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## Book Reviews

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David Holbrook (ed.), *What Is It To Be Human? New Perspectives in Philosophy*. Avebury Series in Philosophy. Aldershot, Hants, England: Avebury, 1990. L27.50. Brookfield, VT: Gower Publishing Co. \$49.95 (est.). Pp. 158. ISBN 1-85628-055-1.

This book includes the proceedings of a conference held at Downing College, Cambridge, in September 1987, conducted by Mr. Holbrook, Dr. David Lamb and Dr. Wolfe Mays. Most of the contents have already been published elsewhere. Mr. Holbrook, Emeritus Fellow of Downing College, has been a member of *Convivium* since it began; Dr. Mays was likewise a member for many years; and Dr. Lamb, also at the University of Manchester and the Editor of the *Avebury Series in Philosophy*, has recently joined us. Several other members attended the conference, which was a part of Mr. Holbrook's campaign against reductionist and mechanistic views of man. (See his *Education, Nihilism and Survival*, 1977; *Education and Philosophical Anthropology*, 1987; *Evolution and the Humanities*, 1987; *Further Studies in Philosophical Anthropology*, 1988.) Mr. Holbrook's contributions are the opening report on the conference, at the end of which are printed comments by some of the other participants; a reprint of a paper from *The British Medical Journal*, 1985, on "Medical Ethics and the Potentialities of the Living Being;" and the two concluding surveys, "A Hundred Years of Philosophical Anthropology" (reprinted from *The Sources of Hope*, R. Fitzgerald, ed., 1979) and "Changing Attitudes to the Nature of Man: A Working Bibliography." Dr. Lamb has contributed "The Meaning of Death," a detailed paper on the medical and moral problems of defining death, deciding that someone has died, allowing someone to die, ending attempts at resuscitation, and the removal of organs, and "Further Considerations of Ethical Problems in Medicine" (reprinted from his *Down the Slippery Slope*, 1987), on the legal and moral problems of the right to refuse treatment, passive euthanasia, and living wills and Natural Death Acts. And Dr.

Mays has contributed "Linguistic Analysis and Phenomenology," a reduced version of his introduction to *Linguistic Philosophy and Phenomenology* (W. Mays and S.C. Brown, eds., 1972), with a new appendix on "The Concept of a Person and its Ethical Bearing," and "Michael Polanyi: Recollections and Comparisons," a paper from a conference on Polanyi and Phenomenology in 1977 (organized by *Convivium*) and published in the *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 1978.

At first sight the contents appear to have little connection with one another and with some of the discussions at the conference, as reported in the opening chapter. Yet there is at least the following scheme. Mr. Holbrook's opening and closing papers set out the challenge of reductionist and mechanistic theories of man with their moral and educational implications, the need for an alternative, and sources where that may be found, especially Polanyi, Marjorie Grene, phenomenological biology and psychology, and psychoanalysis. Dr. Mays then gives a more specific account of some of the alternative sources--Polanyi and phenomenology--while Dr. Lamb, with a thorough grounding in medical and legal practice, and Mr. Holbrook in his companion paper, reveal how scientific, medical, and technological issues and procedures regarding illness, death, transplants, and so forth, necessarily raise legal and moral questions which limited views of persons inevitably ignore or distort. Those are serious questions, the answers to which have grave consequences for the life and death of patients and those yet to be born.

For readers with a general knowledge of philosophy and the general themes addressed, the most rewarding papers will be those by Dr. Lamb with their detailed references to medical and legal practice and opinion. Such readers, like the reviewer, may feel that Mr. Holbrook's swift surveys sometimes superficially assimilate one thinker or idea to another and miss the distinctiveness of each. He

also glosses over conflicts among his alternative sources yet expresses caution regarding criticism of some aspects of Freud and the gloominess, nihilism and amoralism of Sartre. Some would regard Freud as almost equally reductionist and mechanistic as, say, behaviorism. Again, while “philosophical anthropology” as an inquiry pursued under that name does apply to many of the persons and movements mentioned (e.g. Scheler, Plessner, Buytendijk), all of whom have presented genuine alternatives to reductionist and mechanistic views of man, yet the very views to which Mr. Holbrook is rightly opposed are themselves examples of “philosophical anthropology,” although their authors may, in positivist fashion, explicitly repudiate that notion and fail really to articulate their notions of man. The conflict is one *within* the field, though positivist philosophies, allied to the reductionist versions, repudiate the idea of philosophical anthropology just as they repudiate metaphysics and ultimately philosophy itself. And the exigencies of compression make the surveys read like students’ essays: “As Maslow says . . . ,” “As Biswanger says . . . .”

Yet the book, like the conference, is, I presume, addressed to the general reader concerned with some of the real problems of our time. Unfortunately, the economics of publishing and the consequent price militate against that aim, and perhaps a paperback version would have been more appropriate. All the same, the three contributors have tackled a very important task, and their efforts to spread awareness of the dangers of limited and distorted images of humans along with alternative and superior views deserve support and success.

R. T. Allen

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## Notes On Contributors

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**Doug Adams** teaches in the Theology and the Arts program at Pacific School of Religion and the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley. His most recent book is *Transcendence with the Human Body in Art: Segal, De Staebler, Johns and Christo* (1991).

**R.T. Allen** is a teacher and author as well as editor and coordinator for the UK Polanyi studies group; he recently published a volume titled *Michael Polanyi in the Thinkers of Our Time* series.

**John Apczynski** is on the faculty at Saint Bonaventure University; he is author of *Doers of the Word* (1977).

**Walter Gulick** teaches in the interdisciplinary humanities program at Eastern Montana College. Gulick has been active as a paper writer or respondent for many years in the Polanyi study group which meets annually in conjunction with the meeting of the American Academy of Religion.

**Richard A. Hocks** is a member of the English Department at the University of Missouri, Columbia. Much of his scholarship has focused upon Henry James including *Henry James and Pragmatic Thought* (1974) and *Henry James: A Study of the Short Fiction* (1990). Hocks also has long-standing interests in both the thought of Owen Barfield and Michael Polanyi.

**Philip Lewin** teaches in the humanities program at Clarkson University in Potsdam, NY. His special interests are epistemology and narrative and philosophy of science.

**David Rutledge** is a professor of religion at Furman University; last year he gave the Rockwell Lectures at Rice University on "Humans and Planet Earth: Networks of Mutuality."

**James Stines** is on the faculty at Appalachian State University; his recent interest in chaos theory is explored in his short article here but also in a longer paper ("Polanyi, Chaos Theory and Time") which he delivered at the Spring 1991 Kent State University Polanyi Centennial Conference.

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## Submissions for Publication

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Articles, meeting notices and notes likely to be of interest to persons interested in the thought of Michael Polanyi are welcomed. Review suggestions and book reviews should be sent to Walter Gulick (see addresses listed below). Manuscripts, notices and notes should be sent to Phil Mullins. All materials from U.K. contributors should first be sent to John Puddefoot. Manuscripts should be double-spaced type with notes at the end; writers are encouraged to employ simple citations within the text when possible. Use MLA or APA style. Abbreviate frequently cited book titles, particularly books by Polanyi (e.g., *Personal Knowledge* becomes *PK*). Shorter articles (10-15 pages) are preferred, although longer manuscripts (20-24 pages) will be considered.

Manuscripts should include the author's name on a separate page since submissions normally will be sent out for blind review. In addition to the typescript of a manuscript to be reviewed, authors are expected to provide an electronic copy (on either a 5.25" or 3.5" disk) of accepted articles; it is helpful if original submissions are accompanied by a disk. ASCII text as well as most popular IBM word processors are acceptable; MAC text can usually be translated to ASCII. Be sure that disks include all relevant information which may help converting files to Word Perfect or ASCII. Persons with questions or problems associated with producing an electronic copy of manuscripts should phone or write Phil Mullins (816-271-4386).

Insofar as possible, *TAD* is willing to work with authors who have special problems producing electronic materials.

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Members renewing subscriptions do not need to complete the full form above. Note only address changes and recent publications. If your address label is correct, please tape it to this form. The membership cycle follows the academic year. Subscriptions are due September 1 to Richard Gelwick, University of New England, Biddeford, ME 04005. European subscriptions (5 pounds sterling) are handled by R. T. Allen, 20 Ulverscroft Rd., Loughborough, Leics, LE 11 3PU.

# **The Polanyi Society and Allied Meetings**

**November 22 and 23, 1991**

Kansas City, Missouri

*Registration for the AAR meetings not required for participation*

## **Joint Meeting of The Polanyi Society and The North American Paul Tillich Society**

Time: November 22, 1991 2:00-4:00 p.m. Place: Room Young B (3rd Floor)  
Allis Plaza Hotel, 200 West Twelfth, Kansas City, MO 64104

*Symposium:* "Post-Critical Interdisciplinarity: the Polanyi-Tillich Dialogue of 1962"  
A. Arnold Wettstein, Rollins College. Presiding

Richard Gelwick, University of New England.  
"Polanyi's Search for a Post-critical Logic in Science and Theology"

Charles McCoy, Pacific School of Religion/GTU  
"The Post Critical and Fiduciary Dimension in Polanyi and Tillich"

Durwood Foster, Pacific School of Religion/GTU  
""Faith and Knowing in Polanyi and Tillich"

## **The Polanyi Society Centennial Banquet**

Time: November 22, 1991 7:30 -9:30 p.m. Place: Room Turner B (3rd Floor)  
Allis Plaza Hotel, 200 West Twelfth, Kansas City, MO 64104

Richard Gelwick, University of New England. Presiding

*Panel Presentation:* The Tacit Victory and the Unfinished Agenda:

Panelists: Martha Crunkleton, Bates College

Joe Kroger, St. Michael's College

Daniel Hardy, Center for Theological Inquiry/Princeton

The banquet can accommodate 25-40 persons. The Polanyi Society guaranteed reservations for 20. Menus and final pricing for the banquet meal are not presently available but will be in the \$20-25 range. Please make reservations for the banquet as soon as possible but no later than November 8, 1991. To reserve send a check for \$20 to Phil Mullins, MWSC, St. Joseph, MO 64507.

## **Regular Meeting of The Polanyi Society at the AAR**

Time: November 23, 1991 9:00 to 12 noon, November 23, 1991 Place: Room McShann A (third floor)  
Allis Plaza Hotel, 200 West Twelfth, Kansas City, MO 64104

Phil Mullins, Missouri Western State College. Presiding

Ronald L. Hall, Francis Marion College "Critical and Post-Critical Objectivity"

Martin Moleski, Canisius College. Respondent

Phil Rolnick, Greensboro College "Immanent Principle and Personal Transcendence: Polanyi's Teleology of Progress"

Diane Yeager, Georgetown University. Respondent

Participants are expected to have read the papers. Papers can be ordered for \$5.00 from Phil Mullins, MWSC, St. Joseph, MO 64507