter of May 7, 1914," in *Wittgenstein in Cambridge: Letters and Documents 1911-1951*, ed. Brian F. McGuinness (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), p. 73.

²⁴ F. Wilson, "Empiricism: Principles and Problems," in W. Sweet, ed., *Approaches to Metaphysics* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer, 2004).

²⁵ See Alan P.F. Sell, *The Philosophy of Religion 1875-1980* (London: Croom Helm, 1988); Leslie Armour, "The Idealist Philosophers' God," *Laval théologique et philosophique*, Vol 58, No 3 (2002): 443-455;

Timothy Maxwell Gouldstone. *The Rise and Decline of Anglican Idealism in the Nineteenth Century*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005).

²⁶ The Fabian Society, founded in 1883, included a number of reformers, such as Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Annie Besant, Sidney Ball, G.B. Shaw, H.G. Wells, and Bertrand Russell. The Fabians were not a political party; many of them were associated with the radical wing of the Liberal Party and, later, Labour, but they also had allies in the Conservative Party. The major causes of economic poverty were, the Fabians held, structural and not the fault of the individuals concerned. Social change, therefore, must occur through legislation and economic reform. See the "Introduction," to Bernard Bosanquet, *The Philosophical Theory of the State and Related Essays*, eds. Gerald F. Gaus and William Sweet (South Bend, IN: St Augustine's Press, 2001), p. xviii.

²⁷ See note 22, above.

²⁸ See, for example, Gerald F. Gaus, *The Modern Liberal Theory of Man* (Canberra: Croom Helm, 1983), pp. 3-9. See also his *Justificatory Liberalism: An Essay on Epistemology and Political Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

²⁹ See my "Individual Rights, Communitarianism, and British Idealism," in *The Bill of Rights: Bicentennial Reflections*, ed. Yeager Hudson and Creighton Peden (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1993), pp. 261-277.

³⁰ In his 1911 essay "Objet et méthode de la philosophie comparée" (*Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 19e année, n° 4, juillet 1911, pp. 561-568) and in *La philosophie comparée* (Alcan, Paris 1923; translated as *Comparative Philosophy*, London 1926), his focus was on logic.

³¹ Paul Masson-Oursel, "True Philosophy is Comparative Philosophy," *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1951), pp 6-9, at p 6.

³² Masson-Oursel, "Objet et méthode de la philosophie comparée."

³³ P.T. Raju, *Introduction to Comparative Philosophy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1962), p. 335.

³⁴ "The Concept of an Intercultural Philosophy," tr. Michael Kimmel, in *polylog: Forum for Intercultural Philosophy* 1 (2000). Online: <http://them.polylog.org/1/fmr-en.htm>.

³⁵ See F.M. Wimmer, *Interkulturelle Philosophie. Theorie und Geschichte* (Wien: Passagen, 1990).

³⁶ Cited from the discussion of 'polylog' at: <http://ev.polylog.org/> See also, for example, Franz Martin Wimmer, *Essays on Intercultural Philosophy* (Satya Nilayam Endowment Lectures; Chennai-Madras: Satya Nilayam 2002). For a more extensive discussion of Wimmer's view, see: <http://www.inst.at/ausstellung/enzy/polylog/wimmer.htm>

³⁷ Raju, *Introduction to Comparative Philosophy*, p. 295, 300.

³⁸ See, for example, my "Migrating Texts and Traditions," invited paper, International Institute of Philosophy, the XXII World Congress of Philosophy, Seoul, South Korea, July 31, 2008.

³⁹ R.G. Collingwood, *The New Leviathan: Or, Man, Society, Civilization and Barbarism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), p. 74. (It is interesting that Hans-Georg Gadamer finds a link with Collingwood in Gadamer's own logic of question and answer, which he develops in *Wahrheit und Methode* [1960; See Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975], p. 333.).

⁴⁰ Masson-Oursel, "True Philosophy is Comparative Philosophy," p. 7.

⁴¹ See his lecture on "Art, Culture and Autonomy," presented at the Conference *Rethinking the Role of Philosophy in the Global Age*, Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, Hanoi, Vietnam, June 1-3, 2006