

Tradition & Discovery

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Preface

In *TAD* 25:2, I indicated in this column that the Polanyi Society voted, in the Fall 1998 Polanyi Society meeting, to file an application to become an official tax exempt nonprofit organization and that some reorganization of the *TAD* editorial board would soon occur. Since this is the beginning of the academic year, the editorial board changes have been put into place and are reflected in the re-constituted mast printed to the left. No longer do we have area studies coordinators; instead, you will note that we have a board of directors and officers with specific responsibilities. This scheme corresponds to that employed in our pending application for nonprofit status. With a little luck, this application should be approved at some point in this academic year. Thanks go to all those who served—some for many years—as area studies coordinators.

In this issue on page 4, you will find the notice about the upcoming 1999 Polanyi Society annual meeting to be held in Boston on November 19th and 20th. Be sure that you note that the papers prepared for both sessions of the meeting are now available on the Polanyi Society WWW site: simply go to <http://www.mWSC.edu/~polanyi/> and click on the highlighted Papers for 1999 Boston Polanyi Society meeting and you can read them online or print a copy. If you don't have WWW access and wish to have copies, contact Marty Moleski (address on the mast to the left) who coordinates the annual meeting.

Struan Jacobs' review article in this issue is a careful study of RT. Allen's new book *Beyond Liberalism: The Political Thought of F. A. Hayek & Michael Polanyi*. R. T. Allen is an important Polanyi scholar especially interested in Polanyi's social and political philosophy and in comparing Polanyi's ideas with ideas of other social and political philosophers. Jacobs does a nice job of summarizing and assessing Allen's account. Allen was kind enough to respond to some of the points at issue in Jacobs' review essay. The third major article in this issue, "Wittgenstein and Polanyi: Metaphysics Reconsidered" by Charles W. Lowney, is an interesting essay that links Wittgenstein's criticism of metaphysical philosophy and the kind of rehabilitation of metaphysics possible through Polanyi's epistemology of tacit knowing. Also you will find reviews of the recently published audio tape *Tacit Knowing, Truthful Knowing: The Life and Thought of Michael Polanyi*, a resource likely to be very useful for introducing Polanyi's thought.

Please note that there is an insert included for membership renewal. Thanks are due to those who have already sent renewals—please ignore the insert. But please don't ignore the insert if you have not paid dues for 1999-2000. Remember that the main expense for the Polanyi Society is printing and mailing *TAD*. We remain a solvent professional society but barely so.

Phil Mullins

Tradition and Discovery is indexed selectively in *The Philosopher's Index* and *Religion One: Periodicals*. Book reviews are indexed in *Index to Book Reviews in Religion*.

NEWS AND NOTES

The October, 1999 issue of *Appraisal* (Vol. 2, No. 4) has just been published. It contains papers from the third *Appraisal*-sponsored Polanyi Conference held last April. The following are the major articles: James Lund, "What Are We to make of One Another?"; Percy Hammond, "Models of Reality"; R. J. Brownhill, "Polanyi and the Development of Qualitative Research"; Sue Watkinson, "Tacit Knowledge and Professional Judgment"; Hans Popper, "The Interpretation of Literary Texts: An Exercise in Understanding"; David Kettle, "On the Primacy of Indwelling." In addition, there is a review by Chris Goodman of R. T. Allen's *Beyond Liberalism: A Study of the Political Thought of F. A. Hayek and Michael Polanyi* and reviews by R. T. Allen of several new editions of books by R. G. Collingwood and a volume of *Collingwood Studies*.

Georg Hans Neuweg from the Institute für Pädagogik und Psychologie at the Universität Linz has just published *Könnerschaft Und Implizites Wissen: Zur lehrertheoretischen Bedeutung der Erkenntnis und Wissenstheorie Michael Polanyis*. This book will soon be reviewed in *TAD*.

Electronic Discussion List

The Polanyi Society supports an electronic discussion group exploring implications of the thought of Michael Polanyi. For those with access to the INTERNET, send a message to owner-polanyi@lists.sbu.edu to join the list or to request further information. Communications about the electronic discussion group may also be directed to John V. Apczynski, Department of Theology, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778-0012 E-MAIL: apczynsk@sbu.edu PHONE: (716) 375-2298 FAX: (716) 375-2389.

Polanyi Society Membership

Tradition and Discovery is distributed to members of the Polanyi Society. This periodical supercedes a newsletter and earlier mini-journal published (with some gaps) by the Polanyi Society since the mid seventies. The Polanyi Society has members in thirteen different countries though most live in North America and the United Kingdom. The Society includes those formerly affiliated with the Polanyi group centered in the United Kingdom which published *Convivium: The United Kingdom Review of Post-critical Thought*. There are normally three issues of *TAD* each year.

Annual membership in the Polanyi Society is \$20 (\$10 for students). The membership cycle follows the academic year; subscriptions are due September 1 to Phil Mullins, Humanities, Missouri Western State College, St. Joseph, MO 64507 (fax: 816-271-5987, e-mail: mullins@griffon.mwsc.edu) Please make checks payable to the Polanyi Society. Dues can be paid by credit card by providing the card holder's name as it appears on the card, the card number and expiration date. Changes of address and inquiries should be sent to Mullins. New members should provide the following subscription information: complete mailing address, telephone (work and home), e-mail address and/or fax number. Institutional members should identify a department to contact for billing. The Polanyi Society attempts to maintain a data base identifying persons interested in or working with Polanyi's philosophical writing. New members can contribute to this effort by writing a short description of their particular interests in Polanyi's work and any publications and/or theses/dissertations related to Polanyi's thought. Please provide complete bibliographic information. Those renewing membership are invited to include information on recent work.

Upcoming 1999 Polanyi Society Meeting in Boston

The program for the Polanyi Society annual meeting to be held in Boston on November 19 and 20, 1999, is printed below. This program is fashioned from seven papers on the general topic of “Polanyi and Realism” that are soon to be published in a special issue of *Tradition and Discovery* edited by Andy Sanders. The draft papers are all posted on the Polanyi Society web site (<http://www.mwsc.edu/~polanyi>). Since the papers will not be read in annual meeting sessions, participants should download and study them before the meeting. Each session will include a panel commenting on particular papers but this will be followed by open discussion.

The location for the meetings is Boston's Hynes Convention Center, Room 312. As in past years, Polanyi Society sessions are held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion and Society for Biblical Literature. In recent years, all sessions have been assigned time slots just prior to the official opening of the AAR/SBL meetings. Because of the pressure for space, these large umbrella professional organizations are now carefully monitoring hotel reservations. It is necessary to register for the AAR/SBL annual meeting to be eligible for hotel accommodations in one of the primary hotels near where meetings are held. However, anyone who is interested is welcome to attend the Polanyi Society meetings, whether or not they are attending the AAR/SBL meetings. The Hynes Convention Center where the Polanyi Society meetings will occur is a stop on the subway. If you want information about registration for the AAR/SBL meetings (and information about hotels), please phone AAR/SBL Joint Ventures at 404-727-2343.

Friday, November 19, 1999—Hynes Convention Center, Room 312—9:00-11:00 p.m.

“Science, Meaning and Reality”

Chair: Andy Sanders

Panelists: Walter Gulick, Stephania Jha, Esther Meek and Phil Mullins

Saturday, November 20, 1999—Hynes Convention Center, Room 312—9:00-11:30 a.m.

“Realism, Ethics and Religion”

Chair: Walter Gulick

Panelists: Stefania Jha, Andy Sanders, Esther Meek, Phil Mullins

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Classical and Conservative Liberalism: Burke, Hayek, Polanyi and Others

Struan Jacobs

ABSTRACT Key words: liberty, freedom, Hayek, Polanyi, Burke, Popper, tradition, liberalism, conservatism. *An extended discussion of Richard Allen's **Beyond Liberalism: The Political Thought of F. A. Hayek & Michael Polanyi** in which the book's prominent themes and arguments are described, and certain inaccuracies and shortcomings noted.*

R. T. Allen, *Beyond Liberalism: The Political Thought of F. A. Hayek & Michael Polanyi*. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1998. Pp. x+ 266. ISBN 1-56000-355-3.

1. Freedom Dissected

What are the conditions of a viable liberalism? Richard Allen's *Beyond Liberalism* argues that it has to be conservative, be "passionately held as ...a religious faith," and should assign the human individual "unique value" (p. 12).¹ Polanyi's liberalism is shown as going quite some way towards meeting these conditions, but only the Christian conservatism of Edmund Burke and Aurel Kolnai satisfies all three. (Oddly, Kolnai is hardly mentioned in the body of Allen's book, and for this reason his ideas will take no part in this review.)

Some readers, this one included, may wonder where exactly Allen's sympathies lie. Interchanging the locutions "conservative liberalism" and "liberal conservatism," and choosing the title *Beyond Liberalism* suggest that *conservatism* rather than liberalism may be what he really approves of. The thought is reinforced when he subsequently enunciates his thesis that *classical liberal* analysis of liberty is self-destructive, requiring to be transformed into a "conservative" account (p. 41). Freedom is endangered today by the breakdown of common history and agreement on "natural moral laws" (p. 42).

Beyond Liberalism is a discussion in three parts, the first dealing with liberty's image in *classical* liberalism. A feature of such liberalism, as depicted by Allen, is the attempt to define *general* liberty in *abstract* fashion, committed to so doing by virtue of its elevating liberty to the supreme political good and correspondingly denouncing infringement of it as the worst political evil. (His claim about freedom as *summum bonum* of classical liberals is disputable, John Locke for example valuing life, liberty and property equally, while utilitarians James Mill and Bentham, and probably John Stuart Mill, subordinately value liberty as the way to happiness.)

Conceptions of liberty considered by Allen under the head of "classical liberalism" are principally Isaiah Berlin's distinction between negative and positive liberty, and Friedrich Hayek's idea of liberty as *Rechstaat* or constitutional order. Berlin's suggestion is that negative and positive freedoms (summarily defined as "freedom from" and "freedom to") are qualitatively different, the first representing the general condition of being left alone to live as one chooses consistent with neighbours enjoying the same right, the other equating to self-mastery.

Allen argues against Berlin that the two supposed different types of liberty are in truth “inseparable aspects of” it (p. 17). All forms of liberty comprise these two, have a negative element and a positive. Free to act or live in some specified way, you are free *from* interference in that respect; each implies the other. The primary freedom, however, is that of doing “certain things ...and the negative can be defined and understood only as noninterference with it” (p. 137).

If, as Allen claims, all forms of liberty have this bipartite “from-to” constitution, what forms are there? His classification and characterization is complex, so much so that some readers may judge his efforts on this score as finical scholasticism, obscuring not elucidating. But this reviewer rates it a most useful analytical device, well adapted to avoiding conflation, counteracting vagueness, and rigorously studying the subject. Within Allen’s commodious arrangement are interpersonal/intrapersonal (civil/psychological) liberties, general liberty/specific liberties, and liberty of wider/narrower extent (more or less of a given freedom). There are also individual/corporate/communal forms of interpersonal liberty, Allen believing classical liberal thinkers (in contrast to Burke and Polanyi) have typically associated freedom with individuals. Corporations and communities liberals have not regarded as bearers of liberty as such, reducing ascriptions of liberty to them to statements about liberty enjoyed by their individual members. Allen for his part believes groups and corporate bodies may provide their members with more or less freedom and, “like individuals, can be free or coerced, and more or less free, with regard to public authorities, other groups and associations, and individuals” (p. 35).

From another standpoint, influenced by Brenkert’s *Political Freedom*, Allen delineates “five notions of liberty” (p. 41) which are not an internal division of liberty into different types (as above) but broad interpretations or understandings of freedom. *Conservative liberty* (exemplified in Burke, Tocqueville, Oakeshott), the only viable notion of liberty so far as Allen is concerned, envisages traditional rights and liberties counterchecking arbitrary exercise of power over society. Freedom is not a domain of non-interference but one of “reciprocal rights and obligations”; unsusceptible to abstract definition one gets to know it through “actual and prescriptive rights and duties” conveyed by tradition (p. 42). *Classical liberal freedom*, recall, is distinguished by its *abstract definition* of the term and its advocacy of an equal “general freedom to live as one pleases” (p. 43). Other views are *libertarian* or *individualist radical freedom* (Tom Paine, Jeremy Bentham, Robert Nozick) combining freedom in the classical liberal sense with minimal law, government, and tradition; *collectivist radical freedom* (Rousseau, Jacobins, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Marcuse), used by people to collectively define themselves and their way of life; and *welfarist freedom* aimed at empowerment.

A major argument of the book is against classical liberalism with Hayek the principal exemplar (although, as emerges below, his position is quite eclectic). His definition of freedom in *The Constitution of Liberty and Law, Legislation and Liberty* (Allen persistently miscalls it *Law, Liberty and Legislation*) is along negative lines as the opportunity to use personal knowledge for personal purposes, *uncoerced*. The basic connotation is absence of *coercion*; freedom existing where no threat of harm forces a person to serve another’s purposes, in contrast to forced labour, extortion and blackmail. This definition strikes Allen as doubly deficient, covering neither “all cases of definite coercion nor all cases of deprivation of liberty” (p. 51). One confuting example of several he cites concerns a prisoner so manacled as to be unable to move his limbs. Obviously unfree, he may nevertheless encounter no threat nor be forced to serve another’s purposes. Blackmail, another counter-case of Allen’s, is coercive without invariably depriving its objects of liberty. When Hayek thinks as a pure classical liberal he seeks “a general set of conditions which constitute liberty or its absence” and which is capable of universal application (p. 54), a project Allen deems futile. It is more instructive, Allen considers,

“to speak of freedoms rather than freedom in general, and thus of the ways in which given persons are free or not free” (p. 57). (Perhaps. Yet specific freedoms presuppose a generic one of which they are varieties. Allen seems to operate with an outdated “essentialist” idea of definition rather than a stipulative one.)

Allen’s account progressively reveals that Hayek has no single stance on liberty. Besides searching for a general definition of it, he resolves freedom into specific types (rights, competences or immunities) among which are legal protection of property ownership, enforcement of contract, “legal status as a protected member of the community, immunity from arbitrary arrest, the right to work ... and the right to move” about (p. 57). Citizens of a free society are envisaged as acting unhindered within private spheres demarcated by general rules and protected by threat of state coercion. As a further strand, Hayek defines liberty as subjection to laws that are known, predictable, and general in the sense of applying to all, laws excluding certain actions while prescribing none. The trouble is that such laws - collectively constituting Hayekian rule of law - fail to assure citizens of freedom by eliminating arbitrary interference, “for one may be free” from such “interference by being subject to *regular* interference” (p. 63). A good point. Islamic Sharia law might conceivably satisfy Hayek’s conditions (known, predictable, general) but could never ground a free Hayekian society. While conceding that rule of law is as secure a “legal framework for liberty” (p. 64) as can be hoped for, the foregoing problems demonstrate to Allen that *formal* attributes of law (generality and the like) constitute no sufficient condition for freedom under the law. *Substantive* (material) liberties or rights, independent of the rule of law as such, have to be considered when it comes to determining if actual regulation of different spheres of social life goes beyond what people require to act freely.

In chapter 4, “The Tacit Dimensions of Liberty,” a title redolent with Polanyi, we have Allen contending that freedom involves “a certain relativity” since, “for practical purposes, a people is free if, on the whole, they feel free” even if other people look on their laws and customs as unduly restrictive (p. 67). (How “relative”? - a population under Sharia law might consider itself free.) Liberty is in Allen’s assessment largely an object of *tacit understanding*, arising from experience of living in liberty, coupled “with a focal and explicit group of important specific liberties such as several property, immunity to arbitrary arrest, and freedom of movement, occupation, worship, and speech” (pp. 67-8). This recalls Burke’s image of liberty, to which Allen believes the arguments of Hayek and Polanyi lead. A particular concern of Burke is to show that preservation of a free society may in times of crisis dictate temporary suspension of basic liberties, as for example “security from imprisonment without public trial” (p. 68). This proposition imparts some sense to freedom being tacitly understood, as does the fact of law’s always having “indeterminate margins” which, as Allen remarks, appears to contradict the possibility of protection for freedom by the rule of law (p. 69). Duties not to obstruct the police and to assist them cannot be articulated in detail. Again, law must contain vague prohibitions if governments are to be able to respond to emergencies that threaten lives, liberties and property. Liberties may collide in unexpected ways, rights cannot be exhaustively enumerated, events are often unpredictable. These are further respects in which freedom is tacit. In Burkean spirit Allen argues that even if salient features of a system of liberty can be abstractly stated, lacunae and limitations must exist, to be dealt with by experts and lay people taking specific decisions in concrete situations as need arises, heedful of custom. The inference is “that knowledge of liberty is primarily the lived knowledge of liberty [an “unspecifiable art of practising it”] embodied in specific institutions and practices, which cannot be abstractly codified and applied elsewhere” (p. 71).

Burke presages Polanyi’s view that freedom is grounded on tacit interpretation of constitutional rules of free societies, “formulations of liberal principles derive their meaning from” diffuse and tacit knowledge of freedom, freedom depending “upon the presence and accredited authority of the liberal tradition” (p. 72). These

are conditions for understanding and, *a fortiori*, realising freedom. (It is of interest that several Hayek passages cited by Allen (pp. 73-4, 78) chime with these insights of Burke and Polanyi.)

Rather than attempt to generally and formally define freedom as an abstract idea, Burke and Polanyi produce a “*workable*” idea of it connected to “practical experience of an actual system of specific and concrete competences and immunities” (p. 75). Contrasting classical liberalism’s abstract individual deciding his life for himself, doing as he pleases, “conservative” liberals focus on real individuals in concrete social worlds. What such individuals recognize as freedom, its constituents and scope, depends on the traditions in which they have been raised. Their freedom concerns, not choice of private lifestyle but, opportunities to participate in traditional inherited ways of life.

As Allen sees it “the valid core of liberalism is an account of certain competences and immunities which have become recognised and established within the European world and can be enjoyed in similar circumstances” (p. 78). There is a good deal of Hayek in this, and Allen congratulates him for seeing that “two fundamental presuppositions of liberty are the Rule of Law ...and [the] ...presumption that everything is permitted which is not specifically prohibited” (p. 78).

2. Freedom Valued

Those are features of “The Nature of Liberty,” Part 1 of Allen’s book. Its second Part, “The Value of Liberty,” examines why liberty, largely understood in terms of competences and immunities enunciated by Hayek, is so desirable. Following chapters on von Mises and Popper (I say something about Popper below), Allen returns to Hayek, examining his main argument for freedom and its sustaining institutions and just rules, an argument from their beneficial effects of peace and prosperity. It is utilitarianism along the lines of David Hume, evaluating social orders rather than individual acts or specific rules.

Hayek’s notion of utility is seen as *transcending* itself. How so? Because his “rules of just conduct and liberty itself” are *necessary* rather than disposable or optional means for achieving “human well-being,” with the upshot that these rules and liberty become “almost ...inherently valuable” (p. 122). (Query: in the present context “almost” means “*not* inherently valuable”; does the negative exclude transcendence?) Utilitarianism for Allen is seriously defective, not least because attaining benefits from some social structure requires that it be valued “not for those benefits, but for itself,” the benefits arriving not through being aimed at but as unintended consequences (p. 123). (I find the argument less than cogent; exceptions spring to mind. Technology seems exempt from it (automobiles, electricity), as does an institution such as democracy, likewise an activity such as Smith’s jogging for an improved sense of well being notwithstanding her dislike of the exertion itself.)

Two thirds of the way through the volume, Polanyi becomes the centre of attention.² His point of departure combines freedom of science with a realization that liberty cannot be securely based on utilitarianism, the utility of science - technology - being a side-effect of free science. Polanyi’s foundations of science are moral, as are his grounds for freedom in its various main social forms, his interest lying in liberty for self-dedication to truth, justice, charity and other transcendent ideals or self-justifying ends. Allen takes a similar view of liberty as resting “upon moral foundations, of self-restraint and the practice of justice, which cannot be motivated by regarding them merely as means.” Justice as respect for others’ rights has to be accepted as

“good and binding in itself, apart from what results from it” (p. 162).

Polanyi designates this as “public liberty,” meaning free choices by people to join in pursuit of “common purposes that are aims in themselves” (p. 154). He contrasts it against “private liberty” to pursue one’s own purposes in ways of one’s choosing, consonant with the same right for others. Liberty “for self-dedication, not that for doing as one likes” is fundamental for Polanyi (p. 162). So classical liberals to the contrary, liberty is no *summum bonum*; its value deriving instrumentally from proving efficacious for truth and other ideals. Allen refers to this as liberty (and classical liberalism) transcending itself, freedom to do “only that which has a value that transcends individual likings and dislikings” (p. 165). This self-dedicated public liberty has a moral right to exist, is “the only defensible liberty” (p. 171). Obligations inhere in it: to groups sustaining enterprises to which individuals have chosen to dedicate themselves, to the enterprises and their ends. It is liberty embedded in tradition. Social rather than individual, Polanyi’s public freedom is set in, depends on, and is essential to the workings of, *spontaneously* formed social orders of science, scholarship, law, art, religion, and free political discussion, the distinction between spontaneous and corporate social orders, a particularly interesting facet of Polanyi’s social theory, being only briefly mentioned by Allen.

3. Freedom Founded

Part 3, Allen gives over to “The Foundations and Presuppositions of Liberty.” Arguing first that not all aspects of social life are based on contract, most indeed are unchosen, Allen proceeds to Hayek’s image of the Great Society as *cosmos*, opposite of *taxis*, terms with the same connotations as Polanyi’s “spontaneous” and “corporate” orders respectively. The Great Society has an indefinite and open membership with many *abstract* relations, people interacting on a functional, impersonal basis, in most cases never meeting (e.g. relations between producers and buyers of their goods from retailers). Dealings are typically conducted in compliance with abstract and general rules applying to all relevant parties rather than dictated by personal obligations and loyalties.

Polanyi’s image of the free society, shaped by his analysis of the “republic of science,” differs appreciably from Hayek’s. Recall that Polanyi’s society relies on commitment to truth and to other transcendent ideals, embodied in and guiding development of a tradition of thought. The society has a General Authority expressed in general propositions and exercised by individuals as they interpret and apply propositions. Specialists explore “self-improvement” in its various forms (art, science, and the like) and pursue different excellences, influenced by traditional authority and seeking “creative self-renewal” (p. 193). Specialists’ ideas impinge on the general public. In this inclusive society and in its diverse spheres of excellence, tradition has authority and grounds authority as conditions of transmitting what “cannot be known by any single mind nor be known wholly explicitly” (p. 194).

Allen is again reminded of Burke. For Burke as for Polanyi, the purpose of the free society is not to protect the negative liberty of doing as we please but to allow members of groups and enterprises positive liberty to dedicate themselves to forms of “self-improvement.” (It is not entirely clear, in either Polanyi or Allen, whether “self-improvement” refers to activities of creative specialists or more broadly. Is it a case of specialists improving traditions of institutions and enterprises, of people improving themselves, of most members of society helping to enhance heritages, or what? Of course contributions to traditions of a free society tell us nothing about contributors’ moral qualities: distinguished scientists, philosophers, artists can be vicious or

virtuous. If Polanyi and Allen believe that most citizens of inclusive free societies are dedicated to bettering cultural heritages, they idealize. Overall I find Polanyi's writings on this particular topic too assertive, insufficiently explanatory.)

Polanyi's image of the free society lays greater emphasis on associations than does Hayek's; "a Society of societies" (p. 197) is Allen's happy phrase for it. Also Polanyi's society has distinctive beliefs and general positive aims, whereas Hayek's society has only one aim, self-preservation. What holds these free societies together? The "cement" in Hayek's Great Society is universal principles of justice, the tissue of social relations deriving from equal treatment of members according to those principles. There is no commanding authority, and citizens' purposes are diverse. By contrast, Polanyi's free society is cemented by the tradition of free discussion-*cum*-civil liberties "which its members develop by individual initiatives" (p. 205). Embodied in, protected and fostered by, free institutions of Parliament, courts and the press, principles of this traditional art of free discussion prescribe that cases be presented accurately, and adversaries be heard tolerantly. The principles depend on truth being accepted as real, an object of felt obligation and of love throughout society. (Further idealization by Polanyi?)

While Polanyi has little to say concerning differences between liberal traditions of free societies, Allen specifies some between England, America, Holland and Switzerland and reiterates his thought that a free society is cohered by dedication not to abstract freedom but to concrete freedoms incorporated in specific practices, laws and structures. "All freedom is freedom to do or be something determinate" (p. 207).

A further cement in free societies, noted by Allen rather than by Polanyi it would appear, is positive civic and moral duties or obligations. Liberals as a rule (Hayek is an exception) have dealt with duties of non-interference, assuming and ignoring the necessity of "a tradition of civility and a general respect for law" (p. 209). The tradition of freedom depends on ingrained moral beliefs about duties by which passions are restrained, for example beliefs that it is inherently, rather than instrumentally, correct not only to desist from unduly intruding in our neighbours' lives but to positively uphold respect for the law, set a good example to children as parents and teachers, aid citizens who have been insulted and attacked. Similarly, Allen ascribes government with positive duties to preserve laws, customs and structures that nurture "the moral life of the people," all "sane and efficacious policies are primarily conservative" (p. 210).

Something else that Allen rates as important to free societies' coherence is emotional solidarity, contrary to Popper and Hayek for whom allegedly it is part of fossilized tribalism. Informed by Max Scheler's fascinating studies, Allen explains the free society as founded on each member's possessing a general capacity for sympathy or fellow-feeling with any one he meets, "sharing in the emotions of others" (p. 218) and binding people together. Without this "sympathy other people would be mere things to us and their actions mere events" (p. 219). The main context of social life is not transient encounters with strangers but the small "circles of family, neighbourhood, parish, workplace, professional associations" (p. 220). Objects of suspicion for collectivists and individualists alike, these "little platoons" as Burke refers to them engender emotional bonds above and beyond "fellow feeling," each one in itself is a "community of feeling, of shared attachments, hopes, fears, joys and sorrows" (p. 220). (Another rose-coloured view: what of dysfunctional families; and of rivalry, lack of collegiality, petty jealousies and outsize ambitions in specialist societies, universities, professional associations? How many people these days enjoy their work? Allen concedes superficial conflict may occur, but argues there must be "underlying commitment" in small groupings for them to survive. Let it be pointed out to him that commitment can be pragmatic and opportunistic. The situation is more complex than he

believes; “platoons” may be divisive and rancorous.)

Allen commends Polanyi’s *Personal Knowledge* (chapter 7, §§ 4 and 5) for its discussion of “the emotional basis of society” in terms of “‘pure conviviality’ or companionship” (simple enjoyment of company), and its account of rituals as affirming a group’s transcendence of its individual members (p. 221). Adding to understanding of the free society’s “felt solidarity,” Polanyi stresses emotional commitments to its continuance, laws, traditions, associations. “Bonds of emotional unity,” never part of totalitarian states, emerge spontaneously and persist traditionally in free societies (p. 223). (Could they also be part of *unfree* societies, for example medieval Europe and imperial China?)

Allen’s affirmation of traditions and emotional bonds cementing free societies is subsequently qualified by this comment: “Looking back on the twentieth century, we can see the vast damage done to European civilisation by restless and uprooted emotions. Rapid change, industrialisation, and the decline of religious belief have left men without the old patterns and sureties” (p. 225). The basis of our free societies has evidently been weakened. He looks at nationalism as one attempt to fill the heart devoid of traditional attachments, but a failure. (*Traditional* attachments and antipathies, especially those of religion, inspire much nationalism. Allen’s references to tradition are invariably positive, not mentioning how many are and have been authoritarian, intolerant, and adverse to liberty. A further point: if standards for judging what is socially desirable are tradition-dependent as Allen seems to imagine, on what basis if any are good and bad traditions to be discriminated? Are we in the mire of relativism?)

A crucial issue for Allen turns out to be this: “The appeal of revolutionary collectivism has declined dramatically, but the underlying rejection of the world will manifest itself in new ways [often violent], ...unless some proper emotions towards man and Nature are revived or implanted. The only defence for human dignity and liberty is a rightly ordered set of emotions which will give men the strength and patience to live, endure, and act” (p. 226). What then is the answer? Part of Allen’s is to urge support for conservative liberalism as the only viable liberalism, maintaining the traditional fabric of society while cautiously extending inherited liberties and permitting their positive use to pursue values presupposed as real and knowable. There is for Allen a more fundamental question: why should the individual receive respect and be permitted freedom? He agrees with Scheler that nowhere in modern thought can a conception of the individual as uniquely valuable be found. In particular Allen finds no satisfactory answer in Polanyi who makes liberty for self-dedication valuable with reference to transcendent ideals, so “the value of the individual lies in his service of those ideals, and, consequently, in what he produces” (p. 234). A conception of the individual as unique and inherently valuable such as liberty (and liberalism) require may be found in theology. R. G. Collingwood recognized this, saying “‘The real ground for the “liberal” or “democratic” devotion to freedom was religious love of a God who set an absolute value on every individual human being”’ (p. 235). Liberalism took its conception of freedom from Christianity without providing it new grounds, so Allen claims. But because liberalism was shaped by Christian doctrine which affirms “the ultimate and inherent value of the” human individual, and has been sundered from this source, “Whence can come the emotion and faith to sustain liberty in the future?” (p. 237).

This in Allen’s mind is the major problem facing contemporary free societies: “What deep convictions can sustain them in the trials to come ...?” (p. 238). Collingwood to the contrary, Allen contends religious faith cannot be *used* to support the liberal order. Religion must be held as intrinsically true and important, God’s existence and justice as convictions. Polanyi saw his own writings as removing obstacles to “a rebirth of religious faith” (p. 239). He “thought that perhaps only a revival of religious faith and the Christian

understanding of man and the world could be the ultimate basis of a free and orderly society, yet he himself, like many others today, could not personally take that step. “That” writes Allen “seems to me the position we are in. ...It remains, in my opinion, to take the final transpolitical step to the full-blown Christian politics of the archetypical conservatism of Edmund Burke” (p. 241).

4. Assessment

Commencing this section, I want to sing the praises of *Beyond Liberalism*. Quite simply, it is a splendid book; continually illuminating and thought provoking, I have learned a great deal from it. Erudition combines with razor sharp conceptual analysis in Allen’s study of fascinating thinkers. His interpretation of the leading lights - Hayek and Polanyi - is careful and convincing; the writing crisp, clear and leavened with wry humour. Sample this: “It is ironic that the pressure of public opinion, which worried Mill, was weakening in its extent just as Mill thought it was becoming unbearable. For it was quite possible to conduct many an ‘experiment in living’ in London if the parties were discrete about it: Maida Vale was built just for that purpose” (p. 155). Another instance: “To these are to be added other rights such as ones to privacy and secrecy (i.e., immunities to being watched and spied upon, now a dead letter as far as the tabloid press in Britain is concerned)” (p. 60).

Liberals (and others), Allen is right in saying, have been inattentive to traditions, even downright hostile to them. There is something in his critique of highly abstract political philosophizing, and his call for traditions to be included in analyses of freedom and of political systems is good sense. But it is one thing to criticize theory for abstractness and another to avoid such theory. For example, Allen on the subject of intrinsic value appears to operate with an abstract philosophical theory (as at p. 209) unless he thinks that values respected as intrinsic in the West have (and justifiably have) a different status elsewhere.

Turning negative now, I confess to having problems with Allen’s ultimate *conclusion* which strikes me as unrealistic for contemporary liberal-pluralist democracies. Regardless of one’s feelings about secularization and multi-culturalism in our societies (Allen is no admirer of these developments) they have advanced so far that his conclusion - freedom as a value demands respect for individual uniqueness for which only Christianity can provide - is, in its last component at least, out of the question for many citizens.

Related to Allen’s invocation of Christianity in this context is his claim (based on Scheler) that no liberal thinker offers a case for the unique value of each human individual. Is the denial correct? What of John Stuart Mill’s *On Liberty* with its chapter “Individuality as one of the elements of human well being,” urging individuals to develop distinctive attributes? He quotes Wilhelm von Humboldt approvingly:

‘the end of man, or that which is prescribed by the eternal immutable dictates of reason, and not suggested by vague and transient desires, is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole;’ that, therefore, the object ‘towards which every human being must ceaselessly direct his efforts, and on which especially those who design to influence their fellow-men must ever keep their eyes, is the individuality of power and development’.³

Popper is another thinker who, like Mill, insists upon the moral value of concrete individuals. The flavour of his thinking is conveyed in his representation of the teaching of his idol, Socrates: “the human individual ...[is]

an end in himself,” “there is nothing more important in our life than other individual men. ... It is your reason that makes you human; ...that makes you a self-sufficient individual and entitles you to claim that you are an end in yourself.”⁴

It needs to be said that Popper is not well interpreted by Allen. A case in point is when he suggests Popper’s only alternative to an “unqualifiedly Open” society “is a ‘closed’ [or] ... ‘tribal’ one” (p. 185). Read Popper carefully and you see he locates open and closed societies at opposite ends of the spectrum with many intermediate possibilities. Allen envisages Popper’s open society as “open to any criticism and any change ... It cannot allow itself to have a secure faith in itself, nor a solid core which is not up for negotiation” (p. 181; cf. pp. 197, 205). This is not Popper’s view. His *Open Society* makes a case for rationalism over irrationalism, one that ultimately depends on *faith* in and commitment to humanitarianism (equality, freedom, individualism, and the like) and a dogmatic renunciation of violence. Serving this faith, rationalism is favoured at the expense of violence for settling conflicts. The open society is not without faith.

One of the few friendly things Allen has to say about Popper, buried in an endnote, is that he “rightly sees relativism as the principal intellectual malady of the age” (199 n. 14) - not just “a malady” but “the” chief one. One would expect Allen to discuss such a grave problem in detail. To the contrary, as we saw earlier, he actually endorses “a certain relativity” in the notions of freedom and coercion so that “for practical purposes, a people is free if ...they feel free, even though they may ...live under ...laws and customs which another people would find highly restrictive” (p. 67), freedom relativized to collective outlook. Allen seems unsure about where he stands, elsewhere implying universals, referring to a definite “valid core of liberalism” (p. 78) and describing Hayek’s rules of just conduct as necessary to human well being. What if such rules are absent from a society whose citizens nevertheless “feel free”? Are they free? Allen expresses belief at another place in universal moral laws, but conceding that with one hand he takes it back with the other, saying the content of these laws is socially variable, which effectively means moral validity is socially variable and relative. The topic is pregnant with irony in that Popper, for whom Allen has little time, is relentlessly hostile to relativism, while Polanyi is arguably an unwitting relativist. I lack space to document the case concerning Polanyi, but it is circumstantially significant that two of our era’s leading cognitive relativists - Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend - were powerfully affected by Polanyi’s analysis of relations between scientific theories and between the worldviews of scientists and other groupings, helping inspire their doctrine of incommensurability.

Refer again to Mill since Allen also misinterprets him. Allen considers that at the commencement of *On Liberty* Mill “simply set aside inner liberty, as the freedom of the will, as an [sic.] pseudo-problem” (p. 33). Mill does no such thing. He says, correctly, such freedom is no part of the subject of the book. But elsewhere “inner liberty” is a genuine problem of utmost importance for Mill, spilling much ink on it in his *A System of Logic* and his *Autobiography*. Mill serves to rebut a repeated claim by Allen that classical liberals want freedom for people to do as they please (pp. 195, 231), “to do as one likes just because one likes it” (p. 235). The tenor of Mill’s *On Liberty* is otherwise, proposes freedom for people to grow in Periclean (not wanton Alcibiadean) manner, developing moral, emotional, intellectual, and practical capacities and endowments. People may abuse freedom but Mill does not approve it, is no supporter of “do as you please.” (The same spirit - responsible exercise of freedom - suffuses the liberal texts of Locke, Humboldt, Popper and most other great liberal thinkers known to me.)

Often citing (pp. 153-4, 156, 165, 190ff, 201ff.) Polanyi's social analysis of science - the Republic of Science model - Allen is unaware that doubts have been cast on its contemporary relevance. Ravetz's *Scientific Knowledge and Its Social Problems* forcefully argues the character of science has changed since World War II. Science has been "industrialized," its research projects have become large scale, capital intensive, and linked to commercial exploitation. Scientific work is plagued by problems of quality control, and is directed by extra-scientific organizations in charge of funding, scientists having lost the autonomy and freedom that Polanyi fought so hard to preserve.⁵ If Ravetz's argument is granted (being well informed and amply documented) it may not disqualify Allen from using Polanyi's "Republican" model to *analogically explicate* the inclusive free society but, anachronistic, the model's intellectual *support* for that society is slight.

Allen's attitude to what Polanyi styles "private liberty" calls for comment.

And what we are to be free to do can principally be only that which has a value that transcends individual likings and dislikings. Any other freedom is worthless by definition. The liberty that matters is one of self-dedication, a liberty that can claim a moral right to exist and be exercised. There can be no moral right to live irresponsibly or immorally (p. 165).

Must "private liberty," not dedicated to some ideal end, be worthless and, by implication, irresponsible, even immoral? I would answer that freedom to indulge one's "likings," not immorally but, in amoral or extra-moral ways is one of the free society's great attractions. Whether the object of a "liking" be driving in the countryside, watching movies, enjoying wine and food, holidaying overseas - dismissing the related freedoms as "worthless" seems puritanical. We are all of us in need of restorative pleasures, making freedom to enjoy oneself desirable and worth protecting. The freedom has limits to be sure, but life without it would be colourless and austere. It has been said that "Without the 'right to be left alone', to shut out on occasion the prying eyes and importunities of both government and society, other political and civil liberties seem fragile."⁶ Another point: if, as Allen insists, our freedom is principally "to do only that which has a value that transcends" personal likings (p. 165) then by the same token freedom for profit-making in the capitalist economy is another mere "worthless freedom." Well Polanyi sees it differently in *The Logic of Liberty* essays where market orders are prominent spontaneous orders alongside science and common law, and involve *public* liberty (Allen to the contrary at p. 156). Allen says little about market freedom, effectively deprecating it as *outré* freedom with no ideal or moral end.

Since Bentham, liberals have commonly regarded democracy as an indispensable protection for liberty, bestowing citizens with power to counteract their rulers. Competing political parties and periodic elections with universal suffrage allow citizens to vote out governments, inhibiting abuse of power. This appreciation of democracy is never mentioned by Allen or Polanyi.

Typographical and spelling mistakes include "R. A. Nesbit" (p. 14) for Nisbet, "utilitarianism" for utilitarianism (p. 118), "consequence" for consequent (p. 140), "late" for later (p. 173); there is a solecism "be not be" (p. 193), and a number of omissions including "be" (p. 35), "d" (p. 41), "be" (p. 43), "of" (p. 60), "of" (p. 231). On a point of historical detail, Allen's claiming the "rise of nominalism ...resulted in a rejection of the whole idea of Natural Law" (p. 140) seems falsified by the likes of Locke and Boyle who coherently combined conceptual nominalism with natural law ethics.

Beyond Liberalism should prove of considerable interest to able undergraduates, to postgraduates and

academics interested in Hayek or Polanyi, freedom and the liberal tradition.

Notes

* Preparation of this article in its final stages was greatly expedited by a grant from The Faculty of Arts, Deakin University.

1. All references are to *Beyond Liberalism* unless otherwise indicated.
2. Primary sources for Allen's coverage of Polanyi include *Knowing and Being*, *The Logic of Liberty*, *Personal Knowledge*, *Science, Faith and Society*, and *The Tacit Dimension*.
3. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, in *Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Government* (London: Dent, 1968), pp. 115-16.
4. Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, 5th ed., vol. 1 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 190.
5. J. R. Ravetz, *Scientific Knowledge and its Social Problems* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973).
6. "The surveillance society", *The Economist*, May 1st, 1999, vol. 351, number 8117, p.17.

Beyond Liberalism: A Reply to Some Comments

R.T. Allen

ABSTRACT Key Words:liberty, freedom, Hayek, Polanyi, Burke, Popper, tradition, liberalism, conservatism
*This is a brief response to S. Jacob's review of **Beyond Liberalism**.*

I am very grateful for Struan Jacobs' appreciative review. I shall limit my comments to a few points, mostly of clarification where I have not been sufficiently clear. References to relevant sections and/or pages of Jacobs' essay are listed parenthetically before the listing of the topic of my comment

1. (§1 p. 5) Aurel Kolnai: I regard Kolnai as having arrived at the destination to which Hayek and Polanyi successively point, but, as I stated in the book, I could not read his earlier work in Hungarian and German, and so could not provide an adequate account of his position. Hence the Appendix based on what I could read.

2. (p.5) My sympathies: I would have thought that they were obvious: I am an unqualified Conservative. I sympathise with conservative inclined Liberals, but see their position as ultimately unstable and dangerous to liberty. Surely history proves that. Today Liberal parties and groups, in Britain, North America, and Continental Europe, demand more and more restrictions (except on sexual activity) and have left the defence of liberty to Conservative parties and groups, where they exist. My argument is that Hayek and even more so Polanyi, represent a movement back from the radical forms of Liberalism, which have destroyed freedom, to a more classical position, which can itself be stabilised, and liberty with it, only by an explicit acknowledgement of its Conservative foundations.

3. (p. 6) *Law, Legislation and Liberty*: Mea culpa, as also the other errors which Struan Jacobs points out. (I read the intended meaning, not the actual words, of my own work: a Polanyian error?)

4. (p.7) "Out-dated essentialism": rather than that even more out-dated nominalism. My point is that the general notion or essence of political and civil liberty can be known only tacitly and resists definition.

5. (§2 p.8) Benefits as unintended consequences: obviously not all are, and some activities, such as technology, are inherently utilitarian. My point is that important things in life are achieved only indirectly: you will not be happy if you make it your aim, but only if you lose yourself in something you do primarily for its own sake and not just because you want to be happy. So too with justice and the other virtues. Hume and Hayek realised that fundamental moral laws have to be obeyed as if they were right in themselves for the benefits of peace and prosperity to follow. But that, as I said, is the view of an external observer. The people themselves must hold justice, etc. to be good, right and binding in and by themselves, irrespective of consequences, to achieve, when possible, the consequential benefits of peace and prosperity. Make the latter your primary aim, and you are back to rule- and then act-consequentialism, and thus collapse of law and order, and of peace and prosperity with them.

6. (§3 pp.9-10) Self-improvement and specialists: Yes, I have not made this sufficiently clear. Polanyi's and my argument is that the model of a specialist group, the republic of science, applies to the whole population: what matters is the freedom to become and be as we ought, not as we wish. (Nor is this invalidated by what has happened since his day: many of the developments that Struan Jacobs cites are external impositions and inimical to science.) There cannot be a moral case for immoral freedom. Hayek, in *The Road to Serfdom* (pp. 156-9, mentioned by me on pp. 144-5) came near to this, but did not develop it. The same applies to private spheres. Only with a private sphere as well as public roles, can the individual develop his character. Private spheres are not for doing just as we like: some people like being miserable, carping, indulging in wanton destruction, or letting themselves go. (A question which moral philosophers have not addressed, Bradley in Chap 7 of *Ethical Studies* being a rare exception, is the expression of moral character outside the realms of explicit duties, of being as we ought in everyday life: Christian devotion, as in Herbert and Keble, has given the answer.) And while it was Matthew Arnold, and not Liberals themselves, who used the phrase 'doing as one likes', I do not think I am being unfair in following him. For either liberty is for 'doing as one likes' whatever that is, and so is valueless, or it transcends itself into the liberty of self-dedication, which, as I pointed out (p.9) is to be found in Acton's definition, cited by Hayek.

7. (pp.10-11) Dysfunctional "little platoons": Yes, of course, they can and do go wrong, like everything else in human life. But it does not follow that a car that runs badly on dirty petrol would run better on no petrol at all. The same applies to emotional solidarity (I explicitly referred to its abuse by totalitarians, pp. 223-4), tradition and authority, and everything else which Liberals and rationalists shy away from or actively oppose. Look around today and see what Liberalism and rationalism have done to the family, schools, and the upbringing of children: just read the newspapers and review the statistics of juvenile crime.

8. (p.11 and 13, §4) Tradition and relativism: all life depends upon tradition, good or bad, right or wrong. Again, the abuse does not invalidate the use. As for Popper, I think I quote him sufficiently to show that his moral scepticism is radical, though he is schizophrenic about it. In contrast, I hold, as any sane person must, that moral laws are universal but their particular content (*Sittlichkeit*) varies and must vary according to circumstances. 'Thou shalt not steal' applies at all times and places, but what actually constitutes theft in any particular time and place depends upon the local definitions of property. If no intellectual property is recognised, you cannot steal by plagiarism. Duties of parents, children, citizens, and so on, again must vary, according to circumstances. Of course, some variations are better or worse, irrespective of circumstances: e.g. (the commonest type of varying for the worse), the arbitrary restriction of duties only to specific persons or groups, only to one's own relatives, kinsmen or fellow nationals, and neglect of those outside the circle.

9.(p.12) The value of the individual: Yes, Mill valued individuality. But on what grounds? Certainly not, as Collingwood pointed out, on the basis of his official Utilitarian and Empiricist-Phenomenalist philosophy. My point is that modern and ancient philosophy and other world-views have or had no place for it: the individual is simply a unit of the social whole (as in the Hebrew Bible up to Jeremiah and Ezekiel), a function of his role, distinguished from others only by his body, a stimulus-response mechanism, a vehicle for the *Weltgeist*, a spark of the one Light to be absorbed back into it, an illusion. Lovers and poets have known it: 'Who can say more, what greater praise than this, That only you are you?' But its explicit formulation and presuppositions belong to Christianity alone, as does our heritage of civil and political liberties, which have been endangered and destroyed as we have departed from it. If men today cannot return to the faith of their fathers, then neither can they expect to enjoy much or for long the liberty that presupposes it. I do not claim to

know what will in fact happen, only what liberty requires and depends upon, in the individual and society at large.

10. (p.14) Economic freedom and the market: I would have thought that my opposition to collectivism, corporatism, etc., was obvious, along with my endorsement of Liberal economics, which 'Liberal' parties have abandoned. I did not discuss it, for I took for granted the arguments by Hayek and Polanyi. I would say that the economic sphere, getting and spending, works better when it is not merely economic: when satisfaction is found in occupation and not just money gained from it. Here too is self-transcendence. (It also requires respect for law which is not merely economic in motivation, as witness Russia and the Mafia).

11. (p.14) Democracy: In the book, I agreed with Hayek in clearly separating the questions of what is freedom and of what are its conditions, but also quoted Burke (p.15) when he did not so clearly separate them. I think that I should have qualified the former somewhat, as in fact I did when I cited diffusion of powers, which is both an element in and a condition of freedom. Clearly there have been relatively unfree democracies, and relatively free non-democracies. And unfreedom can result from the extension of democracy when more and more of life is made political and organised from above because 'the people' must collectively decide for themselves. The actual form of government is a practical question, and it is the substance of what government does and doesn't, can and can't do, that matters more. Certainly, in the modern European world, there both can and must be a wide popular participation in government, but equally there must be elements that are beyond the popular will of the moment: an independent judiciary with the power to enforce its decisions, a strong constitution and respect for it, or a monarchy, or even an aristocracy.

12. (p.13) The Open Society: Even if Popper does recognise degrees of openness, his Open Society is at the open end of the scale. Hence its vagueness, and in fact the book (and criticism of it) is all about its enemies and not the OS itself. For the OS is a merely negative condition, of not being closed, and therefore lacks any substance or character. What Popper does not acknowledge is that the negative aspect is but the reverse of a positive one that is the obverse, a society that exists for something and with a definite content.

13. (p.14) Locke and Natural Law: I did show (n. 7 pp.149-50, that Locke emptied Natural Law of all content save the one injunction to obey the commands of God as a superior, exactly what theological positivism holds, and for which contemporary Legal Positivism substitutes the State

Wittgenstein and Polanyi: Metaphysics Reconsidered

Charles W. Lowney

ABSTRACT Key words: Ludwig Wittgenstein, Michael Polanyi, Plato, essence, joint comprehension, epistemology, metaphysics, meaning.

This paper looks at Wittgenstein's criticism of metaphysical philosophy and its possible reconstitution through Polanyi's epistemology of tacit knowing. The two approaches are contrasted in the end in response to the question "What is the meaning of life?"

What I plan to do here is to address the question of the possibility of there being sense to metaphysical philosophy. There is one key point upon which any metaphysical edifice turns: the notion of essence. If this notion is destroyed, then no metaphysics can stand. If it can be sustained in some manner, then the possibility of metaphysics remains.

Essence appears to be the base level for developing standards of judgment that stand apart from us. Once we name essences, we can arrange them in propositions to describe states of affairs, and further, we can arrange our propositions into general philosophical pictures. Undermining essences will undermine the push towards unity at each of these levels.

The beauty of Ludwig Wittgenstein's later work is that it displays elegantly the collapse of metaphysical philosophy through a sustained attack on the notion of essence. The beauty of Michael Polanyi's epistemology is that it can show the seductive power of traditional conceptions of essence as it provides a new understanding of what essence might amount to.

I will first display the strategy Wittgenstein employs in criticizing metaphysical philosophy in the *Philosophical Investigations*¹; I will discuss briefly Polanyi's conception of "tacit knowledge"; I will then exhibit how Polanyi not only counters the move Wittgenstein makes in order to reformulate a notion of "essence," but shows why Wittgenstein's criticisms work so well in the first place.

Wittgenstein's Attack on Metaphysical Philosophy

The explicit targets of Wittgenstein's attack are Plato, Augustine, Frege, Russell, and his earlier self. It is helpful here, however, to blanch out some of the subtler distinctions and more specific critiques² for a general sense of the metaphysical view Wittgenstein undermines: the Platonic picture which sets the ground for a "correspondence" conception of truth.³

As sophisticated as the theories and counter-theories of various philosophers became, Classical or Modern, they relied on a conception of truth that Wittgenstein reads back into the dialogues of Plato and leads, ultimately, to a metaphysics that could undergird a positivist's view of science.⁴

This correspondence theory manifests itself in various ways throughout the tradition of philosophy. This

view, however, is a distortion evoked by the story we give about the way we learn language. We are misled to take a linguistic “thing” as an actual thing and then build a metaphysics of essence and correspondence on top of it. The purpose of entertaining such philosophies is to get a handle on what is true and what is false by establishing a standard in light of which correct judgments may be made.

For Wittgenstein, however, names are not “tags,” nor do we arrive at judgments by comparing and seeing what things fall under certain categories.⁵ The ability to use words and make judgments comes from a whole context of use in which we learn, as if through training, what words are appropriate when. To even begin to name, much preparatory work must be done. One must already be “a master of the game.” To ask how language “hooks onto” the world was thus nonsensical. The world is given together with language.

By looking at language at a very basic level, Wittgenstein attempts to show us why metaphysics is nonsense. He shows how general concepts in philosophy have no life. They are something⁶ that is added, that adds nothing. This is what Wittgenstein calls “the philosophical urge: we are inclined to say something which gives no information.”⁷

One might say that the eternal is exchanged for the timely, the necessary for the contingent and the universal for the local, but this would be misleading as well. The inversion of a metaphysical approach is just as metaphysical as metaphysics for Wittgenstein. The questions themselves would be denied as lacking sense. Instead of argument, instead of being drawn into philosophical debate, Wittgenstein would simply point to various language games, and show how we might use words, and how we might behave when we did so.

In Plato’s *Meno*, Socrates asks, “What is Virtue?” Meno, a statesman involved in the practical concerns of life, answers with specific instances of excellent behavior:

for a man, he should know how to administer the state, and in the administration of it to benefit his friends and harm his enemies; and he must also be careful not to suffer harm himself. A woman’s virtue, if you wish to know about that, may also be easily described: her duty is to order her house, and keep what is indoors, and obey her husband. Every age, every condition of life, young or old, male or female, bond or free, has a different virtue: there are virtues numberless, and no lack of definitions of them; for virtue is relative to the actions and ages of each of us in all that we do.⁸

Socrates, however, is not satisfied. He insists that there must be a “nature” of virtue. He insists that there is something about the word that allows us to use it appropriately in all these specific instances. He looks for an “essence.”

For Wittgenstein, Meno’s answer would be sufficient. Socrates felt pulled by the language to say more apart from the specific contexts in which the word was used, but the word does not have an essence that precedes its use in contexts and gives us one fixed general meaning. It does not have a “nature” that sets the conditions for all its possible uses. It simply has a “family resemblance” to its other uses.⁹

Essence as Tacit Integration

I believe that the insights of Wittgenstein, by pointing out the flaws in the traditional ways of taking philosophical knowledge, allow us to build a better picture of what knowing is like.

The seeds of such an epistemology are found in Polanyi's exploration of tacit knowledge. He presents a picture that begins to make sense of the phenomena that Wittgenstein unravels. For Polanyi, a general concept is not an abstraction of what is common to particular occurrences—it is not a lowest common denominator—it is rather the “joint significance” of the particulars that tacitly comprise it. And this joint significance is, in an important sense, the condition for the possibility of the very intelligibility of the particulars.

According to Polanyi, when we attend to something, when we focus our awareness, we attend from a group of subsidiary clues that are tacit. The tacit clues can never be made explicit in the way that a philosopher would like them to be because (1) when we focus our attention on these clues, they do not perform the same function as they do when we attend from them as clues, and (2) when we attend to them, we attend from other clues which are tacit in relation to what we now have as our focal knowledge.

There is always a tacit dimension to knowledge that we cannot hope to completely eradicate. We can get somewhat clearer on many of the clues by focusing on them, but we can never make explicit all the clues that go into an awareness, or how they might be organized, arranged and added to in the future. There is also a hierarchy, or community, of levels that work together to provide us with a focal knowledge. And this focal awareness, though composite, will always present itself as something primitive and “given.” There is a “vectoral quality” to the clues, which carries us directly to the focus. The particulars that bring us to the meaning are thus, in an important sense, “transparent.”¹⁰

A simple example of this can be drawn from linguistic comprehension. When we attend to a word on a page, we attend from the particular letters as clues to the word. When we attend to the meaning of a sentence, we attend from the words in the sentence and their organization. When we attend to the meaning of a paragraph, we attend from the sentences and their organization.

We do not see the letters of a word in the same way, when we look at the letters, as we do when we look through the letters to their joint meaning as a word. We do not see the individual words in the same way as we do when we look from them to their joint meaning in a sentence. There is a “from/to” or “from/at” structure to knowing in which what are taken as “clues” work tacitly to present us with a focal awareness, and this rough, general structure seems to work in most forms of understanding and perception.

When we turn to look back at the meaning of the particular clues that comprise a joint significance in a focal awareness—when the clues become the focus of our interest—we look through that joint significance as a key tacit clue. When we look to the meaning of a word after reading the sentence as a whole, not only the letters of the word and the experiences we have had of the word's use, but also what we perceive as the joint meaning of the words in the sentence as a whole, acts as a clue to how that word is taken. A joint significance becomes like a tacit lens that the clues are “looked at” “through.”

Polanyi believes that Plato was noting a basic experience that contains a valuable lesson when he noted that a “nature” or “essence”, which gets developed into “Forms” or “Ideas” that provide intelligibility, corresponds with a class of particulars.¹¹ Plato, however, was partially wrong to give that essence a precedence completely independent from its particular occurrences.¹² In Polanyi’s terminology, the particular instances of men and women would be the clues to the joint significance we name “human being” in general, or “man.” The current concept has epistemological value, but does not legislate *a priori* for all time what we may or may not consider an instance of a man or what his or her potentialities might be. The general concept is dependent on the subsidiary clues, and how they are taken, to give us a picture of what the human being is, and the picture lets us see different avenues and possibilities for what we will regard as an instance of that concept in the future.

The individual concept, “human being,” will be affected by the larger picture of the philosophical system in the same way that the meaning of a word is affected by the sentence, paragraph, chapter, part and ultimately the “story.” The “joint significance” of each level is like a “picture” in that it gives us a way of looking at the clues that help to constitute it, and it gives us ways of going on in a consistent manner.

Metaphysical Thinking as a Skill

Polanyi, like Wittgenstein, was a keen observer of ordinary experience. His paradigm of how knowledge works is developed from many types of common experiences of knowing that are well grounded in “roughness” of experience.¹³

In the very process of perception and sensation, we dwell in the subsidiary knowledge of bodily clues that combine in the joint significance of a visual image, a taste, a sound, a smell, a touch. Here, as in other cases of tacit knowing, when we look at the clues (the nervous system for one), we have a different understanding than when we look through the clues to their joint meaning (a perception).

How a doctor recognizes a disease; how we work the muscles of the eyes and attend from the clues of two pictures in order to have stereoscopic vision; how a swimmer swims, a pianist plays, or a fighter fights — all paying little or no attention to the complicated bodily manipulations they must make in performing their tasks — are all examples of tacit knowing.

Similarly, how a scientist may pursue an answer to a question left open in her field and make a discovery is deeply analogous to how a person who seeks to master a physical skill will proceed. The scientist will analyze and synthesize knowledge, working from theory to facts and from facts back to theory. The master of an art will analyze her skill to learn its components, practice individual movements and then re-synthesize them in a fluid performance, perhaps innovating along the way.

Polanyi comes to the realization that knowledge is very much a skill: “Though we may prefer to speak of understanding a comprehensive object or situation and of mastering a skill, we do use the two words nearly as synonyms. Actually we speak equally of grasping a subject or an art.”¹⁴

Knowledge and skill deepens by an analytic breaking down of theory (where the joint comprehension or meaning of the data is no longer in focus) and a synthetic reformulation of theory (where the data can once again be ordered and understood in terms of a new theoretical picture).

For Wittgenstein, seeing understanding as a training, or habit, broke the “necessity” that we feel when pulled to a philosophical conclusion. It tore at the idea of a special “intuition” involved in coming to understand.¹⁵ Knowledge was thus a construct of human dimensions; the “pull” towards empty generalizations was unmasked and the necessity behind philosophical judgments was delegitimized.

For Polanyi, that knowledge is a skill does not delegitimize it but makes it an accomplishment. Through Polanyi’s picture, we can see how “essences” and philosophical pictures are constructed in one sense and yet valid in another.¹⁶ We come to see “essence” as an epistemological structure with such a phenomenological force that “it” seems to demand an ontological status.¹⁷

In most traditional accounts, an essence is *a priori*, universal, necessary and eternal. Our experience, in contrast is *a posteriori*, local, contingent, and in history.

The “*a priori*” conception of essence can be drawn from the intelligibility that a joint comprehension provides for its clues. The subsidiary clues brought to bear are, to use Wittgenstein’s terminology, “neither a something nor a nothing”¹⁸ before a joint comprehension arises to give sense to them. We can identify particulars only after we look back to them through this gestalt. In an epistemological sense, then, the joint comprehension comes first. It seems anterior to the particulars we experience, since we cannot conceive particular clues without it.

The “universal” aspect of these essences can also be seen here. A joint comprehension becomes the guiding picture that helps us identify what members fall within its class. The word that is associated with the joint comprehension of men and women will quite naturally cover everything we see as a human, since the joint comprehension we name acts tacitly to give us the criteria to distinguish human beings from all other things; it is our tool for identifying the particular case from the start.

The felt “necessity” that Wittgenstein describes and undermines in his discussions of “rule following” would come from the “vectoral quality” of tacit integration. We run through the clues in such a way that we perceive the focal meaning as “immediately” before us. There is no gap open to question the tacit inference that leads us forward from subsidiary sensory stimulation to a perception, or from signs to their focal meaning.¹⁹ When we open our eyes, we do not see the two distinct pictures that are fused together to give us stereoscopic vision. When we see the letters “c”, “a” and “t” concatenated, we are transported directly to the focal meaning of the word “cat.”

The “eternal” aspect can also be seen in how the joint focus stands outside of time. None of the particular historical instances that make up a joint comprehension is sufficient to capture it. It stands beyond them and, due to its role in providing intelligibility, cannot be perceived to change. It remains the fixed point. In that this joint comprehension operates tacitly, we see the non-discursive nature of the Ideas. All explicit definitions will fall short at some point. The best definition is just another clue to the joint comprehension that guides our understanding. Yet we can have explicit knowledge. We can examine the clues that we do see and continually deepen our understanding through a continual process of analysis and re-synthesis.²⁰

Whereas Wittgenstein said, “whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent,”²¹ Polanyi would say “Speak! Say as much as you can say in the best way you can say it, but realize that even the best formulations will never completely capture the tacit underpinnings of thought.”

One way Wittgenstein breaks philosophical pictures is to show us that there can always be another way of taking something. He demonstrates that there is always another way to go on which is not open to us because of the picture we are currently employing.

This I see as Wittgenstein's general strategy or method: he disrupts our ordinary notions of general concepts and general systematic philosophical pictures by taking our attention off the joint significance of the clues and directing our attention to the clues themselves. For instance, in discussing how the concept of "game" has no essence, he points to various particular games and shows how there is nothing that is common to all of them. Since perceiving the joint meaning is a skill that relies on "tacit integration" —like any other skill— if you attend directly to the subsidiary processes or clues that make the skill work, you will disrupt its smooth performance and cause it to stall.²² Just as if, while playing the piano, we began to focus our attention on the subsidiary movements in the muscles of our fingers, the music jars to a halt.

Skills are closely related to habits. Developing a skill is training a habit. Wittgenstein gets us to break our old habits of thinking. This is good because that something is a habit does not give it justification. It is also good because it shows that different habits are possible. It is bad and Wittgenstein is wrong (in a moral sense) because skills/habits do get things done and joint comprehensions can give us some standards by which we may determine goals and establish values. Also it is wrong (in an epistemological sense) because Wittgenstein sometimes obscures the fact that we are always proceeding from habits (of seeing, thought, action, etc.) that are tacit. We cannot simply lay everything out in plain view so that we might just "look"! We are always "seeing as," even when we look neither at the duck nor the rabbit but at the lines on a page. The "look" abides not without tacit clues.²³

We cannot simply take off our spectacles to see the world aright. To see at all we must look through tacit lenses, or we fumble in a discrete darkness where nothing can be identified. To say this is to say that metaphysics, in a sense, is inevitable.

Conclusion: Metaphysical Meaning

Wittgenstein breaks apart the "essence" of general concepts to show a family resemblance between our experiences of a word in its ordinary use. Polanyi groups together experiences of knowing that have a family resemblance and the joint significance of this group is the general structure of tacit knowing.

Through his notion of tacit integration, Polanyi validates the construction of wholes by which we can make some parts more intelligible and bring them into sharper focus. By allowing us to reconstruct the notion of essence, he takes the first step in legitimizing the building of systems by which we can better understand our experiences in general. He legitimizes metaphysics.

Polanyi needs to restore metaphysics because he means to restore faith in human values against a reductionism that he saw as inherent in an objectivist epistemology of science.

Wittgenstein would deny that any such restoration of metaphysics is necessary to uphold values. The need to develop a way to rationally justify values is also a philosophical mistake according to Wittgenstein. He doesn't seek to justify any particular system of values, or even attempt to justify —as Polanyi does— the credibility of systems of values in general, but undermines any philosophic conception that would claim to

substantiate values.

The differences between Wittgenstein and Polanyi may best be described in their approach to metaphysical questions. For instance: What is the meaning of life?

For Wittgenstein, the answer lies in breaking the grip of the question. After a dialectical struggle, we may come to see that the question, asked at such a general level, makes no sense. So instead of general meanings, Wittgenstein might point to specific local areas where such “meanings” may be found: the satisfaction of a day’s work, the smile of a loved one, etc.

Polanyi, on the other hand, would want to say that sense can indeed be given to the question. The meaning of life is the joint comprehension of the activities and thoughts that we believe make a human life worth living. Such a general meaning can never be made fully explicit, but can be captured for us and reflected back in rituals, explicit values and maxims that guide the way life is to be lived if it is to be meaningful. One might then advance a work ethic or family values as an attempt to partially systematize those experiences that might make life meaningful for us and as a way to initiate others into an understanding of the particular experiences we find worthwhile.

Endnotes

¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953.

² Such as that on Frege’s theory of reference, Russell’s definite descriptions, and the early Wittgenstein’s view of logic as an intermediary between language and the world.

³ My interpretation of Wittgenstein as an anti-essentialist might be challenged. Wittgenstein’s work allows us to clarify the notion of essence, yet any notion strictly derivable from Wittgenstein’s view would lose the characteristics that have marked “essence” in philosophy and look nothing like Plato’s Ideas or Polanyi’s reconstruction of them. Though one might conceivably get normative concepts for understanding and prediction locally in language games, as I see it, metaphysics is still out of bounds for Wittgenstein.

⁴ In British “empirical” and twentieth century positivist philosophy, however, the Platonic Ideas became mental representations or sense impressions, and the Good and the Beautiful became subjective and relative, while the true and the false could still be considered objectively determined.

⁵ Hence a judgement is not simply “representation of a representation” as it was for Kant.

⁶ This already shows how speaking in a language is to be misled and to mislead: saying “they” are “something” already pushes us towards an ontological claim. Our language leads us to expect a “something” wherever we direct our attention— so it is with the positing of “faculties” for psychology: we tend to think that there must be a “something” that issues in types of behavior. And so it is with our private “sensations.” We treat them as a “something” when, as Wittgenstein says, they are “neither a something or a nothing.” See Wittgenstein, *PI*, p. 102.

⁷ Wittgenstein, *PI*, section 298.

⁸ Plato's *Meno*, #71 and #72. The blatant sexism of Meno's comment, which is more visible from the perspective of today's society, highlights a certain dependency of words on the local and historical context of their use.

⁹ Here we see an opening to the heart of John Dewey's criticism of philosophical metaphysics. For Dewey, the philosophical fallacy is taking the consummatory result of a series and making it antecedent. Then attributing to this result explanatory or causal power.

¹⁰ Michael Polanyi, *Knowing and Being*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969, p. 141.

¹¹ See Michael Polanyi, and Harry Prosch, *Meaning*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975, pp. 51-53 and Polanyi, *KB*, p. 165.

¹² If that is what Plato did— his use of “recollection” leaves this vague.

¹³ Some of the experiences Polanyi points to in relaying an understanding of tacit knowing are: “(1) the understanding of physiognomies, (2) the performance of skills. (3) the proper use of sense organs, and (4) the mastery of tools and probes.” In Polanyi, *KB*, p. 128. See also “Tacit Knowing” in Polanyi, *KB*, p. 163.

¹⁴ Polanyi, *KB*, p. 126.

¹⁵ Particularly helpful here is Juliet Floyd's paper, “Wittgenstein on 2,2,2...: The Opening of Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics” in *Synthese* 87, 1991, pp. 143-180. We see here how, for Wittgenstein, even the expectation we would have regarding “how to go on” in a mathematical series is a “training” and defies the necessity we ordinarily associate with mathematics.

¹⁶ It is also important to note that there are different types and levels of joint comprehensions. An “Idea” can be a joint focus, an “object” can be a joint focus, an “image” can be a joint focus. Also, not all general concepts are “essential.” Some categorizations can integrate particular experiences to cut nature at the joints. These are usually the natural “classes.” Others are more arbitrary associations. Sorting out which categories and theoretical pictures do have endurance is the task for a community of inquirers who have what Polanyi calls “universal intent.”

¹⁷ The ontological status of such objectifications is a further claim that Polanyi is willing to make, but at present I wish merely to point out how the phenomena of tacit integration can pull us towards a more traditional account of essences. For the purposes of this paper, then, I concentrate on the epistemological and forgo a discussion of an ontological correlate. I do believe that these essences can direct our attention to reality, and unveil it, but to say that they are therefore “real”, as Polanyi and Plato do, may gerrymander the language a bit too much. Also, given Polanyi's structure of knowing, to say there is a one to one correspondence between the essence we name and an existing entity may be too much of a simplification.

¹⁸ Wittgenstein, *PI*, p. 102.

¹⁹ This is key for understanding the composite nature of “primitive” intuitions. Similarly, there are no gaps left open to question the tacit knowledge that leads us forward from accepted premises to “necessary” conclusions.

²⁰ In the extreme cases of a scientific “revolution,” this process can be seen most clearly. The gathering of facts in a field of knowledge can outmode our theoretical understanding of how they go together. A “paradigm” is very much a joint comprehension of meaning that is seen through to the “facts” that it organizes. This accounts for the indefinability of the paradigm with which Thomas Kuhn struggles. (See *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962.) The paradigm operates as tacit knowledge and — like the Ideas of Plato— any discursive rendition will ultimately fall short. A theory is an explicit rendering of a joint comprehension that we look through to understand. As such, it is always the explicit formulation of that which is tacit— hence subject to the limitations of any set of tacit clues viewed focally.

²¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1922, p. 189.

²² Polanyi and Prosch, *Meaning*, p. 126.

²³ Which brings us to what? An infinite regress or an assessment of the human condition given the nature of consciousness?

Notes on Contributors

Struan Jacobs teaches social theory at Deakin University. His published articles cover important figures in the liberal tradition (Locke, Bentham, J. S. Mill, Polanyi, and Popper). Also interested in theories of science, he has recently published on Kuhn's handling of the idea of scientific community, and is putting finishing touches to a paper that looks critically at the problem solving account of science given by Popper, Polanyi, and others.

Richard Allen read philosophy at Nottingham University; taught in school, and then at Loughborough College of Education, Sokoto College of Education (Nigeria), and The University of the West Indies (Trinidad). He took a Ph.D. (external) at London on Polanyi's philosophy and Christian Theism, since published. Allen recently edited *Society, Economics and Philosophy-Selected Papers of Michael Polanyi* which was reviewed in *TAD*: 25:3; he also edits and publishes *Appraisal*.

Charles W. Lowney is a graduate student at Boston University. His essay was originally a paper presented on May 3, 1999, in the Boston Colloquium for the Philosophy of Science sponsored by the BU Center for the Philosophy and History of Science. The Colloquium's topic was "Michael Polanyi Reconsidered."

Submissions for Publication

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. 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 normally will be sent out for blind review. Authors are expected to provide a hard copy and a disk or an electronic copy as an e-mail attachment. Be sure that electronic materials include all relevant information which may help converting files. 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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REVIEWS

Editor's Note: The following is an appreciative comment that Richard Gelwick submitted in a letter soon after listening to the entire tape which he and others in the Polanyi Society helped shape.

When I began working with Michael Polanyi in 1962 as the first person to compile his social and philosophical bibliography and to write a dissertation on his thought, I was alone. There were only a few brief reviews of *Personal Knowledge*. There were no critical essays, books, or bibliography of Polanyi's social and philosophical thought. Now the Mars Hill audio publication of "Tacit Knowing, Truthful Knowing, The Life And Thought Of Michael Polanyi" has brought the study of Polanyi to a new level of public discussion. With this audiotape, the complex thought of Polanyi and a generation of scholarship on Polanyi has opened up Polanyi's theory of knowledge to the serious but non-academic inquirers of our time. Writer Andrew Witmer and co-hosts Ken Meyers and Kate Burke have reached out to many who knew Polanyi and have creatively used master violin makers and scientist's testimonies to illustrate Polanyi's ideas. For the first time, there is a handy tool for a quick yet deep introduction for those unlikely to labor through Polanyi's works. Students, scientists, pastors, journalists, artists and poets will find a key to unlock the puzzle of beliefs in a world of cynicism and doubt. Even philosophers who have misunderstood Polanyi may see grounds for reconsidering their criticisms. The Mars Hill leadership is especially to be commended for helping the listener understand why the problem of knowledge is important and the revolutionary importance of Polanyi's thought. Now teachers and inquirers have a new tool that will open up the important philosophical contribution of Polanyi. For the first time, I have a ready means of showing to others in a global collection of interpreters and the voice of Polanyi himself the significance of "personal knowledge" and "tacit knowing." This excellently prepared and produced audiotape is a must for all that want to teach and to share the ideas of Michael Polanyi.

Richard Gelwick

Mars Hill Audio Report, *Tacit Knowing, Truthful Knowing: The Life and Thought of Michael Polanyi*. Written and ed. by Andrew Witmer, produced by Ken Myers, 1999. Information: phone (800) 331-6407, e-mail tapes@MarsHillAudio.org

Ken Myers, producer of this audio cassette featuring Michael Polanyi, provides a form of access to Polanyi not previously available. Now one can offer a person with some interest in Polanyi's thought, but not the time to read one of the good secondary sources available (much less *Personal Knowledge*), this two and a half hours' worth of description and interviews to listen to while traveling or during free moments at home. And one can be confident that the two highly professional tapes are accurate and enticing.

In suggesting that *Tacit Knowing, Truthful Knowing* would make a good gift for those who know only a little about Polanyi, I am indicating the audience I think will most benefit from the material provided. Those with a sophisticated understanding of Polanyi's thought will also find some helpful information on these tapes. It is good to hear Michael's voice on tape two, side two. Marjorie Grene's reflections about work with Michael are important historical nuggets. But essentially the tapes are introductory in nature.

Much of the first tape sets forth an historical overview of Michael's career. Marty Moleski and Richard Gelwick are key individuals interviewed to supply telling insights about various key incidents during Polanyi's career. Both Polanyi's scientific accomplishments and his philosophical developments are dealt with in the second tape. Gerald Holton and Dudley Herschbach make interesting contributions with regard to the domain of science, while Gelwick, Grene, Moleski, Thomas Torrance, Ruel Tyson and Steven Garber help illuminate the implications of Polanyi's thought in philosophy and theology.

Large portions of the first part of the second tape are devoted to discussion of tacit knowing. I found the protracted interview with violin makers Peter and Wendy Moes to be less productive than other commentary. That expert violin making is a craft requiring tacit skills is a significant but not too difficult concept to comprehend.

The tapes concentrate on tacit knowing and the place of value in a world also made intelligible through science. Many facets of Polanyi's thought are not touched upon. The notions of emergence and the evolutionary growth of knowledge are not mentioned. Ideas from *Meaning* are not discussed. Controversies that have emerged in Polanyian scholarship are also not broached. But what is covered is covered well. Bibliographical information about Polanyi's works and secondary books are cited in the written material, and contact information about the Polanyi Society is provided. In sum, these tapes provide a reliable and most welcome addition to the resources for finding out about, as the subtitle indicates, the life and thought of Michael Polanyi.

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Matthew Forstater, "Working Backwards: Instrumental Analysis As a Policy Discovery Procedure," *Review of Political Economy* 11:1 (1999): 5-18.

Adolph Lowe, an economist who studied industrial capitalism earlier in the century, proposed an "instrumental method" for economics whereby economics was to focus attention on inventing means to desired ends. Although Lowe did not much develop his idea that economics must be oriented to discovery procedures, he did note that Polya's work on heuristics, Charles S. Peirce's work on abduction, and Michael Polanyi's work on tacit knowing and discovery were relevant to economic problem solving (i.e., inventing means to desired means). Matthew Forstater's essay reviews the work of Polya, Peirce, and Polanyi to try and extend Lowe's notion of instrumental analysis as

a policy discovery procedure. Forstater provides an interesting comparison of Polya, Peirce and Polanyi. Especially using Polanyi's ideas, he offers some suggestions about how economics can develop the procedure of instrumental analysis in methodological terms. The essay concludes by noting that some economists are today rediscovering and using ideas of Mises, Hayek and, secondarily, Polanyi in post Soviet era critiques of centrally planned economies. In sum, this is an interesting article, which, like some recent *TAD* essays, that suggests the critical and constructive thought of Polanyi is being rediscovered by economists and social scientists.

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WWW Polanyi Resources

The Polanyi Society has a World Wide Web site at <http://www.mwsc.edu/~polanyi/>. In addition to information about Polanyi Society membership and meetings, the site contains the following: (1) the history of Polanyi Society publications, including a listing of issues by date and volume with a table of contents for recent issues of *Tradition and Discovery*; (2) a comprehensive listing of *Tradition and Discovery* authors, reviews and reviewers; (3) information on locating early publications; (4) information on *Appraisal* and *Polanyiana*, two sister journals with special interest in Polanyi's thought; (5) the "Guide to the Papers of Michael Polanyi" which provides an orientation to archival material housed in the Department of Special Collections of the University of Chicago Library; (6) photographs of Michael Polanyi.

