

# Harry Prosch 1917-2005<sup>1</sup>

Phil Mullins

ABSTRACT Key Words: Harry Prosch, Michael Polanyi

*This is an obituary notice for Harry Prosch, the American philosopher who collaborated with Michael Polanyi to publish Meaning in 1975.*



Harry Prosch died peacefully on the morning of March 11, 2005, in Saratoga Springs, New York, where he lived in retirement after 25 years as a Skidmore College faculty member. In May 1991, not long after the Kent State Polanyi Conference, Prosch had a debilitating stroke and was unable to continue his scholarly work.

Prosch was born on May 4, 1917, in Logansport, Indiana, the son of an independent grocer. He was disappointed to learn, when he registered for high school in Logansport, that he was not eligible for the college preparatory class because he had not studied Latin. He was placed in the Industrial Arts program from which he graduated in 1935 and became an apprentice pattern-maker at a machine company where he worked for several years. Later he worked as a clerk at the local post office until he entered the army in 1942. Prosch served in the Pacific in New Guinea and the Philippines as a supply sergeant in World War II. Prosch's widow Doris reports that he often spoke of the joy he felt when as a soldier he heard the news about the new G. I. Bill, which meant he could realize his dream of attending college.

After the war, Prosch became a student at the University of Chicago where he earned an AB with honors (in 1948), an AM (in 1950, the year Michael Polanyi first visited the University of Chicago) and finally a Ph. D. in Philosophy in 1955. His master's thesis was titled "Methodological Pre-Requisites for a Practical Social Science" and his doctoral dissertation, "The Current Impasse in Ethics." At Chicago, Prosch became interested in the thought of Michael Polanyi. Prosch taught at Idaho State College, Shimer College and Southern Methodist University before joining the faculty in 1962 at Skidmore College. He served as the Chair of the Philosophy Department for a total of 15 years before he retired from Skidmore in 1987.

Prosch's former colleagues and students report that he was a committed and talented philosophy teacher. Two of his colleagues remembered his special approach to teaching Plato. In a seminar when treating Symposium, Prosch invited his senior students (of legal age) to his home for a true Greek-style symposium, where they were served retsina, which the students did not like. One of his fellow philosophers mused that this was Harry's way of warning students not to overindulge. One of Prosch's former students who did graduate work in philosophy, Cynthia Ai, offered the following tribute to Prosch's pedagogy and his influence:

I will remember him as the fine, brilliant, generous teacher he was. His gentle, yet firm, method of sharing knowledge, his kindness to us students, his sense of humor, and gentle chuckle—all this will remain. In direct and in subtle ways, Harry influenced our lives. Because of his example, I pursued studies in philosophy with a love of learning and

exploration I never experienced elsewhere. In large measure, whatever I have become is due to having studied with Harry for whose friendship I shall always be grateful.

Another former student, Susan Jennings, commented in a similar vein:

After thirty years, I still value the lessons he taught me. He was a wonderful teacher, a man who approached life's mysteries with great moral seriousness and a wry sense of humor. While concerned about the state of the world and the modern mind's muddled thinking about it, he nevertheless evinced a deep faith that somehow, in the very long run, reason and goodness would prevail.

In 1968, Harry Prosch took a sabbatical in England; he came to learn more about Polanyi's philosophical ideas. This year of work with Polanyi significantly reshaped his life as a scholar. Prosch's publications and many of his public engagements thereafter focused on Polanyi. Because one of the articles that follows in this issue of *TAD* treats in some detail the nature of Prosch's work with Polanyi, including his collaboration on *Meaning*, remarks here are abbreviated. It is worth emphasizing, however, that without Prosch's diligence and commitment, *Meaning* never would have been published. With Prosch's unflagging interest in interpreting Polanyi's ideas, good questions might never have been raised. Without Prosch's energetic involvement in programs like the 1973 Polanyi Society meeting at Skidmore at which he took on the role of disciplinary coordinator for philosophy, Polanyi studies would have been poorer.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Thanks go to Doris Prosch and her family as well as Joel Smith from Skidmore College who provided rich material about Harry Prosch, including reflections of former students, local newspaper obituaries and the announcement about Harry's death that the President of Skidmore, Philip Glotzbach, sent to the Skidmore community. This obituary has borrowed generously from this material.

<sup>2</sup> Phil Mullins and Marty Moleski, S. J. , "Harry Prosch: A Memorial Re-Appraisal of the *Meaning* Controversy," *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical*, 32:2 (2005-2006): 8-24.

## WWW Polanyi Resources

The Polanyi Society has a World Wide Web site at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/orgs/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) digital archives containing many past issues of *Tradition and Discovery*; (4) information on locating early publications not in the archive; (5) information on *Appraisal* and *Polanyiiana*, two sister journals with special interest in Polanyi's thought; (6) 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; (7) photographs of Polanyi; (8) links to a number of essays by Polanyi.

# Harry Prosch: A Memorial Re-Appraisal of the *Meaning* Controversy<sup>1</sup>

Phil Mullins and Marty Moleski, S. J.

**ABSTRACT** Key Words: Harry Prosch and Michael Polanyi, *Meaning*  
*This essay traces the history of Harry Prosch's work with Michael Polanyi. It analyzes the Prosch-Polanyi archival correspondence as well as other correspondence records in an effort to make clear the scope and nature of Prosch's work in their collaboration on Meaning, a book published under both names at a late stage of Polanyi's life when his mental capacities were diminished.*

This essay intends to honor Harry Prosch and, in this journal, that can be done best by providing a reconsideration of his collaboration with Polanyi and the subsequent criticism of the book that resulted. We believe that all Polanyians are indebted to Prosch's self-effacing, patient, and reasonable efforts to help the aging Polanyi develop the capstone of his philosophical career.

## Prosch's Early Work with Polanyi

Although Prosch first discovered Polanyi's thought when he was a graduate student in the early fifties,<sup>2</sup> it was not until the late sixties that he began to work in earnest on scholarly projects related to Polanyi. During the sixties, Prosch's scholarly articles were focused on issues in ethics. He produced several essays on topics concerned with law, justice and civil disobedience.<sup>3</sup> In 1966, he published *The Genesis of Twentieth Century Philosophy*; as its subtitle (*The Evolution of Thought from Copernicus to the Present*) implies, the book is an historically-oriented effort to put contemporary philosophy in perspective.<sup>4</sup> Polanyi is not mentioned in the book, although *The Logic of Liberty* is included in the appended list of books that represent contemporary philosophical movements.

By 1967, Prosch was beginning to work on Polanyi. The earliest letter from Prosch to Polanyi in the Polanyi archives is dated June 29, 1967. It suggests that Prosch had recently talked with Polanyi by phone when he was in Chicago. The main concern of the letter is to confirm that Prosch was "still planning to come to England during the academic year of 1968-69 in connection with the work I wish to do on your philosophy."<sup>5</sup> In fact Harry, his wife and children did come to Oxford in late summer 1968 and stayed until the spring of 1969 and these nine months reshaped Harry's professional life. In preparation for his sabbatical, Prosch tried to read everything Polanyi had ever written. In his letter, he commented on the difficulty of locating Polanyi publications and asked if Polanyi could supply a list of his publications.<sup>6</sup>

The sabbatical provided Prosch opportunities to dig deeply into Polanyi's thought and discuss issues with Polanyi; clearly, he also came to know and like Michael and Magda Polanyi. His respect and appreciation for Polanyi are evident in a letter written to Polanyi (who was visiting in the U.S.) late in his sabbatical year: "I would like to say that associating with you for these months has been a great experience for me. I feel I have learned a lot from you and also that I have met a decent and admirable human being—of which I'm afraid the world is not very plentifully supplied."<sup>7</sup> Many years later, in the Introduction to his own book, *Michael Polanyi, A Critical Exposition*, Prosch described his sabbatical year as something like a conversion experience:

This book had its origin in a sabbatical leave I spent with Michael Polanyi in Oxford, England, during 1968-69. I had come as an interested but rather critical spectator, intending to assess coolly what this strange interloper into philosophy was doing, and to analyze his thought into its fundamental grounds and principles. I left a fellow participant in an active effort to develop an adequate contemporary philosophy, wholly convinced that Polanyi was on to something tremendously fundamental, sound, and healthy for the modern mind, but not yet wholly convinced that he had got it all perfectly straight.<sup>8</sup>

The correspondence between Polanyi and Prosch in the first years after Prosch's sabbatical show how Harry was drawn into many kinds of Polanyi projects, only some of which reached the desired conclusion. Polanyi wanted Prosch to be the editor of a proposed two-volume re-issue of *The Logic of Liberty* that would also include extra essays.<sup>9</sup> Polanyi got Prosch appointed as a spring 1970 semester lecturer on Polanyi's thought at the University of Chicago where Polanyi gave four lectures.<sup>10</sup> Polanyi encouraged Prosch to write a rebuttal (which he did, although it was never published) to Richard Zaffron's severely critical review<sup>11</sup> of *Knowing and Being in Science*.<sup>12</sup> Not only Harry Prosch's great respect for Michael Polanyi, but also his kindness and common decency, and his lack of ego, are apparent in the Prosch-Polanyi letters in both this early and later periods.

As we have noted above, Prosch came to work with Polanyi in Oxford in order better to understand Polanyi's work and decided in 1968-69 that he wanted to write a book about Polanyi's thought. The letters from 1969 and 1970 indicate Prosch was already drafting material and Polanyi was reviewing some of it. From first to last, Prosch felt that the organization of the material had to be guided by Polanyi's desire to clear the way for a religious renaissance:

And in the last chapter, one which I could not have written without the capstone to your thought you have provided in your Texas and Chicago lectures of last spring, the healthy soul will complete itself in the myths and rituals of a religion that is at last possible, given the reformation of secular thought developed in the book. I believe this is in agreement, in general, with your views and with what you have been doing. I have in mind your remark to me that the problem must be attacked not through the attempts first to engender a re-birth of religious belief, but rather through the reform of secular thought, on the basis of which such a re-birth of religion would become possible. But I will be trying to show, eventually, that the capacity to enjoy a religious life is, in a sense, the final goal of the reform. The reform, however, is related at each step to the achievement of greater truth and adequacy—of greater comprehensibility of understanding—not by its agreement with a preconceived religious commitment, or else it would fail to carry the reader along to a conversion. ... It can indeed be said that this religious commitment is never absent from your thoughts and is never in opposition to science and adequate thought—indeed is always illustrated by science in its actual conduct and in its essential implications.

I hope I can bring this all out adequately in the book. At least this is what I see you to be doing, so that I shall have failed, if I do not bring this out.<sup>13</sup>

Prosch sent Polanyi his draft introduction, noting that his book would be organized around Polanyi's "notion of what he thinks ails the modern mind and how he thinks it can be cured."<sup>14</sup> Prosch projected breaking up the book into sections called "Diagnosis, Prescription, Treatment and Evaluation." It is this scheme that

is employed in Prosch's *Michael Polanyi, A Critical Exposition*, a book published finally in 1986. As both Harry and his spouse testify, his work on his book about Polanyi was delayed, first by the sort of smaller scale Polanyi projects described above and then by the *Meaning* project.<sup>15</sup> As Prosch's work on his book slowly developed, even during the *Meaning* project, he also began to produce other scholarly work about Polanyi. In 1971, he gave a Skidmore College Faculty Research Lecture titled "Cooling the Modern Mind: Polanyi's Mission" and in 1972 his essay titled "Polanyi's Ethics" was published in *Ethics*.<sup>16</sup> The Skidmore lecture ended, as so many of Polanyi's own essays did, with a vision of how Polanyi's philosophy reached toward the threshold of religion:

Religion would then presumably consist of a sort of final integration of incompatibles. But we do not need to spell out here the complexities of such an integration. Religion, as such, does not shape the meanings achieved in morality. Nor do the moral imperatives depend upon the power of a God. Religion appears, in Polanyi's view, to be connected with morality only by making us better able to live with our necessarily limited morality. Those of us who discover how to dwell in that fullest integration of the most incompatible of incompatibles, the Kingdom of Heaven, may indeed find how our transcendent hunger and thirst after righteousness can at last be filled.<sup>17</sup>

Prosch sent Polanyi a copy of this lecture.<sup>18</sup> Polanyi wrote Gelwick, "Harry Prosch has composed an admirable summary of my recently developed work on the life of knowledge linked to the arts. ... you could write to Harry yourself, just telling him how profoundly pleased I am with this work by him."<sup>19</sup>

## **The *Meaning* Project**

At the May, 1972 Dayton conference on Polanyi's thought, Polanyi asked Prosch to help with *Meaning*<sup>20</sup> rather than pursue his own scholarly agenda. The correspondence reflecting the context makes very clear that the initiative was Polanyi's. In the early spring of 1972, Polanyi apparently complained about difficulty getting his work together and Prosch noted that he wished he could come to Oxford in the summer to help.<sup>21</sup> In April of 1972, Polanyi wondered out loud whether Prosch could come for another stay similar to his 1968-69 sabbatical<sup>22</sup> and he wrote to the President of Skidmore in late May so "that my work might well be saved from loss in my receding hand, if I could obtain once more the presence of Harry Prosch in Oxford during the coming academic year."<sup>23</sup> In June of 1972, Polanyi wrote to Prosch "my hopes of ending the book depend pity [*sic pretty?*] well on your coming."<sup>24</sup> Harry worked out a leave of absence at Skidmore and in the summer and fall of 1972 began the task of seeking funding to go to England.<sup>25</sup> In November, 1972, Prosch learned that he was to receive an NEH Senior Fellowship for the spring of 1973<sup>26</sup> and he began to work out his travel and housing plans thereafter, even though it was not clear that he would have enough support for his maintenance in Oxford.<sup>27</sup> Prosch arrived in Oxford in early February, 1973 to begin working in earnest with Polanyi on the Chicago and Austin lecture material that was to become *Meaning*.<sup>28</sup>

Although Polanyi and Prosch met and worked on a plan for *Meaning* for about a month, Prosch left Oxford earlier than he had expected to in the first week of March. It is somewhat unclear why Prosch departed early, but apparently Polanyi gave Prosch some indication that he did not want further collaboration at the moment:

I derived a great deal from our talks together and I only wish I had not got the erroneous idea from your remarks that you wanted our association together there to be of such limited

duration. This is an almost incredible misunderstanding. And, believe me, I should still like to remedy it by any means in my power. *I want that book you have in mind to see the light of day!* And it does not matter to me what role I actually play in helping you to get it out—whether a large or small one, an equal or a subordinate one. Whether my name does or does not appear with yours as author is also, as you know, *not* of importance.<sup>29</sup>

What the correspondence makes absolutely indubitable is that Polanyi's mental agility and his capacity to work were progressively diminishing. But letters also show that Polanyi's own appraisal of his capacities vacillated. At his best, he recognized his waning strength and growing inability to write clear and coherent prose, but he also hoped to publish a last great book and he often entertained (and was carried away by) vague ideas and unrealistic expectations about joining previous publications with new material to produce the final synthesis. At various times, Polanyi tried to enlist a number of different people to help him with the project: Lady Drusilla Scott, Marjorie Grene, William T. Scott, Paul Craig Roberts, William H. Poteat, and Richard Gelwick. In fact when Bill Scott told Prosch in April, 1994 about Polanyi's many efforts to enlist collaborators, he wryly commented, "I . . . did not know that he had tried to get so many other people to help him bring out his last book. Poor soul! Finally had to put up with me!"<sup>30</sup>

Almost immediately after Prosch departed for the U.S. in early March, 1973, Polanyi wrote to Prosch "it has become more clear to me how inflexible I am for any work of my own, perhaps to its damage;" he reported that upon re-reading some things he has written, he had to discard them.<sup>31</sup> Less than a week later, he wrote "I wrote to you a week ago in some pleasure about starting my work. But by this time, I am realizing that I must give up this task. I simply have not got the strength any more. I have sent you a cable about this and hope that you can accept and get going as fast as possible."<sup>32</sup> Three days later, he wrote "I think the situation is decisive, for my faculties are declining. But I would like still to help to devise the further tasks, and I shall start on this immediately."<sup>33</sup> Subsequently, Polanyi outlined a two-part approach to the material in which he was to work on an introduction while Prosch developed the material called "works of imagination."<sup>34</sup>

By the end of April, 1973, Prosch had substantially completed four chapters of "works of the imagination" and reported to Polanyi "I think you will like the way it is turning out. Most of the words are yours. I do not have a great many pages of my own explication."<sup>35</sup> Although he acknowledged doing some editing and clarifying of the original material, he noted "I think your lectures were well-planned and well executed and they form the solid basis for a really important work. They do not need a lot of work done on them."<sup>36</sup> In early May, Polanyi acknowledged that he was not capable of producing the introduction:

I have come to the conclusion that I cannot effectively support your work on our book from here. This is due quite simply to the troubles growing with my age. My powers are insufficient. . . .

To put it in a different way, the efforts of my task with you are now too complex for me. They make me go round without success. I have reached the final conclusion that I must leave the substance of our task to you and limit myself to observations by word or writing.<sup>37</sup>

Prosch proceeded with his effort to complete what was originally his section. In a June 7, 1973 letter, he provided an interesting note on his progress:

Finally, I have got the 'Acceptance of Religion' (Chapter Seven) put in some sort of shape.

This one is very much reorganized in its actual shape. But it follows the points that you were making. I have supplemented it with more examples and with what else you have written about religion. From the conversations we had I would think you would approve of the general form of this—maybe, I hope, of its precise text. But we shall see.”<sup>38</sup>

In mid August, 1973, Prosch completed his section and sent it to Polanyi for review.<sup>39</sup> On August 21, Polanyi sent Prosch a telegram: “Text of book very promising. Can you accept my project of 9 August. This is very important.”<sup>40</sup> On August 24, Polanyi wrote, “Just a line to tell you about my delight about your section on religion.”<sup>41</sup>

Although Prosch focused his energy on the *Meaning* project, he continued to take on other Polanyi-related projects. He corresponded with some of the people Polanyi asked him to contact; when Polanyi sent him a *London Times* Sunday Color Supplement piece on Karl Popper, he wrote a letter to the editor criticizing Popper and praising Polanyi. He made plans to return to the University of Chicago in October to give a lecture on Polanyi’s thought. His own article, “Polanyi’s Tacit Knowing in the ‘Classic’ Philosophers” was accepted for publication in *The Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*.<sup>42</sup> Polanyi was so pleased with the article that he suggested that a revised form of the essay should be added to *Meaning*: “It is no mere break in our studies; it is of the essence. And so it marks an entry—in the fourth year—a recognition of our substance. ... It is an extension of my original framework to include a great step from the origins in Greece up to the grounds of modern phenomenology.”<sup>43</sup>

By this time, Polanyi also clearly looked to Prosch to provide leadership in what Polanyi perceived as growing interest in post-critical perspectives: “The spreading of participations evokes the need for shaping the ways in our camp, and I am coming to you now in the hope that you will take on a leading part.” Later in the same letter, Polanyi noted his confidence in Prosch: “I am coming to you in this way because you are at the heart of the work and are a master of it.”<sup>44</sup> But Harry Prosch’s humility and his reluctance to speak for Polanyi are also clear in the correspondence:

I feel reticent to set myself up as your official representative. My position of leadership among what you have called “our company,” if it ever comes to pass, must arise only because others come to acknowledge it on the basis of what their opinion is of what I have done. I cannot *assert* it, nor do I think you can either—in so many words. I recognize that there does seem to be a need for someone to take the lead, now that you are no longer able to stand the strain. But I think things will work themselves out in time. For the moment it looks as though no one is tending the store. Actually *lots* of people are tending the store. More every day.<sup>45</sup>

In the late summer and fall of 1973, Polanyi read (or perhaps partially read) the ten chapters that Prosch had sent to him. His few comments seem a mixture of praise and criticism, although it is very difficult to discern what Polanyi was suggesting to improve the draft.<sup>46</sup> Polanyi in fact seemed at times to doubt his own power to provide criticism:

I am coming more and more to doubts as to advising you in your work. Much of the material we could consider for publication by ourselves seems open to choices, in which I do not effectively want to advise you. The main point is that your decision is so much nearer to our present material that I am tending to refrain from giving effective advices.<sup>47</sup>

Prosch's work in finishing up the introduction (the first three chapters of *Meaning*) was somewhat delayed by the death of his father, but he assured Polanyi that the introduction would treat some of the matters Polanyi seemed anxious about.<sup>48</sup> In early October, Prosch sent Polanyi the three introductory chapters, along with a careful description of which earlier Polanyi publications he had adapted to frame these chapters; he also proposed the title "meaning" for the book.<sup>49</sup> In the fall of 1973, Polanyi's letters become extraordinarily confusing documents, suggesting a further decline of Polanyi's mental capacities. At this stage, Polanyi seemed increasingly hesitant to make any decisions; he seemed sometimes to have ideas but they remain vague and he put them forth very tentatively. Sometimes Polanyi seemed to be suggesting that Prosch publish *Meaning* under his own name;<sup>50</sup> sometimes he seemed to suggest further revisions to the text, but it is not clear what precisely Polanyi intended Prosch to correct or modify. In late November, Polanyi cabled Prosch "have read your excellent manuscript and wish to be its fellow author."<sup>51</sup> But just four days later, Polanyi wrote: "You have introduced in your last chapter a treatment similar to my own, but essentially departing to a way of yours. I mean your image of residual conceptions open to a further perspective. This differs essentially from my way of handling such an important unfinished element."<sup>52</sup> The effect on Prosch of Polanyi's changes of perspective and the incoherence of Polanyi's articulation must have been maddening, though no trace of frustration appears in any of Prosch's letters or interviews.<sup>53</sup> What is clear in Prosch's letters to Polanyi during the fall of 1973 and thereafter is that Harry recognized that he was now dealing with a friend and collaborator whose capacities were very seriously diminished. Prosch was infinitely patient with Polanyi, assuring him he could take extra time to study the manuscript and assuring him that he would help him with the new collection of his essays that Polanyi now seemed to be contemplating. He repeated explanations offered in earlier letters about the organization and sources of material in *Meaning*, since Polanyi seemed to have forgotten or to be confused about such matters.<sup>54</sup> In late November, Prosch proposed that he approach the University of Chicago Press about publishing *Meaning*.<sup>55</sup>

By December of 1973, Polanyi had apparently made up his mind to start fresh with another collaborator. He invited Richard Gelwick to "work out for a book an ultimate material of my own. ... The work of Harry Prosch should be included, but not treated at this stage."<sup>56</sup> Gelwick objected that this would not be fair to Prosch. Polanyi replied,

I am turning to you because the work of more than two past months has failed to reach a satisfactory solution. I have written to Prosch that I am turning to you for help. ... There is a majority of his text which I would not sign, and there is another part also which I feel to lack sufficient penetration. ... The essence of the fact is that the text of Prosch as it now stands has not got my full acceptance, and in other parts does rely on essential features which he can speak for with my cordial agreement.<sup>57</sup>

Nothing in the extant Prosch-Polanyi correspondence shows which part was which.

Gelwick was in Cambridge at this time on sabbatical studying with Peacocke and dutifully began meeting with Polanyi, providing detailed notes on their conversations, and beginning the process of pulling Polanyi's articles, notes, and oral instructions into a coherent whole. In February, Polanyi reported to Prosch, "My project, in which Richard Gelwick is somewhat helping me, is getting on well. I have completed about half of the manuscript. It contains two pieces, one an introduction on general conditions of mental actions, and the other the re-working of my essay including five articles produced in Chicago in 1969 and subsequent



years ...”<sup>58</sup> But within a month, Polanyi put the project on hold: “I want to postpone our own joint work for another week or so before renewing our meetings. This detachment is called upon by the major demands of my comprehensive work on religion. This requires a careful battle of thought by myself which may extend over a week or so.”<sup>59</sup> The battle was too much for Polanyi’s diminished strength. In May, Magda wrote Gelwick, “I find him increasingly difficult to follow and rapidly deteriorating. He has written a letter to Bill Poteat to express his pleasure and appreciation, but the letter is such that it cannot be sent, not even to Bill. It is heartbreaking for me to talk about this, but shall have to explain to Bill why M. has become silent.”<sup>60</sup>

Prosch was not able to make much sense out of Polanyi’s letters about his collaboration with Gelwick and what it meant for the work Prosch had already done. At one point, early in 1974, when Polanyi speculated about a possible trip to Toronto with a stopover in Saratoga Springs, Prosch replied, “I need to talk with you, since I am not sure I understand fully what you have been telling me in your last letters.”<sup>61</sup> In mid April, Prosch advised Polanyi he had good news “for our joint project, but I cannot tell you about it as yet. As soon as something more definite comes through I will communicate with you about it.”<sup>62</sup> In midsummer, Polanyi seems to have been reading a draft of Prosch’s book on Polanyi (which Prosch had sent to him much earlier) and was excited by it. He wanted to use this text to launch some further work (either on *Meaning*, the separate collection of essays he had begun assembling with Gelwick, or Prosch’s book itself) and he asked if Prosch could come to England for another six months.<sup>63</sup> On July 19, 1974, Prosch wrote to Polanyi telling him he would be coming to Oxford for two weeks at the end of the month: “I am excited at the prospect of seeing you again after so long a time. I am excited also about something of considerable significance for both of us that I want to lay before you.”<sup>64</sup>

Prosch apparently had in hand the contract for *Meaning* from the University of Chicago Press. But on July 20, before he received Prosch’s July 19<sup>th</sup> letter, Polanyi cabled Prosch, “Have developed grave doubts whether our collaboration feasible.”<sup>65</sup> A follow-up letter on July 22, however, tells Prosch “the work on our joint efforts has been redeemed today with the effective assistance of my secretary Miss Argyle.”<sup>66</sup> On July 23, after receiving Prosch’s July 19<sup>th</sup> letter, he sent a second cable advising Prosch to disregard the first cable! Polanyi was very often very confused at this stage. Magda was very grateful for Prosch’s visit: “Harry Prosch has been here for a fortnight, staying at Summertown House. He and I are trying to straighten out M.’s affairs. ... [He] will be leaving tomorrow, alas. He and Michael have completed the book—based on Michael’s lectures, to be entitled ‘Meaning.’ I am delighted.”<sup>67</sup>

During this visit, Prosch presented the contract for *Meaning* to Polanyi and he signed it.<sup>68</sup> *Michael Polanyi, Scientist and Philosopher*, relying on Bill Scott’s interview with Prosch in April of 1994, reports that Prosch had difficulty getting Polanyi to address the matter of the contract until, on Prosch’s final day in Oxford, Polanyi signed the contract only after realizing how much the prospect of his not doing so disheartened Prosch. Although Magda was initially pleased that the work had been completed, she began to have second thoughts. She wrote Gelwick, “I find it difficult to tell you that Harry Prosch and Michael have finished ‘Meaning’ and will publish it jointly with the Chicago Press. ... All this is good, but what about all the work you have done with Michael? He, poor man, is unable to tell me what you had been working on. At my urgent request, Prosch has promised to get in touch with you over this.”<sup>69</sup> Three weeks later, she wrote again:

I fear that you might be upset about “Meaning,” to be published by Polanyi and Prosch jointly. So am I, though I cannot think that Harry has acted in bad faith. He may not have realized the seriousness of Michael’s condition and would have assumed Michael’s full agreement, since no hint of opposition

to his acting was forthcoming. Yet poor Michael now voices objections and cannot understand my saying that it is too late for that. And *I* cannot understand why I wasn't told until after the signing and mailing of the Contract, what the two of them were doing upstairs. ... I don't know Prosch well and I am not accusing him of anything. But had I known of the matter before it became too late, I would certainly have asked you of your opinion in the matter.<sup>70</sup>

Prosch knew nothing of these regrets on Michael and Magda's part. Magda decided not to raise the question of Michael's doubts with Prosch and regretted that she had mentioned Michael's doubts to Gelwick:

Nothing can be done or should be done about "Meaning" and I haven't said a word to Prosch about M.'s belated—and obviously superficial—doubts about their joint publication. You are absolutely right; M. was going to publish on his own and let Prosch get on independently. But his memory being as it is—and deteriorating rapidly, alas—he no longer remembers anything of that. He no longer remembers even a word about "Meaning" and I am unable to convey to him that a joint publication with Prosch will be forthcoming. The doubts he raised at the time I wrote you are equally forgotten; nor can he remember Prosch's visit here. We have to let the matter rest as it is and Prosch had better not be told anything. I myself am now convinced that it would have been better not to have mentioned a word to you about M.'s remarks.<sup>71</sup>

The very last phase of Prosch's work with Polanyi on *Meaning* has a sad and somewhat surreal quality. Prosch was the victim of Polanyi's failing mind. The Prosch-Polanyi correspondence as a whole shows beyond a doubt that Harry Prosch salvaged the *Meaning* project. As the biography puts it, "the very weaknesses of mind and memory that necessitated collaboration also rendered Polanyi incapable of true partnership in the work."<sup>72</sup> Prosch took on more and more responsibility for the book after his foreshortened visit to Oxford in the spring of 1973. As Polanyi's powers of thought and articulation decreased, Prosch's role in shaping material increased. Nevertheless, Prosch was at every step extraordinarily respectful of and attentive to Polanyi, even though it was increasingly clear that Polanyi could neither write anything by himself nor edit Prosch's text. Despite the time and energy he had invested in the project, Prosch was willing to let Polanyi have the final say:

I know that you must be conscious of the great distance between my poor work and what you see in your imagination that it should be, and that it is difficult for you to let it go out in this shape. I am sorry I could not make it better. If you can do so—great!! I will be so pleased. If not, maybe it would be better the work saw the light of day in *some* form or other—even in *this* poor form—rather than not at all. But this is a matter for your own judgment. So let me know when you have made your decisions and, as I said, I stand ready to help you in every way I possibly can with whatever time I have at my disposal.<sup>73</sup>

In sum, his careful and compassionate work with Michael Polanyi on the *Meaning* project shows that Harry Prosch was a person of great integrity, patience, and generosity.

## **Harry Prosch and the Post-*Meaning* Discussions**

After the completion of *Meaning*, Harry Prosch continued to write to Michael Polanyi and to take on scholarly projects related to Polanyi's thought. Prosch's last letter in the archival correspondence collection

is dated February 9, 1975<sup>74</sup> but there are indications that Prosch continued to monitor Polanyi's health during the last year of Polanyi's life, even after Polanyi was institutionalized.<sup>75</sup> *Meaning* was published in 1975 and in that same year "Truth in Myths," a chapter of *Meaning* was also published in *Cross Currents*.<sup>76</sup> In 1977, Prosch published another essay in *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, "Biology and Behaviorism in Polanyi."<sup>77</sup> In 1979, he contributed a biographical piece on Polanyi to the *Biographical Supplement of The International Encyclopedia for the Social Sciences*.<sup>78</sup> He also wrote, in 1979, a five-page review for *Ethics* of Richard Gelwick's *The Way of Discovery*.<sup>79</sup> In 1981, Prosch contributed an essay to the special issue of *Pre-Text* on Polanyi.<sup>80</sup>

Prosch's review of Gelwick's book was the beginning of the discussion between Gelwick and Prosch and the more general discussion about *Meaning* among Polanyi scholars.<sup>81</sup> The Consultation on the Thought of Michael Polanyi at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in 1980 included several papers on *Meaning* and these were published as a set of articles in *Zygon* in 1982. Prosch's contribution was "Polanyi's View of Religion in *Personal Knowledge: A Response to Richard Gelwick*."<sup>82</sup> Both his review and his article raised questions about how to regard the ontological status of realities known in "transnatural" integrations. When Drusilla Scott published *Everyman Revived: The Common Sense of Michael Polanyi*,<sup>83</sup> Prosch wrote a very positive review, but raised the same questions that emerged in his earlier review of Gelwick's book.<sup>84</sup> In his April, 1994 interview with Scott, Prosch said,

Polanyi was concerned about his treatment of creation myths. He didn't think that most people who were religious would care much about his theory of incompatibles—if they really believed, they would not want to think of God as a unity of incompatibles but as a person or a being. ... Polanyi got a lot of static from members of the Polanyi Society who thought that he was more of an orthodox believer than he ever was. Tillich told him, "You really say what I am thinking about religion. I have to inform people who are going to be ministers of what they can say in their churches and can't be completely frank about everything."

For Prosch, this remark was his "bulwark against criticism that I have read (including Lady Scott)."

In 1986, Prosch's own book *Michael Polanyi, A Critical Exposition* was finally published. While the book generally was a careful and thorough treatment of Polanyi's thought, it also provided an opportunity for Prosch to comment critically on interpretations of Polanyi's thought put forth by Rom Harre, Marjorie Grene, Thomas Torrance, Sheldon Richmond and Ron Hall. The criticisms of Torrance, Richmond and Hall were similar to criticism in the reviews of the Gelwick and Scott books; that is, they were concerned with the ontological status of realities known in "transnatural" integrations.<sup>85</sup> The publication of *Michael Polanyi, A Critical Edition* elicited further discussion on both sides of the Atlantic among Polanyi scholars interested in how Polanyi's ideas about art and religion should be read.<sup>86</sup> Prosch singled out one review that came a bit later in Maben Poirier's essay, "Harry Prosch's Modernism."<sup>87</sup> His point-by-point rebuttal, "Those Missing 'Objects,'" is especially interesting because Prosch here offers some speculations about Polanyi's metaphysical claims for "objects" in the noosphere; such "objects" are not merely "projections of our subjective psychological needs" nor are they empirical realities, "a mere thing among things."<sup>88</sup>

What is left is, it seem to me, the very Polyanian position that the reality of God is an item of personal knowledge (with universal intent and thus with objectivity) established by our creative imagination *in* the religious framework of thought—that is, *from* the wealth of

subsidiary clues provided by the history, myths, worship, doctrine, rites, etc. of our religion, *in* which He exists “to be worshipped and obeyed.” God is not established in the frameworks of science, art, ethics, or mathematics. They each have their own “core,” or trajectory of meaning. And none of the frameworks of thought provide us with merely “second-rate” knowledge. Nor are any of their own realities second-rate. The reality of God, as founded uniquely in religion, could only be denigrated as a second-rate reality by those whose attitude of mind makes them regard *empirical* realities as the only “real” ones, the truly first-rate ones. Neither Polanyi nor I (nor Plato), I submit, ever thought such a thing. If we thought there were any “lower-place” realities, I’m sure the three of us would think that this “honor” belonged rather to the empirical sort.”<sup>89</sup>

In talking with Bill Scott in his 1994 interview, Prosch insisted that he was faithful to Polanyi’s view of religion: “The more I thought about his views on religion, the more fond I became of them. . . . I knew quite clearly—it came to make sense to me—what is in the book is genuinely what he said, and I accepted it, too.”

Prosch offered the following criticism of Drusilla’s Scott’s account of Polanyi’s ideas about religion in *Everyman Revived*: “To the extent that Drusilla Scott leaves us with the impression that Polanyi agreed—or did *once agree*—with her conviction that these things of the mind, including God, exists independently of our thought, just as do the realities investigated by our science, I believe she is wrong.”<sup>90</sup> In 1986, Thomas Torrance responded sharply to these criticisms. Torrance asserted that it was “Harry Prosch who is *wrong, and very wrong indeed*, about Michael Polanyi’s convictions about God.”<sup>91</sup> Further Torrance proclaimed, “After Michael read my book *Theological Science* in which I argued at length for the scientific objectivity of our knowledge of God, who exists independently of our conceiving of him, he asked me to act as his Literary Executor after he had died.”<sup>92</sup> Torrance contended that Polanyi, after reading the jointly authored, published version of *Meaning*, said “he would not like to have his ideas bowdlerized after his death as had sometimes happened with Einstein’s ideas after his death.”<sup>93</sup> Torrance’s rather dramatic account in terms of Polanyi’s interest in Torrance’s theological writing appears to be quite self-serving and it elicited from Prosch a coolly rational response. In response to Torrance’s allegations of “bowdlerization,” he pointed out that by the time Polanyi could have read the published version of *Meaning* (December, 1975), he was institutionalized and a few months from death. Reports from John Brennen to Prosch suggested that Polanyi’s condition made it difficult for anyone to carry on an intelligent conversation, at this stage, with Polanyi.<sup>94</sup> Prosch also recounted his view of his discussions with Polanyi about work on *Meaning*, which the correspondence treated above bears out, but which is not the only account, as correspondence with Gelwick shows. Prosch invited Torrance or anyone else to check the material in *Meaning* against the Chicago and Texas lecture materials now in the University of Chicago archives. We suspect Thomas Torrance never looked at this material and that he did not look at the Prosch-Polanyi correspondence before making his claims against Prosch.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, the decision to choose Torrance as Polanyi’s literary executor was not an endorsement of Torrance’s Polyanian theology against Prosch’s account. After some difficulties in negotiations about the Polanyi papers with representatives in Toronto, Torrance was selected due to his geographical proximity, his experience as Karl Barth’s literary executor, and the availability of Torrance’s two sons, both engaged in academics, to assist him in sorting Polanyi’s papers.<sup>96</sup> In this same letter, Magda reports that Michael “sits all day upstairs, looking at old photographs—that’s all. I myself should have known better than letting him confer with Prosch—neither then, nor since has he realized that a joint book of theirs will be coming out and that he has signed a contract to make that possible.” Polanyi was clearly in no position to appoint Torrance—or anyone else—as his

theological representative. It was Magda Polanyi who chose Torrance as the literary executor.

What does Prosch's scholarship and interaction with other scholars show in the period after the publication of *Meaning*? Like his work with the living Polanyi, his late writing reflects the seriousness of his commitment to promoting Polanyian ideas. It also shows that Harry Prosch was a scholar who recognized his obligations to continuing conversation with the scholarly community interested in Polanyi, even if what he had to say often met resistance. Prosch's questions and his carefully articulated views about Polanyi's ontological claims, now more than twenty years old, continue to be debated in Polanyi scholarship, as recent discussions of topics such as Polanyi's realism show.

In looking back at the *Zygon* debate, Prosch felt that "nobody convinced the other what were Polanyi's views."<sup>97</sup> Prosch clearly shared Polanyi's sense of mission to diagnose and treat the sickness of our culture that, in turn, cripples religious expression. In 1964, Polanyi wrote Joseph Oldham about his hopes for the healing power that might be released through his work in philosophy: "Our scientific culture is getting under fire for falsifying the nature of things. The beliefs which we shall thus re-capture will eventually culminate in religious faith. Nothing short of that would make us at home in the universe again."<sup>98</sup> With Polanyi, Prosch worked as best he knew how in order to make room for faith and to fill the universe with meaning.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> This essay relies upon both archival correspondence in the Special Collection of Polanyi Papers and correspondence with or collected by William T. Scott. The archival correspondence is noted by box and folder. Other correspondence is noted only by writer and recipient and date. Use is also made of William T. Scott's interview notes that were a part of his research for *Michael Polanyi, Scientist and Philosopher*. If the text makes clear that Scott's interviews were the source, no note is provided.

<sup>2</sup> Prosch notes in his 1991 Kent State Polanyi Conference paper, "My first introduction to Polanyi's thought was to his views on economics and freedom in my reading of his *The Logic of Liberty* which had just then come out." ("Polanyi's Economics and the New Start in Europe," *From Polanyi to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Proceedings of A Centennial Conference, Kent State University, April 11-13, 1991*, Ed. Richard Gelwick: 295).

<sup>3</sup> "The Problem of Ultimate Justification," *Ethics*, 71, April 1961, pp. 155-74. "'Law' and 'Justice,'" *Politeia*, 1, April 1964, pp. 44-52. "Limits to the Moral Claim in Civil Disobedience," *Ethics*, 75, January, 1965, pp. 103-11. "Towards an Ethics of Civil Disobedience," *Ethics*, 77, April, 1967, pp. 176-92. "More About Civil Disobedience," *Ethics*, 77, July, 1967, pp. 311-12.

<sup>4</sup> *The Genesis of Twentieth Century Philosophy*, Garden City: Doubleday and Co., Inc. 1966.

<sup>5</sup> Prosch to Polanyi, June 29, 1967, Box 16, Folder 10. This and future references in this shortened format are to materials in the Polanyi Collection held in the Department of Special Collections at the Regenstein Library of the University of Chicago; quotations are used with permission.

<sup>6</sup> Subsequent letters indicate Polanyi did supply Prosch with many articles, but he also referred him to William Poteat as a source of potential information about his publication. The letters also implied that Polanyi often did not know exactly what had been published where. Richard's Gelwick's comments also indicate Polanyi did not really have records about his own scholarly work. The publication of Gelwick's bibliography in *Intellect and Hope* (1968) was helpful to Prosch.

<sup>7</sup> Prosch to Polanyi, April 17, 1969, Box 16, Folder 10.

<sup>8</sup> Harry Prosch, *Michael Polanyi, A Critical Exposition*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1986): 1.

<sup>9</sup> See Polanyi to Prosch, July 31, 1969 and Prosch to Polanyi, August 5, 1969, Box 16, Folder 10. Prosch's response to Polanyi's request is typical of his many gracious efforts to take on whatever Polanyi thought important to make Polanyi's work more mainstream: "I would be very pleased and honored indeed to edit the two volumes you would like to make out of *The Logic of Liberty*."

<sup>10</sup> Several letters, beginning with Polanyi to Prosch, 17<sup>th</sup> July, 1969, in Box 16, Folders 10 and 11 are concerned with setting up this program at Chicago and with defining what Polanyi's role would be and what Prosch's role would be. Prosch bends over backward to accommodate Polanyi who wants Prosch to handle a class on Polanyi's ideas. Marjorie Grene had in an earlier visit to Chicago taught what was apparently a similar course.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Zaffron, "On Understanding What We Don't Know How We Know," *Science* 168 (1970):1440-1442. Prosch's reply, "Polanyi Explicitly Mis-Read," a ten-page typescript, is in Box 16, Folder 15.

<sup>12</sup> There are several letters, beginning with Polanyi to Prosch, July 27, 1970, Box 16, Folder 11 concerning this rebuttal. Polanyi apparently earlier thought Marjorie Grene or Bill Scott would do a rebuttal, but when he found they would not, he turned to Prosch. Prosch immediately wrote a reply to the review by Zaffron and sent it to *Science* (who rejected it) and to Polanyi who suggested a much more extensive statement about Polanyi's philosophy and its relation to other contemporary philosophy of science (Polanyi to Prosch, 12<sup>th</sup> August, 1970). Interestingly, Polanyi suggests to Prosch that in the new introduction ("Background and Prospect," p. 12) to the 1964 reprint of *SFS*, he has given a "rough guide" indicating which contemporary philosophers of science are particularly important. He admits that he has never himself written anything linking to or distinguishing his thought from these philosophers of science "for the simple reason that I have not taken the trouble to read my successors Toulmin, N. R. Hanson, Thomas Kuhn and one or two others who would belong to this group." Prosch responds positively to Polanyi's suggestion for a more extensive rebuttal article, but points out that his areas are ethics and social and political philosophy, and history of philosophy. He acknowledges that he needs to extend his own reading in philosophy of science: "I have realized, as I got into my writing about you, and as, I saw the problem shaping up at Chicago, that I shall have to do some more serious reading in their works. I am planning, therefore, to get this done as soon as I can. For it will have to be done for the book" (Prosch to Polanyi, September 27, 1970, Box 16, Folder 11). The book in question, as we discuss below, is what eventually becomes Prosch's *Michael Polanyi, A Critical Exposition*, published sixteen years later.

<sup>13</sup> Prosch to Polanyi, October 12, 1969. Box 16, Folder 10.

<sup>14</sup> Prosch to Polanyi, Sept. 21, 1969 (Box 16, Folder 10) notes that Prosch is enclosing a rough draft of an introduction to Prosch's book on Polanyi. The draft is in the archival material (Box 16, Folder 10); the quotation is from page 10. Polanyi to Prosch, October 7, 1967 (Box 16, Folder 10) responds to the draft saying "you do give a picture, which I welcome, later when you emphasise the extension of my interests, indeed their predominance, outside the accepted pursuits of academic philosophy." Polanyi mildly criticizes Prosch's architectonic in two respects; he does not much like being linked with Heidegger and Tillich who are also mentioned as, like Polanyi, concerned with affairs of history and culture. He wants Prosch to assure that the sickness-to-health metaphor is not read merely as criticism and dissent from Freudian ideas.

<sup>15</sup> Prosch comments in his Introduction (p. 1) to *Michael Polanyi, A Critical Exposition* that he started his book while on sabbatical, but its development was delayed first by his work with Polanyi at the University of Chicago in 1970 and then by his work on *Meaning*. In a phone recent phone conversation (11/2/05) with Phil Mullins, Doris Prosch, noted that Harry essentially put aside his own work on Polanyi in order to work on *Meaning*.

<sup>16</sup> “Cooling the Modern Mind: Polanyi’s Mission” was published in *Skidmore College Bulletin*, vol. 56, no. 4 (August 1971): 5-39. “Polanyi’s Ethics,” *Ethics*, no. 82 (January 1972): 91-113.

<sup>17</sup> *Skidmore College Bulletin* 56:4 (1971) 33.

<sup>18</sup> Prosch to Polanyi, September 27, 1971, Box 16, Folder 11. In Prosch to Polanyi, October 17, 1971 (Box 16, Folder 11), Prosch says, “Thank you both for your kind words about my printed lecture. I am tremendously pleased that you both liked it. . . . So with your enthusiastic reception of this effort ringing in my ears my inspiration has been renewed to re-double my efforts to get on with our work.”

<sup>19</sup> Polanyi to Gelwick, October 25, 1971.

<sup>20</sup> Prosch notes in the Preface to *Meaning* (ix) that Polanyi asked him in the spring of 1972 if he would help him prepare the lectures from 1969, 1970 and 1971 from the University of Chicago and University of Texas for publication.

<sup>21</sup> Prosch to Polanyi March 22, 1972, Box 16, Folder 12.

<sup>22</sup> Polanyi to Prosch, April, 24, 1972, Box 16, Folder 12.

<sup>23</sup> Polanyi to Joseph Palamountain, Jr. May 25, 1972, Box 16, Folder 12.

<sup>24</sup> Polanyi to Prosch, June 5, 1972, Box 16, Folder 12.

<sup>25</sup> Prosch as well as Skidmore applied to a number of foundations and other sources. The applications as well as Polanyi’s letters of reference are included in Box 16, Folder 12. Prosch’s letters to Polanyi indicate he was quite self conscious about asking for support for a project in which he might appear an equal co-author with Polanyi; he says about one proposal, “But I do want you to know that in no way do I consider myself co-equal with you in it and please ignore any of my remarks in the description that might lead you to think I am assigning too important a role to myself. My position will be simply to help you in any way I can. I do consider it *your book*” (Prosch to Polanyi, June 14, 1972, Box 16, Folder 12). While making his applications, Prosch continued to do some work on his own book on Polanyi (Prosch to Polanyi, August 30, 1972, Box 16, Folder 12).

<sup>26</sup> Prosch to Polanyi, November 6, 1972, Box 16, Folder 12.

<sup>27</sup> Prosch to Polanyi, November 25, 1972, Box 16, Folder 12.

<sup>28</sup> Prosch projects he will arrive, get settled and meet with Polanyi on February 5, 1972 (Prosch to Polanyi, January 13, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13).

<sup>29</sup> Prosch to Polanyi, March 8, 1972, Box 16, Folder 13. Prosch’s good will toward Polanyi has no bounds. In this letter, he returns \$1000 which Polanyi has given to him for expenses. He offers to give “editorial assistance” to Polanyi in cleaning up anything he puts together. He offers to return to Oxford if Polanyi reaches the point in the future that he wants to work together with Prosch. He offers to come to Toronto when Polanyi is visiting in order to read through whatever Polanyi has written.

<sup>30</sup> Prosch to Scott (interview), April 25, 1994.

<sup>31</sup> Polanyi to Prosch, March 8, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13.

<sup>32</sup> Polanyi to Prosch, March 12, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13.

<sup>33</sup> Polanyi to Prosch, March 15, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13.

<sup>34</sup> Polanyi to Prosch, March 19, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13. He failed to provide Prosch with information about what “works of imagination” was to include, as subsequent letters show, although Prosch managed to discern what Polanyi had in mind. By this time, Prosch seems to know almost all Polanyi’s writing, early and late, and can second-guess many of Polanyi’s poorly articulated desires.

<sup>35</sup> Prosch to Polanyi, April 29, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13.

<sup>36</sup> Prosch to Polanyi, April 29, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13. Prosch notes that he is keeping a list of matters that should be treated in Polanyi’s introduction if Polanyi’s section is indeed to introduce what Prosch has woven together. Prosch seems to know that Polanyi will never produce his promised introduction or, if he does,

it will need to be recast as the two sections of the full text are fitted together.

<sup>37</sup> Polanyi to Prosch, May 3, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13. Prosch acknowledged Polanyi's final admission: "As I understand these last three letters, you are leaving the drafting of the manuscript to me and you will assist, as you say, with your observations by word and writing" (Prosch to Polanyi, May 14, 1973, 16, 13.). In the same letter, he offers to come to Oxford after he sends Polanyi the final draft and Polanyi has digested it: ". . . I will come again and we will spend what time I then have left talking over the work with a view toward making it closer to what you really want to say."

<sup>38</sup> Prosch to Polanyi, June 7, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13.

<sup>39</sup> Prosch to Polanyi, August 13, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13.

<sup>40</sup> Polanyi to Prosch (cable text), August 21, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13. Although the project referred to in Polanyi to Prosch, August 9, 1973 (Box 16, Folder 13) is not altogether clear, it seems to concern an idea Polanyi has to move forward in organizing the movement promoting Polanyi's thought. Polanyi apparently was asking for confirmation from Prosch that Prosch would play a central role.

<sup>41</sup> Polanyi to Prosch, August 24, 1973. Copy of letter provided by Prosch to Bill Scott.

<sup>42</sup> All of these matters are treated in July and August, 1973 letters (Box 16, Folder 13). Polanyi clearly is looking to Prosch to provide leadership in what Polanyi perceives as growing interest in Polanyi's philosophy: "The spreading of participations evokes the need for shaping the ways in our camp, and I am coming to you now in the hope that you will take on a leading part." Later in this letter Polanyi notes his confidence in Prosch: "I am coming to you in this way because you are at the heart of the work and are a master of it" (Polanyi to Prosch, August 9, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13). The *London Times* Supplement article on Popper was from June 3, 1973. See especially Prosch to Polanyi, July 18, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13 in which there are notes about several Polanyi-related Prosch endeavors, plus a progress report on work on *Meaning*: "Work here is proceeding well. I think everything is going to work out. I have had to do a good bit of new writing on the "Order" part." Prosch's "Polanyi's Tacit Knowing in the 'Classic' Philosophers" is in *The Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 4 (October 1973): 201-216.

<sup>43</sup> Polanyi to Prosch, October 22, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13.

<sup>44</sup> Polanyi to Prosch, August 9, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13.

<sup>45</sup> Prosch to Polanyi, August 19, 1973, Folder 16, Folder 13.

<sup>46</sup> For example, the following is from Polanyi to Prosch, September 6, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13: "I find your first seven pieces very good, but have doubts about the other three. These parts should be tremendously striking for hitherto breathless ways of man. And this should set the boundless tragedy of our terrible achievements." In a later letter, Polanyi says more clearly that he wants the book to have a more "vigorous ending" (Polanyi to Prosch, September 13, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13). See also Polanyi to Prosch, September 20, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13.

<sup>47</sup> Polanyi to Prosch, September 10, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13.

<sup>48</sup> Prosch to Polanyi, September 16, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13. Some of Polanyi's letters in this period suggest that he does not always remember that he has not read part of the text.

<sup>49</sup> Prosch to Polanyi, October 2, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13.

<sup>50</sup> Polanyi to Prosch, October 22, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13. In Prosch to Polanyi, November 6, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13, Prosch at least infers from Polanyi's earlier letter that Polanyi is suggesting that he publish *Meaning* under his own name. Prosch points out that if Polanyi wants him to do this, he must provide a note granting him permission to do so. Prosch notes that if the book is under his name only, he will nevertheless give full credit to Polanyi for all the parts that came from Polanyi's works (Prosch to Polanyi, November 6, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13).

<sup>51</sup> Polanyi to Prosch (cable text), November 22, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13. In the letter that followed



explaining the cable, Polanyi tried to explain his vacillation about the manuscript: “It is only now that I have read most of your main part (starting from chapter 4) that I got to know your main ideas. I realized that the technical procedure of my work, to which I gave much attention, was secondary to you. And I realized to my profound joy that you had taken up and swept over the daring vision of recovering the true powers of thought away from technical reductions.”(Polanyi to Prosch, November 22, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13).

<sup>52</sup>Polanyi to Prosch, November 26, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13.

<sup>53</sup> In Polanyi to Prosch, September 10 (Box 16, Folder 13), Polanyi mentioned “material for another publication, which could follow the one which you have now in hand.” Later in the fall (Polanyi to Prosch, November 13, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13), Polanyi outlined what seems to be a collection of essays (four previously published plus some of the lecture materials from Chicago and Austin) he wanted to publish apparently with Prosch’s help: “I hope that I can get some of your help for this task; but I will be happy if it is only a response.” By this time, Polanyi seemed to envision publishing *Meaning* under Prosch’s name and this collection of essays under his name at the same time. It seems likely that this collection of essays is the same material that Polanyi was also seeking help from Richard Gelwick to organize in late 1973. See the discussion below.

<sup>54</sup> Prosch to Polanyi, November 26, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13. See also Prosch to Polanyi, December 1, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13. Interestingly, Polanyi’s letters mention two other scholars, Paul Craig Roberts and Richard Gelwick, who seem to be trying to help Polanyi (Polanyi to Prosch, December 11, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13, and Polanyi to Prosch, December 21, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13).

<sup>55</sup> Prosch to Polanyi, November 27, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13.

<sup>56</sup> Polanyi to Gelwick, December 11, 1973.

<sup>57</sup> Polanyi To Gelwick, December 13, 1973. Concerning the work with Gelwick, see Polanyi to Prosch, December 11, 1973 (Box 16, Folder 13), which says “I hope I can get help from Richard Gelwick, who has come essentially for such work.”

<sup>58</sup> Polanyi to Prosch, February 21, 1974, Box 16, Folder 13.

<sup>59</sup> Polanyi to Gelwick, March 18, 1974.

<sup>60</sup> Magda Polanyi to Gelwick, May 18, 1974.

<sup>61</sup> Prosch to Polanyi, February 11, 1974, Box 16, Folder 14.

<sup>62</sup> Prosch to Polanyi, April 18, 1974, Box 16, Folder 14.

<sup>63</sup> Polanyi to Prosch, July 15, 1974, Box 16, Folder 14.

<sup>64</sup> Polanyi to Prosch, July 19, 1974, Box 16, Folder 14.

<sup>65</sup> Polanyi to Prosch (cable), July 20, 1974, Box 16, Folder 14. Some notes in the same folder identified as notes for a letter to be dictated on the Monday following July 20 indicate that Polanyi wants his name to be listed “as supporter of your text without any connection to your views.”

<sup>66</sup> Polanyi to Prosch, July 22, 1974, Box 16, Folder 14.

<sup>67</sup> Magda Polanyi to Scott; the letter was begun on July 22 and concluded on August 11, 1974.

<sup>68</sup> The evidence for this in the archival correspondence is Prosch to Polanyi, August 29, 1974, Box 16, Folder 14 and Prosch to Polanyi, September 15, 1974, Box 16, Folder 14. These are letters Prosch wrote after returning home in response to a letter from the Polanyis. The letter sets forth some details related to the publication such as that Prosch will handle the indexing and provide a list of Polanyi publications from which materials were drawn.

<sup>69</sup> Magda Polanyi to Gelwick, August 17, 1974.

<sup>70</sup> Magda Polanyi to Gelwick, September 9, 1974.

<sup>71</sup> Magda Polanyi to Gelwick, October 2, 1974.

<sup>72</sup> *Michael Polanyi, Scientist and Philosopher*, 286.

<sup>73</sup> Prosch to Polanyi, October 25, 1973, Box 16, Folder 13.

<sup>74</sup> Prosch to Polanyi, February 9, 1975, Box 16, Folder 14.

<sup>75</sup> See the comments on Polanyi's last days in Prosch's response to Thomas Torrance's accusations in a short article titled "Postscript to *Meaning*: Prosch Responds to Torrance's Letter," *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical*, vol. xv, no. 1 (Winter, 87-88): 24-25.

<sup>76</sup> with Michael Polanyi, "Truth in Myths," *Cross Currents*, 25, Summer, 1975.

<sup>77</sup> *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 8, (October, 1977): 178-191,

<sup>78</sup> *Biographical Supplement of The International Encyclopedia for the Social Sciences*, 18 (New York and London, 1979): 640-642.

<sup>79</sup> Review of Richard Gelwick's *The Way of Discovery, Ethics*, 82 (January, 1979): 211-216.

<sup>80</sup> "Polanyi and Rhetoric," *Pre-Text*, 2 (Spring-Fall, 1981): 189-196.

<sup>81</sup> Although this is the beginning of these discussions, the articulation of Prosch's perspective in the debate comes earlier. His 1972 article "Polanyi's Ethics" puts Prosch's view this way: "Michael Polanyi holds that morality is analogous to art and religion in terms of its reality status, its structure, and the sort of involvement of our selves that it entails. The unique level of reality in which the objects of morality, art, and religion exist is what he calls the cultural stratum. This stratum includes for him, in fact, all the works of man's thought" (92).

<sup>82</sup> "Polanyi's View of Religion in *Personal Knowledge*," *Zygon*, 17 (March, 1982): 41-48.

<sup>83</sup> Drusilla Scott, *Everyman Revived, The Common Sense of Michael Polanyi* (Lewes, Sussex: The Book Guild Limited, 1985).

<sup>84</sup> Harry Prosch, Review of *Everyman Revived, Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical*, vol. xiii, no. 2 (Spring, 1985-86): 20-22.

<sup>85</sup> Although critical of Prosch's approach, for a review that attempts concisely and accurately to summarize the approach, as well as his criticisms of Harre, Grene, Torrance and the *Zygon* writers, see Phil Mullins, Review of Harry Prosch, *Michael Polanyi: A Critical Exposition*, *Zygon*, vol 23, no. 2 (June, 1988): 215-220.

<sup>86</sup> Three very interesting responses to Prosch are included in *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical*, vol. xv, no. 1 (Winter, 1987-88). This issue was not published until 1988. John Apczynski's "Are Religion and Science Distinct or Dichotomous Realms? Reflection on Prosch's Interpretation of Polanyi" (pp.4-14, originally a December, 1987 American Academy of Religion Roundtable Paper) is a fine effort to understand Prosch's approach to Polanyi and show how it is different than his own perspective. Essentially, Apczynski argues Prosch makes some assumptions common in earlier American naturalistic philosophy and in much contemporary philosophy. Apczynski concludes that Prosch's exposition is consistent but he thinks the assumptions underlying the exposition are not what he believes appropriate. He concludes "it would appear that any analysis of the implications of Polanyi's thought must take into account reflectively the fundamental assumptions of the interpreter and how they enter into the reading of the texts. Prosch has shown us, in brief, that Polanyi's is not a settled system and that to be faithful to Polanyi requires going beyond him"(11). Also interesting are Drusilla Scott's "Quality But Bristling With Difficulties On Polanyi's View of Reality" (pp. 14-17) and Joan Crewdson's "Nature and the Noosphere: Two Realities or One?" (pp. 18-24). Both the Scott and Crewdson essays were first published in *Convivium*, no. 24 (March, 1987).

<sup>87</sup> Maben Poirier, "Harry Prosch's Modernism," *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical*, vol. xvi, no.2 (Spring, 1988-1989): 32-39.

<sup>88</sup> Harry Prosch, "Those Missing 'Objects,'" *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical*, vol. xvii, nos. 1 & 2 (1991-1992): 21.

<sup>89</sup> Prosch, "Those Missing 'Objects,'" 21.

<sup>90</sup> Harry Prosch, Review of *Everyman Revived, Tradition and Discovery*, vol. xiii, no. 2 (Spring, 1985-

86): 22.

<sup>91</sup> Thomas Torrance, “Letters to the Editor: Torrance Answers Prosch on Polanyi’s Convictions about God,” *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical*, vol. xiv, no. 1 (Fall, 1986-87): 30.

<sup>92</sup> Thomas Torrance, 30.

<sup>93</sup> Thomas Torrance, 30.

<sup>94</sup> Harry Prosch, “Prosch Replies to Torrance’s Letter: Postscript to *Meaning*,” *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical*, vol. xv, no. 1, (Winter, 1987-1988): 24-25.

<sup>95</sup> *Michael Polanyi, Scientist and Philosopher*, 280, note 22 cites John Puddefoot’s November 2, 1994 letter to Robin Hodgkin as evidence that Polanyi chose Torrance as literary executor because of Torrance’s excellent credentials and “to avoid the kind of difficulties he experienced working with Prosch” (286). This letter which came to Bill Scott was written about twenty years after the publication of *Meaning* and several years after the controversy treated here appeared in *Tradition and Discovery*. The letter does no more than report the ideas appearing here that Torrance had already circulated about his appointment as literary executor.

<sup>96</sup> Magda Polanyi to Gelwick, November 24, 1974.

<sup>97</sup> Scott interview; April, 1994.

<sup>98</sup> Oldham to Polanyi, August 16, 1964; Box 15, Folder 5.

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