

A Symposium Encounter: The Philosophies of William Poteat and Michael Polanyi

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ABSTRACT Key Words: William Poteat, Michael Polanyi, concepts, perpetuating intellectual legacies, transcendence, returning to primal principles, Enlightenment, spatial/temporal, visual/aural, static/tensional, dynamic, indeterminate future manifestations, tacit/explicit, retentive/preentive.

Participants have known Poteat as teacher or colleague or author over various periods of time and assess him according to these various relationships. Polanyi is given less attention largely because he has been less difficult to understand. Poteat's approach is the more radical because he attempts to take the implications of Polanyi's thinking further. Central to comprehending the nature of their differences are an understanding (1) of their different perceptions of transcendence and (2) of the contrasting groundings they provide for reality.

Backgrounds of the Participants

The seven contributors to the journalistic symposium featured in this issue of *Tradition and Discovery*, were all participants in a special meeting of the Polanyi Society held June 13-15, 2008, at Loyola University, Chicago, in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Michael Polanyi's *magnum opus*, *Personal Knowledge Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (hereafter designated as *PK*). Since William Poteat was one of a relative few philosophers to recognize, early-on the philosophical genius of Polanyi - having discovered some of Polanyi's initial writings as early as 1952 and, during a visit with him in Manchester, England, in 1955, having examined, upon Polanyi's request, a typescript draft of *PK* (later described by Poteat as the occasion when his own thinking began to take on "deeply interiorized Polanyian motifs") - it seemed fitting to give some attention at this conference to the relationship between the thinking of these two exceptionally seminal minds.

The six essays that follow, by Gus Breytspraak, Ron Hall, Dale Cannon, Diane Yeager, Jim Stines, and Bob Osborn, are adapted from the presentations they made in a panel discussion at that meeting. The final essay, by Kiernan Cashell, was presented independently as a paper at the conference. Five of the six panelists were students in Professor Poteat's Religion or Philosophy classes, seminars, or independent studies as undergraduates and/or divinity students or Ph.D. candidates for various periods between 1964 and 1974. All five enjoyed an on-campus and personal student/professor relationship with Poteat for three to six years. The sixth panelist, Bob Osborn, by contrast, knew Poteat only as a colleague, from the time Bill arrived on the Duke campus in 1960, teaching in the same Divinity School or Department of Religion continuously with Bill until he retired in 1987. Indeed, they continued, on occasion, to cross paths with each other right up until Poteat's death in 2000 - a total of some forty years. Yet, as we shall read in his essay, Professor Osborn asserts that, ironically, he (like his colleagues) who knew Bill the longest, also knew him the least.

As a participant in the panel (although only as moderator), I alone never taught with Bill nor sat as a student enrolled in his class. However, I must qualify that statement. I came to the Duke campus in the fall of 1960 as a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science, the same semester that Poteat arrived on the campus. About midway through my three years of study there, I began to hear from some of the graduate students

in Religion about this new professor who had thoroughly captured their attention and elicited their enthusiasm. I think it was during my last year at Duke that I finally managed, about mid-semester, to sneak into a corner of his seminar room. I was certain that a great mind was at work there as I heard the professor allude, both masterfully and excitedly, to the insights of a philosopher by the name of Derrida and another by the name of Merleau-Ponty - but, having had not the slightest introduction previously to phenomenology, I found it all passing at some considerable altitude well over my head. I might as well have slipped into a lecture on quantum physics. That was my one and only “classroom experience” with Professor Poteat.

Since my interest in Political Science was from a philosophical perspective, after completing my formal studies and beginning my teaching career, I soon found the opportunity to gain a considerable appreciation of phenomenology, particularly as represented by Merleau-Ponty. But it was not until some time later, after I'd delved fairly thoroughly into Polanyi's works and come to value his insights (by bad timing, he was brought by Poteat and Tom Langford to Duke the spring semester of 1964 following the summer I departed from Duke), that I finally began to read Poteat's works. It was probably in the early 1980s that I read Poteat's chapter in *Intellect and Hope* (Duke University Press, 1968) and about 1988 that I was captivated by his *Polanyian Meditations* (Duke University Press, 1985).

Indeed, it was my letter to Poteat expressing my delight at the development of his own insights in that book that started a decade-long period of the most stimulating correspondence - his letters often lengthy and hand-written on legal pad sheets, eventually filling several inches of a file drawer. Soon after my correspondence with Bill on *Polanyian Meditations*, I'm sure that it was upon his recommendation that the editor at the University of Missouri Press, asked me to referee his manuscript, *A Philosophical Daybook*, regarding its suitability for publication, which occurred in 1990; shortly after that, the same request from the same publisher regarding Stines' and Nickell's collection, published in 1993, and, in the meanwhile, Bill was passing to me later drafts of his final book, *Recovering the Ground*, which I then refereed for the SUNY Press and was published in 1994. It was a wonderful way to become acquainted with Bill's thinking.

Our correspondence was by no means limited to matters raised by his writings, but sometimes were prompted by my writing efforts, and often simply by “quotidian” (a word he loved to use) reflections and life experiences shared by one or the other of us. These communications, at first by postal mail, later partially by e-mail, together with a few direct visits with him, including a couple days while he and Patricia had residency in Athens during her university presidency there, represent some of the most gratifying intellectual interchanges of my entire career.

Ireland-based Kiernan Cashell, is the only participant in this symposium who has had no personal contact, either inside or outside the classroom, with Poteat. He draws his impressive understanding of Poteat's contributions entirely from studying his writings. I find this encouraging to the extent that this provides evidence that Poteat's influence has spread beyond his personal circle of former students and colleagues. But such evidence is limited: few others outside this “circle” appear to have familiarized themselves with Poteat's contributions. Recent efforts to find a remnant of Bill's legacy at Duke in regard to current faculty familiar with him or his ideas and, therefore, potentially interested in establishing an archive of his letters and papers there, have proved fruitless. Further, there has been no attempt on behalf of those appreciative of Bill's thinking to establish an association, similar to the Polanyi Society, to perpetuate his legacy. However, there have been a number of former students of Poteat and a few of his former colleagues who, as members of the Polanyi Society, have brought their Poteatean insights to bear through their participation on panels and as authors of related

articles in *TAD*.

Poteat's Insights: More Difficult to Communicate Than Polanyi's

Perhaps these are the means one can most realistically rely upon, at present, for the dissemination and - hopefully - the perpetuation of his ideas. This was my chief consideration in recommending to the Polanyi Society Board the inclusion of Poteatean scholarship in last summer's program. Some members of the Society will recall that Bill was the featured guest at the 1993 Annual Meeting of the Polanyi Society in Washington, D.C., and that Jim Stines guest-edited a follow-up, six-participant symposium issue of *TAD* (v.21, no.1, 1994-1995). Several other articles relating to Poteat have appeared in the pages of *TAD* over the years. Stines, together with James Nickell, also made a major contribution toward perpetuating Poteat's influence by co-editing an extensive collection of Bill's essays in *The Primacy of Persons and the Language of Culture* (University of Missouri Press, 1993).

But, whereas there is considerable evidence of Polanyi's influence having passed, however modestly, beyond the first generation of his students, there is scant evidence of this in regard to Poteat. This may well be, in part, due to the limited amount of writing that Poteat himself did, relative to Polanyi. Whereas Polanyi produced about a half-dozen books and approximately 130 published articles on social and economic theory and philosophy, Poteat wrote only 3 books and about 30 published articles. Further there is an impressively scholarly collection of secondary literature about Polanyi and his philosophical thought: approximately 18 books and a couple hundred articles (the majority of these in *TAD*). By contrast, there are no secondary books, of which I am aware, on Poteat's contributions, and only, perhaps at most, two dozen articles. Among those of us who have been beneficiaries of Bill's insights, there is reason for us to be concerned about this legacy being effectively passed on. Many of those who brought his ideas into their classrooms and writing have, like Bill, passed on, and many of the rest of us are becoming well accustomed to being beneficiaries, as well, of senior discounts.

Poteat's More Radical Approach

It struck me that the participants on the summer panel charged with relating Poteat's to Polanyi's thinking, and vice versa, for the most part - as is reflected in their contributions to this *TAD* symposium - ended up speaking of Poteat more than they did of Polanyi - indeed, as I have done, so far. I suspect there are several explanations for this. First of all, most of us, as members of the Polanyi Society, have already spent a lot of time discussing and developing Polyanian ideas; bringing Poteat into the discussion provides us with a new opportunity. Second (and I suspect this goes a long way toward explaining the greater difficulty incurred in perpetuating Poteat's insights), it has been my impression that most of us have found it more difficult to understand Poteat's ideas than Polanyi's, even though some suggest that they don't find Polanyi an "easy read." Poteat, himself, claims that he takes Polanyi farther, and deeper, into his thinking than Polanyi, himself, does; that he "radicalizes" Polanyi by laying out the implications that are inherent - unknown to Polanyi - in his own thinking.

Particularly in regard to the theological implications of Polanyi's thought (which Polanyi admitted he had dealt with about as far as he was equipped to do), Poteat perceived himself, in the course of being true to his own Christian understandings, as a radical threat to what was generally perceived as Christian "orthodoxy." Here I cannot resist relating an anecdote recently told to me by Jim Stines that had been originally told to him by Poteat (and that I have failed to persuade Jim to include in his essay so that I wouldn't have to). It seems that

one of Bill's theologian colleagues in the Religion Department at Duke exclaimed to Bill one day that, to the limited extent that he could make any sense of Bill's teaching, he could not detect how it had anything to do with the teaching of the Christian faith, as he understood it.

Thereupon Bill resorted to parable, telling his colleague about a country parson who, one day, was called upon by a frantic mother to rescue her young child who had fallen through the seat opening in her outhouse. The pastor hurried to the scene and took upon himself the obviously unpleasant task of pulling the child out of his unspeakable predicament. Upon viewing (as well as registering through other senses) the [excrement] (not the word used by either Bill or Jim) that coated Junior from head to toe, the pastor turned to the distraught mother and advised, "Well, I suppose you could try to clean up your child, but I suggest that you would probably be far more successful, and it would certainly be far easier, for you to start all over again." Such was the condition into which Bill perceived Enlightenment thinking (including theology) had fallen, indeed, Western thinking from the Ancient Greeks on; and such, to his thinking, was the radical nature of the only cure sufficient to deal with it.

Different Treatments of the Transcendent

Adding to the difficulty that Poteat perceived as inherent in the task of a radically reformed way of thinking, and therefore to the difficulty of communicating his manner of thinking, was the enigmatic manner in which he often expressed himself. For example, while acknowledging his "deeply interiorized Polanyian motifs," he disclaimed being a "Polanyian." Indeed, Kieran Cashell, in the final essay in this symposium, makes a convincing case that Poteat's thought was thoroughly inspired by Polanyian ideas and marked by Polanyian concepts. Still, it is obvious that, in order to develop further what, according to Professor Poteat, were implications of Polanyi's concepts - implications of which, as we have noted, Polanyi himself was unaware, Poteat had also to go beyond Polanyi by creating his own concepts.

Polanyi's concepts, although a decided advance, did not permit him to break completely free of the essentially spatial, visual, and static categories that had inhered in Western thought from its very beginning, and that were exacerbated by the linear literacy of the Enlightenment. In fact, it is precisely the temporal, aural, and dynamically tensional dimension of Poteat's innovative concepts that provide not only the radical genius of his contribution to the processes of both knowing and being, but also - by their very innovative nature - confront the inheritor of Enlightenment habits of perception with the difficulty of grasping his radically challenging insights.

I've encountered numerous individuals who, having assured themselves of finally having comprehended Professor Poteat's dynamic mode of thought, and indeed in many instances having been assured by Poteat himself of their having achieved this, suddenly experienced their mentor's sharp rebuke for "falling back into the old Enlightenment habits." Around 1997, when I had nearly completed a lengthy essay in which I attempted to schematize Bill's understanding of his key concept of "mindbody" in its "protensive" dynamics by utilizing the, admittedly spatial, concept of a circle, with its center, radius, and circumference (see my "William H. Poteat's Anthropology: 'Mindbody in the World'," *The Political Science Reviewer*, v. 27 [1998], pp. 267-344.), he lavished probably the most extravagant praise I've ever received for having grasped another's thought. Bill, it turned out, had no problem with the utilization of spatial images as long as they were understood as metaphors. In fact, his writings are filled with references to a mindbodily "radix," or "center," thereby implying the image of a circle.

However, in the final stage of drafting my essay, when I turned from mere exposition to partial criticism, suggesting that some of his fundamental concepts did not allow him to incorporate in his thinking a sense of true transcendence and, in particular, an acknowledgement of a Divine Being, his rebuke was as sharp as it was, at this point, unexpected. It turned out that, according to Bill, I had finally and unwittingly succumbed, along with the rest of modern, Western culture, to the attractive madness of the Enlightenment mode of thinking. What surprised me even more was that Bill, in his effort to vindicate himself from my suggestion that his concepts did not allow him to acknowledge the reality of a God, proceeded to recite a major portion of the Nicene Creed, thereby proclaiming his unreserved embrace of all its principle affirmations. I shared this latter part of Bill's rejoinder, at the time, with Jim Stines, who quotes it in his essay. (It turned out that Jim, too, was still puzzled over a similar experience with Bill, shortly after having received from him the highest accolades for his and Jim Nickell's publication of Poteat's collected essays.)

After Jim's much more recent sharing with me of Bill's parable of the child who fell into the outhouse toilet, it occurred to me that I would have liked to have had the chance to ask Bill, "How on earth does one 'start all over again' by starting with the Nicene Creed?!" It seems that the point Bill was attempting to make here was that, in this instance, I had completely failed to see that his radical reconceptualization of the mindbody (or self) in relation to its Divine radix, or its primal core, had retained its full faithfulness to the primal principles of Christianity. But, again, it seems to me that much of what he claimed to embrace in his lengthy excerpting from the Nicene Creed were a long way from what one can convincingly claim to be the primal principles of the faith, that is, of early first-century Christianity.

In short, I've never been able to reconcile some of Poteat's key concepts - not to mention, his rare, if ever, discussion of his personal faith and his equally rare witness of this through public worship - with this sudden, unqualified affirmation of Christian orthodoxy. Some have puzzled over what appears, to them, to be a gap between, in this instance, Polanyi's occasional affirmation of Christian principles in his philosophy, on the one hand, and the absence in his life of either consistent personal affirmation or consistent relationship to a community of worship, on the other hand. However, I have argued elsewhere (in an unpublished paper, "A Polanyian Resolution of the Age-Old Conflict Between Faith and Reason," presented at the Annual Meeting of the Polanyi Society, November 17, 2006) that this inconsistency was not due to the deeper implications of his thinking. It, rather, appears to have been an instance of some of those deeper implications of which, according to Poteat, Polanyi himself was not aware, and - most ironically, in this instance - of which Poteat himself appears to have been unaware!

But, despite my failure to reconcile Bill Poteat's apparently far more blatant self-contradiction on this matter, I think I've been more successful, after years of puzzlement, in finally coming to comprehend his avoidance, within his scheme of thought, of the concept of "transcendence" (and, therefore, his sharp response to my criticism of him, which employed this concept) - even while allowing for the other metaphorically-employed, spatial concepts. It finally occurred to me that, for Poteat, unlike the concepts of a "circle" and its "circumference," "radius," and "center," the concept of "transcendence" or "transcending" was apparently too radically spatial in its suggestion of a reaching "out There" to allow for a convincing and mere metaphorical construal. And it was apparently in this sense that Poteat thought Polanyi had come to belie his promising beginning in *Personal Knowledge*.

Contrasting Grounds of Reality: A Primal Radix vs. Indeterminate Future Manifestations

The radical insight of Polanyi's epistemology, Poteat agreed with Polanyi, was well expressed in his epigrammatic formula, "I know more than I can tell." In other words, our epistemological grounding is what we tacitly dwell within and from which we tacitly draw in all our articulations and understandings. For Poteat, this grounding of all that we can come to embrace with some degree of certainty, lay deep within us, and not in some transcendingly distant "Beyond." And it is to be encountered by our silent listening to, and reverential probing, or "retrotending," into this radical center, or "radix," of our concrete experience of being in this particular circumstance, in this particular moment in time, and in this particular place. This, to Poteat, was quite the opposite of an abstract and spatially outward "transcendence." Apparently, to Bill's thinking, in my criticism of his thinking, I had over-extended the applicability of an inherently and inextricably spatial metaphor.

And, likewise, it appears to me that this was the sense in which Poteat felt that Polanyi had suddenly abandoned, idway through *PK*, the concrete, "mindbodily" grounding that, up to that point, he had provided for his, until then, brilliant and radical portrayal of the process of discovery and knowing. Bill was specific in locating what was, to him, the clearest indication of this surprising and sad epistemological reversal, on page 192 in the 1964 Harper Torchbook edition of *PK*, where Polanyi asserts that

logical antecedents derived from the prior acceptance of their consequents are necessarily *less certain* than the consequents. It is clearly unreasonable, therefore, to regard these antecedents as the grounds on which we accept their consequents. (Emphasis mine.)

One's basic assumptions, which Poteat insists we come upon only by a deep probing into, and indwelling within, the mindbodily radix, are /less/ certain than the explicitly elaborate abstractions we derive from them?!! Polanyi himself had asserted, up to that point, that it was our tacit indwelling, our reflective journey into the depths of ourselves, that grounded our thoughts and that provided us with the intimations by which our "neat" conclusions were challenged, forcing us often to "break out" of these elaborate and often long-held world-views and theoretical constructions.

As far as I know, Poteat never confronted Polanyi with what appears to be a clear inconsistency in his thinking. In all fairness to Polanyi, I'm inclined to think that, had he done so, Polanyi would have done some rephrasing, or some re-contextualizing, of that statement, because it is clear to me that the dominant theme that Polanyi maintains throughout not only *PK*, but also in his *The Tacit Dimension* and, indeed, throughout the extensive body of his epistemological literature, is one of a primary reliance on, and a trusting of, one's tacit intimations – to be sure, while still subjecting the trustworthiness of our initial intimations to a testing by our encounters in the empirical world of experience, as well as by the durability of the generalized conclusions to which we have been thereby guided. In other words, the process of discovery and knowing to which Polanyi introduces us is a *dialectical* process, an only partially articulable back-and-forth process between, on the one hand, an opening and attuning of ourselves to awarenesses, themselves a product of largely inexplicable inner processes of assimilation and synthesis and an equal openness, in the sense of a "reaching outward" to, on the other hand, our developing, but far more explicit and articulable, awarenesses and understandings of our larger world. Polanyi described this as a "from - to" movement: *from* an indwelling of our internalized awarenesses, we move *to*/ experience that of which we can be aware only from our involvement with the external world.

Polanyi, in asserting that “We know more than we can tell,” was suggesting that there’s an important, inner- but tacit – reality to which we should be attuned. Poteat referred to this as the “radix” at our innermost core of our awareness and being. Polanyi also said that “We tell more than we can know,” implying by this that, as we give such articulation as we can to bring both our inner awarenesses and our more tangible, or “outwardly” focused experiences to a more comprehensive explicitness, we tend to discover more and more implications in our articulations than we had expected, or “known,” when we initially articulated them. In fact, Polanyi offers the very insightful proposal that we measure the reality of a thing (which could be an idea) by its anticipated fecundity – in his terms, by what we have experienced, or at least anticipated, as its potential to manifest itself in terms of “indeterminate future manifestations.” In this sense, he says, “A person is more real than a cobblestone.”

Poteat, with the heavy emphasis he placed upon one’s “primal” awareness and the generative potential of such awareness, which we discover in the depths of introspection, at the very inner core, or “radix” of our being, feared that Polanyi, especially when his statements (such as the one we have quoted) occasionally placed more emphasis upon “consequents” than upon “antecedents,” had lost a sense of the balance that needed to be maintained in what Polanyi had himself, earlier, characterized as a “from - to” dialectic. Whether or not we agree with Poteat that Polanyi had lost this balance in his thinking, the real genius of Poteat, to my thinking, is his determined effort to eliminate the stark dichotomy of the “inner-self” and the “outer-world,” and therefore the split between mind and body generally assumed in Polanyi’s understanding of the processes of both knowing and being. Instead, in Poteat’s thought “mind” becomes merged with “body” (in his central concept of “mindbody”) and knowing comes to constitute the very essence, or meaning, of being. In fact, Poteat goes beyond the mere merger of concepts and, if you will permit me a neologism, further “dynamizes” our understanding of both what it means to know and what it means to be.

However, to accomplish this, Poteat realizes that we must replace the Modern/Enlightenment vestiges of spatiality that he perceives as still inhering in Polyanian concepts (despite Polanyi’s success, for the most part, in moving beyond modernity’s blinders) with concepts more suggestive of temporality, exemplifications dominantly visual with those that are more aural. Therefore we find Poteat speaking in terms of a tensional dynamic, using such words as “pro-tensive” and “retro-tensive” and alluding often, both in his seminars and in his writings, to the musical medium. Just as within the musical progression of a melody involving a series of notes, C, G, and E, our appreciation of the melody must entail our sense of the G note anticipating (pro-tending) the E that follows it, even as it still recalls (retro-tends) the C note that preceded it, and so on; thus we come to know the meaning of words within a sentence, sentences within a paragraph, our present experiences generally in the larger context of past and future (anticipated) experiences.) This temporal dynamic, indeed, might well have been employed by Polanyi to provide fuller illustration than was allowed by his more spatial concepts to his own insistence upon the active role of the knower in the process of knowing. I am quite certain that Polanyi would have welcomed a conceptual move in this direction. In 1972, when Professor Polanyi was aware of his declining mental capability, he invited Bill to assist him in drafting his final work aimed at pulling together the strands of his reflections. Bill was initially agreeable to the invitation, but because of the pressures of his academic schedule at Duke, finally declined. One can only wonder about the salutary impact that Poteat might have had upon Polanyi’s formulations, had he been a participant in this final collaboration.

Still Poteat, himself, often employed spatial illustrations of his dynamic approach. In reflecting upon both the conversations I’ve had with him and his writings, I’ve puzzled for years over the sometimes dominating references he has made to the graphic and plastic arts, wondering, for example, how he could perceive in the spatially two-dimensional paintings of Cezanne, or even in the spatially three-dimensional sculptures of

Moustakas the temporally pre- and retro-tensive dynamics of the creative process. Only recently did it finally occur to me that he viewed works of art not simply as finished products and, also, even with viewed as “finished,” not objects separate from the viewing subject. In regard to the latter, I discovered in his unpublished essay on Cezanne Poteat’s sense of being “drawn into” the painting. One found oneself walking on Cezanne’s depiction of a winding path, allowing the viewer, in a sense, to be ‘indwelt’ by the entirety of the landscape, and to progressively appreciate, successively, the ever-changing perspective offered at every step along the way. And, from listening to Bill’s experience of watching Moustakas at work, sculpting a chunk of marble in his studio, gradually giving it human form, I became convinced that even when Bill viewed the finished sculptures, his mind’s eye still saw the marble dynamically taking form as the skilled artist pro-tensively imagined the finished form, but also modifying the image of that imagination as he retro-tended a vast array of tacit intimations suggesting both the possibilities and the limitations of the material with which he worked.

When I used to speculate on matters of this sort, I’d usually end up sending Bill a write-up of my reflections, to get his always-ready reactions, sometimes a few lines of my reflections provoking several pages of treasured response. Now I turn to those who sat far longer than did I in his seminars. I’ve found that I could always rely upon them, both to raise interesting questions of their own about the exciting thoughts of this enigmatic mind, and to provide an array of insightful responses. So, let us now turn to them, then to one who – along with other colleagues – found that, among peers, he was pretty much a “loner” – not even sharing his enigmas, and finally to one whose relationship to Bill was only as a reader – still an *appreciative* reader – of his works.

Notes on Contributors

Gus Breyspraak (gus.breyspraak@ottawa.edu) received his B.A. from Southwestern-at-Memphis (now Rhodes College), where he learned of Poteat from Jerry Gill, who encouraged him, as a Political Science major growing increasingly committed to Philosophy and Religion, to go on to Duke. There, as a Divinity student from 1967 to 1970, he took classes from Poteat, including graduate seminars from him during his final year in the Divinity School. Subsequently, as a graduate student from 1970 to 1973, he pursued further studies with Professor Poteat, served as his teaching assistant, took a preliminary exam in Religion and Culture, and wrote his dissertation under his guidance, finishing in December of 1973. Gus then taught in Duke’s Department of Religion, which Poteat chaired from 1973 to 1976, and even then continued to attend some of Poteat’s seminars. Since leaving Duke, Gus has been on the faculty of Ottawa University in Kansas City, Kansas, where he currently serves as Director of Graduate Studies and Professor of Social Ethics.

Dale Cannon (cannodw@wou.edu) entered the graduate program in Philosophy at Duke University in Fall 1965. A year later, he transferred to Duke’s graduate program in Religion so that Professor Poteat could be his advisor. In Fall 1967, he began his dissertation research in areas relating to both Religion and Philosophy including Poteat’s field of Religion and Culture. He left Duke in Fall 1968 for a teaching position at Skidmore College while completing his dissertation, which he successfully defended in June 1969. A year later, he taught at the University of Virginia. He is currently Professor Emeritus at Western Oregon University, where he taught philosophy and religious studies. He is on the Board of Directors of the Polanyi Society. His articles have appeared in numerous journals, including the *International Philosophical Quarterly*, *PRE/TEXT*, *Tradition & Discovery*, *The Personalist Forum*, *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, *Polanyiana*, *Appraisal*, and *Buddhist-Christian Studies*.

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