

## An Introduction to Michael Polanyi's Gifford Lectures

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An important milestone in the development of Michael Polanyi's philosophical ideas was his Gifford Lectures, delivered in two series, each with ten lectures, in May and early June of 1951 and November of 1952. *Personal Knowledge, Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*, Polanyi's book that is based upon his Gifford Lectures, was not published until June 20th of 1958.<sup>1</sup> In his Acknowledgements in *Personal Knowledge*, Polanyi says this about the relationship between his Gifford Lectures and his later book: "Since subsequent work [after the lectures] has not essentially changed my views, large parts of the lectures could be retained unchanged; other parts have been reconsidered, some cut out and others amplified" (PK, xv). The subtitle to Polanyi's magnum opus, "Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy," seems to reinforce Polanyi's comment. *Personal Knowledge* is the articulation of a "post-critical" philosophical perspective (see the discussion below); Polanyi's subtitle suggests that he views this articulation as a revised and enriched account in continuity with his Gifford Lectures which were titled "Commitment, In Quest of a Post-Critical Philosophy."

The posting of Polanyi's Gifford Lectures on the Polanyi Society web site provides anyone who is interested an opportunity to examine the connection between Polanyi's lectures, *Personal Knowledge*, and other Polanyi writing. Thanks go to John Polanyi, literary executor for Michael Polanyi, for granting permission to post these lectures and to the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Duke University for providing the pdf copy of the lectures and for cooperating with the Polanyi Society project making Polanyi's Gifford Lectures more broadly available.

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<sup>1</sup> William T. Scott and Martin X. Moleski, SJ, *Michael Polanyi: Scientist and Philosopher* (Oxford: OUP, 2005): 230. The Polanyi biography is hereafter cited in the text as Scott and Moleski with pages in parenthesis. Citations of *Personal Knowledge* use PK and page numbers in parenthesis and are to the Torchbook edition (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1964) which includes Polanyi's important Preface to the Torchbook Edition. There is an extensive discussion in the biography of both Polanyi's Gifford Lectures and *Personal Knowledge*. Especially Scott and Moleski, 203-221 provides information about Polanyi's work on his Gifford Lectures, although this discussion is mixed with discussion of other topics. Below I summarize several matters treated in the biography but provide specific page citations for only a few details. I supplement the biography's account with a few things found in Polanyi archival material (Papers of Michael Polanyi, Department of Special Collections, Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, hereafter cited in parenthesis as MPP with box and folder number) as well as archival materials for Edward Shils (Papers of Edward Shils also in the Regenstein Library Department of Special Collections and cited hereafter in parenthesis as ESP with box and folder number).

The following brief introductory discussion provides (1) some general background that situates Polanyi's Gifford Lectures in the historical context of Polanyi's life and other philosophical writing and (2) a few important details about this text of Polanyi's Gifford Lectures.

## **I. The Historical Context of Polanyi's Gifford Lectures**

### **A. The Years Leading Up to Polanyi's Gifford Lectures**

Polanyi was invited on May 23, 1947 by Sir William Hamilton Fife, Vice Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen, to give the Gifford Lectures to commence in the fall of 1949 (Scott and Moleski, 203). The Gifford Lectures are, of course, a prestigious lecture series (established 1875) that is given, on a rotating basis, at four Scottish universities; the series has a broadly construed charge calling for the lecturer to deal with the topic of natural religion.<sup>2</sup> By 1947, Polanyi had become a scholar publishing many things that were not research in chemistry, although he continued also to publish some papers in chemistry until about mid-century. The late thirties and most of the forties were a time in which the Polanyi biographers summarize Polanyi's non-scientific work by suggesting that he was working out the "philosophy of freedom" which covered the "physiology of a liberal society."<sup>3</sup>

An examination of the published and abundant unpublished nonscientific writings of Polanyi, in this period and even earlier, makes clear that Polanyi was deeply troubled by the world that emerged with World War I. He was looking for ways to understand and correct the slide into totalitarianism and violence in Europe that he experienced firsthand. Polanyi sought to rehabilitate liberal political philosophy, and this included developing an account of the political, economic and cultural developments of the eighteenth and nineteenth century and ways to repair what he regarded as the serious and intertwined problems in each of these areas in the twentieth century. Although some of the literature on Polanyi does not make this clear, Polanyi was especially interested, after he came to Manchester in 1933, in understanding recent economic history and devising ways to address economic problems. In the late thirties and early forties, Polanyi devoted much energy to economics education and made a film.<sup>4</sup> Polanyi's interest in economics was woven with his opposition to the British "planned" science movement, whose

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<sup>2</sup> See the official web site for the Gifford Lectures where there is a discussion of the history of the lectures, the charge, a list of lecturers and other interesting information (<http://www.giffordlectures.org/overview.asp>).

<sup>3</sup> "Philosophy of Freedom: 1938-1947" is the title of Scott and Moleski's seventh chapter (171-209), covering the period of World War II and a few years afterward. "Physiology of a liberal society" is Scott and Moleski's term (177) for the type of social and political liberalism with particular ideas about "public liberty" or freedom which Polanyi argued for in this period.

<sup>4</sup> Eduardo Beira's work on early Polanyi writing on economics and the making of Polanyi's 1940 economics education film *Unemployment and Money* is illuminating. There is a link available on the Polanyi Society web site (<http://polanysociety.org/essays.htm>) to a site where the film can be viewed. Beira has also posted on this site several working papers which analyze and reprint published and unpublished Polanyi lectures, essays and letters on economics, economic history, and film as a vehicle for economics education.

Marxist-influenced views called for the elimination of pure science and the promotion of applied science furthering social goals. In his 1941 review article “The Growth of Thought in Society,”<sup>5</sup> Polanyi sketched his own theory of social order and the place in that order of science and other “dynamic orders”<sup>6</sup> such as the law and the economy. By the middle and late forties, Polanyi’s philosophical interests had broadened to include epistemological issues and the ways in which the developments in Enlightenment ideas (and particularly ideas about science) had transformed modern thought and society. Polanyi came to believe that science, society and human beings were often misrepresented in modern manifestations of Enlightenment thought. He came to see the totalitarianism, violence and nihilism of the twentieth century as the bitter fruit of modern ideas. As Scott and Moleski suggest, Polanyi recognized his Gifford Lectures as an “opportunity for his wider piece of work in philosophy” (204). By the time he is invited in 1947 to give the Gifford Lectures, Polanyi was thus interested in carefully articulating (1) his serious criticisms of certain Enlightenment themes and contemporary philosophical views, but also (2) in setting forth in some detail an alternative constructive philosophical perspective that drew on but significantly reformed Enlightenment ideas. The latter alternative philosophical account Polanyi termed a “fiduciary philosophy” which emphasizes the importance and pervasiveness of belief.

## **B. The Fiduciary Program<sup>7</sup>**

After accepting the invitation to deliver the Gifford Lectures in May, 1947, Polanyi began to work on his lectures which he regarded as his opportunity to articulate a “fiduciary” philosophy. The term “fiduciary” is, of course, frequently used in *Personal Knowledge*, and the 1964 Torchbook Preface (PK ix-x) draws attention to it as the key term marking the book’s philosophical “task of justifying the holding of unproven traditional beliefs” (PK, ix). Polanyi comments on the many entries under “fiduciary program” which appear in the Index (PK, ix) and notes that the “fiduciary element is intrinsic to the tacit component of knowledge” (PK, x), which his later thought explores more fully. In his chapter titled “The Logic of Affirmation,” Polanyi promises that he will further elaborate the nature of “self-accrediting” which is “the structure of

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<sup>5</sup> *Economica* 8 (November, 1941): 421-426.

<sup>6</sup> “Dynamic order” is a term Polanyi borrows and adapts in a 1941 essay from the Gestalt psychologist Wolfgang Kohler; it is a term used somewhat interchangeably with “spontaneous order,” which Polanyi in a 1951 publication suggests is likely more familiar. The scientific community is, for example, in Polanyi’s lexicon, a dynamic or spontaneous order, a specialized, subcultural social network. Polanyi seems to envision society as a loosely cohesive and overlapping set of such systems or communities, some much larger in scale than others and each with particular values and practices.

<sup>7</sup> In her intellectual autobiography, Polanyi’s friend and collaborator from 1950 until the end of his life, Marjorie Grene succinctly defined Polanyi’s “fiduciary program” in philosophy (to which she also subscribed) as “a kind of lay Augustinianism, in which we recognize that our reasoning always rests on the attempt to clarify, and to improve, something we already believe, but believe, of course, in such a way that we recognize that we might be mistaken” (*The Philosophy of Marjorie Grene*, Randall E. Auxier and Lewis Edwin Hahn, eds. [The Library of Living Philosophers, Vol. 29, Chicago and LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 2002]: 14).

this ultimate self-reliance, to which this entire book shall bear witness” (PK 265). He notes that the subtitle of *Personal Knowledge* (“Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy”) suggests the “critical movement” of the last several centuries is coming to an end, and the new era of thought will be one in which human beings recognize that “no intelligence, however critical or original, can operate outside . . . a fiduciary framework” (PK 266).

The articulation of a “fiduciary” philosophy which comes to fruition in *Personal Knowledge* is clearly already on the horizon in some of Polanyi’s writing in the late forties, and it finds its first formulation in his Gifford Lectures in 1951 and 1952. In a short 1948 paper “Forms of Atheism,” which Polanyi prepared for one of his friend J. H. Oldham’s discussion groups, he notes that “only the fiduciary mode, used in the first person ‘I believe this or that’ can be self-consciously upheld.”<sup>8</sup> In a late 1949 letter to his friend Edward Shils, Polanyi comments about his upcoming spring 1950 lectures at the University of Chicago: “It would be easy to talk on the lines: ‘The Structure of Liberty’. But my true interest lies in getting my basic position clear which would be hinted at in a title like ‘Towards a post-critical age.’” Polanyi notes that he does not have his material for this title fully prepared but “I should concentrate on it, since it is what I need for my Gifford Lectures. If you can react to this at all, I should be most grateful.”<sup>9</sup>

In the Preface to Polanyi’s 1951 collection of essays *The Logic of Liberty* (that went to press in late 1949<sup>10</sup>), Polanyi notes that this collection of his essays takes more seriously than in the past “the fiduciary presuppositions of science; that is the fact that our discovery and acceptance of scientific knowledge is a commitment to certain beliefs which we hold, but which others may refuse to share” (LL v).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> “Forms of Atheism” (Box 15, Folder 8, MPP) was first published in the October 1981 issue of *Convivium* (Newsletter No. 13, pp. 5-13) but was republished in *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical*, 40:2, along with my introduction and comments on the essay by Martin Moleski, S.J., D. M. Yeager and Richard Gelwick. These materials are available at <http://polanyisociety.org/Forms-of-Atheism-essays.htm> .

<sup>9</sup> Polanyi Letter to Shils, Series III, Box 4, Michael Polanyi Folder, ESP. Although the year of the postmark is clearly 1949, the month is unclear and the letter is otherwise undated. However this Polanyi letter is a response to Shils’ earlier November 6 letter.

<sup>10</sup> In a footnote at the end of Chapter 5 of *The Logic of Liberty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951, which is cited hereafter in parenthesis as LL by page number) Polanyi provides the date of November 1949 for “collecting my essays into this volume” (LL 85, note 1). Polanyi’s undated letter to Edward Shils (Series III, Box 4, Michael Polanyi Folder, ESP), which almost certainly was written very late in the year in 1949, comments that he has sent off to Chicago and Rutledge “the manuscript of my collected essays under the title ‘The Structure of Liberty’ about a week before Christmas.”

<sup>11</sup> Polanyi also notes in his Preface that “there is a link between my insistence on acknowledging the fiduciary foundations of science and thought in general, and my rejection of the individualistic formula of liberty” (LL vi).

In his Gifford Lectures, Polanyi begins to work out his “fiduciary” account, which is his constructive philosophical effort. But, as I have suggested above, both in his Gifford Lectures and some of his earlier writing, Polanyi sharply criticizes contemporary philosophical perspectives (and particularly philosophical accounts of science) which he often identifies as Marxist or positivist<sup>12</sup> or objectivist.<sup>13</sup> Thus Polanyi’s constructive effort to set forth a “fiduciary” philosophy is coupled with (as is the case also in *Personal Knowledge*) his effort to set forth shortcomings of other contemporary philosophical perspectives. More generally stated, Polanyi’s constructive “fiduciary program” is woven inseparably with his searching criticisms of themes prominent in the critical era of thought;<sup>14</sup> critical thought, Polanyi suggests, overvalues doubt, explicitness, and objectivity and undervalues skill, intellectual passions and conviviality.

Polanyi’s constructive “fiduciary” account is everywhere apparent in his Gifford Lectures. The fourth lecture of Series I is titled “The Fiduciary Mode” and it aims to “recast declaratory statements into a form which makes it apparent that they are personal allegations (Fiduciary Mode).” Polanyi notes that this account of declaratory statements “brings them into line with other personal actions and should eventually lead to a justification of declaratory statements within a general framework of personal commitment” (Syllabus). The broader context of personal action and personal commitment are the topics treated, Polanyi also notes, in Series I, Lectures 6 (“Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy”), 9 (“General Doubt and Commitment”) and 10 (“The Personal, the Universal and the Subjective”). In Series II lectures, in Lectures 1 (“Meaning”), 4 (“Chance”) and 6 (“Skills and Connoisseurship”), there are a number of important discussions of “fiduciary” elements and/or “fiduciary philosophy.” Polanyi argues, for example, in “Skills and Connoisseurship,” that “traditionalism can be consistently upheld only within a fiduciary philosophy, where there is room for it among the maxims for the proper application of which we assume the ultimate responsibility, within the framework of our beliefs” (Series II, Lecture 6, p. 314). He contends in his discussion in “Meaning” that “a fiduciary

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<sup>12</sup> Marjorie Grene points out in *A Philosophical Testament* (Chicago and La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1995), that Polanyi uses of the term “positivism” generically to cover much more than the ideas of Carnap (63)

<sup>13</sup> Polanyi’s Gifford Lecture Syllabus for Series I is an important archival document with Polanyi’s lecture summaries for his first ten lectures. Unfortunately, I have never been able to locate a Syllabus for Series II, although some correspondence implies one was prepared. The [Syllabus for Series I](#) (Box 33, Folder 1, MPP) is hereafter cited in parenthesis simply as Syllabus and is posted (with the permission of John Polanyi, literary executor) on the Polanyi Society web site along with the pdf Duke copy of Polanyi’s Gifford Lectures. In the Syllabus précis for Polanyi’s Lecture 6 (“Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy”), Polanyi proposes that his philosophical outlook will “break altogether with objectivism” because “philosophy cannot perform its task within the restrictions of objectivism;” he suggests that his philosophical purpose is “to find and declare what I truly believe in” (Syllabus). What Polanyi dubs “objectivism” as well as “positivism” is often tightly bound up with a strict empiricism.

<sup>14</sup> Polanyi suggests that era of critical thought goes back at least to the modern turn in philosophy with Descartes but he also suggest that there are elements of critical thought much earlier in the intellectual traditions of the West.

philosophy tries openly to profess the ultimate beliefs endorsed by our use of the matrix within which we deploy our mental existence” (Series II, Lecture 1, p. 219).

### **C. The Struggle to Assemble His Lectures**

Although Polanyi apparently, when he accepted his invitation to give the Gifford Lectures, knew generally what he wished to do in his lectures, he struggled to get his lectures together. Articulating his “fiduciary” philosophy proved to be a very large project that adversely affected Polanyi’s health in the years after he accepted his invitation. Although he tried to slim his commitments, Polanyi seems to have been involved in a number of other things in the late forties and early fifties that required time and energy (Scott and Moleski, 211-218). He intended to seek a two-year leave of absence from the Chemistry Department but, through the work of his friends at Manchester University, he effectively exchanged his Chemistry position for a position in Social Science in March 1948. Winding up his work in Chemistry and taking up his new responsibilities in the Faculty of Economics and Social Studies in 1947 and 1948 apparently was more time-consuming and stressful than anticipated, although Polanyi did do important preparatory reading for his Gifford Lectures in the summer of 1948 (Scott and Moleski, 205-206). But in this period Polanyi also began to work on putting together (and revising) some of his essays as the collection titled *The Logic of Liberty*, which was published in 1951 (Scott and Moleski, 211). Polanyi’s extensive list of publications (some are chemistry publications) in the late forties and early fifties suggests that Polanyi continued to be interested in and worked on a variety of publications. Because of health problems, in December of 1948, Polanyi withdrew from his lectures on social and economic theory, but he continued to participate in certain activities, such as the occasional intellectual discussion groups led by J. H. Oldham, which required considerable preparation.<sup>15</sup> In the spring term of 1950, Polanyi went to the University of Chicago to lecture for the first time and he began planning to take a permanent position, beginning in October 1951, at the University of Chicago. Although he resigned his Manchester appointment, Polanyi could not get a visa and he eventually declined the University of Chicago appointment and was able to return to his Manchester appointment. The difficulties concerned with his visa problems were enormously stressful in the period just before and between his Gifford Lecture series.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Scott and Moleski (212-214) discuss the December 17-20, 1948 meeting for which Polanyi produced his paper “Forms of Atheism.” Additional details are in the materials (cited above in note 7) in the issue of *Tradition and Discovery*, 40:2 focusing on this Polanyi essay. There were perhaps as many as five Oldham discussion meetings that occurred between the time that Polanyi received his Gifford invitation and the time he completed his Series II lectures (as well as meetings in the preceding three years). Polanyi likely participated in most of these five weekend meetings. Oldham and Oldham’s discussion groups were important in Polanyi’s intellectual development and at least indirectly important in the development of his Gifford Lectures.

<sup>16</sup> See Scott and Moleski’s brief discussions (217-219, 222-223) of Polanyi’s Chicago appointment and visa problems based on Scott’s interview with Eduard Shils who helped work out Polanyi’s Chicago appointment. Some of the correspondence in the Papers of Edward Shils (letters from Polanyi, Shils and university officials) in 1950 and 1951 (Series III, Box 4, Michael Polanyi Folder, ESP) concern the Chicago appointment and the ongoing problem of securing a visa which came through only in 1953, long after Polanyi first rescheduled the move to Chicago

Scott and Moleski (206) report that Polanyi by 1948 realized he did not have adequate time to prepare lectures for the fall of 1949 (the original projected date for beginning) and he postponed his lectures until spring 1950. Although he was writing lectures in 1949, Polanyi postponed his lectures a second time, resetting them for the autumn of 1950 and the summer of 1951. The Polanyi biographers (214-215) quote some of Polanyi's 1949 correspondence with family and the vice-chancellor at Aberdeen, suggesting that Polanyi recognized he simply could not complete his project on schedule and he offered to resign, although the vice chancellor would not accept his resignation. In late January of 1950, Polanyi was ordered by his psychiatrist to take some time off and he cancelled some of his commitments and postponed his Gifford Lectures for the third time. The first series was reset to commence in the summer term of 1951. The negotiations for a position in Chicago starting in October 1951 led Polanyi to further negotiations about the dates of his lectures. The first series did commence on May 7, 1951 and the last lecture of this series was on June 4, 1951. Series II lectures were given in November 1952. Apparently, the final preparation of the second set of lectures was less fraught with difficulties than earlier work on his Gifford Lectures. Scott and Moleski (220) report that Marjorie Grene, supported by Rockefeller Foundation funding, spent six weeks working with Polanyi on Series II in the spring of 1952; Polanyi may have even had an opportunity to deliver some of the second series material in a seminar he taught for the Department of Philosophy at Manchester in the spring of 1952.

## **II. The Duke Text of Polanyi's Gifford Lectures**

### **A. The Duke Connection**

In the Papers of Michael Polanyi, the archival collection of materials in the Department of Special Collections at the Regenstein Library of the University of Chicago, there are various materials that are related to Polanyi's Gifford Lectures, but the lectures themselves are not part of the collection. So far as I can determine, the University of Aberdeen where the lectures were originally delivered also does not have a copy of Polanyi's lectures. There is a copy of Polanyi's lectures in the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Duke University: here there are two loose-leaf binders with typescripts of both series of lectures. The Duke typescripts are a revised version of Polanyi's 1951 and 1952 lectures that were given to Duke in the late sixties.

A microfilm of the Duke Gifford typescripts was made in 1969 and was for some years in circulation. Gerald L. Smith, at the time a Duke University graduate student who worked with Duke Professor William H. Poteat, prepared this microfilm as part of his work for his

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and finally, in November, 1951, resigned from the permanent appointment. See especially Magda Polanyi's October 8, 1951 letter to Edward Shils (Series III, Box 4, Michael Polanyi Folder, ESP) on Polanyi's depression. Shils was the special editor of an issue of the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* (vol. VIII, no. 7 [October, 1952]) which focused on the many European scientists excluded from the U.S. by U.S. policies. Shils wrote an introductory editorial "American's Paper Curtain" (210-216) and Polanyi's case—which Polanyi laid out in detail (223-228) and which was followed by comments on the case by John Baker and P. W. Bridgeman (229)—was the first of seven British cases.

dissertation.<sup>17</sup> Smith wrote the Introduction for the microfilm which indicates that Polanyi gave the typescripts of the lectures to Marjorie Grene in appreciation for her work on *Personal Knowledge* and she, in turn, gave the typescripts to Duke in the late sixties.<sup>18</sup> 18 On the first page of the pdf file for Lecture 1 of Series I, there is a photograph of a handwritten note on the inside cover of one of the binders; this note is dated May, 1957 and says “To Marjorie, in grateful appreciation of our wonderful partnership: 1950-57.”

Polanyi was in residence in the spring term of 1964 at Duke University, as the visiting James B. Duke Distinguished Professor in the Department of Religion. William Poteat was primarily responsible for setting up this Duke residency. During this semester, Polanyi gave a series of five lectures, known as the Duke Lectures, which were never published (but are at <http://polanyisociety.org/essays.htm> on the Polanyi Society web site). Scott and Moleski (256) suggest that Polanyi’s 1964 Duke residency was one of Polanyi’s most pleasant and productive times at an American university. Later correspondence between William Poteat and university administrators discusses the possibility of bringing Polanyi back to Duke for a conference or another residency in 1967 or 1968.<sup>19</sup> Gerald Smith’s 1969 Introduction to the microfilm suggests that Grene gave the typescript “to Duke University Library for inclusion in the Polanyi archives” (Introduction). It appeared in the late sixties that the Duke University Library would be the place where the Papers of Michael Polanyi would eventually be housed.

## B. Notes on This Text

The searchable pdf files of Polanyi’s twenty Gifford Lectures which are posted on the Polanyi Society web site were made directly from the paper copies in the David M. Rubenstein Rare

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<sup>17</sup> The biographical statement (298) at the end of Gerald L. Smith’s 1970 Duke University, Department of Religion dissertation directed by Poteat (“Tacit Knowing and the Logic of Tradition: A Study in the Thought of Michael Polanyi”) notes that he prepared the microfilm as part of his dissertation project. Although the microfilm is not presently in circulation, the Duke University Library identifies this film as Michael Polanyi, #222-1-2. I use short quotations from Smith’s Introduction below and cite these in parenthesis.

<sup>18</sup> Polanyi in the Acknowledgments section of *Personal Knowledge* indicates how important Grene was to the development of both his Gifford Lectures and his later book: “This work owes much to Dr. Marjorie Grene. The moment we first talked about it in Chicago in 1950 she seemed to have guessed my whole purpose, and ever since she has never ceased to help its pursuit. Setting aside her own work as a philosopher, she has devoted herself for years to the service of the present enquiry. Our discussions have catalyzed its progress at every state and there is hardly a page that has not benefited from her criticism. She has a share in anything that I may have achieved.” (PK, xv).

<sup>19</sup> See especially the following correspondence in the Archives of President Knight at Duke University: Letter of William H. Poteat to President Douglas Knight, December 12, 1966; Letter of William H. Poteat to Provost R. Taylor Cole, December 12, 1966; Letter of President Douglas Knight to William H. Poteat, January 6, 1967; and Letter of William H. Poteat to President Douglas Knight, January 13, 1967.

Book and Manuscript Library at Duke University. The library staff was careful to make copies that show some of the typescript features (e.g., handwritten notes) of interest. Nevertheless, the Duke version of Polanyi's Gifford Lectures has many ambiguities. In an effort to orient the reader of this digital copy of Polanyi's Lectures, I comment on some features of this pdf version and the original typescript from which the pdf was made, including some of the puzzles the original document presents.

Gerald Smith's Introduction to the microfilm copy of Duke's typescript of Polanyi's lectures provides important information about this typescript based on his careful study of textual features. Smith believes that Polanyi's handwritten notes on the first pages of some lectures, particularly in Series II, suggest that Polanyi "prepared and often delivered the Gifford Lectures from a manuscript" (Introduction). The handwritten marginal note in Lecture 4 of Series II, for example, suggests this lecture is a typescript of an earlier manuscript.

Information now available about Polanyi's Gifford Lectures suggests that Polanyi likely had a typescript which he used for delivery of most of his lectures. The Syllabus for Series I provides a clear and a succinct précis for each of these lectures, suggesting that Polanyi had well-organized materials to use in the delivery of his Series I lectures. However, the Syllabus does indicate that the summaries were issued in stages. A note at the bottom of the précis for Lecture 6 indicates "the syllabi of Lectures 7- 10 will be distributed later" (Syllabus).

Scott and Moleski also imply at least indirectly that Polanyi probably had well-organized material by the time he delivered most of his lectures. As noted above, Marjorie Grene spent about six weeks, supported by a Rockefeller Foundation grant, in the spring of 1952 helping Polanyi with the second set of lectures. Polanyi may have practiced the delivery of some of the second series material in a seminar he taught for the Department of Philosophy at Manchester in the spring of 1952 (Scott and Moleski, 224). Grene may also have had a hand in preparing or revising some of the Series I lectures, since she corresponded very regularly with Polanyi after meeting him in the spring of 1950 and agreeing to help him with his Gifford Lectures. She came to Manchester twice at some point in 1951 (possibly after the Series I lectures were delivered) before she moved to Ireland in 1952 (Scott and Moleski, 220).

The dates on the lecture typescripts usually appear at the top of the first page of the lecture and are quite confusing. Three of the dates on the first pages of Series I lectures are the same as the dates for lectures listed in the Syllabus for Series I; two of the Series I lectures have no dates and five have dates before the dates listed on the Syllabus as the delivery date. None of the Series I lectures have additional handwritten notes on dating of the typescript. Since some Series I lectures show accent marks for oral delivery, it is very likely (as Smith notes) these lectures were typed by the time of delivery.

Four of the Series II lectures have typed dates that list some date in November of 1952 (two November 3, one November 5 and one November 11). Two Series II lectures have no typed date; one has a typed date several months before the November 1952 presentation (June, 1952). One has a typed date in late December, 1952 and two are dated mid-January, 1953. However, eight of the Series II lectures also have handwritten notes concerned with dating at the top of the first page of lectures. In some cases, the typed dates are marked out. Many of these handwritten notes

tie the typescript to a text (Smith thinks a handwritten predecessor) used in Aberdeen in November 1952. But some of the notes also tie the typescript to later revisions, some as late as March, 1954.

There is a double page numbering system used in the Duke typescript of Polanyi's Gifford Lectures. Except on a few pages (usually the first page of the lecture), there is a page number in the top right corner of the page and in the center of the page. The number in the corner is the cumulative page number. The page number in the center is the number of the page in the particular lecture. In some cases, notes relevant to a particular page were made on the back of the preceding page. These notes are shown in this pdf copy by showing the back of the page with notes on the same screen as the primary page with page numbers on it. In a few cases, there is a two-page spread, but no handwritten notes will appear on the back.

Many typescript pages have been redacted and have handwritten notes on the page, which are usually readable in this pdf version. Some handwritten redactions appear to be in Polanyi's hand but some are likely in Grene's hand. There are a few odd things preserved among the lecture typescript pages: page 97 (at the beginning of Series I, Lecture 6) seems to be an English translation of a 1951 German translation of Professor D. N. Nasledow's address "Physics in Soviet Russia" which was first published in Russian in 1950.

Some features of the original typescript are simply not visible in this pdf version. Smith points out that the type in the original typescripts was generally black but occasionally was blue; some of the handwritten notes were in pencil and some were in red, green, blue and black ink, although there is no key to these colors.

Some sections of some typescript pages incorporate typed revisions that have been pasted at the edge so that they are an overlay that can be pulled back to reveal the text beneath. Some of these overlays have been crossed out. If a page number in a given lecture in this pdf version appears twice, the second version of the page shows the text beneath overlays (i.e., with the overlays folded back). All of page 122 (Series I, Lecture 7, page 4) is crossed out, and a full page replacement (rather than an overlay) identified as only page 4 (of Lecture 7) follows the crossed-out page.

Smith concludes that it is safest simply to identify the Duke typescript as a "stage in the development of Polanyi's thought between the manuscripts of the Gifford Lectures and *Personal Knowledge*," although the typescript is "closer in time, content, and organization" (Introduction), to Polanyi's 1951 and 1952 lectures than to his 1958 book. I agree with the general assessment that the Duke typescript should be considered an early revised version of Polanyi's Gifford Lectures. Markings on some lecture typescripts seem to be markings intended to guide oral delivery. These accent marks and comparison with some parallel passages in *Personal Knowledge* and perhaps some of the dates on the lecture transcripts suggest that "much of the content of the [original] lectures is retained" (Introduction). The Duke lecture typescripts follow the order of the Gifford Lectures, which is found in the Syllabus for Series I and the list of all twenty lecture titles in sequence that Smith incorporated in his Introduction, indicating these were provided by Richard L. Gelwick. Even a quick comparison of the Table of Contents of

*Personal Knowledge* and the Gifford Lecture titles, topics and sequence makes clear that sections of the Duke typescript are in many ways different than the book that grew out of the lectures.

### **Addendum of September 20, 2016**

In 2016, another copy of Polanyi's Gifford Lectures was discovered among materials of the original Polanyi biographer, William T. Scott, which had been stored by Monika Tobin, Scott's long-term assistant. This copy (hereafter referred to as the Scott copy) was very likely acquired by Scott soon after he began his work on the Polanyi biography in 1977. The Scott copy is almost certainly a duplication of another copy of Polanyi's Gifford Lecture material that eventually became the Duke copy of the lectures available under links to titles here (see the discussion above about the Duke copy). That is, the redactions in the text of the Duke copy are included in the Scott copy. However, there are a few puzzling differences in the texts listed below.

(1) The Duke copy has on the right margin of every page a cumulative page number in enlarged type. The Scott copy has a penciled page number on the right margin of only a few pages, often the first pages or the first and last pages of a lecture.

(2) The back of Series I, Lecture 9, page 13 of the Duke copy has almost a full page of handwritten notes which are not on the back of Series I, Lecture 9, page 13 of the Scott copy. These same handwritten notes appear on the handwritten page following the final typed page (page 18) of Series 2, Lecture 1, "Meaning." However, it appears that other notes made on the backs of pages appear in same place in the Scott and the Duke copies.

(3) In the Scott copy of Series I, Lecture 10, the last half line on page 6 is handwritten but the full line is typed on the Duke copy of this page.

(4) In a number of places in the first six Series I lectures on the Scott copy, there are cryptic and often difficult to read marginal notes in which the word "Shils" appears. These "Shils" notes are not on any pages of the Duke copy. It seems very likely that these "Shils" notes were added by William T. Scott. The handwriting is like that of Scott on other documents. Also the "Shils" notes clearly are an abbreviated version of items listed by page in the eight-page "Comments on Gifford Lectures 1-5, by Professor Edward Shils" which is dated "September 1951" and is available in Box 25, Folder 2, of the MPP. The title "Comments on Gifford Lectures 1-5" is misleading since Professor Shils' comments cover the first six Series I lectures and also include a general organizational scheme for all Series I lectures. In a 25 July 1951 letter to Shils, Polanyi thanked his friend for returning his manuscript and for "detailed comments on my manuscript." He indicated that he might publish Series I material independently and asked for Shils' reaction to this plan (Series III, Box 4, Michael Polanyi Folder, ESP).

Some pages of the scanned Scott copy are more luminous than pages of the scanned Duke copy of lectures available here. Also, on some Duke copy pages, words and lines from the pages loosely stacked beneath the scanned page sometimes confusingly appear at the top and bottom of the scanned page. A copy of the scanned Scott copy of Polanyi's Gifford Lectures is available upon request from Phil Mullins ([mullins@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:mullins@missouriwestern.edu)).