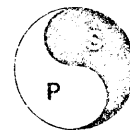


# THE POLANYI SOCIETY



**VOL. III**

**SPRING**

**NO. 2**

Greetings:

This issue of the News Bulletin includes some interesting bibliographical information that I expect will be of interest to many of you.

Also, it's time again for membership renewal. Renewal forms are attached to the Newsletter. Please fill in the form and return it to my office if you plan to continue your membership in the Society.

Have a good summer!

Cordially,

Frederick Kirschenmann  
General Coordinator

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I. Items of Interest

1. Institute of Human Values Created in Canada.

An Institute of Human Values has recently been formed at St. Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. The Institute, funded in part by a grant from the Imperial Oil Ltd. is committed to the restoration of the relationship "between knowledge, values, and freedom" through discussion, research and writing.

This issue of our Newsletter could not be issued in time to announce the first of a series of conferences (held June 23-25) but I provided the Director, Professor John R. MacCormick, with a copy of our membership list so that he could invite you directly. A second conference is scheduled for summer, 1977 (on "Knowledge and Values"), and a third for the summer of 1978 that will explore the relationship between values and freedom.

Professor MacCormick is interested in Polanyi's epistemology in relation to the work of the Center and I suspect members of the Polanyi Society will be interested in staying in touch with the Center. A booklet describing the Center and its work is available from:

John R. MacCormick, Ph.D.  
Institute of Human Values  
St. Mary's University  
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3H 3C3

2. Polanyi Consultation to be Held at the Next Annual Meeting of the A.A.R.

Professor Gelwick reminds Society members that a Polanyi consultation will be held in conjunction with the next annual meeting of the A.A.R. and urges us to watch the bulletin board for a time and place of meeting. Also, there will be an informal cocktail hour at the A.A.R. for Polanyi Society members!

Following is the official announcement of the consultation:

POLANYI CONSULTATION

This Consultation grows out of the Philosophy and Theology Symposium of last year "Towards a Post Critical Theology: The Influences of Polanyi." The range and diversity of interest that appeared have called for further exploration and delineation of issues. To facilitate this discussion the focus will be on 1) the problem of interpreting Polanyi for religion, 2) implications of Polanyi for theology, and 3) religion and the arts.

The following papers will be presented as a basis for discussion:

1. "Reasons of the Heart: A Polyanian Reflection," Professor Jerry Gill, Eckard College, St. Petersburg, Florida, 33733; Respondent, Dr. Frank Kirkpatrick, Trinity College.
2. "Theology as Understanding," Dr. John Apczynski, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, New York 13778; Respondent, Dr. Joseph Kroger, St. Michael's College.

3. "Meaning With the Arts: The Implications of Polanyi's Epistemology for Aesthetics," Dr. Doug Adams, Religious Studies Department, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana, 59801; Respondent, Dr. Phil Mullins, Graduate Theological Union.

Presiders for the Consultation will be Dr. Richard Gelwick, Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri, 65201, and Dr. Robert Osborn, Duke University. Persons wishing to participate in the Consultation should secure copies of the papers from their authors at the above addresses and notify Richard Gelwick.

3. Note from Magda

Magda Polanyi has written a note expressing her appreciation for the many kind expressions of sympathy received from the Society and for the Society's continuing work relative to the issues that concerned Michael.

She was good enough to enclose a copy of the obituary published in Nature, Vol. 261, May 6, 1976 and noted that the Royal Society will be publishing a more extensive one in the near future.

## II. Bibliographical Information

1. --From Sam Watson, Jr.  
On Wayne C. Booth's, Modern Dogma and the Rhetoric of Assent

"Now is the time to read this book", Richard Gregg writes to rhetorical theorists (Philosophy and Rhetoric, Fall 1975), opening a review of a book which makes extensive use of Polanyi, Wayne C. Booth's Modern Dogma and the Rhetoric of Assent (University of Notre Dame Press, 1974). He continues, "(For Booth) rhetoric consists of the procedures or ways by which we arrive at our knowledge," a conception which invites us "to replace the language of dichotomy and exclusion." Thus in Booth's proposed "rhetoric of assent," Gregg finds a harbinger of important work in rhetorical theory.

Booth himself finds much in Michael Polanyi:

His Personal Knowledge is the most important critique of systematic doubt in the name of what I have called systematic assent; though I can by no means agree with all that he says, his "postcritical philosophy" challenges the dogmas of modernism more thoroughly than any other modern work I know. He appears here again and again, usually unacknowledged and often in forms that he might not himself recognize" (p. xvii).

Most clearly, Booth finds support in Polanyi for his own critique of "modern dogma," with its reductionism, its divorce of fact from value, its resulting moral inversions and disdain for reasoned discourse in practical affairs. Modern dogma "has saddled us with standards of truth under which no man can live" (xii). More significantly, Booth proposes replacing modernism, in which doubt has become dogmatic, with a rhetoric of assent, defined as "the art of discovering warrantable beliefs and improving those beliefs in shared discourse" (xiii). In the process, Booth is

coherent with Polanyi at a number of points, emphasizing for example "our common sense - what we 'sense' and know in common" (100), the role of qualified communities in inquiry (101), the role of belief in knowledge (108-110), and the importance of indwelling in knowing other minds (114-116). Like Polanyi, Booth would restore "forms of assent that are often called irrational - assent to religious groups, to dramatic and fictional appeals, to music, to political leaders - ...to potential intellectual respectability and thus to meaningful debate" (139). Booth makes no mention of Polanyi's epistemology of tacit inference, but he does show some of the important connections between Polanyi's thought and the contemporary interest in studies of rhetorical processes.

Barry Brummett, in "Some Implications of 'Process' or 'Intersubjectivity': Postmodern Rhetoric" (Philosophy and Rhetoric, Winter, 1976) finds that rhetoric is uniquely basic to a process philosophy and that "Polanyi's system (of final and subsidiary distinctions is) the most appropriate one for the study of a process reality." While giving a lucid account of the assumptions and implications of process philosophy and of the mechanistic philosophy which it opposes Brummett also finds in Polanyi's distinctions grounds for reconciling empirical experimentation and humanistic rhetorical criticism.

David H. Smith, in "Communication Research and the Idea of Process" (Speech Monographs, August 1972), uses Polanyi's concept of tacit knowledge in encouraging researchers to develop methodologies coherent with the process orientations they claim to embrace.

The North Carolina Art Council and the Red Clay Press are sponsoring a series of symposia on Science and Art, to encourage practitioners and interested laymen to explore the dynamics which unite, as well as those which distinguish, the two enterprises. The first symposium was held April 27 at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte; discussion was informed by a paper of Edward B. St. Clair of UNCC: "The Relationship of Science and Art: A Polanyian Perspective." The symposium, including Dr. St. Clair's paper, is available to any interested campus in the state. The Polanyi Society also has a file copy of the paper.

In "Discoursing Tacitly or Back to the Wrong Basics" Sam Watson argued that objectivist assumptions inform the "Back to the Basics" movement which insists that today's students are inept at written composition. But that ineptitude itself is informed by objectivist assumptions. Polanyi's critique of objectivism thus reveals a vicious irony in composition pedagogy, and there is reason to believe that Polanyi's understanding of the tacit offers teachers and students alike a more reliable guide to what is really basic to composition. The paper was read before a rhetorical theory section of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, meeting in Philadelphia March 25-27. The Polanyi Society has a file copy.

2. Edward B. St. Clair, "The Relationship of Science and Art: A Polanyian Perspective"  
(An unpublished manuscript that was presented as a position paper for the Symposium on Science and Art, sponsored by the Art and Science Council of Charlotte, and the North Carolina Art Council on April 27, 1976).

Using Polanyi's argument that science and art both depend on the same bodily powers of knowing, Professor St. Clair uses the concepts of tacit knowing, embodiment and emergence to stress the need for a new balance between art and science in our society as a means of addressing the contemporary problems of the human spirit.

3. Sam Watson, Jr., "Discoursing Tacitly or Back to the Wrong Basics."  
(An unpublished manuscript that was presented at the Rhetorical Theory Section of the Annual Conference on College Composition and Communication in Philadelphia on March 25-27, 1976.)

#### Abstract of the Paper

Called by voices increasingly strident to go "back to the basics" of composition, we may respond by more vigorously embracing and teaching commonplaces we now accept without much question--of hard facts determined by objective observation and of formal proofs. Those commonplaces are based on a widely-shared idea of what science is, one which assumes science to be impersonal, exact, and indubitable. Yet Michael Polanyi gives reason to believe that this "objectivist" concept of science is disastrously misleading, fueling tremendously persuasive and mindless contemporary ideologies, which threaten decisively to undercut cultural activities, including those of science. Polanyi offers a subtly but fundamentally different conception which undergirds achievements of knowing in the sciences and elsewhere, a concept of "tacit knowing." Because his resulting epistemology is strikingly coherent with rhetorical theory, because our own classroom practice is based on a competing concept of science which Polanyi rejects, and because habits and attitudes of our students unfortunately reflect debilitating objectivist traits which Polanyi has analyzed in ideologies, there is ample warrant for our further study of Michael Polanyi and there is hope that such study will help us not mis-identify what truly is basic to our endeavors.

4. Geoffrey Price, "The Politics of Planning and the Problems of Science Policy," Unit One. A SISCO (Science In a Social Context) project publication, 1976.

This document includes the proceedings of three sessions sponsored by SISCO in which Professor Price dealt with the following topics:

Session One    Introductory survey: The foundations of  
                  positivist and personalist accounts of  
                  scientific knowledge and their consequences

Session Two The case for planning in science:  
J.D. Bernal's "Social Function of Science"

Session Three Science as personal insight: Polanyi's  
critique of positivism, and the freedom  
of research

The document includes a helpful bibliography. Copies are available  
from:

Dr. W.F. Williams,  
SISCON Coordinator  
Room 9/83  
Physics Administration Bldg.  
University of Leeds  
Leeds, LS2 9JT ENGLAND

Price: 80¢  
Airmail postage: \$1.34  
Seamail: 18¢

5. E.F. Schumacher, Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered.  
Harper & Row, 1973.

While this little volume nowhere alludes to Polanyi, Schumacher effectively challenges the recent trend toward making economics a "science" and argues for the adoption of a posture that is committed to many of the concerns expressed by Polanyi. It is a beautiful inter-disciplinary treatise.

### III. New Members

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### IV. Change of Addresses

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V. Financial Statement February 29, 1976 - June 30, 1976

Balance, February 29, 1976 \$ 53.66

Income

New Memberships and Advance Renewals 40.00

93.66

Expenses

Telephone 1.00

Materials and duplication 19.20

Postage 9.20

Secretarial Services 30.00

58.40

Balance, June 30, 1976..... \$ 35.26

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