

Michael and Paulus: A Dynamic Uncoordinated Duo

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ABSTRACT Key words: Key terms, Polanyi, Tillich, their Berkeley dialogue of 1963, theology of culture, scientism, faith, belief, role of personal freedom in cognition, Gestalt epistemology, fundamentalism, objectivism. *Polanyi's and Tillich's unique dialogue of February 1963 is systematically exegeted, its provenance and aftermath traced and its disappointing but challenging outcome inventoried. Mutual lack of preparation flawed the Berkeley meeting along with Tillich's severe preoccupation. Polanyi had valued Tillich's basic theology but never delved into the latter's important conceptualization of science, wherein Polanyi's own concerns are significantly broached. Tillich had barely heard of Polanyi, while under the surface was wide disparity in the meaning of faith. Afterwards, having meaninglessly blandished, they ignored each other, though the late Tillich espoused freedom in faith in a way that would have opened him to Polanyi's help and the latter desiderated a panentheistic endorsement of human creativity as part of his Pauline envisagement of satisfying and open ended faith—which was just what Tillich became intent upon in the denouement of his system. Destined lovers who tragically fail to connect, they leave their respective societies with a truly proactive heritage, since the cultural crisis they combatted has if anything worsened.*

1. Polanyi and Tillich are congruent *and* divergent heroes in modernity's ongoing struggle for meaning, especially with a Christian twist. They are indeed a dynamic duo but never gelled as they might, which challenges us, the Tillich and Polanyi Societies, with unfinished business. Born five years apart, Tillich first in 1886, they share bourgeois middle Europe in harrowing transition from 19th Century progressivism through scientific upheaval, social convulsion, and Nazi barbarism, under threat of which the targeted Jew and the distrusted academic (first to meet decades later) emigrate to England and America. Both devote serious attention to socialism, but come to eschew Marx as well as Soviet oppression. In Eliot's postwar wasteland they join—philosopher-scientist and philosopher-theologian — the insurgency of humanist existentialism against objectivist scientism, as titanic new ethnic and global energies start to seethe. From early on, Tillich the Christian strikingly appreciates Judaism, while Polanyi the Jew receives baptism and saliently intones Christian faith (which may be the reason Jewish thought stays cool to him). In 1914 our duo enter the military of the Central Powers, as chaplain and medic respectively. Ailing, discharged early, they return to their research. Tillich, the burgeoning Berlin Privatdozent, startles his profession with the “Idea of a Theology of Culture,” 1919, just as Polanyi receives a PhD and emigrates from Hungary, a promising new hands-on talent in German physical chemistry. He corresponds with Einstein and will awaken thoughts of a Nobel, yet feels increasing pan-disciplinary duty to “Science and Society.” It becomes his transcendental “calling” to restore the humanity of knowledge and reinsure the significance of culture.

2. In 1923, Tillich publishes a system of all the Wissenschaften. Three years later his “Religious Situation” critiques every cultural domain as enthralled by “self-sufficient finitude” through which however the Transcendent is perceived to break anew. This book classically models theology of culture until (arguably) upstaged by a more provocative work, Polanyi's Gifford Lectures of 1951-52 (—i.e., “upstaged” substantively though Polanyi never appropriates Tillich's *idea* of such a theology). Tillich meanwhile mainly addresses church theology, the counterpart to that of culture. In the same year as Part One of *Personal Knowledge* (as lectures), there emerges Volume One of the *Systematics*. Each magnum opus, Tillich's *ST* and Polanyi's *PK*, aims to

overcome malignant loss of meaning in modern life. For Polanyi the problem's core is the ideal of impersonal detachment pervading science and epistemology, typified by Laplace in the 18th Century and Skinner now. There results from this ideal of positivist objectivism—which Polanyi rebuts as untenable—not only undermining of ethics and religion but also conceptual abolition of the free person and free society. Tillich's overlapping diagnosis of the human predicament (elaborately rethinking original sin) is much more complex but has come by 1951 to include a critique of that controlling knowledge which denies pervasive participation of the subject and reduces the human to manipulable objectivity. The stage is set for our duo to meet, and Richard Gelwick gets Charles McCoy to arrange this in Berkeley during Tillich's Earl Lectures of February, 1963.

3. To use Polanyian parlance, there are several documentary sources that crucially comprise the subsidiary matrix converging to the "Berkeley Dialogue" at the Claremont Hotel, which lasts about an hour and a half on the evening of February 21. [The hotel is not actually in Berkeley, but just over the Oakland line.] It seems pertinent to recall that in *Personal Knowledge* five years earlier, Polanyi had named Tillich his favored theologian [pp. 280, 283n.], citing from *Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality* and *ST I* the coupling of doubt and faith and critique of fundamentalism. More recently, he was troubled in reading *Dynamics of Faith* [1958] by Tillich's separate dimensions strategy for avoiding conflict between science and faith. Hereto see Polanyi's article "Science and Religion: Separate Dimensions or Common Ground?" in *Philosophy Today*, VII, (Spring, 1963) 4-16, written right after the Berkeley encounter. Contrary to Tillich, Polanyi affirms (p. 4) his own belief that our knowledge of nature has a bearing on our religious beliefs; that, indeed, some aspects of nature offer us a common ground with religion. [Bob Russell, on our panel, will recall how such a belief later moved some of us in Berkeley to found under his lead the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences.] Here indeed is one of the BIG issues between Polanyi and Tillich., but it was left very much unpacked on February 21. For what actually transpired that night between them, the most essential record is Richard Gelwick's 1995 article in *Tradition and Discovery* XXII, 1, which includes Polanyi's four and a half page summary of the conversation. Regretfully, there is no resume by Tillich, though some weeks later in two letters to Polanyi [included in Gelwick, op. cit.] he is pleased by how much they agree and notably with Polanyi's assertion that Tillich has fought for the purification of faith from religious dogmatism while Polanyi supplemented this by purifying truth from scientific dogmatism. Tillich adds that Polanyi has excellently shown the continuity between the different types of knowledge and then in the second letter identifies the essay to which he refers Polanyi in the conversation as "Participation and Knowledge: Problems of an Ontology of Cognition," his contribution to the festschrift, *Max Horkheimer zum 60. Geburtstag* published in *Sociologica*, pp. 201-9, hrsg. Adorno and Dirks, Frankfurt a.M., 1955, bound in *Frankfurter Beitrage zur Soziologie*, Bd. 1. [This essay was prior to the 2007 Polanyi Society annual meeting put on the website as the most axial subsidiary clue to the interface from Tillich's side.] With these sources I would further place the second of Tillich's Earl Lectures, "The Nature of Present Day Thought: Its Strangeness to Traditional Christianity" [available in the published lectures, *The Irrelevance and the Relevance of the Christian Message*, Pilgrim Press, 1996, pp. 23-41]. Polanyi heard Tillich deliver this lecture just prior to their conversation, but did not (I understand from Richard Gelwick) attend any other of Tillich's formal presentations that week—including the Wednesday afternoon lecture at UCB on "Science, Philosophy and Religion," which (from a remark attributed to him in Polanyi's summary) Tillich might be taken to assume Polanyi did hear. [I cannot, by the way, locate any extant text of this lecture.] Finally, as to salient documents bearing on the Claremont Hotel encounter, it seems pertinent to cite Tillich's statements in his letter to Polanyi of May 23, 1963 [Gelwick, op. cit.] that he first envisaged an epistemological hierarchy of involvement and detachment when he wrote *System der Wissenschaften* (1923) and that he has carried it through rather fully in the forthcoming third volume of the ST. This clearly implies that an assessment of where Tillich stood and came to stand vis-à-vis the Polanyian epistemological project calls for a close look also at both those works.

4. However, the first document of interest in our case to examine is doubtless Tillich's essay "Participation and Knowledge," regarding which he makes his most meaty intervention during the Berkeley conversation and then follows up in the second letter to Polanyi with bibliographic data and the promise of help if needed in finding the piece. The *Frankfurter Beiträge* were in fact hard to access, and I understand Polanyi never did get to read what Rob James calls Tillich's little gem of epistemology. [James' enthusiastic look at the essay in his *Tillich and World Religions*, (Mercer University Press, 2003), pp 55 ff., is very much worth consulting]. Ironically, Tillich could have given far simpler directions to the document. It was widely available (in a German translation of the original English) in Band VI of his *Gesammelte Werke*, 1961. Like Karl Barth, Paulus could not recall where to find all he had published! It is even more ironic, though, that the pith of what Tillich had to say epistemologically, so far as it bears on the Polanyi project of establishing personal participation in all cognitive domains, was already in *STI* when Polanyi consulted that volume, as he mentions in the *Philosophy Today* article referred to above. After citing there what he does not like in *Dynamics of Faith* (the separate dimensions strategy) Polanyi says the following in Footnote 1:

The present paper responds to this statement [from p. 81 of *DF*] and more directly to recent lectures [sic] at Berkeley in February, 1963. The following formulation that comes nearer my own position (to which my attention has been called) can be found in *Systematic Theology I* [which we recall was cited in *Personal Knowledge* as a favored theological source], p. 97: "The element of union and the element of detachment appear in different proportions in the different realms of knowledge. But there is no knowledge without the presence of both elements."

5. We find ourselves knee deep here in the question: How does Tillich's "Participation and Knowledge" of 1955 differ from the epistemology formulated in *STI*, 1951 (especially pp. 94-100, dealing with the cognitive function of existential reason)? One might presume there is variance, given the four year hiatus in publication—for Tillich's detailed conceptualization continuously mutated. But in this respect there is something that does not meet the eye, namely that Tillich's "PK" (not to be confused with Polanyi's!) originated precisely at the time *STI* was coming out. The impression given in Polanyi's summary of the Berkeley meeting (see Gelwick, op. cit.) that Tillich says he did the piece while still in Germany (i. e., before emigrating in 1933) is quite misleading; Tillich must have said something like "for a German publication." Peter John, to whose voluntary labors as emanuensis to Tillich (despite the latter's discouraging attitude) we are manifoldly indebted, has preserved a very early (and obviously not entire or ungarbled) version of the "PK" essay from its provenance in the spring of 1951. It seems in the late winter of that year it was Tillich's turn to give the paper for a club of philosophers who met monthly for dinner and discussion at Columbia University. Obviously, he drew from thematization in press for *STI* which would appear in May, no doubt using a compressed outline as was his wont. Soon thereafter (April 30) Peter John was among a group of students at a Tillich open house to whom Paulus presented a redaction of what he had shared with the group of philosophers, with their salient responses. True to form, Peter preserved a shorthand account showing many of the elements reformulated and polished a few years later for the Horkheimer festschrift.

6. While the the final version of Tillich's "PK" still largely coincides with *STI*, there is one new idea: a proposal in the third paragraph from the end as to how knowledge can include, besides the moment of separation, also the moment of union which transcends the subject-object structure. The key, he says, is temporal alternation.

It is the time difference between the moment of uniting participation and separating objectivation

which makes religious and—in some degree—all knowledge possible. This does not mean that a former participation is remembered and made an object of cognition. But it does mean that the moment is present in the cognitive moment and vice versa. Participation still persists in the moment of cognitive separation; the cognitive encounter includes moments of predominant participation, which I have called the perceptive moments, as well as moments of predominant separation, which I have called the cognitive moments. These alternate and establish in their totality a cognitive encounter. This is the situation in all realms, and it is the structure which makes religious knowledge possible. [*Main Works*, I, 389.]

Do we find anything like this elsewhere in Tillich? One has to think a moment, but then yes, we do, in *ST III*'s elucidation of the mystical element in a Protestant theology determined by faith.

The question which arises about faith and mysticism in Protestant theology is that of the compatibility and, even more, the interdependence of the two. They are compatible only if the one is an element of the other; two attitudes toward the ultimate could not exist beside each other if the one were not given with the other. This is the case in spite of all anti-mystical tendencies in Protestantism; there is no faith (but only belief) without the Spirit's grasping the personal center of him who is in the state of faith, and this is a mystical experience, an experience of the presence of the infinite within the finite. As an ecstatic experience, faith is mystical, although it does not produce mysticism as a religious type. The same is true from the other side. There is faith in mystical experience. [*ST III*, p. 242.]

Here Tillich desists from the "temporal alternation" floated in "PK." His thinking of "one within the other" suggests rather the "eschatological panentheism" affirmed at the very end of *ST III* (p. 423). However, temporal movement reappears when normative Protestant mysticism is described as "every serious prayer leading into contemplation" (*ST III*, p. 192). In contemplation, "the paradox of prayer is manifest, the identity and non-identity of him who prays and Him who is prayed to: God as Spirit" (ibid.). What is notable in the wrestling with these matters, in relation to Polanyi's epistemological project, is Tillich's evident awareness of a cognitive bifocality fusing—without being abolished—into a unity. One term is more participatory, the other more detached. At the much more primitive stage of "PK" preserved by Peter John [p. 3 of his transcription], Tillich gets into heated discussion with Prof. Hendel of Yale as to how cognition must participate in terms of the presence of sense impressions, otherwise we cannot have even controlling knowledge. I am sure Polanyi's ears would have pricked up at that! His tacit dimension theory compasses sensation far more thoroughly than does Tillich, but it is surprising how much the two of them, mutually unaware, fished in the same waters.

7. This pertains not only to cognition's sensory or "material" component but also to what Aristotle further taught Western philosophy to call the "formal" and the "final" aspects of any causative transaction. Note in Tillich's published "PK" what he dubs the "structural presuppositions of experience" [*Main Works*, p. 384]. "There is," he insists, despite the disputes over particular renditions of these—whether by Plato (the ideas), Kant (the categories), Husserl, Scheler, or whomever—"an irreducible though indefinite minimum" of such presuppositions in every cognitive encounter. They comprise a medium of inescapable participation of the subject in the object of knowledge and vice versa. Math and logic are of course in the front rank here, without which the "hardest" of the physical sciences would dissolve. Actually, from early on, Tillich is as aware of this as is Polanyi. We could certainly wish, at this precise apposition, that the latter would somehow have read the former's *System der Wissenschaften* of 1923! Beyond the "PK" text Peter John reports Tillich relating, at that

open house in 1951, that some of his philosophical acquaintances, apparently in the club that met monthly at Columbia, had urged him now to turn his creative powers, still at high tide, to a major work in epistemology. Having completed the arduous task of getting *ST I* into galley proofs, if he plowed on with the system he faced the controverted terrain of Christology and Pneumatology where he was less systematically *au courant*. Besides, he seems to have experienced a somewhat galling frustration in not having secured yet better underpinnings in the philosophy of cognition, where he once scintillated prodigiously. Hence the somber remark of Paulus remembered by Sarah Terrien: "I will be damned for my mystical theory of knowledge." Tillich asked the students in his home that evening, says Peter, after they heard the resume of "PK," what *they* thought he should do. It was a typical gesture of the theological giant. But the seminary middlers, of course, were way out beyond their depth. Providence decreed, if partly by default, that the *magnum opus* should be completed. Maybe it was, as some thought might be true of Barth's *Kirkliche Dogmatik*, that the Lord God could not bear to miss the denouement of such magisterial constructs. In Tillich's case at least here on earth most would rejoice that the ST got finished. Yet who can doubt who has read both Tillich and Polanyi that, in epistemology and the whole gamut of culture as well, something still profoundly needed could have commenced to flower had the one's immense gift for theophilosophical conceptualizing somehow melded with the other's prophetic genius in empirical scientific and cultural diagnostics. Suppose after that April evening Peter John was privy to, Paulus had tabled the ST and gone to Britain to hear Polanyi deliver the Gifford Lectures. Suppose Michael, settling in Berlin to do science at the Faber Institute in the '20s, had also walked blocks away to the Kant Gesellschaft and let his irrepressible mind ingest disparate yet dynamically pairable Tillichian stem cells? Dream on, ye fatuous! Or maybe get busy, for the need—*our* cultural crisis, darkened by deadly feud with fanaticism—is no less ominous.

8. But we've gotten ahead of ourselves. Because it is so important also to Polanyi, I want to bring out Tillich's emphatic recognition for *all* knowledge of the determining valuational Gestalt. In society as well as the individual or the research team, knowing is always established and sustained, expanded or corrected, within a contextualizing tradition. Meaning, devolving from ultimate valuation and commitment, shapes the whole matrix within which physics as much if not more than theology transpires. This is the zone of the Aristotelean "final" or teleological cause, which, as modernity unfolds, Francis Bacon and Galileo, unknowingly preparing for Laplace and Skinner, will bracket for untrammelled study of nature. Polanyi as physical chemist (*ipso facto* becoming philosopher too) blows here a shrill whistle and engages the now humongous phalanx of purposeless objectivism in no-holds-barred dissent. After much earlier lightning flashes, this begins to happen programmatically, I take it, by the time he writes the lectures for *Science, Faith and Society*, 1946. [Cf. Moleski/Scott, *Michael Polanyi*, 2005, pp. 200, 258, 100, 154, *passim*] It gains a grand if sprawling fruition, of course, in the Gifford Lectures, 1951-2. Tillich's contemporaneous *ST I*, wherein Polanyi found salient points of agreement, contains upfront the following pregnant passages.

In every assumedly scientific theology there is a point where individual experience, traditional valuation, and personal commitment must decide the issue.... If an inductive approach is employed, one must ask in what direction the writer looks for his material. And if the answer is that he looks in every direction and toward every experience, one must ask what characteristic of reality or experience is the empirical basis of his theology. Whatever the answer may be, an a priori of experience and valuation is implied. ... In both the empirical and metaphysical approaches, it can be observed that the a priori which directs the induction and the deduction is a type of mystical experience. Whether it is 'being-itself' (Scholastics) or the 'universal substance' (Spinoza), whether it is 'beyond subjectivity and objectivity' (James), or the 'identity of spirit and nature' (Schelling), whether it is 'universe' (Schleiermacher) or 'cosmic

whole' (Hocking), whether it is 'value creating process' (Whitehead) or 'progressive integration' (Wieman), whether it is 'absolute spirit' (Hegel) or 'cosmic person' (Brightman)—each of these concepts is based on an immediate experience of something ultimate in value and being of which one can become intuitively aware [pp. 8-9].

9. In these passages, Tillich is talking focally about religion and theology, but it is clear what he says intends to apply to cognition generally. He repeats this in the "PK" essay. When did he begin to think this way? Here let me cite from *System der Wissenschaften* thematization which is the obvious preformation of what was just quoted from ST I three decades later: "*Erkannt ist, was als notwendiges Glied einem Zusammenhang eingeordnet ist*" [Main Works, p. 115]. (Known is what is categorized as a necessary part of a context). The necessary *Zusammenhang*, if it too shall belong to knowledge, must finally fit into an all embracing system, and

"Die lebendige Kraft eines Systems ist sein Gehalt, sein schöpferisches Standpunkt, seine Urintuition. Jedes System lebt von dem Prinzip, auf das es gegründet und mit dem es erbaut ist. Jedes letzte Prinzip aber ist der Ausdruck einer letzten Wirklichkeitsschau, einer grundlegenden Lebenshaltung. So bricht durch das Formalsystem der Wissenschaften in jedem Augenblick ein Gehalt hindurch, der metaphysisch ist, d.h. der jenseits jeder einzelnen Form und aller Formen liegt, und darum nie nach Art einer falschen Metaphysik selbst eine Form neben anderen sein kann. Das Metaphysische ist der lebendige Kraft, der Sinn und das Blut des Systems [p. 118]. (The vital force of a system is its meaningful import, its creative standpoint, its primal intuition. Every system lives from the principle on which it is grounded and with which it is constructed. Every ultimate system however is the expression of an ultimate view of reality, a grounding attitude toward life. Thus in every moment there breaks through the formal system of the sciences a meaningful import that is metaphysical, i.e. that lies beyond every individual form and all forms, and therefore never can itself be in the manner of a false metaphysic a form alongside others. The metaphysical substance is the vital force, the meaning and blood of the system.).

By no means had Tillich always so envisaged the basic layout of knowledge. In this frenetically creative phase of his maturation, spurred by favorable attention from Ernst Troeltsch, conceptual breakthroughs were attaining warp speed. Only four years earlier, in the thunderclap that first gained him wide attention, he opened his lecture "On the Idea of a Theology of Culture" by *contrasting* the "empirical sciences" with the "systematic sciences of culture" in just the way Polanyi would later indict as nefariously deceptive. "*In der Erfahrungswissenschaften*" (In the sciences of experience), avers the opening sentence of that lecture, "*ist der Standpunkt etwas, das ueberwunden werden muss,*" (the standpoint is something which must be overcome) whereas, continues the next paragraph, "*in den systematischen Kulturwissenschaften gehoert der Standpunkt des Systematikers zur Sache selbst*" [Main Works 2, p. 70] (in the systematic sciences of culture ... the standpoint of the systematizer belongs to the matter itself). In other words, at this point Tillich was quite aware that *both* participation and detachment were integral to (what he later mainly calls) the *Geisteswissenschaften*, but he does not yet see what Polanyi would become particularly concerned to drive home, viz., that participation (or indwelling, or a matrix of personal/subjective presuppositions) is pervasively involved also in the natural (also dubbed empirical) sciences, including the so-called "hardest" of them. However, the text of *Das System der Wissenschaften* shows that Tillich just four years later had wised up—at least to some extent—to what was to be the Polanyian insight. This is further confirmed in Tillich's Marburg *Dogmatics* of 1925, which he sometimes spoke of as the ST's beginning. [Cf. *Dogmatik*, ed. W. Schuessler, pp. 100, 238, *passim*. "*Bei naeherem Zusehen ergibt sich... dass*

diese drei Gruppen (the mathematical, empirical, and geisteswissenschaftlich sciences) *gar nicht so radikal geschieden sind, dass jedes Element in jeder mehr oder weniger vertreten ist*" [p. 100] (On closer inspection it emerges ...that these three groups (xxxxx) are indeed not so radically separated and that every element is more or less represented in each). It is also fully reflected in *The Religious Situation's* overview of science [*Die religioese Lage der Gegenwart*, 1926, trans. 1930].

10. Polanyi's summary of the Berkeley dialogue shows *he* is emphatically unsatisfied with Tillich's attempt to envisage participation also in the natural sciences. [Cf. Gelwick's article referenced above.] But how well has he understood Tillich's attempt? I don't see how we can ever know, but *prima facie* he seems to misrepresent Tillich in the opening assertion that "The method of absolute detachment you [PT] ascribe to science in contrasting it with philosophy and religion is a method which scientists falsely ascribe to themselves." [If Gelwick is right that Polanyi did not attend the afternoon lecture at UCB on Science, Philosophy and Religion, then Tillich must have lent him the text before the dialogue commenced. I have already noted I cannot now discover anything about this text—even whether it existed; it seems if it had it would be in the Harvard archives]. But can we believe that at UCB that afternoon, before what was said to be the largest audience ever to crowd the gym, Tillich would have diverged drastically from what had been for decades his standing view? Well, he did in public presentations sometimes foreshorten his complex positions, and there are many oddities in what has come down to us about the whole affair. Why, for example, would Tillich parry Polanyi's opening thrust the way he does—i.e., by reminding that his lecture had also noted the wider responsibility of scientists for our shared world—if the lecture had more relevantly addressed Polanyi's pivotal concern. Polanyi's following intervention justifiably dismisses Tillich's riposte as irrelevantly adducing a "dual function" (the social responsibility of scientists). Of course, we must not forget we are enclosed here within Polanyi's notes; which hardly can accurately embody all Tillich said. The plain truth is we never can precisely know what went back and forth that evening between our dynamic duo, but it is incontestably about as uncoordinated as one can get.

11. It is disappointing that Tillich knows nothing about Polanyi. Further, it is hard to avoid concluding, in spite of epistolary courtesy, that he also failed to learn anything from the interface. Renate Albrecht had reason for not mentioning Polanyi among the many "Encounters" of Tillich she records in Volume XII of the *Gesammelte Werke* [*Begegnungen*, 1971]. The Paucks similarly did not regard anything that happened in Berkeley in 1963 as deserving notice in their account of Paulus's life [*Paul Tillich*, I, 1975]. *ST III*, when it appears the following summer, does show passages we might argue are tintured Polanyianly, except for knowing they were in press when our heroes met—and that, as seen, propitious Tillichian soil for them existed earlier. Tillich never did become privy to Polanyi's courageous and brilliant expeditions in the infrastructure of empirical science. He never grasped, or even confronted in its prime thrust, the theory spelled out in *The Tacit Dimension*. Nor could Tillich assimilate Polanyi's completely unintimidated attitude of bearding practitioners of science in their own den. He felt keenly his lack of credentials—which Polanyi had—to debunk scientific dogmatism at the laboratory level. Besides, Tillich, especially as he aged, was almost overly "nice," close sometimes to being unctious. Note him saying (in Polanyi's resume) that when philosophers like Nagel "would accept none" of the "PK" essay's inclusion of participation in every branch of knowledge, he "did not dare to pursue it further." Even though what he states here (i. e., what Polanyi says he states) is rather misleading, since he had long previously held and kept right on holding there is participation in all knowledge, the utterance is *attitudinally* true to Tillich. It resonates completely with his deference vis-à-vis Martin Buber, Hans Reichenbach and others when they visited Union during my student days there. [I think what Tillich must actually have said to Polanyi is illumined by Peter John's report from the open house (cf. supra). After the presentation of "PK" at UCB in early 1951, some friends of Tillich urged him to shelve the ST and undertake a major work in epistemology, but Ernest Nagel, who had

great prestige around NYC and certainly with Tillich, advised against it. Though a stringent positivist, Nagel fraternized genially with Rabbi Louis Finkelstein and others in the local theological community.]

12. How could Tillich be so nescient of Polanyi prior to the meeting? Was not this the Paulus justly famous since the twenties for an almost too watchful eye on contemporary culture, especially philosophy, with which to “correlate” his theological work? Yes, but it seems even would-be polymaths can overbook. For one thing, Tillich’s speed in English never matched what it was in German; he concentrated on learning to write. Meanwhile a spate of invitations had pulled from every direction since *Time*’s cover (ca. 1950) christened him “Mr. Theology.” But for the last years pressing anxiety to complete the system overhung everything, as his angina pectoris worsened. He *did* for that matter read valiantly—Heidegger, Whitehead, Hartshorne, recently Teilhard, even novels like *1984*, *de rigueur* scholarly papers for meetings and dissertations, always trying as well to scrawl a personal word on the term papers his assistants graded. On the other hand, for whatever reasons, at Union in the mid fifties Polanyi’s work was hardly known by anyone. Before I left in 53, the only sounding of his name I ever heard was by Aristotle expert Richard McKeon of Chicago. He had to spell it as he told Rabbi Finkelstein and his steering committee of the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion of this “Hungarian scientist now living in Britain” who argued Aristotle’s *pistis* (in the *Prior Analytics*) was a skeleton in the closet of modern natural science. Some at Union would have picked up on a possible relation to the *credo ut intelligam* of medieval Christian theology, but Tillich was not one of those. I don’t know when he may first have heard of Polanyi, but it was relatively late, after becoming preoccupied with *ST II* and *III* and all the folderol of moving to Harvard and then Chicago. Then, following the Berkeley dialogue, Tillich had but a short time to live. He returned to Chicago absorbed in his history of religions teamwork with Mircea Eliade, worried at East Hampton about glitches in the English text of *ST III* as he tried to oversee its German translation, kept frenetically responding to multifarious initiatives, including a post at New York’s School of Social Research, and barely mustered strength for that notable swan song lecture in Chicago. There was just no chance to mull over Polanyi. Among my puzzlements about the tangled skein of how come and what if is why the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion did not seek out Polanyi, as his interests and qualifications were very much in their ball park. From about 1940 they had a cosmopolitan program going annually in New York to which he could have spoken very incisively, and then a much more receptive Tillich would perforce have become aware of him. Did the animus toward Polanyi (in British analytic philosophy, e.g), or his endorsing Jewish *assimilation*, also poison more distant waters? [Even today one notices, in the quite recent *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, edited by Ted Honderich, there is (for all the hundreds of modern trivia) no entry at all for Polanyi.]

13. All the initiative for and in the Berkeley encounter was taken by Polanyi. He had been significantly impressed by Tillich’s writing for at least a decade. But, that being the case, why is *he* as unsteeped as it seems he is in the complexity of Tillich’s thought? Polanyi was a phenomenally omnivorous reader. Why would he not have digested, if not earlier then down at Stanford where he was spending the semester, Tillich’s treatise on the sciences? [I happen to know it was in the library there.] Even closer in, why would he not have carefully reread *ST I*, which he praised in his Gifford Lectures? During or after the encounter, he tells us in the *Philosophy Today* article, someone had to call his attention to the passage from that volume which he acknowledges is closer to his own position. There are in fact lots of passages in the volume that resonate quite deeply with Polanyi’s concern and “calling.” Here is one further example (from *ST I*, pp. 98-9):

Most cognitive distortions are rooted in a disregard of the polarity which is in cognitive reason. This disregard is not simply an avoidable mistake; it is a genuine conflict under the conditions of existence. One side of this conflict is the tension between dogmatism and criticism within

social groups. But there are other sides to it. Controlling knowledge claims control of every level of reality. Life, spirit, personality, community, meanings, values, even one's ultimate concern, should be treated in terms of detachment, analysis, calculation, technical use. The power behind this claim is the preciseness, verifiability, the public approachability of controlling knowledge, and, above all, the tremendous success of its application to certain levels of reality. It is impossible to disregard or even to restrain this claim. [The last clause here is NOT acceptable to Polanyi, and yet the resistance and frustration he experiences in pursuit of his "calling" exemplify its truth—or let me rather say its partial truth. For Tillich himself is pursuing the same calling—and so are others like Karl Jaspers and Buber, and the cause has never been altogether lost.] The public mind is so impregnated with its methodological demands and astonishing results that every cognitive attempt in which reception and union are presupposed encounters utter distrust. [Shall we here call Prof. Nagel to the stand?] A consequence of this attitude is a rapid decay of spiritual (not only of the Spiritual) life, an estrangement from nature, and, most dangerous of all, a dealing with human beings as with things. In psychology and sociology, in medicine and philosophy, man has been dissolved into elements out of which he is composed and which determine him. Treasures of empirical knowledge have been produced in this way, and new research projects augment those treasures daily. But man has been lost in this enterprise. That which can be known only by participation and union, that which is the object of receiving knowledge, is disregarded. Man actually has become what controlling knowledge considers him to be, a thing among things, a cog in the dominating machine of production and consumption, a dehumanized object of tyranny or a normalized object of public communications. Cognitive dehumanization has produced actual dehumanization.

This is vintage Tillichian theology of culture. Polanyi's distinct and original voice harmonizes well with it, and we can be gratified and hopeful in the power of their modulated consonance. But any actual duet to come forth from our duo is one we shall need ourselves to arrange.

14. Alas, these two "kings of high C" never get to sing together. When they meet in Berkeley, why does Polanyi [once again if we follow his resume, our sole definitive source, unless Richard Gelwick will correct it] so aggressively pin Tillich to the wall with *his* summation of the latter's position? And then follow with a staccato recital of his own views? Why not ask Tillich whether he has him right? Polanyi's impatience does show a throbbing earnestness we cannot but salute. On to the *Sache selbst!* Still, might we not have expected more scrupulous prior review of his favored religious thinker? And why no reference at least to the Earl Lecture given just several minutes before, which Polanyi came to hear, and in which Tillich had indicted "Skinnerism's" turning persons into things as the current extreme of "calculating reason" run amok [*Irrelevance*, pp. 25, 31, *passim*]? Focus on this point alone would show the inadequacy of casting Tillich simply as the seminary teacher countering fundamentalism, vastly important as that is. True, Paulus seems to acquiesce in this settlement with Polanyi, like a harried business man "agreeing quickly with the adversary" so as to get on with his main agenda. But there are bones to pick that Wednesday evening that are still far from ever having been stripped clean. One we already noted is that Tillich does not perceive how manifoldly and thoroughly the empirical sciences in their experimental infrastructure and their existential underbracing and control *depend tacitly upon a fiduciary matrix* of social and personal preconditions. On the other hand, he is awed by the achievements of science while being unexposed to the sweaty disconnects and seat-of-one's-pants guesswork that Polanyi knew all too well. Of course even more than Tillich, Polanyi also reveres science, but he can and does loudly sound the note as well

that in monotone was projected by the book *Science is a Sacred Cow* [by Anthony Standen, 1950]. That was a kind of book Paulus tended to deprecate.

15. Unaware of the weight of Polanyi's scholarship, Tillich could have gotten the impression his interlocutor was too exercised, not to say obsessed, by his pivotal insight, however correct and important it doubtless was. We have no objectively intended utterance to the point from Paulus; the courteous blandishments can hardly count. Certainly he would have deemed it too simple to ascribe our universal human malaise *only* to the false ideal of objectivity, since for him the human predicament was compounded transcendently of unfaith, hubris and concupiscence—this being our fallenness or sinfulness—continuously issuing in more concrete configurations and specific actions of estrangement. Not that Polanyi really was so tunnel-visioned! The grounding and range we know from *Personal Knowledge*—as well as (post-Tillich) *Meaning* with its incisive addressal of the whole scope of culture—would have doubtless evoked even in a preoccupied Paulus much more hermeneutic alacrity. It is a shame to have to say the Claremont Hotel dialogue of our dynamic duo was largely a reciprocal fizzle, and yet for Polanyi too it seems to have pretty well finished turning him off to Tillich, with whom once he had been coming on so strongly. I can find no subsequent expression of interest in Paulus other than the *Philosophy Today* article which is mainly predicated on Polanyi's disenchantment with *Dynamics of Faith*, published in 1958. His disillusion—re his own cutting edge—probably began whenever it was he perused that work. His deep respect for the “upper story” of Tillich's theology apparently stayed in place, even while he pigeonholed Paulus off to the side of the axial quarrel with science. In any case animadversion to the “separate dimensions” strategy [cf. Par. 3 above] for mutually pacifying religion and science seems in Berkeley to have gone on engrossing his attention in a practical parallel to Tillich's overloaded agenda. He likewise does not appear to have learned anything new about his interlocutor by coming up from Stanford that day, *or* later—settling instead for the rhetorical concord of his tackling scientific false consciousness and Tillich religious fundamentalism. This is all the further borne out if Richard Gelwick is correct that Polanyi never did get around to looking up the Horkheimer festschrift essay. But for me the principal earnest of it is the fact that, in *Meaning* crucially, the theophilosophical work in which Polanyi has latterly become interested is that of emergent evolution and Whitehead. There are sanguine reasons why he would have, as we shall see below. But, as he obviously did not realize, there was much more in Tillich too that might have creatively boosted the project to which he was called.

16. In the resume, after Polanyi presents his position, Tillich inquires, “Is this view based on Gestalt psychology?” Far from just making apt conversation, as it might appear, the specificity of the question is loaded with residual Tillichiana. In *System der Wissenschaften*, Paulus had proposed Gestalt psychology as the pivot to overcoming the stultifying conflict of methods especially within the “sciences of being” vis-à-vis the “sciences of thought.” It seems worth our while to adduce here further the flavor and stringency packed into this 1923 volume which I continue so much to wish our same-year Hungarian immigrant to Berlin had somehow managed to ingest—or, indeed, even more, *emulate* with a comparable “Systematik” of the sciences. Tillich was not out simply to arrange concepts but was intent on solving live problems:

Nachdem im Vorhergehenden die seinswissenschaftliche Systematik positiv begründet ist, moege ein Blick auf den Stand der Debatte zeigen, dass unsere Auffassung im Stande ist, die aktuellen Probleme zu loesen. Es ringen gegenwaertig miteinander eine methodische und eine gegenstaendliche Richtung. Die methodische Richtung, die mit erkenntnistheoretischem Idealismus verbunden ist, teilt die Wissenschaft ein in *Natur- und Kulturwissenschaften*. Die gegenstaendliche, *erkenntnistheoretische* realistische, teilt ein in *Natur- und*

Geisteswissenschaften. Fuer die erste *Richtung* gehoert die Psychologie zu den Naturwissenschaften, da sie methodisch wie diese, naemlich generalisierend verfaehrt. Fuer die zweite Richtung ist die Psychologie Grundlage der Geisteswissenschaften, da sie mit ihnen den gleichen Gegenstand, das geistige Leben bearbeitet. Die Stellung der Psychologie ist also das Kriterium beider Richtungen. Dadurch gewinnt dieser anscheinend so formalistischer Streit eine hoechst reale Bedeutung. In ihm entscheidet sich das Schicksal der Geisteswissenschaften, die Auffassung des Geistes und der Kultur. Ist die Psychologie grundlegende Geisteswissenschaft, so verliert der Geist seinen individuell einmaligen Charakter, er wird aus einer schoepferischen Folge zu einem Strukturgesetz; das Denken zerstoert das Sein, die rationale Form siegt ueber den Widerspruch des irrationalen Gehaltes. Dem entgeht die methodische Richtung, aber sie selbst leidet an zahlreichen Maengeln. Sie unterscheidet nicht die seinswissenschaftliche Historie von den reinen systematischen Geisteswissenschaften und treibt diese gleichfalls zu einer rationalistischen Auffassung, in welcher der schoepferischer Charakter des Geistigen verloren geht. Sie wird aber auch dem Einwand nicht gerecht, den die gegenstaendliche Methode erhebt, dass Psychologie etwas anderes ist als physikalische Naturwissenschaft; sie kann es nicht, denn sie uebersieht das zentrale Gebiet der Gestalt-Wissenschaften, in deren Mitte die Psychologie steht. Sie ist endlich unfaehig, den historischen Elementen in der physikalischen und organischen Gruppe gerecht zu werden, da sie die historische Methode auf die Kulturwissenschaften einschraenkt und den Unterschied von autogenen und heterogenen Methoden nicht kennt. Die Wirklichkeit ist reicher, als dass sich zwei Methoden in sie teilen koennten und gerade die Methode der Gestalten, die im Streit um der Methoden vergessen wurde, ist die eigentlich zentrale und konkrete Methode: Die Methode, die der denkgeformten Wirklichkeit gemaess ist und die darum im Stande ist, das Problem der Methode zu loesen" [MW 1, p. 140]. (After grounding in the preceding the systematic of the sciences of being, a glance at the state of the debate may show our conception is capable of solving the current problems. Contending with each other temporarily are a methodological and an objective trend. The methodological trend, which is bound up with epistemological idealism, divides science into natural and cultural sciences. The objective, epistemologically realist trend makes the division between natural sciences and those of spirit. According to the first trend psychology belongs to the natural sciences since it proceeds methodologically as they do, namely generalizingly. For the second trend psychology is the basis of the sciences of spirit, since it works with the same object they do, the spiritual life. The placing of psychology is thus the criterion of both trends. Thereby this seemingly so formalistic conflict gains an extremely real significance. In it is decided the fate of the sciences of spirit, the way of conceiving spirit and culture. If psychology is the determinative science of the spirit, the spirit loses its individually unique character, from a creative emergence it becomes a structural law, thinking destroys being, the rational form triumphs over the irrational import. The methodological trend escapes the latter, but itself suffers numerous shortcomings. It does not distinguish the history of the sciences of being from the pure systematic sciences of the spirit and drives these likewise to a rationalistic conceptualization in which the creative character of the spirit is lost. It however also does not meet the protest raised by the objective method that psychology is something other than a physical natural science; it cannot do so, since it overlooks the central area of the Gestalt sciences, at the center of which psychology stands. Finally it is unable to do justice to the historical elements in the physical and organic groups, since it constricts the historical method

to the cultural sciences and does not recognize the difference between autogenic and heterogenic methods. Reality is too rich for two methods to divide it between themselves, and the Gestalt method, which is forgotten in the conflict of methods, is the authentically central and concrete method: the method which suits thought-formed actuality and therefore is able to solve the problem of method.)

His architectonic grounding, particularly in psychology, was ever a large resource in Tillich's ongoing career, reanchored in enduring friendships with the Gestalt neurophysiologist Kurt Goldstein and such psychotherapists as Harry Bone, Karen Horney and Rollo May. Fructifying insights devolved not only for depth psychology but also Paulus's fresh thinking in ST III regarding the wholeness and centeredness of personal life—thus fortifying him to stand up to B. F. Skinner during the Harvard professorship. An inestimable catalyst to the co-thinking he did in those very late years with Goldstein and others might have but sadly did not come from Michael, for whom similarly we may desiderate more helpful "think tank" context than he appears to have garnered from fellow scientists or philosophers (with the beneficent exception of Marjorie Grene, Bill Scott and a few others).

17. At the Claremont Hotel, Tillich's rich background goes untapped. Polanyi has started the bidding and remains completely in charge. When asked about Gestalt psychology, he acknowledges its initial significance for his "way of discovery" [to use Richard's fine phrase] but immediately conveys his severe disappointment with the tack taken by Wolfgang Koehler, the name most of us readily associate with the Gestalt movement. This could have opened the door for a truly basic Auseinandersetzung between our dialoguers, one with immense import for the Polanyi project and also for Tillich's theology. The crux of the issue is the causal role of purposive freedom in the cognitive process. In other words, we are propelled headlong here into the solar plexus of Aristotle's grammar of causality—the fourth or final (teleological) cause. Koehler's experiments with apes learning to join sticks to reach food had promisingly cued Polanyi toward his climactic insight into tacit knowing [cf. PK, Torchbook ed., pp. 340-1, *passim*]. In *Tacit Dimension*, the most succinct statement of his flagship theory, Michael favorably refers to Hans Driesch, noting that "Biologists who recognize the basic distinction between mechanistic and organismic processes consider living functions to be determined at all stages by a combination of a mechanism with organismic regulation." Note how close we are to the terrain of Tillich's ruminations in the long passage just cited [Par. 16] from *System der Wissenschaften*. "Gestalt psychologists," Polanyi continues, "have often suggested that the processes of regulation are akin to the shaping of perception, but their insistence that both perceptual shaping and biological regulation are but the result of physical equilibration brought this suggestion to a dead end" [Anchor Books, 1967, pp. 43-4]. Koehler, and in Polanyi's generalization the whole school, had capitulated to impersonal physical determinism. This is *not* how Tillich saw the situation in 1923 when he firmly held "jede Gestaltwirklichkeit ist eine Einheit von aequivalenter und produktiver Kausalitaet [ibid., 145] (every Gestalt actuality is a unity of equivalent and productive causality), *nor* does it cohere with the viewpoint of such neuroscientists as Goldstein, by whom Tillich felt aided and abetted in depicting human being as finite freedom. Maybe the general situation had by 1963 considerably worsened, with Crick and Watson, for instance, simply taking for granted that "religion was a mistake" or Stephen Weinberg announcing "the more we understand the universe the more meaningless it becomes." But whatever may have been happening in Gestalt theory—or later in Prigogine, Eccles, Wilber *et alii*—it is noteworthy that Polanyi and Tillich solidly agree the meaningful creativity of human personal and cultural life is urgently challenged by current science's reductionist causal determinism. They agree *de facto*, that is. Polanyi has no inkling of how much the preceding, or how surprisingly some of the very late, thinking of Tillich may agree with him.

18. There at the hotel, why doesn't Paulus just tell him? We already spoke to this, but more needs saying. Increasingly, as I go on reimagining the dialogue I poignantly regretted having to miss, I am very glad I wasn't there. Paulus was winded, done in from a grueling day of orating and interacting. He was set back on his heels by Michael's pent up steam. He was 75, with a heart condition. As someone who always spoke from notes his mind was juggling possible tacks to take on the morrow to round out the final Earl Lecture. Then, as Polanyi approaches the end of his concentrated allocution, he reasserts the fixed idea that Tillich completely acquiesces in the false ideal of strictly detached scientific knowledge. This was precisely the kind of point at which Paulus would always emit a sigh too deep for words and simply shut up. The only thing left to do was keep smiling and get some relevant reading into Michael's hands, as the followup letters attempt. Okay. But there is still more that *could* explain the muteness of Tillich if the foregoing were insufficient, and these not yet mentioned factors considerably thicken the plot left over for us, the Polanyi and Tillich societies, to untangle.

19. The first of these more subterranean items is the great disparity between the meaning of *faith* for Polanyi and its meaning for Tillich. At first blush, Polanyi's meaning is the more commonplace. It is more or less what Aristotle meant by *pistis* 2300 years ago; namely, a conviction that lacks certainty. A synonym for this meaning of faith is belief. [In German there is one word—"Glaube"—for the English pair, while "Ueberzeugung" ("conviction") also overlaps English use of "belief"] As Polanyi says in the next to last paragraph of his resume, "it is of the essence of knowledge to be held to be true by a man's mental effort." But this meaning of "faith" (which as here put could also be expressed as effortful *Fuerwahrhalten* in German) is exactly what Tillich tried strenuously to insist religious (and Christian) faith is NOT. *Dynamics of Faith* (on another but not unrelated aspect of which Polanyi had gotten hung up) from stem to stern tries to drive home an absolutely pivotal difference between belief (conviction lacking certainty about a matter of fact) and faith (being grasped by "God" or ultimate concern). Ironically, the smudging and even widespread modern obliteration of this difference sometimes seemed comparable in Tillichian diagnostics to the false ideal of detachment in Polanyian. For Paulus, as he says in his *magnum opus*, authentic faith is always and only "the state of being grasped by that toward which self-transcendence aspires, the ultimate in being and meaning" [*ST III*, p.131.]. Above [especially Par. 8] I compared to Polanyi's insight into faith being presupposed by science Tillich's long standing recognition of a "mystical a priori" in all systems of thought. But even though it creates a hermeneutical circle analogous to that of Christian theology, Tillich never calls this *a priori* faith. We also have seen throughout this discussion that subjective "participation" was ascribed in some degree by Paulus to all cognitive domains. But again he never calls this participation faith. Now there were around Union Seminary when I was there ('46-'53) various versions of the idea "that every worldview rests ultimately on a faith." Augustine's *nisi credideritis non intelligeris* or the medieval motto *credo ut intelligam* were cited in support, and it was taken to be an apologetic corollary of this truth that one might not need worry about critical attacks coming from alien faith systems—which meant in effect coming from anywhere, since there was really no neutral science ungrounded in a faith. I was reminded of this attitude some time ago in *Tradition and Discovery* by the slant of Evangelical Biblical Professor Esther Meek, who wanted to claim support from Michael Polanyi in not having to worry about radical criticism. There is a problem here to which we shall have to speak before concluding, but for the moment I want simply to bring out that Tillich was *not* among those who espoused this kind of apologetics. Several times in my hearing, he made clear his unhappiness with it. I hasten to add I personally feel he never cogently established mutual exclusion between faith and belief, even though it was axiomatic for some of his utmost theological concerns. It is no wonder so many, including his would-be friend Polanyi, have been incredulous or uneasy about Paulus' edict of total separation of faith from the "preliminary" findings of science. In any case, coming back to the Berkeley dialogue, the profound problematic that looms in and under their disparate notions of faith—

though Michael is quite unaware of it—would have been all too palpable to Paulus, and very understandably would have clinched his motivation at 10 P.M. or so to call it an evening.

20. Our interest, of course, is not chiefly in why Tillich (normally powerful in dialogue, as Richard says) clammed up that evening, but in the substantive issues inhering then and now in his face-off with Polanyi. Therefore we are impelled on from divergence of faith and belief to a therewith-entangled *aporia* that is if anything even more challenging through the whole history of theology and philosophy. *This is the role of freewill in cognition*. From Socrates to Scotus, Augustine to Arminius, Calvin to Kant, Jansenism to the Jesuits: it is all over the map and then some! Let me say for myself that Polanyi's handling of this enigma [epitomized, e.g., in *The Tacit Dimension*, Anchor Book ed., pp. 42-5] has been groundbreaking. I deem his envisagement of the emergent causality of purposive commitment to be the most significant element in what he calls the "from-to" sequence from a "fiduciary matrix" of subsidiary clues to the focality of accomplished knowing. It picks up in a fresh, empirically convincing way from Peirce, James and so many others a full parsing (which is impossible here) would require. As for Tillich, trying to discern how cognition, freedom and faith converge in the hemispheres of his cerebrum is indeed a formidable task. There is first the fact that Paulus is always amphibious, always "on the boundary" or going back and forth across it—the boundaries here being saliently those between science, philosophy and theology. But in addition to territorial adaptations there occur in Tillich major changes over time, and—*mirabile dictu*—one was just then underway as our duo sat together in the Claremont. To say the great systematizer was constantly evolving is heresy to some interpreters, though I salute it as a corroboration of his remarkable openness—one thing about him that never changed. From early on there is plenty in Tillich's utterances *re* science and philosophy wherewith to support a robust yet sensible doctrine of human freedom. Up to a point this is likewise true of his theology. As bearing on the human factor, in any dimension but the vertical, we have the deciding self-center. Then, in the dipolar structural ontology, dynamics, individuation and freedom are equally enfranchised with form, participation and destiny. Paulus would never have wanted to retract *System der Wissenschaften's* definition of freedom as "*das individuell Schoepferische*" [MW, p. 144] or that work's culminating mandate that "*Nur in der vollkommenen **Einheit von Theonomie und Autonomie** kommt die Wissenschaft, wie jeder sinnerfuellende Akt, zu ihrer Wahrheit*" [p. 262]. (Only in the perfect unity of theonomy and autonomy does science, like every act that fulfills meaning, arrive at its truth.) One can only conclude that a hefty *part* of his conceptual viscera could and did buy Michael's insight that willing commitment is integral to knowing the truth (with unavoidable risk of falling into error) But Michael construed this as what *faith* was about, and here Paulus had a massive block. In spite of his scientific, philosophical and humanological espousal of freedom, a prime taproot of his spiritual being *von Haus aus* [very literally when we think of "*Vaterchen*," his authoritarian dad] was the venerable Christian and especially Lutheran principle that "faith is not a human act" [ST II, p. 178] but rather entirely a work in us of divine grace. Tillich saw this as indispensable to St. Paul's "justification by faith alone" which Luther had made the "article by which the church stands or falls." In the Marburg *Dogmatik* [1925] Paulus went so far as to deny that even the humanity of Jesus contributes anything to our salvation. "*Das in Jesus Christus erchienene Heil ist allein durch sich selbst bedingt. Seine Wirkung ist unabaengig von jeder durch den Menschen geschaffenen Voraussetzung, sowohl vor wie nach seinem Durchbruch*" [p. 375]. (The salvation that has appeared in Jesus Christ is conditioned by itself alone. Its working is independent of any presupposition created by human beings, as well before as after its breakthrough.) This was his determined orientation over against any qualification by liberals like Brightman or Hartshorne. His celebrated message "You are Accepted" gained its force precisely through the "in spite of" of *our* total lack of a reciprocating condition. It was predicated indispensably—so one would have thought—on "the basic theological truth that in relation to God everything is by God" [ST III, p. 135].

21. Something strange, however, was going to happen shortly, and it must have been fermenting that night in Berkeley. When *ST III* appeared in the late summer of '63, there surfaced about 20 pages from its end the Tillichianly unprecedented motif of *essentialization*, which thereafter arguably dominates the denouement of Paulus's whole *magnum opus*. [Cf. my article "Tillich's Notion of Essentialization," in *Tillich-Studien* 3, ed. Hummel & Lax, 2000, pp. 365-83. I am still trying to pin down exactly when, how and why this novel epiphany in Tillich's text occurred. As of now it cannot be ruled out that the encounter with Polanyi was causally involved.] The word was borrowed from Schelling, but "essentialization" [German *Essentifikation*] was used by Tillich to express ontological fructification significant for God that is achieved by finitely free creatures. "The world process means something for God," he can now intone [almost as if proleptically privy to Polanyi's *Meaning*, pp. 162-3, written a decade after Paulus's death]. God "is not a separated, self-sufficient entity who, driven by a whim, creates what he wants and saves whom he wants. Rather, the eternal act of creation is driven by a love which finds fulfilment only through the other one who has the freedom to reject and to accept love" [*ST III*, p. 422]. It is this amplifying of his thinking—after prolonged jousting with process thought—that justifies Tillich finally dubbing it "eschatological panentheism" [op. cit., p. 421]. Charles Hartshorne noted the change [in Kegley, *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, rev., 1982, pp. 230-31], but the only Tillich scholar (of whom I am aware) to anticipate my own perception of a "radical reversal" in Paulus was Alex McKelway [in his 1964 overview *The Systematic Theology of Paul Tillich*, p. 244]. My point about the whole matter at this juncture is in the first instance merely that internal seismic rumblings around the issue of human "vertical freedom" (freedom toward God) may well help explain Tillich's somewhat unusual taciturnity at the Claremont Hotel dialogue—or should we almost say monologue? Be that as it may, the substantive importance of the issue in itself puts it on the overarching agenda of sorting out where the contacts and disconnects of our dynamic duo leave us today.

22. It is exceedingly interesting that Polanyi, continuing his aggressive reading in all cultural directions, had delved hungrily—by the time *Meaning* appeared—into Peirce, James and Whitehead, endorsing their "looser view of teleology" as a desirable alternative to what he had come to see as "the Good forcing itself" on everything else [*Meaning*, pp. 162-3]. This was a decade after Tillich's death, and it seems a shame Michael could not have known about "essentialization" bursting on stage at the very end of Paulus's concluding and to his own mind most authoritative testament, which the *ST* indisputably was. I have the impression that following their time together, except for the courtesy of two letters, Polanyi never read another line of Paulus. I greatly wish I had more access to Michael's candid reaction to the theological opportunities and occasions that had reached out to him through the '30s and '40s as well as thereafter. He seems [in the Scott/Moleski chronicle] to have keenly appreciated initially and then been rather frustrated by the British groups convened by J. H. Oldham. Was he disappointed by their Barthian ethos, which far less than Tillich was prepared to accord any theological significance to human enterprise? One thing is unmistakable: *Polanyi was unswervingly inspired by the sacredness of human freedom*, whereas Christian theology has no such consistent scoresheet. By 1966, in *The Tacit Dimension*, Michael is convinced modernity's dilemma cannot be resolved "by the enfeebled authority of revealed religion;" the reciprocating split between critical cynicism and moral fanaticism (which has hounded humanity since the Enlightenment) must first be healed on secular grounds [Anchor Book ed., p. 62]. Is this in part fall out from his Tillichian disillusion? I continue to ponder such imponderables. It is upbeat in any case that Michael, in a theological coda to his own swan song [*Meaning*, p. 215], manages to hit a surpassingly high note, or actually a chord, that is quite reminiscent of Reinhold Niebuhr and Tillich where they harmonized. Even before his Gifford Lectures, a *cantus firmus* for Polanyi had been the Pauline rendition of the Christian moral vision. His valedictory summation of this is as good theology as Reinie or Paulus ever wrote.

Perhaps it has been the clear moral call of Christianity that has left behind in us a distillation which causes us to burn with ... hunger and thirst after righteousness. If so, it should be possible for us to find in this same Christianity the antidote for [the] poison of moral perfectionism; for what this religion has also told us is that we are inescapably *imperfect* and that it is only by faith and trust in the all-encompassing grace of God that we can project ourselves into that supreme work of the imagination—the Kingdom of God—where we can dwell in peace and hope of the perfection which is God's alone and thus where we can, in a wholly inexplicable and transnatural way, find our hunger and thirst after righteousness satisfied at last—in the midst of all our imperfections. As Saint Paul tells us his God told him: 'I will not remove your infirmity. For my strength is made perfect in weakness.'

23. I like to think this poignant paragraph speaks for Polanyi himself, and yet it is not his very last word. He goes on to represent also the wider cultural *oikumene*, those who stand outside the Christian or any religious stance, affirming our world's need—which has meanwhile become all the more dire—for tolerance and mutual understanding “within the free society,” as in our common yet so differentiated humanity we seek universal truth [ibid., pp. 215-6]. Michael seems in fact to espouse this Christianly uncommitted stance, as though he is “on the boundary” and/or crossing over. We have here, of course, the unfathomable problem of how Harry Prosch's editing may have shaped the text. Even so I cannot believe it stretches things to see a parallel between Michael's farewell witness and that of Paulus, in his October '65 Chicago address on “The Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologian” [*The Future of Religions*, ed. J. Brauer, 1966, p. 94]. Tillich too remains “rooted in his own experiential foundation” which is Pauline Christianity, while urging upon all the endeavor to formulate our roots in “universally valid statements” with “openness to spiritual freedom both from one's own foundation and for one's own foundation.” Just a few months earlier, in his eulogy for Martin Buber, [GW, XII, pp. 320-3] precisely that commitment to openness had been identified as what Paulus would most hope to emulate in his own life. I argued in 2006, in a paper for the Tillich group in Washington, that in that eulogy it comes to light that Paulus' concept of sainthood is best of all fulfilled in Buber. I believe, however, that had Paulus known Polanyi better he might well have canonized him too. For all their missed connections, there winds up being an amazing compatibility between them.

24. Note, for instance, how Polanyi and Tillich both posit a double registry—a dipolarity—of the ultimate fulfilment of meaning. Despite their uncoordination, they both finally embrace fully the *indicative* of unconditional divine grace and the *imperative* of free human creativity summoned to serve beauty, truth and good in what Rilke calls “*die wunderbare Stadt der Zeit* (the wonderful city of time).” This corresponds to what Christianity names (perhaps nowadays too obsolescently) “justification” and (perhaps nowadays too moralistically) “sanctification.” The general history of religion mirrors variously the same problematic, and so (one can hardly not infer) does the human plight to which religion speaks. There is, on the one hand, a need for indiscriminating and absolute Divine help, and, on the other, a finite but still radical need for creative human effort *to be needed* and appreciated. In no theology has the integration of “grace and works” ever been completely or unparadoxically achieved, even while disputes about their relationship have instigated terrible religious hostility. I frankly think Polanyi could have helped Tillich as much or more than Kurt Goldstein on the dynamics *in faith too* of cognitive commitment, after Paulus at the last moment was ready for such help. Our duo also share a profound instinct with Karl Barth to “Let God be God”—to honor the unforespeakable Divine mystery, even in their mutual devotion to intense ratiocination. They affirm categorically the *symbolic* character of religious language. Surely Polanyi would agree with Tillich's mature insistence that the only non-symbolic statement we can make about God is that “everything we say about God is symbolic” [ST II, p. 9], even though,

like Buber, Michael has no taste for ontological language and the partially desymbolizing constructs (such as “being-itself” or “the infinite”) to which Paulus has recourse in relating Christian witness to the wider world.

25. An outcome of the “Berkeley Dialogue” might be seen as Polanyi’s proposal he and Tillich should thenceforth focus respectively on combatting objectivism in science and fundamentalism in religion. Though Tillich gave his nod to the formula, it seems in fact merely to signify the mutual resignation of our duo that each would go his own way inattentive to the other. That was as it had been previously—entirely for Tillich and really, *so far as concerns objectivism in science*, entirely for Polanyi too, since Michael was indebted to Paulus at key theological points but never looked into his sweeping study of science. Then, after the Berkeley encounter, as we already noted, other than parting courtesies they paid one another no heed. But quite apart from their not tuning in to each other, we need to ask *what did Polanyi and Tillich actually do about the twin demons of scientism and fundamentalism?* Surveying this adequately extrudes way beyond my present contract and is an ongoing challenge to both the Polanyi and Tillich societies. Still, we cannot ignore what to begin with makes our duo dynamic, and I first note yet another irony in the whole tableau—specifically in their recipe of divided tasks. For though they put it the other way around, *fundamentalism was arguably more Polanyi’s problem than Tillich’s, and scientism (or the false ideal of detached objectivity) was at least as much Tillich’s problem as Polanyi’s*. Thus the divisional formula of concord they floated after the Berkeley meeting was intrinsically nonsensical. Happily, they both *did go* on counteracting both the more cultural abcess (scientism) and the more formally religious one (fundamentalism,).

26. Tillich’s teaching pulls the rug from under fundamentalism in his categorical premise that religious knowledge is altogether symbolic. Then he also removes from faith anything to be fundamentalist about—by insisting its cognitive aspect, being a matter of ultimate concern, can in principle neither rest upon nor be threatened by the preliminary concern operative in empirical science (including especially historiography, the principal test case in Tillich’s arguments with peers, but also cosmology, and psychology where formidable challenges loomed). But Tillich never spent any time contending with fundamentalists, who avoided him and Union like the plague. Also, the idea (which he himself wafted to Polanyi) that he ever told students what to put in next Sunday’s sermon, is completely fatuous. His insistence that “the biggest barrier to religious understanding is literalism” [often reiterated orally and frustratingly eluding me for documentation] fell equally on the ears of orthodox, liberals, neoorthodox, and scientistically brainwashed seekers—and was as pertinent to their respective confusions as it was to fundamentalism. A striking example here is Albert Einstein, who was notably (albeit gently) critiqued by Paulus for literalistically rejecting the Personal God [“The Idea of the Personal God,” *Union Theological Seminary Quarterly Review*, II, 1, 1940, pp. 8-10]. Though it was hardly appropriate for Polanyi to assign our duo to the separate operational theatres he did, Polanyi himself does seem to have received direct help from Tillich in steering his own religious way around the shoals of fundamentalism. His reiterated envisagement “of an indeterminate meaning which floats beyond all materially structured experiences ultimately pointing at unsubstantial existence” [p.4 of Gelwick private collection of Polanyi quotations from Berkeley dialog] was his (ontologically unsophisticated) way of expressing the Tillichianly symbolism culminating in being-itself. However Michael consistently deplores fundamentalism also because it violates his norm of scientific integrity in defying the consensus of expertise he would rely upon to establish empirical probability. [The best statement I have found of this is in *Meaning*, Chapter 12, “Mutual Authority.”] Now in spite of partial dependence on the notion of symbol shared with Tillich, Polanyi—as was noted above in Paragraph 3—became aware in reading *Dynamics of Faith* that he seriously differed with Paulus regarding faith’s relation to science. Michael did *not* believe the two could be totally separated. Already in *PK*, apparently unaware his thought is here contrary to Tillich’s, Polanyi writes “an event which has in fact never taken place can have

no supernatural significance; and whether it has taken place or not must be established by factual evidence” [p. 284]. After all, it is not enough simply to reveal the overreaching of scientism. Increasingly, Michael seems concerned with the intrinsic plausibility of faith. Toward the end of *Meaning*, note how he desiderates empirical and philosophical support from emergent evolution and cosmic teleology. Thinking along these lines inevitably brings one onto Tillichian-avoided terrain where, unless one becomes a fundamentalist, collision with fundamentalism must occur. Michael, of course, was not about to become one or acquiesce in anybody doing so. But it is this would-be militant presence, so to speak, in the theatre of operations where faith *can* conflict with or receive support from science, that leads me to say—if we *had* to choose one of our duo to battle fundamentalism—the more plausible choice is arguably Polanyi. I say this partly because, along with many others who have carefully studied Tillich’s position on faith and science, I am not convinced these can be so cleanly disjoined as Paulus asseverates—either in historiography or cosmology or psychology. And I also would put Michael in top command here because (presupposing what he shares with Tillich) I find his mandate of universal openness to expert testing and consensus to be the most plausible antidote we actually have to fundamentalism at ground level. I believe Ian Barbour’s appealing redefinition of objectivity, which I personally adopted decades ago, is largely inspired by Polanyi, viz., that post-critical objectivity has to mean “intersubjective testability and commitment to universality” [Barbour, *Issues in Science and Religion*, p. 177]. This is our motive, is it not, in coming to the American Academy of Religion meetings, aside from fun with friends?

27. The other battlefield, scientific objectivism, is an arena where *prima facie* Polanyi might seem almost a shoo-in to head the fighting, especially to hear him tell it, and if the only alternative is Tillich. But, as we saw, Polanyi is unaware of the case for Tillich in regard to science. On alternatives, we are of course talking here of our duo henceforth dividing *their* efforts, prescinding from a much larger field that could not exclude contemporaries like Buber, Marcel, Berdyaev, Shestov and numerous others, not to mention the capital figures like Whitehead, Wittgenstein and Heidegger. Tillich used to mention especially Bergson and Simmel. And James seems more and more important. Nor today do we dare omit Huston Smith. All these fecund minds do bear relevantly on the “sclerosis of objectivity,” to use Jaspers’ incisive phrase. With due allowance for the fact that Paulus and Michael were addressing just their own division of labor, there *is* something a little unreal in their rhetoric (“You have done for science what I have done for religion,” etc.)—one more, perhaps, of the oddities which stud this intermezzo. For one senses hubris, I think, in neither of our duo. They are too consecrated to their calling. While Polanyi is naturally more surefooted in the forward trenches of experimental work and its logical calculus of uptake, and while no one can rival his pioneering expose of scientific pretense, Tillich offers a magisterially comprehensive and deeply anchored matrix in which to unpack, diagnose and treat the pathology of egregious and culturally tyrannical cognitive detachment. The suasive wholism of his vision transcends necessary critique in transparency to the gracious Unconditioned manifest as universal cruciform Love. As the current world crisis widens under simultaneous onslaught of cynical reductionism and all too credulous fanaticism, can we even think of dispensing with the services of either of our doughty duo? As I cannot imagine trying to do philosophy without *both* Plato and Aristotle, I adamantly refuse to furlough either Paulus or Michael to some more circumscribed task. As for Tillich, it is just now becoming clear how very much unfinished business there is in the full outworking of energies, horizons and strategic shifts so richly packed into his intellectual estate. The early and the late phases of it—not to speak of the thick 1923 study of science—have not been at all adequately assessed. There is a specific crying need to pick up the sharp pang Paulus felt when he was tempted, as Peter John reports from that 1951 open house [above, Par. 7], to shelve the *ST* and undertake a major work in epistemology, of which the “PK” essay is a suggestive nucleus. I have just been zestfully reawakened to Polanyi, and if I could only have back my worthy colleague Charles McCoy, I would never tease him again for ranking Michael the greatest mind since Plato. That may be slightly exaggerated, but who cares? We need to

have our consciousness raised. Polanyi has been shamefully ignored by the philosophical/theological gatekeepers. He is an extremely potent catalyst and resource, not only for going on further with Tillich but in marshalling the best aid we can get to deal with the Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris and all the varied legion who reductively deny or uncritically bloat the possibility of meaningful faith to light our human future. In his last Berkeley lecture following the Claremont encounter, Paulus pleads with us all “to fight an uphill battle” [*Irrelevance*, p. 63] and at the end of *Meaning* thirteen years later Michael says “We do not see the end in sight” [p. 214].” The battle can be daunting, but our auspicious duo, our proactive pair, conjoining to evoke the best in us, will preclude our ever despairing.

Submissions for Publication

Articles, meeting notices and notes likely to be of interest to persons interested in the thought of Michael Polanyi are welcomed. Review suggestions and book reviews should be sent to Walter Gulick (see addresses listed below). Manuscripts, notices and notes should be sent to Phil Mullins. Manuscripts should be double-spaced type with notes at the end; writers are encouraged to employ simple citations within the text when possible. MLA or APA style is preferred. Because the journal serves English writers across the world, we do not require anybody’s “standard English.” Abbreviate frequently cited book titles, particularly books by Polanyi (e.g., *Personal Knowledge* becomes *PK*). Shorter articles (10-15 pages) are preferred, although longer manuscripts (20-24 pages) will be considered. Consistency and clear writing are expected. Manuscripts normally will be sent out for blind review. Authors are expected to provide an electronic copy as an e-mail attachment.

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