

Convivialium

Newsletter N° 15

OCTOBER 1982

CONTENTS

- P 1 A Note about Membership and the Future of Convivialium.
- 3 News and Notes.
- 7 To Empower as Jesus Did. by Dr. Aaron Milavec
A Review and Summary.
- 16 'Personal Knowledge' and Poetic Imagination. 11
Frances Stevens.
- 33 List of Members.

Sent out by Joan Crewdson

12 Cunliffe Close,
Oxford. OX2. 7BL
Oxford (0865) 53661

A NOTE ABOUT MEMBERSHIP AND THE FUTURE OF CONVIVIUM

Membership. It is with regret that I report the death in March of this year of Sir Geoffrey Vickers. He was a beloved and close friend of the Polanyis. We welcome two new subscribers to Convivium, Ms. Shirley Thomas, who has studied under Prof. Harry Prosch and visited Oxford this summer, and Dr. Francis Dunlop, who heard about Convivium through Richard Allen, who has just had his doctoral thesis on Polanyi and Education accepted by London University.

In the March Convivium, I gave due warning that some members had not subscribed since 1979 or 1980 and that the membership list would be revised before sending out the October Newsletter, 1982. This has been done, which reduces our subscribing membership to 51. It will be noticed that a few of these have not, according to my records, subscribed for 1982, I look forward to receiving some indication from them that they wish to continue receiving Convivium. Subscriptions are due in January of each year. £2 no longer covers the cost of printing and overseas postage for two copies a year, but owing to some very generous donations, our bank balance is still healthy. In particular, I would like to mention a very generous anonymous response to the appeal in the March Convivium for matching funds to help finance Prof. William T.Scott's work on the Polanyi biography. This donation enabled Convivium to send £900 to this fund.

Convivium's future. About a dozen members of Convivium belong also to the Science and Religion Forum which was founded in 1972 by Dr. Arthur Peacocke. This group organises an annual conference and its membership has grown steadily during the last ten years. Attendance at the conference now averages about sixty. This year, it was decided to start a Science and Religion Forum Newsletter, which is edited by Dr Peter Hodgson, who, together with the Vice-President and the Chairman of the S. and R Forum, are also, as it happens, Convivium subscribers. The Newsletter has a circulation of about a hundred. The idea has occurred to a few of us that there might be mutual profit in moving towards amalgamation of the two newsletters. Any decision will depend on more detailed discussion and some response from our respective readerships, to the extent that it would alter the character of the combined publication. Convivium no longer has a 'committee'. Dru Scott and I virtually 'run' Convivium between us and would be happy to hand over responsibility. The main activity of the S & R F is its annual conference. Recent themes have included:

- 1976 Man's responsibility for Nature.
- 1977 Science and religion, partners in Education.
- 1978 God's action in the world.
- 1979 Technology was made for man - and man for ?
- 1980 New perspectives on Man.
- 1981 The Theologians take account of Developments in Science
- 1982 Cosmos and Creation - The Physicist's view.
- 1983 To be held in Durham University on The Ethical challenge of Contemporary biology.

Dr. Brian Chalmers, secretary of the Science and Religion Forum, has agreed that all Convivium members should receive a copy of the next S.& R.F. Newsletter in December. Similarly, their members will receive copies of Convivium. If there is a consensus that we should go ahead, the first joint edition would probably be in May of 1983.

My own feeling is that Convivium would benefit from amalgamation, since it would greatly increase the circulation of Polanian material and would also broaden our own horizon. In the end, the character of the joint Newsletter will depend on the initiative of those who support it. I have frankly been discouraged by the response of our members, when it comes to sending in information and/or articles. I have had to rely on a very few faithful contributors for news and comments. It is also exceptional for a Convivium subscriber to recruit a new member. So perhaps the way forward is to amalgamate. I believe that this, or a joint newsletter, could become a valuable resource review, given a younger and more enthusiastic editor.

PLEASE send in your comments and reactions (together with subscriptions!) early in the New Year.

Cont. from p 15

room for criticism, not least because the book is printed in typescript, which does not make for easy reading. But for those who feel that the Christian Church has ceased to offer effective apprenticeship in the skills of knowing God and living for Him, this book has an important message. To quote Richardson again, this book "makes understandable how, when and why many of us have become trapped in a spectator Christianity." To a student of Polanyi, it is a delight to find Polanyi's thought so faithfully applied to problems of Christian discipleship, but for any reader concerned with the Church and its future, and who believes God is still working to establish an expression of His Kingdom through holiness of life in His people, this book will be a welcome diagnosis of need and a practical guide towards meeting it.

Joan O.Crewdson.

NEWS AND NOTES.

Robin Hodgkin has drawn my attention to an article in New Blackfriars, September 1982, in which Fergus Kerr O.P. has interesting, if rather involved, things to say about Michael Polanyi and Marjorie Grene. The article is about different ways of escaping 'the grip of positivism'. It is the first part of what looks like being a fairly critical review of Bernard Sharratt's Reading Relations (Harvester Press, 1982, £18.95 !). The gist of Kerr's remarks is to wonder why Leavis had to wait till he discovered Polanyi (via Marjorie Grene) in order to see a clear escape route from positivism and atomism. Why had he not learnt from his acquaintance with Wittgenstein, who, in all his later writings, was offering just such a route? One answer might be that Wittgenstein had more charisma than clarity. Undoubtedly the debate is interesting and is to be continued.

(Comment by R.A.H.)

Extract from the above article:

F.R. Leavis in the end did come round (in The Living Principle, 1975, if not before) to acknowledging that there is a 'knowledge of the development of philosophic thought from Descartes to Polanyi which is essential to their thinking' - the thinking, namely, of literary students (p 29). By his own account, he apparently got to Polanyi's work by stumbling in a second-hand bookshop in Cambridge upon Marjorie Grene's book, The Knower and the Known, written when she was teaching in Belfast and first published in 1966. For Leavis, the book is "an essential stand-by and a classic" (p 30). That sounds a grand claim; in fact, for the Common Reader, and certainly for students in neighbouring disciplines such as literary study or theology, it is hard to think of a more illuminating and useful account of what philosophy is about. She has held a chair in philosophy in California for many years now; but no one familiar with what is going on in philosophy would think of her work, or that book, as in any degree "essential". This is no doubt partly because, in her work on the philosophy of science she has been drawn to biology rather than physics and behaviourist psychology (the dominant Quine-Russell paradigms). Her long-standing interest in Merleau-Ponty and others in the continental tradition will not have helped, at least till quite recently. Above all, however, her choice of Michael Polanyi's work as the terminus ad quem of the history of philosophy since Descartes marked her as a maverick. While his work, particularly the Gifford Lectures he gave in Aberdeen in 1952/53, may well be far more rewarding reading than much of the standard legenda in current philosophy, there is really no prospect of establishing its importance or even of finding it a space in the development since Descartes - not, at least, so long as the work of Wittgenstein remains available.

This is the irony. Marjorie Grene never refers to Wittgenstein's later work in her book - but Leavis, living in Cambridge and enjoying (or enduring) some kind of friendship with Wittgenstein himself, from 1929 onwards, was as immediately attracted by her advocacy of Polanyi as he was put off by personal discussion with Wittgenstein.

.....(Leavis and Wittgenstein) never understood that they were allies in the struggle against the same adversary. Leavis early identified Bertrand Russell as the very antithesis of all that he stood for himself. He expressly attacks Russell's dismissive way of referring to Wittgenstein: "He had no glimmering of Wittgenstein's immense superiority to him as a person - as a centre of life, sentience and human responsibility". He knew that Russell and Wittgenstein had worked together as far back as 1912, when the former

was already forty and the latter twenty-three years of age. In 1935 Wittgenstein attended the annual Aristotelian Society meeting specifically to hear Russell's paper on "The Limits of Empiricism". Leavis, late in the day, had to turn to Marjorie Grene's book to find out how to identify and combat that "Cartesian dualism" which "must be exorcised from the Western mind". He clearly never realised that, throughout the years in which they frequently met in the streets of Cambridge, Wittgenstein was at work on an album of strategies, an exemplification of stratagems, precisely for that purpose - and, much of the time, specifically against Bertrand Russell. But that brings us to the great difference between Marjorie Grene's work, or Michael Polanyi's, valuable as it certainly is, and Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations (first published in 1953, two years after his death). It is one thing to write historical essays about the iniquitous effects of the Cartesian/positivist dilemma into which the so-called "Western mind" has strait-jacketed itself. It is quite another matter to provide, as Wittgenstein surely does, an endlessly imaginative course of practical lessons that go on exposing the unexpected ways in which one is radically under the spell of the dilemma. For Wittgenstein doesn't just expound and refute Russell, Moore, William James, Schopenhauer, Frege, etc. but above all he keeps returning to what he is himself tempted to say. It is one thing to refute opinions of which you have never felt the deep attractiveness. That skill is easily taught. It is only too common in philosophy faculties and journals - which is what puts serious people off the subject. The real skill, on the other hand, and none can teach it better than Wittgenstein, is the ability to hear the myths and illusions by which you are yourself tempted, and to destroy those. "Wittgenstein can take all the sides himself", so Leavis recalls somebody complaining. There has rarely been, since Plato's dialogues, a philosophical work-text that remains a closed book until the reader learns the tempo and thus enters the slow and deep process of self-discovery: "Work in philosophy - like work in architecture in many respects - is really more like work on oneself. On one's own perception. On how one sees things. (And what one desires of them)". (Culture and Value, Ed. by G.H. von Wright, trans. by Peter Winch, 1980, p 16 (Written 1931)).

New Blackfriars, September 1982, pp 360-363.

Gwyneth Dow, Reader in Education at the University of Melbourne and author of a number of books has sent me a copy of Teacher Learning, edited by herself, published 1982 by Routledge and Kegan Paul, £5-95. All the contributors have had wide experience in educational innovation in the secondary school system and in teacher education and many were members of an influential advisory committee set up in 1966 by the State Department of Education to advise on curriculum innovation in Victoria, Australia. The book attempts to share the fruit of their experience in an original and readable way by means of the creation of an imaginary teacher called Maria, who embodies the central concerns of the book. As a result of the work of the Advisory Board, the principle of school-based decision-making in curriculum revision became and has remained explicit policy in Victoria. This should encourage teachers and educational planners who are dissatisfied with the highly centralized control of school curricula that characterizes our present system and who view with dismay the trend to centralize decision-making at an ever increasing distance from those who must carry out decisions. This book will provide encouragement for those who feel trapped in the unfavourable environments provided by large,

impersonal and bureaucratic schools and who want ideas about what can and cannot be done about the crippling effect on teachers and pupils of a dualistic way of thinking in education, a way that polarizes components that should function interdependently in the learning activity, that either forces teaching method into a disciplined, rational and analytic mould, appropriate to so-called 'subject-centred' learning, or leads it to adopt a more permissive and indulgent approach, supposedly suited to 'child-centred' teaching, which focuses on the child as an active agent, able to use his imagination and intuition to the full. Gwyneth Dow's own contribution makes good use of insights derived from Polanyi and she ends with a plea that we should return in education to a method of teaching which allows for the interaction of opposites, of "romance and precision", of "instruction and discovery, logic and intuition, integration and analysis." (p 172).

Polanyi and Liberal Thought.

Dr. Magda Polanyi kindly passed on to me the Summer Number of a Quarterly Review of Contemporary Liberal Thought entitled, Literature of Liberty (Vol 5, No 2, 1982.) In this Number, the Editor welcomes the timely reissue of Michael Polanyi's The Logic of Liberty, (Chicago University Press) The Editorial is concerned with the place of spontaneous order theory in modern social theory. It cites Polanyi's Logic of Liberty as one of the best theoretical explanations of the need for both constructed and unintended institutions. Polanyi "demonstrates the tension yet at the same time the complementarity between what he calls corporate or hierarchical orders and spontaneous orders." Together with Friedrich A. Hayek and "other leading contemporary economists and social theorists" Polanyi sought an answer to the problem of the division of knowledge, the problem that knowledge is fragmented and dispersed unevenly among the members of society. "How can this knowledge be utilized in such a way as to lead to a coherent and viable social order?" The Editorial continues:

With the publication of Sowell's Knowledge and Decisions, Hayek's trilogy Law, Legislation and Liberty, Norman Barry's Hayek's Social and Economic Philosophy, George Shackle's Epistemics and Economics, and Brian Loasby's Choice, Complexity and Ignorance, the reissuance of Michael Polanyi's The Logic of Liberty, the spontaneous order tradition has again been thrust into the midst of the academic debate. This time, the economics and sociology of knowledge are at the cutting edge of the tradition's return.

In the bibliography at the end of Norman Barry's Bibliographical Essay on The Tradition of Spontaneous Order, nine books or essays by Michael Polanyi are listed. On page 59 the following comment occurs in a paragraph introducing book summaries on economic theory:

It is appropriate that this issue featuring Prof. Barry's essay....

should open its summary section with Don Lavoie's paper on the related topic of the market as an 'invisible hand' mechanism for conveying inarticulate knowledge - an idea indebted in no small measure to the late Michael Polanyi's notion of "the tacit dimension" or "personal knowledge".

Polanyi (1891-1976) was one of the pioneering investigators of how "spontaneous order", involving "polycentric mutual adjustment" - any system's ecological self-regulation through 'feedback' - was a vital precondition of health and progress not only in economics but also in science, art and society. All these dimensions of human life require individual freedom to innovate and respond; hence freedom is a precondition of the spontaneous order, and as Polanyi noted, the free market is the exemplar of such an 'invisible hand' coordination.

Here follows a quotation from Polanyi's Pure and Applied Science and their Appropriate Forms of Organisation (Occasional Pamphlet No 14, Dec. 1953 of the Society for Freedom in Science.) The paragraph ends by suggesting that those interested in pursuing other developments of the spontaneous order tradition should consult Barry's Bibliography, especially Polanyi's "The Determinants of Social Action" in Roads to Freedom: Essays in Honor of Friedrich A. von Hayek, R.K.P. and the above mentioned essay together with the Langford-Poteat volume, Intellect and Hope: Essays in the Thought of Michael Polanyi.

Those interested in obtaining this Number of Literature of Liberty should write to the Institute for Humane Studies, 1177 University Drive, P.O.Box 1149 Menlo Park, California, 94025. The annual subscription rate is 16 dollars, one issue 4 dollars. The Review is an interdisciplinary periodical intended as a resource to the scholarly community. Each issue contains one biographical essay and summaries of articles which clarify liberty in the fields of Philosophy, Political Science, Law, Economics, History, Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Education and the Humanities. The summaries are based on articles drawn from about four hundred journals published in the U.S. and abroad.

News from the American Polanyi Society Newsletter, Number 2, Winter 1982. Prof. Edward J. Echeverria of Rockmont College, Lakewood, Colorado has published Criticism and Commitment: Major Themes in Contemporary 'Post-critical' Philosophy (Rodopi: Amsterdam, 1981). It is available through Humanities Press Inc. 171, First Ave. Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey 07716. In this work, Echeverria considers the common ground and differences of Heidegger, Gadamer, Habermas, Rorty and Polanyi. The key issue addressed is how to understand our pursuit of truth in the light of our historical particularity. He takes Polanyi's notions of personal responsibility to the universal pole of truth and develops it by introducing the idea of a "normative dynamic" which he finds in what the Judaeo-Christian heritage has "reverently called 'Creation'".

The following addresses by Walter R. Thorson, Prof. of Theoretical Chemistry at Alberta University, Edmonton, have been published in the Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation, Vol 33, Nos. 1, 2, and 3 respectively: "Reflections on the Practice of Outworn Creeds," March, 1981, "Science as the Natural Philosophy of a Christian," June, 1981, "The Biblical Insights of Michael Polanyi", Sept. 1981.

Book Review

TO EMPOWER AS JESUS DID: Acquiring Spiritual Power through Apprenticeship.
by Dr. Aaron Milavec Toronto Studies in Theology, Vol 9 Edwin Mellen Press
New York and Toronto 1982 xi + 345 pp. Obtainable from The Edwin Mellen Press
P.O.Box 450 Lewiston N.Y. 14092 Cloth or Soft Back.

This book is dedicated "in gratitude to those mentors who have shaped, redeemed and enriched my life," and prominent amongst these is Michael Polanyi, "who built for me an intellectual home in which my scientific demand for precision lived comfortably with my religious romanticism." In the Preface, Herbert Richardson writes,

Perhaps the key to this book is Milavec's own training under the direction of Michael Polanyi. Surely, Polanyi's philosophy offers a valuable alternative to those distancing epistemologies that have us examining and probing at givens while studiously remaining unaffected by them. I do not want to overlook the importance of Polanyi to Milavec's own intellectual pilgrimage. Yet there is a theological brilliance and courage in Milavec's book which goes far beyond what Polanyi has said. So I want to thank the book's author rather than the author's mentor. I think that you will want to too.

In the Introduction, Aaron Milavec writes,

The germinal ideas for the preparation of this book are derived from the epistemology and sociology of knowing as explicated by Michael Polanyi.⁽¹⁾ Up to this time, Polanyi's thought has had its greatest impact among philosophers of science.....⁽²⁾ This book endeavours to enlarge the application of Polanyi's thought to the issues confronting fundamental and pastoral theology.

Michael Polanyi was principally interested in providing a comprehensive description of the scientific pursuit of truth. In this endeavour, Polanyi provided incidental parallels between the scientific and religious quest for truth, but he did not offer any sustained, systematic description of the Christian enterprise. In the course of this book, I have endeavoured to extend Polanyi's thought in this direction.

Polanyi's genius lies in his careful analysis of the key roles provided by systematic apprenticeships and the dynamics of discovery within the scientific enterprise. The first process insures that apprentices assimilate for themselves the settled instincts and performative skills which characterize the living masters of the tradition. The second process insures that such apprenticeships do not deteriorate into a benevolent brainwashing, but that new masters dedicate their energies to revealing as-yet-undisclosed manifestations of those realities which they serve. The first process insures the faithful handing down of the tradition; the second process insures that the tradition itself is being periodically renewed. The first process requires the personal self-giving (faith) of the apprentice to a tradition which he/she regards as authoritative. The second process requires that the masters of the tradition give themselves over to lines of inquiry in the confident expectation (faith) that their trained instincts will securely guide them into an extended series of fresh and relevant contacts with those realities that they seek.

The task that I have set for myself in this book is to spell out how the two key processes, systematic apprenticeships and the dynamics of discovery, form the backbone for a corrected understanding of Christianity. In so doing, I intend to provide a new working model so that Christians might again appreciate the human dynamics whereby Jesus Christ transmitted his own personal powers to his disciples and they, in their turn, transmitted and transmuted what they had received for future generations.

Students of Polanyi's thought will welcome this scholarly and faithful application of his ideas to problems of Christian training and discipleship.

Summary of content.

In the Introduction, Milavec draws attention to the obstacles which traditional Christianity has strewn in the path of those who attempt to take seriously the human dynamics which undergird the transmission of the Christian heritage and of its spiritual powers. He argues, with Polanyi's dynamics of apprenticeship in mind, that religious awareness of God is a learned skill; that God depends to a large extent upon human apprenticeship and that it is too often forgotten that parents do communicate their religious experience. He supports this thesis by referring to the discoveries of Suzuki in the realm of musical talents. Throughout the book he raises basic questions concerning the operation of grace and its relationship to the human dynamics which accompany the growth and transmission of a religious tradition.

In Chapter 2 he draws attention to the "Cinderella mentality" which dominates the lives of so many Christians, the idea that Christians are as powerless to contribute to their own self-transformation as was Cinderella. The Synoptic Gospels show that Jesus did transfer power to his disciples. Milavec asks, How did Jesus communicate his personal powers? Was it done by instantaneous and effortless acts? Or did Jesus progressively enlarge the personal powers of his disciples in the course of a prolonged apprenticeship? On a superficial reading, the Gospels might give the impression that the disciples contributed nothing to the transfer of power except willingness to be passive recipients. The Cinderella mentality, which is part of a whole set of tacit assumptions, is inclined to inform our most trusted perceptions and habitual judgements without being directly noticed. It views grace as an awesome, hidden power which comes unbidden and uncontrolled to back up our human words and deeds. In our own power we can do nothing of what we are commissioned to undertake. When God withdraws his hidden power, we fall from grace as suddenly as Cinderella when the clock struck midnight. So we live permanently under threat that the clock will strike. Milavec rejects this Cinderella mentality in favour of what he calls the apprenticeship mentality, which he finds offers a vastly more satisfying account of how spiritual power is transmitted. At first, Malavec's thesis that Jesus actually encouraged his disciples to increased determination and self-confidence may seem shocking, but he is only trying to help us align our thinking with the not unfamiliar idea that God wants his followers to contribute their talents to the work of God. He quotes a rabbinic midrash which tells how Rabbi Akiba was determined to master Torah, although he only began this task at the age of forty. Rabbi Akiba's determination is likened to the stonecutter chipping away at a mountain. He continued until the mountain was the size of a large boulder. He then loosened it and cast it into the Jordan. (Abot.de Rabbi Nathan 6:2 (20b)). The moral is that strenuous human energies need to be applied to the seemingly impossible task. In this rabbinic tradition there is no hint that the proper procedure is to step aside and leave God to move the mountain. The task involves great faith in oneself!

Jesus uses this rabbinic illustration when rebuking his disciples for their failure to heal the epileptic boy. (Mat 17) According to Milavec, this experience of failure was not a sudden breakdown in the transfer of supernatural power, but was a failure by the disciples to deploy their personal powers which Jesus was progressively enlarging during their apprenticeship with him.

In Chapter 3, Milavec argues that traditional atonement theory trivialises apprenticeship. Anselm's pastoral genius formulated an understanding of salvation that harmonized with the standards of his day. His theory fortified the importance of justice and mercy in the mediaeval world, but was not definitive for interpreting Paul. This chapter surveys the development of atonement theory, illustrating how different cultural epochs have evolved new meanings and how the self-same texts evoke different meanings in different times. Milavec describes the text of Scripture as a fluid, living Word, pregnant in each age with as yet unforeseen guidance and wisdom for unborn generations. Although our understandings are culturally bound, yet this gradual displacement of meanings is a source of renewal for a living religious tradition. Even to-day, Christians are seeking their own solutions to the crippling effects of an inadequate atonement theory.

Chapter 4 explores linguistic problems and looks at the slippage between original Greek idioms and English phrases and misunderstandings which tend to conceal the picture of Jesus as Master apprenticing his disciples and to reinforce the Cinderella mentality. One aspect of Milavec's book which particularly pleases me is his thorough grounding in the Jewish and Rabbinic background of the New Testament. On the basis of careful linguistic study, he discusses not only Hebraic and Aramaic usage but also what a Greek speaking Jew would understand by the Greek idiom. The impressive list of references and footnotes at the end of each chapter remind one that this is a book backed by weighty scholarship, despite which it is easy to read and has plenty of headings and summaries. He analyses the relevant terms used of Jesus and his activity and concludes that the vocabulary of the gospels allows the true character of Jesus as Master of Torah to appear, a Master possessed by the spirit of holiness and consumed with the wisdom revealed to him by the Father. Only by being with him day by day can his disciples hope to assimilate his spirit/Spirit, and thereby become "perfect" as their heavenly Father is perfect. (Mat 5:48)

Having discussed the three major 'hearing' disorders, Cinderella mentality, atonement theory and faulty English translation, Milavec proceeds in Chapter 5 to draw out the portrait of Jesus the Master apprenticing his disciples. This is done with a wealth of New Testament references supported by rabbinic and midrashic illustration. In Chapter 6, he turns his attention to the transmission of Jesus' power after his death. His thesis is that the Church survives by a series of reliable apprenticeships. He challenges the popular notion that Paul's conversion made apprenticeship unnecessary, indicating from clues in the New Testament that there is no ground for imagining that Paul's

conversion allowed him to bypass the apprenticeship process. A careful reading of his letters and Acts suggests that the apprenticeship practices employed by Jesus played a decisive role, both in the formation of Paul and in the establishment by Paul of Christian communities.

Milavec suggests that absence of serious apprenticeship in our own churches blinds us to the clues in Paul's letters and that misleading interpretations of Luther's "by faith alone" leads us to imagine that Paul had no need patiently to nurture his converts into assimilating the patterns of thinking, feeling and acting which characterise Jesus. Milavec insists that the grace of God never bypasses the psychological and social grounds of human existence. On the contrary, grace permeates and uplifts human events, making them capable of a transcendent achievement. In this chapter, Milavec traces the practices of apprenticeship employed by the Church down the centuries in preparation for baptism. In the third century, Tertullian coined the term 'catechumen' to designate persons being apprenticed within an initiation programme. This programme varied, but combined elements of the Jewish practice of apprenticing by a master with elements from the mystery religions. The first generation of disciples knew they had been apprenticed in order to assimilate the personal powers of their master, and they diligently trained others. Metropolitan bishops gradually systematized and enriched the mode of apprenticeship in order to wean their converts from a pagan milieu. In the sixth century, the catechuminate disappeared and initiation ... relied on the prevailing culture to transmit the Christian heritage. Today, publicly accredited Christian standards are no longer woven into society and, in the absence of apprenticeship under competent masters within the Church, any saintly wisdom or prophetic holiness which characterised the first generations of disciples is found only in isolated individuals, not throughout the general membership of the organised Church, which allows the rank and file to be satisfied with 'Sunday' Christianity and a measure of private religious experience.

In Chapter 7, Milavec sketches the initial lines of a theology of grace and argues for a broader and more integrated view of grace, which sees even the organic and cultural life of man as something to be received as grace. We need to give account of both the human and divine components which shape every human experience in order rightly to conceive the religious enterprise. Grace is more integrated than is generally supposed with the human dynamics by which a religious heritage is passed on from one generation to the next. Milavec spells out the implications of regarding religious awareness of God as a learned skill and of recognising the extent to which parents pass on their religious experience to their children. In this and the following chapter, the influence of Polanyi is particularly in evidence. Milavec stresses the prerequisite tacit skills needed to recognise in a given event the revealing initiative of God. This is why, more often than not, the same event can be for one person transparent of the initiative of God and for another remain wholly opaque. If we are prepared

to acknowledge that any and every act of recognition is a tacit skill, whether it be the infant's first elementary integration of sensory clues into a meaningful perception or the sophisticated act of interpretation or diagnosis by a skilled professional of a particular set of observations, why should we make an exception in the case of awareness of God? As Milavec points out, research increasingly demonstrates that our powers of recognition are not innate, but are limited by past training and developed through effort. If this is true of tangible objects, it is even more true of intangibles. Milavec traces the steps by which the child acquires the skill to make such second order recognitions as radio waves, justice and God. Language is decisive. Words alert us to significant though unseen realities. The child has an uncanny power of entering into the meaning of words, beginning from practical experience. Radio waves stop when a car goes into a tunnel. People get sent to prison. Parents say grace before meals. In each case, an enlarging series of past experiences build up to enrich and inform present experience, while present experience enhances and modifies previous experience. Eventually there will be spontaneous recognition of 'radio waves', 'justice' and 'God', together with many other intangibles, but only because parents and other adults use language which alerts the child to the fact that these things are part of the real world. Milavec argues that God belongs to the class of intangible realities that make their presence felt through tangible effects in events. The 'presence' of God, like the 'presence' of radio waves may go unnoticed. But, for better or for worse, a child progressively replicates the powers of recognition exhibited by his parents and teachers, including to some extent their religious experience. Only those with the requisite training 'hear' and 'see' the historic initiatives of Yahweh. Only at the end of an apprenticeship, when tacit skills have become second nature, or as Polanyi would say, have been interiorized, when a person is 'at home in' and 'indwells' those skills or traditions, do rules become transparent to the depth of meaning intended by the master, who always knows more than he can tell.

Milavec argues that tacit skills undergird grace and operate subliminally within every act of recognition. The dynamics of faith have their secular counterpart. Just as the novice at chess learns by entering into the performance of the master, so the disciples of Jesus, having surrendered to his guidance, needed again and again to enter into the inner meanings out of which he spoke and acted. St. Augustine himself spoke of the foolishness of thinking that the route to true holiness can avoid apprenticeship. (De utilitate credendi 12.27) He challenged those who say that no teacher is needed but the Holy Spirit. According to the Augustinian tradition, faith implies a functioning apprenticeship model within the local church. In Milavec's account of the dynamics of faith, divine initiative functions at every stage of Christian apprenticeship. The Christian life is a divine-human partnership. God's method is to make us fellow-workers in his creative-redemptive enterprise. God initiates and cares for what he originates; man co-operates in the providential plan. The general principle in Milavec's

theology of grace is that divine initiative shows up, not by diminishing or disabling human initiative, but by harnessing it in the production of a transcendent co-achievement. He rejects the compartmentalizing of human and divine initiative as resulting in theological schizophrenia. God reaches us within the very fabric of our humanity, as we are. This is the pervasive meaning of the incarnation: that divinity has no need to negate, supplant or coerce humanity. From the beginning, the Spirit of God has been supremely intimate within the cosmic enterprise.

In Chapter 8, Milavec analyses the process of discovery and its application to the Christian quest for God. Faith is a necessary disposition, whereby the disciple can assimilate progressively the informed dispositions of the master. As in the case of Jesus, the master directs his disciples' attention to God. The mature apprentice has been trained to perceive a living spiritual reality, which will reveal itself in an indeterminate set of future manifestations. He/she is open to fresh prophetic experiences, which will modify and reform the very tradition which gave him/her birth. From Abraham and the prophets down to the present day, the story of the people of God is a story of those who hear the voice of God anew. Every fresh prophetic vision is liable to disrupt the status quo and serve as a point of departure for the creative renewal of religion.

Milavec warns that to confine prophetic experience to an elite constitutes a tragic misunderstanding of religion. Without prophetic experience, none of us would have experiential evidence of God as a living reality or be able to affirm the authenticity of commitment. It is prophetic experience that dispels the suspicion that one's personal religious upbringing was empty indoctrination. There is no escape from a situation which is functionally circular. Every apprenticeship is functionally circular. It is impossible to judge the worth of tradition in advance. One's apprenticeship fashions one's settled commitments and one's commitments uphold the worth of one's apprenticeship. How are these commitments to be validated? The mature apprentice operates out of a closed system of tacit skills. He perceives what he has been trained to see. The religious adherent perceives the God of his mentors. This militates against a novel experience of God, and yet dedicated adherents are sometimes grasped and transformed by such an experience.

Any historic religion which stifles prophetic experience generates an idolatry, no matter how divinely authentic its origins. There is a good deal of unrecognised idolatry in all the major world faiths. Novelty is not itself the mark of authentic religion, but prophetic experience renews the existing tradition and challenges it to become more what it was meant to be. Prophetic experience presupposes novel contact with the divine realities which the tradition serves. On theological grounds, prophetic experiences are necessary because God is 'living and personal' and therefore presents a range of self-manifestations

that exceed fixed cosmic forces. On historical grounds, a religious movement that has attracted and redeemed such different cultures was bound to embrace leaders who were more than mindless repeaters of their Jewish Master.

In this chapter, Milavec analyses the dynamics which undergird Christian experience of prophetic innovation, using biblical material and instances from the history of Christianity. Jesus, guided by his own prophetic experience, innovated on the standards of holiness proposed in his day. He took his stand on Torah and apprenticed his disciples to the 'perfection' of the Father.(Mat 5:48). His own life was tested by that holiness and its efficacy was demonstrated by the wholeness it brought to others. The prophetic experience of God-centred lives is, above all, that which can liberate others from demonic self-deception.

Clearly, fresh discoveries of God must be authenticated, and Milavec considers on what grounds appeal can be made. He examines the rational, the pragmatic, the supernatural, the authoritarian and personal grounds of appeal. All but the last fail to provide justification for prophetic innovation. The story of Peter in Acts 10 is used as a classic instance of the experience of the solitary prophet pushing back the horizon of his own tradition. No prophetic breakthrough can be fully specified or defended. Peter, having spent the greater part of his life in routine application of 'Kosher', suddenly finds this tradition brought into question. How can he lay out before his fellow Jews, or even before himself, those personal intimations of growing coherence which guided him to an altered personal commitment? Was Peter confused by demonic day-dreams? Or was his new perspective the fruit of trained and trusted intuitions? Even the scientist, faced with the possibility of new discoveries, has to proceed in face of many indeterminacies and is sustained only by knowing himself to be acting responsibly and conscientiously through the entire process of discovery. Trained and trusted intuitions are acted on all the time in situations requiring creative response. Milavec thinks that theologians should be prepared to assign heuristic efficacy to intuition in the event of prophetic experience. He argues that the latter relies on the same dynamic interplay of imagination and intuition which Michael Polanyi describes when he spells out the place of guiding intuitions in scientific inquiry. (See article , The Creative Imagination: Chemical and Engineering News, No 44 (25.4.66) pp 85-92)

Milavec points out that prophetic discoveries appear within the circularity of one's commitment. There is no such thing as a purely neutral perspective.(See Personal Knowledge 160-174 and 253-257). It is impossible to detail exhaustively the mechanism of prophetic discoveries, but those who yield to their deepest intuitions know that they are reliably, though not infallibly, guided. The prophet is compelled by higher obligations to give voice to aspects of God to which others are as yet deaf. The same applies to the scientific prophet who submits before the scientific community his fresh perceptions of scientific realities, risking his reputation, and sometimes his life, in defence of what he believes.

Once the myth of objectivity is exploded, says Milavec, both science and Christianity will again be acknowledged in parallel terms. Both demand faith; both are guided by authoritative traditions; transmitted through apprenticeship; both need to be responsive to prophetic discoveries.

In Chapter 9, Milavec applies the framework developed in the previous two chapters to the use of the Church's sacred texts. He shows how the New Testament serves both as sanction for the status quo and as a provocative source for prophetic discovery which goes on to alter the belief and practice of the Church. He likens the Scriptures to the scores of Mozart, which require a great master to bring them alive. The Scriptures equally need masters of holiness to make them live in each generation. The Jewish Hasidim developed the art of teaching through creative story telling, and Jesus excelled in this art. At first, Christian Torah consisted of stories that allowed the way of Jesus to address the changing needs of a growing community. When the art of apprenticeship^{through stories} was lost, the Christian community read a recorded narrative, which sought to be faithful to the spirit of Jesus. But the text of Scripture never dispensed with the need for apprenticeship. As Milavec points out, behind every Protestant assertion of biblical supremacy lies an unnoticed system of effective bible training which follows and perpetuates the beliefs and practices of the particular denominational tradition involved.

A text undergoes a phenomenal transformation during apprenticeship. The words of Scripture do not change, but a phenomenal change takes place from epoch to epoch, in accordance with the Church's traditions of the day. This enables the Scriptures to remain fresh in each generation, though written for persons far removed from us in time and culture. Fundamentalism in religion opposes this phenomenal change and turns Scripture from being the vehicle of a living tradition into the dead artefact of a bygone set of commitments. Milavec again illustrates his point from music. Today, Mozart is enjoyed as a living classic, though the score can be 'reconstructed' with the aid of archaic notation and instruments of the time to sound as nearly as possible as it would have sounded originally. In fact, everything except the score has changed, instruments, notation, acoustics, tonality and style of playing. Fundamentalism in music can freeze Mozart into museum-like sterility, but Mozart remains a living classic, not despite these changes, but in accordance with them. Jesus was bent on transforming society, not on cultivating the historical sensibilities of a bygone era. Where the Spirit of Jesus spreads its life-giving energies, this is seen in a reshaping and redefining of life and culture. Just as music lovers flock to hear Mozart played by a great master, men and women hungry for reality in religion are drawn to those they hope will prove to be true masters of holiness. Apprentices are attracted by living holiness and will submit to direction, using the Scriptures under the guidance of their self-chosen masters, who themselves have learnt to use them, ever expectant that they will progressively and richly yield manifestations of the living Spirit of God.

Chapter 10 explores the need of adequate apprenticeship in the art of praying rightly, of receiving the sacraments effectively and of working for today's world within the thrust of the Messianic hope that "Thy Kingdom come". Again, the framework of earlier chapters is used. In the final chapter, Milavec looks at Jesus himself and how he was empowered, fashioned and apprenticed by God. Was he subject to the same divine/human dynamics as were his disciples, whose powers he sought so painstakingly and progressively to enlarge? Orthodoxy tends to think of Jesus as effortlessly and instantly empowered, but this erodes or bypasses his human dynamics. Milavec examines this question in some detail and concludes that Jesus received the rich genetic inheritance that the Logos had fashioned during two billion years and the rich cultural and religious inheritance ^{that} the Logos had fashioned amongst his own people; that Jesus emerged from his childhood training both enlarged and handicapped by his religious and cultural heritage, but responded to his own hunger and thirst for God's wisdom by pursuing his own deepest intuitions. Led, drawn and seduced by the Logos/Spirit of God, Jesus emerged transformed and ready to apprentice others who would work with him to advance and purify traditional religion. His disciples knew him as one who purified and healed their own religious identity. They came to feel that Jesus' wisdom was aligned with the divine wisdom, that his standards were in every way aligned with God's. This, says Milavec, is the truth that the later Greek fathers tried to respect in speaking of the hypostatic unity. He quotes Schillebeeckx as saying that divinity and humanity are essential categories within which every person is correctly envisioned. Every person is humanly self-sufficient and, at the same time, entirely dependant on God. Every person is both self-actualizing and actualized by God. Every person reveals and conceals himself - reveals and conceals his Maker. Jesus altered the identities of his followers. His Spirit transformed their spirits. They went out and did the same for others. Jesus left behind a 'Body' of saints, which transformed western civilization. These people healed the infirmities of their age and infused new life into its personal and collective spirit.

The book ends both somberly and hopefully. Our world is a boat tossing on a stormy sea. In the prow is "a sleeping giant". The needed awakening will come when Christ's modern disciples have recovered the way of acting he originally taught. This recovery process will be long and painful, but we can be sure that we are subliminally guided by the selfsame Logos that apprenticed the original Craftsman. In the end his 'Body' will awaken and again breathe deeply with the Spirit of Jesus. Towards this day we work and pray.

If this 'review' is overlong and deliberately uncritical, it is because I want to whet the appetite of its readers. Aaron Milavec combines both scholarly and prophetic gifts and I believe, with Herbert Richardson, that the pages of his book reveal both theological brilliance and courage. No doubt there is

'PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE' AND POETIC IMAGINATION H.
(The second of **three articles) by Frances Stevens.

A dominant theme of Personal Knowledge is the minutely explored distinction between objectivity and objectivism. Objectivism asserts that truth (scientific truth) is to be established through hypotheses formed from the impersonal observation of things and events, and verifying experiments from which the personality of the experimenter is rigorously excluded. Objectivity, says Polanyi, resides in the approach to a sensed reality on the existence of which the seeker stakes his very being; however severe the method, his 'I believe' is an assertion of faith, and verification is retrospective; it follows, not precedes, the act of knowing. Polanyi maintains, moreover, that the truth of science is not essentially different from that of art. For thinkers of every kind, truth is reality, and is known by recognition.

This proposition can be dangerously attractive to a person, eager for reconciliation, in the field labelled 'Humanities'. There is constant temptation to make incorrect extrapolations and false analogies; and an attempt to apply the thesis to the arts requires persistent effort to compare like with like.

The reality sought and achieved in science or mathematics is not the actual theory, formula or procedure; what calls forth the ecstatic delight of an Archimedes or a Kepler is the conviction that their discovery gives them a perception of the nature of things. Similarly, we must not suppose that the poem (or the picture, or the symphony) is itself the end of the road, the sought truth; its objectivity, like that of scientific discovery as seen by Polanyi, must consist in its maker's confidence that it is a true indicator of reality. A clear assertion of such confidence is found in the words of Shelley which Polanyi quotes:

Poetry purges from our inward sight the film of familiarity which obscures from us the wonder of our being.

** I intended this to be the second and final article; but because of the abundance of material (or my unhandiness with the shears) I have split it into two.

Polanyi is at pains to show that knowledge at its highest level emerges after constant effort and toil towards an object as yet unknown. One of the best pictures I know of the form this toil takes for the poet is found, appropriately, in a work of imaginative literature - Bird of Night, by Susan Hill. The following quotation is from the diary of the poet depicted in the novel:

If 'Janus' will not come right I am done for ... I have to pick my way through it so carefully, there is no wool, no wadding. But there are so many things I must say in it, so many truths. Every line is taut, and the lines interlace like wires.

...
'Janus' is so endless, so like untying knot after knot, I must be so careful with it. There is appearance and reality, being and seeming, mask and face. ...

Writing on 'Thought' and Emotional Quality (Scrutiny, Vol.XIII, 1945), F.R.Leavis points out that the most apparently spontaneous work of art may be no unaccountable visitation, but the product of disciplined search. He examines Blake's poem

O Rose, thou art sick!
The invisible worm,
That flies in the night,
In the howling storm,

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy;
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

and writes:

Such strength as is represented by The Sick Rose isn't necessarily a matter of the inspired instantane, the lyrical flash, but can be exhibited by a systematic exploration of experience. ...

What is being considered here is not, it should be noted, the 'curiosa felicitas' which Petronius ascribed to Horace, and which belongs to the realm of poetic method rather than of intellectual insight. Rather, it is the totality which, however sudden and 'inspired', is, like Kekulé's dreams which led him to the benzene ring (my comparison with scientific experience is deliberately made) the outcome of strenuous and concentrated mental effort.

The artist's training and preparation - I am not referring to the acquisition of technical ^{skill} which all serious practitioners have to learn - lie for the most part not in the scientist's hard system of reflection upon phenomena, nor in the religious devotee's unremitting régime of spiritual exercises - though, of course, he or she may, as a person, be a keen observer, a brilliant inductive reasoner, or

deeply religious. It lies in the cultivation of a disciplined awareness: in operation this is akin to the perception of the child in Hans Andersen's story who saw simply that the emperor had no clothes; but it differs from childish simplicity in its association with a perpetual quest and pressure towards the unknown goal. The artist's speculative scope is very great - 'The objects of the Poet's thoughts are everywhere' - and it has its attendant hazards: on the one hand the temptation to disclaim the 'insupportable fatigue of thought', and, as Eliot said, ruminate rather than think; on the other the danger of sinking into despair beneath the huge demands of assimilation and integration.

In Eliot's poem The Dry Salvages there is a presentation of two paths to reality which, for the purpose of this study, we might regard as both alternative and complementary to that of the scientific imagination:

Men's curiosity searches past and future
And clings to that dimension. But to apprehend
The point of intersection of the timeless
With time, is an occupation for the saint -
No occupation either, but something given
And taken, in a lifetime's death in love,
Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.
For most of us, there is only the unattended
Moment, the moment in and out of time,
The distraction fit, lost in a shaft of sunlight,
The wild thyme unseen, or the winter lightning
Or the waterfall, or music heard so deeply
That it is not heard at all, but you are the music
While the music lasts. These are only hints and guesses,
Hints followed by guesses; and the rest
Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action.

'But,' it will be objected, 'the two ways shown here are those of the saint and the ordinary person, not of the saint and the poet. To use this passage in the course of exploring poetic imagination is therefore inappropriate.' Yes and no. It is true that there is not a straight poet/saint juxtaposition. But the representative of 'most of us' is not the average person, who is seldom visited by the moments of illumination illustrated in the poem, and, when so visited, does not know what to make of them. (One is reminded of the discovery, almost too late, by Charles in The Family Reunion, that he was always

surprised by the bulldog in the Burlington Arcade.) The poet, consciously or unconsciously, holds these moments suspended in a kind of trained watchfulness, and, when the moment of intuition comes, embarks on the unifying and constructive process - much as the trained mind of the scientist takes off from noticing the mould on the staphylococcus culture or the discarded iron which did not rust. 'When a poet's mind,' says Eliot, 'is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary.' (The Metaphysical Poets)

A scientist's perception, which may be sudden but is never unprepared, that that is how things are may be compared with a poet's perception of 'the life in common things'. Reflecting on Wordsworth's poetry, Coleridge writes:

Like the moisture or the polish on a pebble, genius neither distorts nor false-colours its objects; but on the contrary brings out many a vein and many a tint, which escape the eye of common observation.

Within his Augustan bounds, Pope is saying much the same thing:

But true expression, like th'unchanging sun,
Clears and improves whate'er it shines upon,
It gilds all objects but it alters none.
(Essay on Criticism.)

I have said that the poem is not itself the truth or reality, but the means to reality. This is what Keats meant when he wrote:

Poetry should be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one's soul, and does not startle it or amaze it with itself, but with its object.

In his Clark Lectures of 1947 (The Poetic Image), Day Lewis defines the mediative function of poetry:

For imagination is not just a mirror, nor are images merely the reflections to be seen in it. The imagination is also active, the means by which the poet explores reality; and the image ... is also the poet's way of reducing the real world to manageable proportions, and of revealing its depths.

He points out that poetic truth has a different form from that of scientific truth, the essential difference being that poetic truth is not verifiable:

We might go, equipped with a pair of field glasses and a text-book on ornithology, to the seas where, Shelley sang,

The halcyons brood around the foamless isles.

It would not establish the truth of the line if we observed whole colonies brooding there; nor would it detract from its truth if we found not a single halcyon, but a great deal of foam,

(I am reminded of a detail in one of Addison's essays in The Spectator:

One of the most eminent mathematicians of the age has assured me that the greatest pleasure he took in reading Virgil, was in examining Aeneas's voyage by the map.)

Objectivity, says Polanyi, 'does not demand that we estimate man's significance in the universe by the minute size of his body, by the brevity of his past history or his probable future career. It does not require that we see ourselves as a mere grain of sand in a million Saharas. It inspires us, on the contrary, with the hope of overcoming the appalling disabilities of our bodily existence, even to the point of conceiving a rational idea of the universe which can authoritatively speak for itself.' (page 5.) To which Blake's Auguries of Innocence are the reciprocal:

To see the World in a grain of sand,
And a Heaven in a wild flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour.

The paragraph in Personal Knowledge quoted above concludes thus:

It [objectivity] is not a counsel of self-effacement, but the very reverse - a call to the Pygmalion in the mind of man.

This Pygmalion is what Coleridge called 'My shaping spirit of Imagination.' In what sense is knowing creative, for scientist or artist - and does the word mean the same in respect of both? We must try to begin at the beginning, with Polanyi:

As to ourselves, we should know well the joy of seeing things; the curiosity aroused by novel objects; the straining of our senses to make out what it is we see and the vast superiority of some people in quickness of eye and penetrating powers of observation. I believe that we should acknowledge these sensory actions as proper strivings which we both share and rely on. (page 98.)

Polanyi believes that in this joy, this curiosity, this striving

and straining towards intelligibility and significance, lie the origins of the interest in phenomena, the trained powers of observation, and the search for intellectual satisfaction, that mark the scientist. But they are also manifestly the origins of poetry, as we can see when the statement is taken detail by detail:

'the joy of seeing things'

It is easier to exemplify by quotation the products of this joy in its pristine form than to support the assertion from the comments of poets and critics, who, presumably, find it so self-evident, so elemental a quality of poetry as to be unremarkable. It is seen, for example, in Clare's

The flocks, as from a prison broke,
Shake their wet fleeces in the sun,
While, following fast, a misty smoke
Reeks from the moist grass as they run.

in Chaucer's Shipman, awkward on horseback:

He rood upon a rouncy, as he couthe.

in Skelton's

Merry Margaret,
As midsummer flower,
Gentle as falcon
Or hawk of the tower;

That is, I think, what Johnson meant by 'just representations of natural objects'; and such representations are signs of the uncomplicated joy in seeing. (The verb 'to see' must, naturally, be extended to cover other senses than sight.) Keats expresses it thus:

...the poetical Character ... enjoys light and shade; it lives in gusto ... It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. What shocks the virtuous philosopher delights the chameleon Poet.

(Letter to Woodhouse, October 1818.)

'the curiosity aroused by novel objects'

At first sight, curiosity seems to be much more a primitive attribute of the scientist than of the artist, and, in the world of art, of the painter than of the poet. It is fairly easy to conceive of an artist's attention being caught by some unique element of the visual, and of his using his technique as a means of exploring, mastering and understanding it. Much of Cubist painting could be

thought of in these terms. It is much less easy to find a poetic counterpart. We must distinguish here between the ostensible subject-matter ^{of poetry} (or any other art) and its actual subject. A poem 'about' - or, for that matter, exhibiting -curiosity would have no relevance whatever to the question of curiosity as an elemental constituent of poetry. Yet curiosity is, I think, such a constituent. It can be seen in the arresting of a poet's attention by newly encountered techniques, as evidenced periodically in experiments with quantitative or alliterative verse, sprung rhythm, vers libre etc., or in such things as the attempts by English Renaissance poets to naturalise the Petrarchan lyric. Or it can come through the aroused sense of revelatory potential in the encounter with examples which suggest new thematic scope.

'the straining of our senses to make out what it is that we see'

Again the distinction must be drawn between subject-matter and subject. A poem about this experience, and there are such poems, would not demonstrate anything. But that such straining is a generator of poetry can be seen by any experienced reader. Day Lewis, in the book already quoted, testifies to the way in which an unbidden and insistent image (setting up an 'intellectual discomfort' like that mentioned by Polanyi) makes the poet strain to discover what it is pointing to:

A poet does not fully know what is the poem he is writing until he has written it.

...
... you cannot see a wind ... the images of a good poem are orientated to a general truth - a truth which may never be explicitly stated in the poem, may not indeed be realized by the poet himself.

Milton strained for half a lifetime and over four designs and several exploratory fragments before he saw the truth (poetic not doctrinal) which was the meaning of Paradise Lost. I am not suggesting that the straining was consciously maintained throughout twenty years of political and polemical activity; I am certain it was powerfully present in what Koestler has called 'games of the underground.'

'the vast superiority of some people in quickness of eye and penetrating powers of observation'

To give examples of general tributes paid to poets' qualities by critics and other poets would be irrelevant. But it is not difficult to show that, over and over again, a poet is praised, even revered, for exhibiting (of course in developed form) the very kind of superiority mentioned by Polanyi. We can see this superiority for ourselves in Chaucer's description of the horse of brass in the Squire's Tale:

For it so heigh was, and so brood and long,
Sowel proporcioned for to ben strong,
Right as it were a stede of Lumbardye;
Ther-with so horsly, and so quik of ye
As it a gentil foilyys courser were.
For certes, fro his tayl un-to his ere,
Nature ne art ne coude him nat amende.

Keats was obsessed by the felicity of Shakespeare's figure of the snail in Venus and Adonis:

Or as the snail, whose tender horns being hit,
Shrinks backwards in his shelly cave with pain,
And there, all smother'd up, in shade doth sit,
Long after fearing to creep forth again;
So, at his bloody view, her eyes are fled
Into the deep dark cabins of her head;

Coleridge, writing of the same poem, notes that

Venus and Adonis seem at once the characters themselves, and the whole representation of those characters by the most consummate actors. You seem to be told nothing, but to see and hear everything.

(On Poetic Genius.)

This is primarily an appreciation of Shakespeare's art, but it is also, strongly if obliquely, testimony to his 'quickness of eye and penetrating powers of observation.' Johnson sees in poetic as in all genius the 'vast superiority' noted by Polanyi:

The true genius is a mind of large general powers, accidentally determined to some particular direction.

(Lives of the Poets.)

The 'proper strivings' which originate in primitive sensory actions urge the mind to definition and coherence. 'The shaping of our conceptions,' says Polanyi (page 100), 'is impelled to move from

obscurity to clarity and from incoherence to comprehension, by an intellectual discomfort similar to that by which our eyes are impelled to make clear and coherent the things we see.' This⁹ is true of poetry as it is of science. It is not enough to have sensibility and keen perceptions, though these are indispensable preliminaries. As Flaubert said, 'Poetry is as exact a science as geometry.' (Letter to Louise Colet, 1853.) The mind must work on the material which rains in upon it, unifying and transforming the inchoate particulars into a significant whole. God brooding over Chaos is a picture of both scientist and poet.

Wordsworth's 'all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings' is usually quoted without reference to the all-important 'and though this be true' that follows it. Taken as a whole, the passage is eloquent confirmation of Polanyi's statement:

For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; and though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings.

(Preface to 2nd. edition of The Lyrical Ballads.)

Both Wordsworth and Coleridge thought the power of bringing unity out of apparent contradictions and irrelevancies to be a distinctive and essential mark of poetic imagination. Wordsworth beautifully anticipates Polanyi by linking this great power with its sensory origins:

...the pleasure which the mind derives from the perception of similitude in dissimilitude. This principle is the great spring of the activity of our minds, and their chief feeder. From this principle the direction of the sexual appetite, and all the passions connected with it, take their origin.

(Ibid.)

'The perception of similitude in dissimilitude.' Surely it was this

very principle that governed the development of crystallography, described at some length in Personal Knowledge (pages 43 - 48). Polanyi's account of the growth of that science is remarkably similar to Wordsworth's account of the development of a work of poetic imagination:

When the Imagination forms a comparison, if it does not strike on the first presentation, a sense of the truth of the likeness, from the moment that it is perceived, grows - and continues to grow - upon the mind; the resemblance depending less upon outline of form and feature, than upon expression and effect; less upon casual and outstanding, than upon inherent and internal, properties; moreover, the images invariably modify each other.

(Preface to the 1815 edition of The Lyrical Ballads.)

Poets usually see the imagination as a dynamic integrating power. Johnson writes

Of genius, that power which constitutes a poet; that quality without which judgement is cold and knowledge is inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies and animates ...

(Lives of the Poets.)

Coleridge believes that

...images, however beautiful, though faithfully copied from nature, and as accurately represented in words, do not of themselves characterise the Poet. They become proofs of original genius only as far as they are modified by a predominant passion; or by associated thoughts and images awakened by that passion; or when they have the effect of reducing multitude to unity, or succession to an instant; or lastly, when a human and intellectual life is transferred to them from the poet's own spirit.

(On Poetic Genius.)

Eliot, more briefly, says much the same:

... a degree of heterogeneity of material compelled into unity by the operation of the poet's mind is omnipresent in poetry.

(On the Metaphysical Poets.)

Dryden writes of this principle in terms of workmanship:

If then the parts are managed so regularly that the beauty

of the whole be kept entire, and that the variety become not a perplexed and confused mass of accidents, you will find it infinitely pleasing to be led into a labyrinth of design, where you see some of your way before you, yet discern not the end till you arrive at it. And that all this is practicable, I can produce for examples many of our English plays: as The Maid's Tragedy, The Alchemist, The Silent Woman ...

(Essay of Dramatic Poetry.)

Finally, the principle itself (as, now, a universal law of creation) finds poetic expression in the grave music of The Prelude:

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
Like harmony in music; there is a dark
Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, makes them cling together
In one society ...

We have seen that Polanyi denies, explicitly and implicitly, any accidental or fortuitous nature to valid intuition, but on the contrary associates it with strenuous effort and deep though tolerant thinking (I use the word tolerant in respect of the thinker's receptivity, not of his opinions) - and that he is supported in this denial by the testimony of many poets and critics. When, however, an objective (the word is used with deliberate ambiguity) has been reached, human beings have a strong inclination - whether in science, art, social life or religion - to try to fix the perceived good, and if possible ensure its perpetuation, by codifying its observed principles and establishing authoritarian rules. Rules cannot make a scientist or a poet, any more than the law of the Pharisees could by itself make a person good. Yet it seems self-evident that there is a better way - better, because both more economical and more productive - to knowledge than by 'random scratching and clawing'.

Of course there is, and Polanyi resolves the problem by his elucidation of what he calls maxims. Maxims are indeed rules, but they are internal to the skill which is being practised, and they

embody the principles of already successful operations. It must be noted that the emphasis is on the execution, not the conception;

The true maxims of golfing or of poetry increase our insight into golfing or poetry, and may even give guidance to golfers or poets; but these maxims would instantly condemn themselves to absurdity if they tried to replace the golfer's skill or the poet's art. Maxims cannot be understood, still less applied, by anyone not already possessing a good practical knowledge of the art. (page 31.)

There have been times, in poetry as in other arts, when this important reservation has not been understood; maxims, originally enabling or enhancing agents, have acquired the status of externally derived mandatory rules, hardening into conventions in the process, and sometimes institutionalised in academies. Such are the conventions of poetic diction, which sooner or later are flouted by the rebel who advocates, and tries to write in, 'the real language of men.' When Victor Hugo used, in Hernani, the word 'mouchoir', or wrote the bare dialogue

Minuit presque.

Est-il minuit?

He was deliberately shattering the shell of 'elevated' speech.

Another restrictive influence is the assumption of themes or material proper to an art; and the artist, to be free, sometimes has to annex new territory. The young Eliot found release from a convention that was tacit rather than declared:

From [Baudelaire] ... I learned that the sort of material that I had, the sort of experience that an adolescent had had, in an industrial city in America, could be the material for poetry ...

(What Dante Means to Me.)

The laws of the 'unities' in drama, supposedly derived from Aristotle's Poetics, long troubled poets and critics. Sidney, fine poet and clear-sighted observer, strives to be classically correct (in the Renaissance mould);

[Gorbuduc] is faulty both in place and time, the two necessary companions of all corporal actions.

(Apologie for Poetry.)

But Ben Jonson, writing a generation (and a world of Elizabethan and

Jacobean literature) later, claims, disciplinarian though he is, the poet's freedom:

I know nothing can conduce more to letters, than to examine the writings of the Ancients, and not to rest in their sole authority, or take all upon trust from them ... For to all the observations of the Ancients we have our own experience; which, if we will use, and apply, we have better means to pronounce. It is true they opened the gates, and made the way that went before us; but as Guides, not Commanders. Truth lies open to all; it is no man's several ...

...
For rules are ever of less force and value than experiments.

...
No precepts will profit a fool, no more than beauty the blind, or music the deaf ...

...
Nothing is more ridiculous than to make an author a dictator, as the schools have done Aristotle. The damage is infinite, knowledge receives by it. For to many things a man should owe but a temporary belief, and a suspension of his own judgement, not an absolute resignation of himself, or a perpetual captivity.

and, finally,

I am not of that opinion to conclude a poet's liberty within the narrow limits of laws, which either the grammarians or the philosophers prescribe.

(Discoveries.)

Pope, with his classical sense of decorum, states critical principles; but he makes it clear that he regards rules (maxims) not as prescriptions but as salutary checks on a too exuberant or facile gift:

'Tis more to guide, than spur, the Muse's steed;
Restrain his fury, than provoke his speed;
The winged courser, like a gen'rous horse,
Shows most true mettle when you check his course.

(Essay on Criticism.)

and he neatly impales those would-be poets who stay safely within the rules:

But in such lays as neither ebb, nor flow,
Correctly cold, and regularly low,
That shunning faults one quiet tenor keep;
We cannot blame indeed - but we may sleep.

(Ibid.)

'For to all the rules of the Ancients we have our own experience.' The relationship of theory to experience is a matter

deeply considered by Polanyi. The problem is this: there can be no valid insight that is not grounded in experience - originally, as we have seen, in primitive sensory experience; yet, says Polanyi, conceptual thought is the product of an inwardly generated process which reaches a degree of generality far from its origins. It must be applicable to particular experience, but never a precise fit. The creative process leading to that stage is inspired, tested and validated by continual though not always conscious reference to self-set standards proper only to that process. And what is true of conceptual thought is true of art:

[The theory of crystal symmetries] is not merely a scientific idealisation but the formation of an aesthetic ideal, closely akin to that deeper and never rigidly defined sensibility by which the domains of art and art-criticism are governed. (page 48.)

... however meticulously descriptive and plainly expressive a work of art may be, it must never come any closer in referring to experience than crystallography does to crystals; no closer than a representation of conceivable experience, framed in its own harmonious terms, can come to actual experience. (page 194.)

Poetry and criticism must now be examined more closely in the light of these views.

First, poets and critics are agreed that poetry arises out of insistent (even if often buried) experience. It cannot be manufactured. Eliot shows vividly how, in poetry, writing is rooted in experience, for both poet and reader:

[Baudelaire's] significance for me is summed up in the lines:

Fourmillante cité, cité pleine de rêves,
Où le spectre en plein jour raccroche
le passant ...

I knew what that meant, because I had lived it before I
knew that I wanted to turn it into verse on my own account.
(What Dante Means to Me.)

But there is also abundant testimony that, in the creation of a poem, there must be a distancing. The experience is there, and indispensable - indeed intrinsic; but it cannot be lifted straight.

In ordinary life, for the most part, 'We had the experience but missed the meaning' - and this is true whether 'we' are poets or not. Meaning (personal knowledge) emerges in the poem: or, rather, in a way almost impossible to express, the poem is the meaning. (This difficult, almost paradoxical, concept is very carefully worked out in L. Arnaud Reid's Meaning in the Arts.) By the time this stage is reached, the experience has become both subject and object.

In the long Scrutiny article already referred to, Leavis considers two poems, Scott's Proud Maisie and Wordsworth's 'A slumber did my spirit seal'. He contrasts the objectivity of the latter poem with the clinging subjectivity (my phrase, not his) of Tennyson's 'Break, break, break,' and writes:

No one can doubt that Wordsworth wrote his poem because of something profoundly and involuntarily suffered - suffered as a personal calamity, but the experience has been so impersonalised that the effect, as that of Proud Maisie, is one of bare and disinterested presentment.

The converse, no less important for our present purpose, is what he says of The Four Quartets:

The great difference between the thought of the metaphysical treatise and the thought in Four Quartets lies in the genius that enables the poet to refuse with such hardly credible rigour and success the ready-made, the illusory and the spectral in the way of conceptual apparatus, and to keep his abstractions so fully charged with the concrete of experience and his thinking so unquestionably faithful to it.

In the appraisal of Venus and Adonis from which I quoted earlier, Coleridge writes of

... the alienation, and, if I may hazard such an expression, the utter aloofness of the poet's own feelings, from those of which he is at once the painter and the analyst ...

It must be remembered, however, that these latter are themselves 'the poet's own feelings', so far digested and objectified that they must take the form of drama or the dramatic poem. Lamb well understood that, for all the playwright's skill that Shakespeare possessed (and that Lamb had seen demonstrated, and had enjoyed, in the acting of such great players as Kean), his plays are poems - 'the comments,' as Keats expressed it, on his 'life of allegory.'

The relation of a successful poem to the poet's experience

is strictly comparable to that of a concept (e.g. crystallography) to phenomena (crystals). It is extremely difficult to achieve, in the pure lyric, the perfect subject/object synthesis of 'A slumber did my spirit seal' or Herbert's 'Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright'; that is why the true lyric seems an almost miraculous creation. In the process of harmonising multitudinous and disparate experience, the dramatic method (whether or not exemplified in an actual stage play) is an important and sometimes necessary means of distancing; and this distancing is replicated in the mind of reader or spectator. In his Preface to Shakespeare, Johnson counsels:

Let [the reader] read on through brightness and obscurity, through integrity and corruption; let him preserve his comprehension of the dialogue and interest in the fable ... there is a kind of intellectual remoteness necessary for the comprehension of any great work in its full strength and its true proportions ...

Probably the closest and most careful account (itself, appropriately, written from experience) of the relationship of poetry to experience was given by Wordsworth. As commonly happens with his critical writings, a single phrase - in this case, 'emotion recollected in tranquillity' - is all that is remembered by most people, and, in isolation, suggests a meaning almost diametrically opposed to that of the passage as a whole. (In the quotation which follows, the marks of emphasis are mine.)

[Poetry] takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity; the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins ..
(Preface to 2nd. edition of The Lyrical Ballads)

No mood of gentle reminiscence here - still less the dead calm of spent feeling - but the recording of a powerful dynamism. The emotion disturbs the tranquillity. It is recollected (re-collected), and the whole creative process, with its burden of scrutiny and stress of integration, is set in motion. It is relevant that two words used over and over again by Wordsworth in connexion with poetry (neither, it should be noted, with its modern popular meaning) are 'sensation' and 'excitement'.

With this passage, we seem to have travelled to the opposite

pole to that of the emergence of a scientific theory from experience. But opposite poles attract each other; there may be more of an affinity than is at first apparent.

The difference is easily defined. For the scientist the datum is the observed phenomenon^{on} outside the observer: an object (which may be very complex) in itself incapable of significance or emotion. The scientist's excitement is generated by his intuition of clues to the discovery of a comprehensive theory, suggested by his observation of the phenomenon. His enjoyment and persistence are derived partly from highly-developed forms of the trick-learning and puzzle-solving propensities which, as Polanyi has shown, we share with other animals; partly from an ideal of truth the form of which becomes gradually more perceptible as the strenuous pursuit continues. For the poet the datum is internal - experience, originally particular and personal, which becomes the object of contemplation. The poet's practice of skills, his adoption of different strategies, are comparable to those of the scientist; and the increasingly apprehended destination for both is the formulation of an ideal which Polanyi calls aesthetic. But the starting-points are different, and, though they both seek truth in the form of reality, they travel by different roads. It is true that a scientist may contemplate the nature of his experience, record the beauty and wonder of a discovery or be stirred to ecstasy by a blinding flash of the truth; but then he is behaving as poet, not scientist. Eliot states the matter clearly:

I think a distinction should be drawn between the imagination of a great scientist, arriving at a discovery on the basis of observed phenomena, the significance of which has escaped other equally well trained and informed scientists, and the imagination of a Lucretius, or even a Shelley, informing their scientific knowledge with an emotional life with which the scientist, as such, has no concern.

(The Classics and the Man of Letters)

There is, it appears, an affinity: the paths are not divergent. But are they convergent, meeting, as Polanyi maintains, at identifiably the same point; or are they parallel, meeting only at infinity? (If I may hunt this metaphor to death, it could be argued that the latter possibility was compatible with Polanyi's statements of the mystical implications of both scientific and artistic knowledge.) This question, and others connected with the nature of poetic thought, will be considered in the final article.