

Polanyi Society Sponsored Zoom Presentations/Discussions

March 5 and 6, 2021

The Polanyi Society will sponsor four Zoom presentations/discussions in early March, two on March 5 and two on March 6, 2021. Details about these Zoom events follow below. Anyone interested can participate in any or all of the sessions. If you wish to participate, please send an e-mail indicating your interest to **both** Gus Breyspraak (breytspraak@ottawa.edu) and Phil Mullins (mullins@missouriwestern.edu). Those who register will, in early March, receive, via e-mail, a link and password for the Zoom session or sessions.

As in past Zoom presentations/discussions, the focus will be on discussion. Three of the papers for these sessions are now posted and the link for the fourth paper should be available by mid-February. The information below is also posted on the Polanyi Society website (polanyisociety.org). Any updates on sessions will be sent to the Polanyi Society discussion list and will be posted on the Polanyi Society website.

Friday, March 5, 2021

11 a.m. Central Standard Time

Is Polanyi's ethic of discovery corrupted in contemporary science?

Stephen Turner and Daryl Chubin with a comment from Ted Brown

Stephen Turner and Daryl E. Chubin, 2020 (Spring). "[The Changing Temptations of Science](#)" *Issues in Science and Technology* 36 (3): 40-46.

Abstract: The ethic of discovery that once governed science has evolved into an expectation of impact. The autonomy and integrity of science are now up for grabs. The changes in science over the past century have outpaced society's images of science, of what sort of activity it is, and of what scientists are and do. Today's question is this: have these changes also outpaced science's capacity to assure its integrity and quality?

[If you have difficulty accessing this reading for the session which is online at <https://issues.org/autonomy-integrity-incentives-in-science/>, please e-mail Phil Mullins (mullins@missouriwestern.edu) to request a copy.]

12: 15 p.m. Central Standard Time

The Relevance of Sigmund Koch's "Millian Hypothesis" and Polanyi's Understanding of Commitment to Social Psychology

Collin D. Barnes

Sigmund Koch transforms an assertion made by John Stuart Mill into a question, asking, "Can the methods of natural science, 'duly extended and generalized,' be 'adapted' to the 'backward' studies of persons and society ...?" He notes how "[e]ntertain[ing] such a hypothesis responsibly is no light matter," and that social scientists have avoided the "ravages" of the question by "reinterpreting" it "as a priori truth." This paper presents social psychologists' responses to the field's replication troubles and political homogeneity as contemporary examples of the problem Koch's "Millian hypothesis" points to, but it then takes up Polanyi's understanding of commitment to show how such a framing mischaracterizes the situation. For psychologists who hold natural science modes of knowing as foundational, the extension of its methods to persons and society is *not* the reinterpretation of a hypothesis whose fruitfulness could otherwise be tested, but the establishing of an interpretative framework that defines how the world is seen. Thus, for Polanyi, the rub with a field like social psychology is not its failure to test what, properly understood, is a hypothesis, but its commitment to a vision of reality that, postcritically considered, is mistaken.

Saturday, March 6

11 a.m. Central Standard Time

Object-Oriented Ontology and Michael Polanyi's Post-Critical Thought

Martin Turkis

Abstract: Michael Polanyi espouses a realism that has inspired some spirited debate among scholars of his work, most of which was produced roughly 20 years or more ago. Since that time, however, new trends in realist thought have arisen in both analytic and continental circles. I attempt in this paper to bring Polanyi's philosophical work into conversation with the contemporary continental realism known as Object-Oriented Ontology as it is theorized by philosopher Graham Harmon. In so doing I conclude that while the epistemology associated with Object-Oriented Ontology is problematic and in need of a dose of Polanyi's insights, OOO (as it is commonly referred to) is full of rich material that might be of help in fleshing out a more systematic metaphysics compatible with a Polanyian epistemology.

12: 15 p.m. Central Standard Time

Michael Polanyi and the Relation of Fields to Discovery and Problem Solving

Walter B. Gulick

Abstract: In the last seven pages of *Personal Knowledge*, Polanyi introduces the idea of a generalized field to illuminate how through tacit integrations persons are guided toward solutions or discoveries marked by intellectual rightness. But how well does the attractive power of a field fit with the attractive power of a solution? How do Polanyi's notions of imagination, intuition, and beauty, as contributors to discovery, relate to fields? And what of dual control: might the language of fields more cogently describe cosmological relations than the language of levels and a stratified universe?