

Tradition & Discovery

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Preface.....	2
News and Notes.....	3
2010 Polanyi Society Annual Meeting in Atlanta.....	5
Polanyi's Arguments against a Non-Judgmental Political Science.....	6
Jon Fennell	
Submissions for Publication.....	18
From Morality to Spirituality: Society, Religion and Transformation.....	19
Charles Lowney	
A Polanyian Metaphysics?	
Milton Scarborough's Nondualistic Philosophical Vision.....	39
Walter Gulick	
WWW Polanyi Resources.....	46
Dueling about Dualism: A Reply to Walter Gulick.....	47
Milton Scarborough	
Notes on Contributors.....	50
Reviews	51
Matthew B. Crawford, <i>Shop Class as Soulcraft: An Inquiry into the Value of Work</i>	
Paul Lewis	
Susan S. Phillips, <i>Candlelight: Illuminating the Art of Spiritual Direction</i>	
Barbara J. Gulick	
Tihamér Margitay (ed.), <i>Knowing and Being: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Michael Polanyi</i>	
John Apczynski	

The Polanyi Society

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Preface

Jon Fennell's essay in this issue, "Polanyi's Arguments against a Non-Judgmental Political Science," provides a careful and interesting examination of two arguments Polanyi makes in his 1966 essay "The Message of the Hungarian Revolution." Also included is Charles Lowney's "From Morality to Spirituality: Society, Religion and Transformation," his third essay in a series (other essays appeared in *TAD* 36:1 and 36:3) that grew out of a 2008 Polanyi Society paper given at the American Philosophical Association; Lowney's final essay uses Polanyi's thought to analyze spirituality and religion, building on his earlier explorations of morality. Walter Gulick's review essay appreciatively treats Milton Scarborough's *Comparative Theories of Nonduality: The Search for a Middle Way*. Scarborough's response to Gulick clarifies his book's double purpose, namely, finding both a Western middle way and also a middle way between East and West. There are three interesting reviews: Paul Lewis introduces Matthew Crawford's best selling philosophical biography, *Shop Class as Soulcraft: An Inquiry into the Value of Work*, which likely will appeal to those impressed with Polanyi. Barbara Gulick offers sensitive reflections on Susan S. Phillips, *Candlelight: Illuminating the Art of Spiritual Direction*. Phillips is a spiritual director, sociologist, and Executive Director of New College Berkeley, an affiliate of Berkeley's Graduate Theological Union, and a figure significantly influenced by Polanyi. Finally, John Apczynski gives an overview of the newest collection of essays on Polanyi's philosophy, *Knowing and Being: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Michael Polanyi*. Thanks go to editor and essay contributor Tihamér Margitay for putting together these essays, which grew out of the 2008 "Polanyi Reconsidered" Conference in Budapest.

The 2009 Atlanta annual meeting program featuring six papers by graduate students on October 30 is included (p. 5). There are many things of interest in the News and Notes section (pp. 3-4): an update on *Polanyiana* materials on the web; information about a Polanyi-related class, new publications and papers, and the new Polanyi Society Speakers Bureau; and an update identifying additions to the Polanyi Society web site, including new primary materials as well as all the old but often quite interesting Polanyi Society publications going back to 1972.

Phil Mullins

Tradition & Discovery is indexed selectively in *The Philosopher's Index* and *Religious and Theological Abstracts* and is included in the EBSCO online database of academic and research journals.

NEWS AND NOTES

Polanyiana News

A new English issue of *Polanyiana* (2008, No. 1) is available at <http://www.polanyi.bme.hu/periodical/period.php?n=2008-01&d=2008-01&p=39/>. In addition to the new book of essays based on the June 2008 Budapest “Reconsidering Polanyi” conference (*Knowing and Being: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Michael Polanyi*, reviewed in this issue of *TAD*), this issue of *Polanyiana* includes essays based on papers originally given at this conference. The following articles are included: **Daniel Paksi**, “The Concept of Evolution in Michael Polanyi’s Philosophy”; **Charles W. Lowney**, “The Tacit in Frege”; **Zsuzsa N. Tóth**, “The Transparency of Words: The Polanyian Explanation of the Process of Translation”; **Judith Rosenhouse**, “Tacit Knowledge and Language Learning in Children and Adults After *Personal Knowledge* by Michael Polanyi”; **Terence Kennedy**, “Michael Polanyi and ‘Modern Moral Rationalism’”; **C. P. Goodman**, “The Politics of Imperfection”; **R. J. Brownhill**, “Developing a Philosophy of Technology”; **Patrick Rang and Katri Targama**, “Planning and Management: Explicit versus Tacit Knowledge.” Past issues of *Polanyiana* in English and Hungarian going back to 1991 are available in the *Polanyiana* digital archives at the following address: <http://www.polanyi.bme.hu/periodical/period.php?lang=hu>

A Recent Loyola, Maryland Class

Michael Polanyi and Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), a geologist and paleontologist, were both scientists who, as philosophers, focused on human nature. *Michael Polanyi and Teilhard de Chardin* was a course co-sponsored for the spring semester of 2010 by the philosophy and chemistry departments at Loyola University Maryland. Eight students and two auditors (one was the Associate Dean of Science) participated in the course which was listed as upper level in both philosophy and chemistry. Six of the eight students

received credit through the philosophy department and two students received credit through the chemistry department. Classes were led by professors from the two departments and emphasized discussion of views by students. The main agenda for the course was for students to read *The Phenomenon of Man* and significant parts of *Personal Knowledge* in order to find and discuss similarities and disagreements between their respective visions. Teilhard’s concern was primarily with human evolution and its future. It was reported in the newspaper *Washington Times* that Teilhard’s book, *The Phenomenon of Man* (reviewed by Polanyi in the January 30, 1960 issue of *Saturday Review*) was picked by Harper Collins Publishers first among the top 100 spiritual books of the twentieth century. Polanyi’s critique of objectivist science and interpretation of emergence turned out to be compatible with Teilhard’s vision of evolution. Class sessions were lively and evaluations by students were positive.

A Note on Dues Payment

Please notice that this issue of *TAD* issue includes a self-addressed return envelope to be used to pay 2010-2011 academic year membership dues. The Polanyi Society is a registered non-profit organization that operates on a fiscal cycle that roughly coincides with the academic year so dues are collected each fall. The next issue of *TAD* (February 2011) will also include a self-addressed return envelope. US postage regulations, require that EVERY copy of *TAD* mailed in the postage class used must weigh exactly the same. Thus, even if you promptly pay your dues with this issue’s return envelope, your next *TAD* will also include an envelope. If you cannot recall if you have already paid for 2010-2011, e-mail an inquiry to Phil Mullins. Dues remain \$35 (\$25 for libraries and \$15 students), a true bargain in the academic journal world. You can (1) send credit card information and authorization to debit from your account the amount of your dues (mullins@missouriwestern.edu or fax 816-271-5680) or

(2) send a check to Phil Mullins (HPG, MWSU, St. Joseph, MO 64507 USA). Sorry but we cannot handle American Express cards. Creating a dues payment form on the Polanyi Society web site is a project still in the works but one more complicated than initially thought. In past years, many have generously included with dues payment a US tax deductible contribution to the Society; these dollars go to promote things such as the Travel Fund which supported travel of graduate students to the 2010 annual meeting featuring graduate student papers.

Polanyi Society Speakers Bureau

The Polanyi Society's Speakers Bureau is ready for the new academic year. Marty Moleski, S. J. and Richard Gelwick gave talks in this program's first semester of operation last spring at Loyola University of Maryland and Yale University respectively. Some preliminary discussions with a few other universities about future talks have occurred. If you know anyone who might be interested in sponsoring a talk, please send the name and e-mail address to Phil Mullins. There is now a link on the Polanyi Society web page with general information about the Speakers Bureau. You will find there a precis of the talks given last spring by Moleski and Gelwick.

New Additions to the Collection of Polanyi Materials Available

The last issue of *TAD* reported that Michael Polanyi's essay titled "The Body-Mind Relation," published in 1968, has been added to the primary materials available for downloading from the Polanyi Society web site (<http://www.missouriwestern.edu/orgs/polanyi/essays.htm>). Two additional things written by Polanyi that have been earlier published by *TAD* are now also available in the component of the web site with links to primary materials: Polanyi's 1936 letter to the British journal *Philosophy of Science* known as "The Value of the Inexact," was re-published in *TAD* 18:3; "Persons," the previously unpublished seventh lecture of a 1954 eight-lecture series at the University of Chicago, appeared in *TAD* 36:3. Soon the five-lecture

series "Man in Thought" from 1964, known as the Duke Lectures, will be added to the Polanyi materials available on the Society's web site. Although reading these Polanyi Society site primary materials and the eleven links to Polanyi materials on other sites is not a substitute for reading texts like *Personal Knowledge*, there are enough available Polanyi materials (textual and audio) from different periods of Polanyi's life to put together a reasonably good reading list for students.

Society Publications Now Available Back to 1972

Interested in a review of the special double issue of *Pre-Text: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Rhetoric* (vol. 2, nos. 1-2, edited by Sam Watson) devoted to the bearing of Polanyi's thought on rhetoric? Or perhaps two early reviews of William Poteat's *Polanyian Meditations* by Jim Stines and David Rutledge? These are all now available online. The project of expanding the digital archives on the Polanyi Society web pages is now complete so that you can access Society-published materials that go back to 1972. Check it out by going to the digital archives web page accessible from the Polanyi Society home page.

Polanyi and the International Institute for Field-Being

The vision of the International Institute for Field-Being has much in common with the philosophical perspective Polanyi outlined in Part IV of *Personal Knowledge*. **Walter Gulick** will give a paper, "Polanyi and Field-Being," at the group's meeting held in conjunction with the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association in Boston on December 30 at 12:15 p.m (see the program for location). He'll explore the possibility of further cooperation between the Polanyi Society and the Field-Being group, which is also affiliated with the AAR.

Paul Richard Blum's article, "Michael Polanyi: The Anthropology of Intellectual History" was published in *Studies in East European Thought* 62 (2010), 197-216.

2010 Polanyi Society Annual Meeting

The Polanyi Society will hold its annual meeting in conjunction with the meetings of the American Academy of Religion on October 30, 2010, in Atlanta, Georgia. To attend the Polanyi Society annual meeting, it is not necessary to register for the AAR meeting. For additional information about the AAR meeting, go to http://www.aarweb.org/Meetings/Annual_Meeting/Current_Meeting/default.asp. The hotel and room (Marriott international 1) and times in which meeting sessions will be held are listed below and will be posted on the Polanyi Society web site (<http://www.missouriwestern.edu/orgs/polanyi/>); they will also be available in the Online Program Book for the AAR meeting (listed as session numbers M30-113 and M30-408).

This year's annual meeting program is devoted to six papers by graduate students. Neil Arner and Phil Rolnick have worked diligently to put together this set of papers from students studying at a variety of different institutions. Walter Mead also has and continues to work hard to raise dollars for the Travel Fund which will help support student travel to the annual meeting. Papers for both sessions should be available for downloading from the Polanyi Society web page link for the annual meeting by late October.

Session I: 9 a.m.--11:30 a.m. , October 30, 2010, Marriott International 1

Chair: Neal Arner, Yale University

David Agler, Pennsylvania State University

“Polanyi and Peirce on Doubt”

Aaron Creller, University of Hawaii at Manoa

“The Epistemic Structures of Polanyi and Ryle”

Nancy Hutton, Harvard Divinity School

“Technologies of Intimacy as a Way of Knowing”

Session II: 7 p.m.--9:30 p.m., October 30, 2010 , Marriott International 1

Chair: Phil Rolnick, University of St. Thomas (MN)

Neil Arner, Yale University

“Appraising Newbigin's Appropriation of Polanyi”

Kellen Plaxco, Marquette University

“From Polanyi to Origen and Back Again”

Mary Speckhard, Geneva College

“*Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism*, Toward Polanyi.”

Polanyi's Arguments against a Non-Judgmental Political Science

Jon Fennell

Key words: political science, social science, value-free observation, political behavior, tacit inference, Hungarian revolution.

Michael Polanyi articulates two arguments against the view that moral judgment has no proper place in the conduct of political science: Non-judgmental political science cannot understand what it studies; and non-judgmental political science cannot understand the political scientist himself. Evaluation of these arguments not only clarifies important dimensions of Polanyi's conceptions of understanding and tacit inference, it prompts a reconsideration of the nature of both moral deliberation and moral truth. The encounter with Polanyi demonstrates that non-judgmental political science does indeed fall short of its stated objective.

It is something great and greatening to cherish an ideal; to act in the light of truth that is far-away and far above; to set aside the near advantage, the momentary pleasure; the snatching of seeming good to self; and to act for remoter ends, for higher good, and for interests other than our own.

Joshua Chamberlain
"Dedication of the Maine Monuments"
Gettysburg, PA, on October 3, 1888

In "The Message of the Hungarian Revolution," a brief but strikingly prescient article from 1966, Michael Polanyi offers two arguments against the proposition that, while moral judgments and moral motivation may be among the phenomena studied by political science, moral judgment has no proper place in the conduct of such science. Behavioral science, it is said, cannot determine whether the moral judgments of the persons it studies are "right or not, since this observation would constitute a moral judgment which science is not competent to make."¹ Both of Polanyi's arguments against this position derive their power from an alleged inconsistency. We must ask, then, whether such inconsistency on the part of non-judgmental political science in fact exists. And, if it does, is it truly crippling? More deeply, whatever may be the fate of Polanyi's arguments, are there other grounds in his thought for sustaining his conclusion that moral judgments properly belong to political science, and behavioral science generally?

Argument One: Non-Judgmental Political Science Cannot Understand What It Studies

Polanyi's first argument is by far the more complex. It begins with the premise that "[a]ll men, whatever their professions, make moral judgments." By "moral judgment" Polanyi is referring to the familiar practice in which we conclude that an action, whether our own or that of another, is good or bad, right or wrong. Already,

however, a distinction summons our attention. While it would be fractious to deny that all men make moral judgments, what in fact is taking place when they do so? Polanyi, recognizing the need to secure his flank, at once sets forth his second premise: implicit in moral judgment is “submission to a standard [that] has universal intent.” To make a moral judgment is to affirm the validity of an authority that is binding on everyone. What, however, are we to do with the cynical riposte that while men certainly are apt to believe moral judgments are informed by objective authority, this is nothing more than a convenient delusion? The cynic admits that he makes moral judgments; but those judgments, he asserts, have nothing to do with authoritative universal standards, since such standards do not exist. But again Polanyi anticipates the interlocutor. His third premise states that implicit in appeal to a universal standard, an appeal that for him resides at the heart of moral judgment, is recognition of the distinction between truth and illusion, conjoined with the affirmation that the standard is in fact real. This in turn leads to Polanyi’s fourth premise: corresponding to the ontological distinction between moral truth and moral illusion are two varieties of motivation. In the face of moral truth, an action is good (or bad) insofar as it is reasonably classified as being in accordance with (or in violation of) the standard in question. This is in contrast with moral illusion, where the motivation for judgment is a form of seduction.²

Preliminary Reflections

Before examining the conclusions that Polanyi draws from these premises, let us reflect on what has been said thus far. To begin with, Polanyi would have us understand “moral standards which we hold to be valid” to be equivalent to “moral standards [that are] binding on all men.” But is this true? The ancient Incas, in order to please the gods and to secure eternal life for the targeted individuals, selected the most innocent of their children and buried them alive at the summit of the highest mountain that they knew. To readers of this essay, such a practice will surely seem the product of moral illusion, if not something much worse. This is not to deny, of course, the earnestness of the Incan beliefs. It is precisely because the children were dear that they were selected; and to carry them to the peak of a 20,000 foot mountain demonstrates a remarkable commitment that occasioned what may well have been the crowning act of an Incan’s life. Still, none of us, including Polanyi, would allow that the ancient Incas were acting in light of a real moral standard that is binding on everyone. But how are we to accommodate the perspective of the Incan? Surely, he understands himself to be acting free of illusion and in accordance with a morally incumbent rule. Quite possibly the children and their families joined in this judgment. Attempts to interfere with the practice would be viewed as immoral. Yet, Polanyi would say the Incan was the victim of illusion, while the Hungarian revolutionaries that are the focus of his article were acting reasonably, which is to say under the authority of a standard whose domain is universal. The issue, then, is this: if there exists no failsafe element within the perspective of the actors to distinguish between moral reality and moral illusion, wherein lies the grounds for the distinction? Whose judgment is involved? And when?

To get at these questions it is useful to look at what Polanyi means by “evidence.” He states that our “awareness of moral truth is founded on the recognition of a valid claim, which can be reasonably argued for and supported by evidence.”³ As opposed, then, to the motivation by “seduction” that marks moral illusion, when acting in accordance with moral truth, we look for and find reasons (i.e., evidence) for our judgments. Recognizing the authority of these reasons, we give way to them. An analysis by Polanyi of “true coherence,” from a somewhat later article, casts needed light on this vague formulation.⁴ In this account, Polanyi begins by reminding us of the famous drawing in which it is possible to see a vase, or two human profiles, but not both at the same time. Viewers of the drawing typically can with little effort switch from one way of seeing the drawing to the other, and

back. While being able to see the drawing in one way or the other represents for Polanyi a successful integration of the available clues, doing so falls short of “true coherence.” The reason this effort falls short is that in alternately viewing the drawing as a vase or a pair of profiles, we fail to reach a full commitment. In contrast, and representative of the coherence of understanding that purports to capture reality, is deliberation by a jury. Members of a jury are also faced with alternative interpretations of a set of clues. But, as opposed to the viewer of the ambiguous drawing, a member of the jury must reach a decision “under the discipline of a grim responsibility.”⁵ Only when a decision about the world is arrived at (and the various alternatives ruled out) do we, says Polanyi, establish true coherence. Such understanding naturally and unavoidably becomes grounds for action. And, as we act, we encounter evidence relevant to our belief. To be true, a belief must not only make sense, it must successfully withstand the challenge of reality.

“Evidence” for Polanyi refers, then, to what in the past followed from embracing a particular moral principle, as well as what is likely to follow from embracing that principle in the future. One is reminded of the biblical observation: “By their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:16). We distinguish truth from illusion by attending to their consequences. Now, by alternately viewing the drawing as a vase and a pair of human profiles, we avoid serious and enduring commitment. We systematically refrain from acting on the basis of our transient understanding. The matter is trivial. But what are we to say about our ancient Incan? He vehemently embraces his principles and clearly demonstrates commitment. What permits us to assert that he is in the grips of illusion? To begin with, note that Polanyi’s distinction between truth and illusion is forward looking. Whether a principle is true or, instead, the product of illusion can be known only *ex post facto*.⁶ What Polanyi says regarding natural laws holds for moral laws as well: “To hold a natural law to be true is to believe that its presence may reveal itself in yet unknown and perhaps yet unthinkable consequences; it is to believe that natural laws are features of a reality which as such will continue to bear consequences inexhaustibly.”⁷ True belief points to something real and possesses “heuristic power.”⁸ That is, embracing and acting upon truth leads to new understandings and fresh discoveries. One’s world is richer, clearer and more meaningful. In short, “the truth of a proposition lies in its bearing on reality”; but this means “its implications [are] indeterminate.”⁹ As Socrates warns in *Protagoras* (314A-B), in order to evaluate “doctrines” it is necessary to give oneself to them and see what ensues. There is a risk. But this, says Polanyi, is good and necessary. The possibility of injury is inseparable from the prospect of gain. The evaluation that yields the judgment that a belief is true or illusory is always personal, but it can and ought to be a response to what we have learned from others as much as it is a response to our direct experience. Due to such vigilance, that which appeared to the actor as moral truth may prove to be illusion. Our judgment is subject to revision in light of what follows from holding it. It is because of the vital role played by responsible assessment that Polanyi states that “[t]ruth becomes the rightness of an action.”¹⁰ Insofar as belief and the resulting action and consequences are right, they are true.¹¹ The moral imperative, therefore, is to do the best we can with what we can reasonably know (as opposed to what we *do* know, since weakness of character, inattention, etc., may impede our taking full responsibility).

Let us imagine the perspective of the contemporary descendant of the ancient Incan or, even more tellingly, the perspective of the ancient Incan himself subsequent to his conversion to, say, Christianity. The former practices—burying children alive—would, in the light of newly understood principles, be seen as erroneous. Perhaps in this case “erroneous” is too strong a term and we ought instead to say “incomplete.” After all, the converted actor still wishes to please the deity and to secure eternal life for those that are dear to him. What has changed is that he now understands that the preservation of an innocent child (securing for the child in this world a full and autonomous life) is of primary importance. This would not constitute abandonment of the earlier moral standards and the corresponding commitments. It would instead be to understand them more fully and in

conjunction with equally important (and heretofore overlooked) standards. Whether erroneous or simply incomplete, however, the earlier views are understood to be in need of revision.¹²

This account of morality highlights an important element of Polanyi's "educated mind."¹³ A person with an educated mind recognizes the fallibility of all human judgment, including one's understanding of moral truth. Such an individual, however, is nonetheless willing and able to embrace fully his highest principles. He lives openly and unhesitatingly in allegiance to what he believes is true. He gives himself without reservation to the truth (even while remaining open to the "evidence"—this openness being one of his highest principles). For Polanyi, a defining characteristic of an honest life—a life of integrity and discovery—is to admit the fallible nature of our central principles even while wholeheartedly continuing to give ourselves to them. This is a life of pronounced faith. On Polanyi's view, this attitude, and the corresponding stance toward the world, characterized the very core of Christian existence.¹⁴

An Objection

As noted above, Polanyi celebrates the "educated mind" that, while recognizing the fallibility of its (and all other) moral beliefs, nevertheless wholeheartedly embraces what it believes. Such a mind defines the good life in terms of a never-ending process of inquiry, revision, and discovery. One's highest ideals and aspirations have an indispensable role, but this is one of stimulus or attractive prospect, not an actual final destination. The educated mind has been weaned of such expectations. It is more mature than that.

In a penetrating critique of Isaiah Berlin's influential *Two Concepts of Liberty*, Leo Strauss, a prominent twentieth century political philosopher whose work has returned to prominence, comments on the author's approving citation of the following declaration by Joseph Schumpeter: "To realize the relative validity of one's convictions and yet stand for them unflinchingly, is what distinguishes a civilized man from a barbarian."¹⁵ In his response to this assertion, Strauss begins by observing that Schumpeter and Berlin, despite their claim, in fact believe that at least one thing is not relatively valid—namely, that "the right position toward any primary end [permits us to distinguish] between civilized men and barbarians." But this, says Strauss, is to be expected, since it is the fate of any "thinking" person "to take a final stand, an absolute stand in accordance with what he regards as the nature of man or as the nature of the human condition or as the decisive truth, and hence to assert the absolute validity of his fundamental conviction."¹⁶ Strauss goes on to note, "This does not mean, of course, that [Schumpeter's] fundamental conviction is sound. One reason why I doubt that it is sound is that if [Schumpeter] were right, every resolute liberal hack or thug would be a civilized man, while Plato and Kant would be barbarians."¹⁷ It would seem, therefore, that in Strauss's view Polanyi, like Schumpeter and Berlin, not only is inconsistent but also wrong regarding the nature and stature of moral belief.

This, however, is to misunderstand Polanyi. There is an "as-if" in Polanyi's account of moral truth and the educated mind that is absent from the position occupied by Schumpeter and Berlin. It is because of this element that Polanyi likens his portrayal of moral conviction to Christianity. He asks that we understand moral truth as describing a condition that can and ought to be the case. We are to act as if the principle were true. There is here a respect for the absolute, and an impulse toward it, that is absent from what Schumpeter and Berlin maintain is highest for man. Granted, Polanyi remains open to the lessons of experience. These are indispensable to discovery. But Polanyi aspires to that which is real, external to the individual, and possibly beyond revision and

change. Most important, he believes that this very aspiration is a necessary condition for the most significant discovery. Nothing like this is detectable in Berlin's approving citation of Schumpeter.

We might say that Polanyi is "younger" than Schumpeter and Berlin. Although he is as much a product as they of the historicist intellectual milieu of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, he escapes the clutches of that world (including its nearly irresistible momentum toward moral and cultural relativism). He does so through a form of intellectual and moral rebirth within which the absolute returns to life. This, moreover, occurs without recourse to the Nietzschean willfulness (the self-conscious reevaluation of values) that is the closing focus of Strauss's essay. The Nietzschean response to "objective history" (the history that recognizes the relative situated character of all moral convictions and ideals) falls well short of what is set forth by Polanyi. Polanyi aims higher by affirming the reality of the transcendent. He offers an account of moral truth in which not only do all the candidates for this designation throughout history become genuine contenders for commitment and belief, but they may also be authoritatively evaluated and ranked.

So, Strauss is correct about the necessity of taking a final stand. But Polanyi's final stand is fundamentally different from that of Schumpeter and Berlin. He states that while belief is always subject to revision, it is a cheapening of human possibilities to close off in advance the possibility of arriving at a truth that is absolute, and hence binding in every time and place. Indeed, Polanyi vehemently calls for commitment to the very thing that Schumpeter and Berlin state that man proudly can do without. Polanyi is therefore not properly subject to the criticism Strauss launches against them.

Conclusions to the First Argument

Let us now review the conclusions of the first argument, and the manner in which for Polanyi they follow from the premises outlined above. The first of these conclusions is that, given the existence of "true human values" and the fact "that people can be motivated by their knowledge of them," "*we have implicitly denied the claim that all human actions can be explained without reference to the exercise of moral judgment*" (33). Sensing that he may not so far have been persuasive, Polanyi provides a gloss: the political scientist acknowledges that the revolutionaries in Hungary acted as they did because they believed that the government had violated a real moral standard. But, Polanyi states, this "leaves open the question *why* they believed this" (33). In reflecting on this question the political scientist, says Polanyi, must allow that one possible answer is a) that moral standards do in fact exist, b) that in conducting fake trials the government violated such standards and hence acted evilly, and c) that the revolutionaries rebelled "*because they knew [such practices] to be evil*" (34). With this foundation, Polanyi then delivers what he conceives to be the decisive blow: "But this cannot be decided without first establishing whether faked trials are in fact evil or not" (34), which would be a moral judgment. From here it is a short distance to Polanyi's second conclusion: "*This value judgment proves indispensable* to the political scientist's explanation of their behavior" (34).

Analysis

Polanyi's repeated use of emphasis in these statements reveals the degree to which he is personally committed to them. It is also an indication of his belief that he has conclusively shown that political science cannot avoid making moral judgments. Does, however, that conclusion in fact follow? Recall that in Polanyi's view the suggestion that political science does not properly engage in moral judgments fails because it entails

inconsistency. In this, the first of Polanyi's arguments, the inconsistency consists of the political scientist at first admitting that he himself (when not acting as a behavioral scientist) makes and is motivated by moral judgments, and then refusing to grant that those he is studying might in their own lives be acting in the same way. But where is the inconsistency? The political scientist admits in his account of human behavior that people make moral judgments and act in light of them. In doing so, however, he does not morally judge the actor's judgment or behavior. Of course, the political scientist may later morally evaluate his own professional practice. He might, for example, decide that he acted well in refraining from evaluation of the judgment and behavior of those he had studied. But this is not to engage in moral judgment of those he is studying.

At this point Polanyi might observe that the political scientist while engaging in moral judgments in his personal life assigns to moral standards a degree of reality that he does not extend to the moral ideals or truths to which the subjects of his study claim to be responding. In explaining his own behavior the political scientist understands the need to acknowledge the authority of these things; when engaging in his behavioral analysis of others, he recognizes no such need (or even, within political science, the possibility). Polanyi is correct in detecting a degree of inconsistency here. But the inconsistency is not crippling, since the political scientist can without embarrassment say that accounting for oneself is a fundamentally different enterprise than is explaining the behavior of others.

In sum, Polanyi's first argument, as stated, fails. There is no debilitating inconsistency when the political scientist admits the importance of moral judgment in his own life and then states that behavioral science is not competent to engage in moral judgments of its own. This is, first, because he can acknowledge the significant role of moral judgments in the lives of his subjects without himself evaluating those judgments or the actions said to follow from them; and, second, because there is no compelling reason why a political scientist must in his professional capacity act in the same way he does in his personal life. Indeed, it is likely that the political scientist would say there are important reasons not to.

Salvation?

Can Polanyi's conclusion nevertheless be rescued? Drawing from his work as a whole, how might this be done?

Polanyi justifiably attributes to the political scientist the understanding that the Hungarian revolutionaries believed in the existence of moral standards and that they were motivated by the conviction that the standards had been violated. But *who* cannot decide that the government's actions are evil "without first establishing whether faked trials are in fact evil or not"? There seems, thus far at least, to be no grounds for insisting that it is the political scientist who must so decide. It may well be that the political scientist cannot account for the behavior of the revolutionary without acknowledging that the actor made a moral judgment in light of (his perception of) moral standards, but this moral judgment, while "indispensable," belongs to the actor, not the political scientist. Polanyi perhaps fares better when we ask a different question: *what* cannot be decided "without first establishing whether faked trials are in fact evil or not"? Polanyi cites two items: 1) that the revolutionaries "were rebelling against a *real evil*," and 2) that they "may have done so *because they knew it to be evil*." If the decider is the revolutionary, then yes, his understanding that his actions are a legitimate reaction to a genuine evil presupposes that he has already established that the government actions were in fact evil. But if the decider is the political scientist (and that, of course, is the relevant case for Polanyi's argument), establishing the factual presence or absence of evil would be a requirement only if his resolving whether the revolutionaries

were responding to an evil known to them entailed that he morally evaluate the governmental measures in question. Everything, however, depends on the phrase “an evil known to them.” We find its origins in Polanyi’s plausible statement that the political scientist needs to allow that the revolutionaries’ belief that the government’s actions were immoral can explain their behavior. He immediately adds that to allow for the effect of such belief leaves open the question of “*why*” the actors so believe. According to Polanyi, the political scientist must concede that one possible answer to this question is what we have just discussed, viz., that the evil was (known to be) real and that the revolutionaries therefore “were rebelling against a *real evil*.” But must the political scientist make this concession? He might instead say that Polanyi is begging the question. Polanyi is asking him to allow indirectly what he (the political scientist) has already directly denied he can competently do—engage as a political scientist in moral judgments. Polanyi might remind the political scientist that he makes such judgments quite regularly in his non-professional life. The latter’s response could well be, “Agreed, but in such instances I am not acting as a political scientist.” For the political scientist, then, while the revolutionaries’ actions can be viewed as a response to evil, such evil is not known by them in the same way as are objects in the world; it is “known” only in the fashion characteristic of fairies and unicorns (or, more charitably, in the fashion characteristic of fine music or good food). Such “knowledge” may indeed account for behavior, but the political scientist is not obligated to assign it the authority called for by Polanyi. Imagine a parallel case: a Native American’s behavior cannot be explained without reference to his “knowledge” of animal spirits, but the anthropologist need not himself know such spirits in order to offer that explanation.

Or, perhaps he does. Polanyi asks us to apply to the political scientist what he says is characteristic of the natural scientist and of perception generally: we must “dwell” in the particulars in order to derive from them their meaning in the form of a phenomenally distinctive whole. He states, “[W]henever we are focusing our attention on a particular object, we are relying for doing so on our awareness of many things to which we are not attending directly at the moment, but which are yet functioning as compelling clues for the way the object of our attention will appear to our senses.”¹⁸ This is the model for science as well: “[A] scientific discovery reduces our focal awareness of observations into a subsidiary awareness of them, by shifting our attention from them to their theoretical coherence.”¹⁹ The same is true for the study of political actors. The political scientist admits that the people he is studying acted in response to their understanding that the Hungarian government violated a moral standard. *That* is the phenomenon to be explained (i.e., made meaningful). But, just as a machine cannot be understood without reference to its principle and function, nor a living organism without reference to its intentions and purposes, the actions of the revolutionary achieve their full meaning only to the degree the investigator participates in his mind. Polanyi states, “We know a chess player’s mind by dwelling in the stratagems of his games and know another man’s pain by dwelling in his face distorted by suffering.”²⁰ It would seem, then, that the revolutionary being studied by the political scientist is satisfactorily understood only if we know something about his mind, and that his mind is to be understood by what he says and does, including the assertion that he is responding to governmental violation of moral standards.²¹ For the investigator in his account to rely exclusively on what is concrete and measurable (Polanyi often uses the term “mathematical”) is to miss that which he has purportedly set out to capture. It is to be blind to the very thing that interests us. One cannot understand a watch or a frog in terms of physics and chemistry, and one cannot fully account for the mind and actions of the revolutionary in terms of “economic necessity, propaganda,” etc.

So, the political scientist’s value judgment “proves indispensable” to his explanation of the revolutionary’s behavior in the same way that the physiologist’s acknowledgment of an organ’s purpose is indispensable to explaining its existence, or the engineer’s reference to the successful operation of a steam engine is indispensable to explaining its nature. The political scientist succeeds in his professed task to the degree that he joins the actor

in surrendering to the reality of moral standards and in experiencing indignation at their violation.²² The anthropologist in our illustration is similarly required to accredit the existence of animal spirits.²³

For Polanyi this is a question of logic. Our understanding of a whole is an inference from the particulars that serve as clues to that whole. (The whole is their meaning.) But, unlike a syllogism, the inference here is not a deduction but instead a tacit integration. That which we are studying, the focus of our attention, is the product of effort and skill. By assembling the clues and dwelling in them, we aim to, and oftentimes do, see a result. This result is a joint meaning not present in the subsidiary clues.

Still, a question persists. Is this dwelling in the mind of the revolutionary equivalent to making a moral judgment? The political scientist cannot actually experience the world in the same way as did the person he is studying. Neither does he replicate his actions, whether that be making a speech or hurling a Molotov cocktail. But this is not what Polanyi need say that the political scientist, if he is to achieve his objective, must do. It is not that the political scientist must himself make the moral judgment but that he must participate in it (make it “present in thought”²⁴)—which, of course, requires that he acknowledge the authority of moral standards and the evil of their violation. He must (through dwelling in the mind of the revolutionary) affirm the existence of moral truth as well as the propensity of men to act in accordance with it. In short, Polanyi would have the political scientist emulate Aristotle who begins his study of politics with the observation that all political action aims for the good. Political life is not to be understood otherwise.

Argument Two: Non-Judgmental Political Science Cannot Understand the Political Scientist Himself

Polanyi’s second argument is simpler than the first. Is it also more successful? Polanyi begins by explicitly declaring that the second argument, like the first, consists of demonstrating “[t]he inconsistency of a science professing that it can explain all human action without making value judgments, while the scientist’s private actions are said to be often motivated by moral motives” (34). We are now, however, to approach the inconsistency from the opposite direction: “If the social scientist can explain all human action by value-free observations, then none of his own actions can claim to be motivated by moral values. Either he exempts himself from his own theory of human motivation, or he must conclude that all reference to moral values—or any other values [including his own]—are meaningless: are empty sounds” (34). What are we to make of this assertion?

The first thing to note is that the response by our hypothetical political scientist to the first argument is not going to succeed with the second. That is, he does not escape Polanyi’s second indictment by saying that he is entitled, or bound, to act differently in his professional capacity as a social scientist than he does in private life. This is because the gravamen of the second argument is not the inconsistency per se but instead that the inconsistency entails a choice between the equally unacceptable alternatives of incoherence (the political scientist exempts himself from his understanding of human nature) and the meaninglessness of his own (and any other) reference to moral values.

What connection exists between Polanyi’s second argument and his original formulation of the primary issue? That is, where in the alleged inconsistency associated with this argument do we find the refusal of behavioral or political science to judge the judgments of the persons it studies as “right or not”?²⁵ In order for this dissatisfaction with behavioral or political science to remain central to the second argument, Polanyi’s “can explain all human action by value-free observations” must mean *can explain all human action without judging*

that action to be right or wrong. This seems plausible, for what after all is a “value-free observation” other than an effort through explanation to capture a phenomenon (in this case human judgment and behavior) without moral judgment of it? But it is important to recognize that acknowledging the existence of moral standards, whether in one’s own life or in that of those one is studying, is entirely compatible with value-free observation. To see a standard, or even to account for someone’s behavior in terms of the impact of that standard, is not to morally judge the standard or the behavior conducted in light of it.

Polanyi’s second argument shares the initial premise of the earlier argument: “All men, whatever their professions, make moral judgments.” (It is the juxtaposition of that premise with the political scientist’s insistence that he can and should avoid value judgments that, according to Polanyi, yields the inconsistency.) But we must again ask, Where is the inconsistency? Let us suppose that our political scientist is also one of the revolutionaries. Presumably, then, in his personal life he recognizes a moral standard that is violated by the government’s actions, and his behavior is motivated by his understanding of and reaction to that violation. In his subsequent political analysis of the Hungarian revolutionaries’ activities (which would of course include his own activity), he refrains from judging their judgments and actions to be right or wrong. His observations are value-free. It does not appear true, however, that the political scientist must then make the choice outlined by Polanyi. His value-free observations, even though they claim to constitute a full explanation of the behavior of the revolutionaries, entail neither that he exclude himself from his analysis nor that his reference to moral values be meaningless. Quite the contrary: recognition of moral standards and men’s propensity to act in light of them is precisely what he is portraying. The political scientist simply does not judge as right or wrong the judgments and actions of those he studies. Polanyi’s argument, as stated, therefore fails.

Conclusion

While Polanyi’s two arguments fare poorly when subjected to careful scrutiny, we saw in the discussion of the first argument that Polanyi’s work taken as a whole does raise serious doubt about the pretensions of non-judgmental political science. But must the issue be forced? Is it possible that either of two explanations—that offered by the passionate actor in the grips of his moral ideals as well as that offered by the non-judgmental observer—satisfactorily accounts for the behavior of the actor? If so, we would reach an acceptable result through two quite different paths.

This, however, does not seem right. The reason for discomfort is stated repeatedly throughout Polanyi’s writings, but is absent from his explicit arguments against non-judgmental social science: as elaborated in the commentary on Polanyi’s initial argument, a vital element of that which the political scientist is examining is missing from his value-free explanation. This is because what the political scientist aims to capture cannot, in two respects, be experienced through the prism of non-judgmental observation. In *Personal Knowledge*, Polanyi states, “According to the logic of commitment, *truth is something that can be thought of only by believing it.* It is then improper to speak of another person’s mental operation as leading to a true proposition in any other sense than that it leads him to something the speaker himself believes to be true.”²⁶ For Polanyi, then, a political scientist does not understand the revolutionary unless he (the political scientist) accredits the truth of the ideal that infuses the actor he is studying.²⁷ The heart of what the political scientist is studying is personal, and the personal is precisely what is overlooked by the non-judgmental approach. Or, to put the matter somewhat differently, everyone concedes that the political scientist is concerned with the facts. But, “[t]o ask what I would believe to be the true facts of a matter, if I were somebody else, means simply to ask what somebody else would believe them to be. This kind of question is interesting...but it is clearly not a question concerning the facts of

the matter.”²⁸ For Polanyi, “the thought of truth implies a desire for it, and is to that extent personal.”²⁹ While that which the revolutionary desires is universal and hence not itself personal, it is available to the political scientist only to the degree that he participates in the personal. This in turn points to the other aspect of the revolutionary actor that cannot be experienced through the non-judgmental approach, namely, the personal responsibility exercised when one commits himself to the truth. One pursues the truth, and accepts the attendant risks, because he understands that he is called to do so. It is in obedience to such a calling that one makes up his mind (and then acts).³⁰ To complete his task, the political scientist must join the revolutionary in perceiving and responding to that calling. This achievement on the part of the political scientist captures the meaning that accounts for the behavior of the revolutionary. It is not, of course, a replication of those actions themselves.

In closing, let us return to the hypothetical non-judgmental political scientist and erstwhile revolutionary. When he conducts his value-free observations, he emerges as a schizoid personality. To the degree that he remains in his account of political life oblivious to the personal dimension of the revolutionary (to his commitment to moral standards, to the standards’ perceived authority, to the call to submit and respond, to the risk he is willing to run in the name of the standards, etc.), he becomes someone other than the revolutionary, and hence is split in two. And, just as our revolutionary when acting as a value-free observer overlooks something vital about himself, so too does the non-judgmental political scientist ignore a central fact about those he is studying (while remaining inattentive to that same element in his own life). But such inconsistency on the part of the non-judgmental political scientist is not, as alleged by Polanyi, in and of itself disabling. While such an approach to the study of political action is indeed flawed, this is for reasons other than those found in Polanyi’s formal arguments against non-judgmental political science. In his account of moral deliberation and the pursuit of moral truth, Polanyi succeeds where these two arguments fail.

Appendix

Below are Polanyi’s two arguments against non-judgmental political science. They occur on pages 33-34 of the article. An endnote is omitted. All emphasis is Polanyi’s.

[T]his doctrine can be proved to be inconsistent by two complementary arguments, one starting from the existence of the scientist as a moral agent (outside the range, as he alleges, of his scientific activity) and examining the implications of his (extra-scientific) moral judgments for the statements he makes as a scientist; the other moving from his allegedly value-free scientific pronouncements to his (extra-scientific) moral judgments.

The first argument is as follows: (1) All men, whatever their professions, make moral judgments. (2) When we claim that an action of ours is prompted by moral motives, or else when we make moral judgments of others. . . we invariably refer to moral standards *which we hold to be valid*. Our submission to a standard has universal intent. . . our appeal to moral standards necessarily claims to be *right*, that is, binding on all men. (3) Such a claim entails a distinction between *moral truth* and *moral illusion*. (4) This distinction in turn entails a distinction between two types of motivation. The awareness of moral truth is founded on the recognition of a valid claim, which can be reasonably argued for and supported by evidence; moral illusion, in contrast, is compulsive, like a sensory illusion. (5) Thus once we admit, as we do when we acknowledge the existence anywhere of valid moral judgments, that true human values exist and that people can be motivated by their knowledge of them, *we have implicitly denied the claim that all human*

actions can be explained without reference to the exercise of moral judgment. For to observe...that the Hungarian writers rebelled against the practice of faked trials because they *believed* this practice to be wrong, leaves open the question *why* they believed this. If true human values exist, the Hungarians may not have been driven by economic necessity, propaganda, or any other compulsion; they may have been rebelling against a *real evil*, and may have done so *because they knew it to be evil*. But this cannot be decided without first establishing whether faked trials are in fact evil or not. Therefore: (6) *This value judgment proves indispensable to the political scientist's explanation of their behavior.*

The inconsistency of a science professing that it can explain all human action without making value judgments, while the scientist's private actions are said to be often motivated by moral motives, can be more simply demonstrated the other way round. If the social scientist can explain all human action by value-free observations, then none of his own actions can claim to be motivated by moral values. Either he exempts himself from his own theory of human motivation, or he must conclude that all reference to moral values—or any other values—are meaningless: are empty sounds.

Endnotes

¹Michael Polanyi, "The Message of the Hungarian Revolution," in *Knowing and Being: Essays by Michael Polanyi*, Marjorie Grene, ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 24-39. (The quotation is from page 33.) The appendix to the present paper contains the text of Polanyi's arguments.

²Polanyi adds that the moral illusion is "compulsive." But compulsion is not in and of itself problematic. The important question is the source of the compulsion: "While compulsion by force or by neurotic obsession excludes responsibility, compulsion by universal intent establishes responsibility." This observation is from *Personal Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974; first published in 1958), 309. See, too, page 313: "[T]he effort of reaching out to reality involves...compulsion of oneself to make oneself conform to reality." Polanyi later refers to this as "self-compulsion" (318) and says that compulsion is the subjective aspect of our participation in knowing, where such participation is "personal" (324).

³See the appendix.

⁴Michael Polanyi, "Logic and Psychology," *American Psychologist*, 23 (1968), 28-29.

⁵*Ibid.*, 29.

⁶Cf. "The Unaccountable Element in Science," in *Knowing and Being*, 119: "Strictly speaking, the premises of science are today what the discoveries of tomorrow will reveal them to be." Polanyi later adds, "[T]he greatness of a discovery lies in its fruitfulness" (*ibid.*).

⁷"The Logic of Tacit Inference," in *Knowing and Being*, 138. See, too, *Personal Knowledge*: "[A]s there is no rule to tell us at the moment of deciding on the next step in research what is truly bold and what merely reckless, there is none either for distinguishing between doubt which will curb recklessness and thus qualify as true caution, and doubt which cripples boldness and will stand condemned as unimaginative dogmatism" (277, emphasis added). In a similar vein, Polanyi earlier states, "Some of these doubts may turn out one day to have been as wanton, as bigoted and dogmatic as those of which we have now been cured" (275). We do not and cannot know now. The matter will become clear only in retrospect. Cf. 285.

⁸See, for example, "Tacit Knowing: Its Bearing on Some Problems of Philosophy," in *Knowing and Being*, 171.

⁹*Ibid.*, 172.

¹⁰*Personal Knowledge*, 320.

¹¹The most important measure of being right is whether the belief is consistent with reality. For Polanyi belief is a conjecture (as well as a personal commitment) “in search of a valid result” (322). He observes that “if time could be suspended” we would see that at any given moment our reasons for belief are not “wholly specifiable” and must therefore be “objectively inadequate” (320). Especially noteworthy in Polanyi’s reference to suspended time is the implicit admission that reasons for belief (or disbelief) continue to arise indefinitely. The question of truth, theoretically at least, is never closed.

¹²Readers familiar with *Personal Knowledge* will in the case of the ancient Incan be reminded of Polanyi’s extended discussion of the “conceptual framework” of the primitive African people known as the Azande (see 287-294). Ranking among the most intriguing analyses offered in the book, this discussion issues in the following startling claim: “I conclude that what earlier philosophers have alluded to by speaking of coherence as the criterion of truth is only a criterion of *stability*. It may equally stabilize an erroneous or a true view of the universe. The attribution of truth to any particular stable alternative is a fiduciary act which cannot be analysed in non-committal terms...[T]here exists no principle of doubt the operation of which will discover for us which of two systems of implicit beliefs is true—except in the sense that we will admit decisive evidence against the one we do not believe to be true, and not against the other. Once more, the admission of doubt proves here to be as clearly an act of belief as does the non-admission of doubt” (294). While Polanyi’s use of the terms “erroneous” and “true” clearly indicates that he does not subscribe to epistemological relativism (he also earlier states that “Azande are quite wrong when [selectively pointing to facts] for protecting their superstitions”), some readers will nonetheless be apt to understand him in such a fashion. Perhaps fearing this reaction, Polanyi later returns to the Azande (318-319) to say that while their witch doctor “is clearly a rational person, his rationality is altogether deluded...[A]s an interpretation of natural experience [his intellectual system] is false” (318). The distinction between error and truth becomes clear as we “strive for a more correct experience” (319).

¹³This is the title of Chapter 5, Section 8 of *Personal Knowledge*. Extended examination of the “educated mind” promises to unlock the whole of Polanyi’s thought.

¹⁴One such statement occurs on p. 280 of *Personal Knowledge*: “[I]t is part of the Christian faith that its striving can never reach an endpoint at which, having gained its desired result, its continuation would become unnecessary. A Christian who reached his spiritual endpoint in this life would have ceased to be a Christian.” Cf. 199 as well as the final sentence in the book.

¹⁵Strauss’s analysis is contained in the essay “‘Relativism’” (the title is enclosed in quotation marks), which may be found in Thomas L. Pangle, ed., *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 13-26.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸“The Unaccountable Element in Science,” 113.

¹⁹“The Logic of Tacit Inference,” 140.

²⁰“The Structure of Consciousness,” in *Knowing and Being*, 215.

²¹ See *Personal Knowledge*, 312: A person’s mind “is the focus which we look at by attending subsidiarily to the utterances and actions unспецифически co-ordinated by his mind.”

²²“Joining the actor” is ambiguous, and the ambiguity raises an important question. In the first sense of “join,” the political scientist recognizes *now* (as he observes) what the actor recognized or is recognizing. Actor and observer have in common a sense of immediacy as well as the compulsion mentioned in note 2 above. In the second sense of “join,” the political scientist’s observation is informed (i.e. made accurate and comprehensive) through the effect of a recognition *that occurred in the past*. Under the first conception, the political scientist shares the actor’s passion; under the second, the political scientist is able accurately to understand due to the

effect of a passion that existed at an earlier time. There are those (one thinks, for example, of Machiavelli) that would regard the absence of passion to be an important asset in political calculation, and essential to effectiveness. Even for Classical philosophy a distancing from immediate passion (a bracketing via philosophical ascent) would be a sign of superior character. Polanyi, however, consistently argues to the contrary: some things are simply not to be understood in the absence of passion. The highest possibilities are realized only through wholeheartedly (and presently) giving oneself to them. Memory is not enough.

²³See “The Logic of Tacit Inference,” 150-151: “[O]ur perception of living beings consists largely in mentally duplicating the active coordinations performed by their function. To this extent our knowledge of life is a sharing of life—a re-living, a very intimate kind of indwelling.”

²⁴“Sense-Giving and Sense-Reading” in *Knowing and Being*, 189.

²⁵See the opening paragraph of the present paper.

²⁶*Personal Knowledge*, 305.

²⁷Does this mean that the political scientist must always concur with the actor that he is studying? The answer is “no.” But, in order to grasp what is to be evaluated, the observer must, like the actor, personally participate in it. The participation is provisional (albeit wholehearted). The political scientist, no less than the actor, subsequently can and ought to be open to confirming and contradictory evidence.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 316. Among the facts to be known are the ideals or values perceived by the actor under study. Polanyi, in other words, denies the fact/value distinction.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 308.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 324. See the entire section, entitled “Acceptance of Calling,” on 321-324.

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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From Morality to Spirituality: Society, Religion and Transformation

Charles Lowney

ABSTRACT Key Words: postcritical epistemology, emergentism, teleology, emergentist ethics, moral philosophy, religion, spirituality, metaphysics, aesthetics, mysticism, God.

In a Polanyian emergentist ethics, moral ways of being and their concomitant interpretive structures come as achievements in response to a heuristic in the human condition. Religious transformation, as seen in mysticism and enlightenment, however, may present a radical, “transnatural” solution of a different order. Polanyi’s understanding of “breaking out” from conceptual frameworks, and his conception that Christian worship promotes a sustained hopeful anguish, are contrasted with a Polanyian “breaking in” to a new framework of knowing and being that provides a happy solution to human suffering. With a new framework, a new spirit, or center, is seen through that provides a different experience of the world. Polanyi’s conceptions of a telic organizing principle, breaking out, and breaking in provide three different conceptions of God.

This paper is the third and final installment of a series of papers titled “From Science to Spirituality.” The entire project is geared to applying Michael Polanyi’s insights on tacit knowing and emergent being to the field of morality, with an expansion to see how this picture may also be used to understand spiritual transformation. In papers one and two, as well as showing its strong ties to virtue ethics, I broadly showed how deontological, consequentialist, sentimentalist and intuitionist insights fit together in an emergentist ethics that is sensitive to the role of tacit knowing, the from-to structure of consciousness, and the process of discovery. Now in paper three, I will venture beyond societal and religious ethics to sort out how Polanyi himself understood spiritual transformation and how it might be better understood given Polanyi’s own epistemology and ontology.

The first paper provided a postcritical understanding of morality by dealing with the puzzle presented by the dissonance between the spirit and the letter of the moral law. The second paper showed how morality can present an emergent reality by dealing with the puzzle of why we should practice virtue for itself. This third paper looks at those same puzzles from a different perspective, and also deals with the puzzle of whether spiritual transformation is in fact a further emergent development that requires new tacit structures, or whether it is a return to some unpoluted original experience of the world.

Paper one showed strong ties between a postcritical and an Aristotelian ethic. Paper two began to show a divergence from an Aristotelian view with the notion of a discontinuity, i.e., a logical gap, that must be crossed in advancing from novice to expert. Paper three will see several more divergences from Aristotle: first, in the possibility of a plurality of moral systems; second, in the notion that happiness can come from the complete disruption of a virtuous life, as one shifts from a moral to spiritual mode of being; and third, in the notion that the advance of human beings may be *telic*, rather than drawn forward by an ultimate teleological end. Conceptualizations regarding being *drawn forward* to a higher goal, *breaking in* to a new tacit structure, and *breaking out* of conceptual frameworks will bring several candidates for referents to the word “God.”

I. Drawn Forward: Following the Spirit *Rather Than* the Law

In “From Science to Morality,” I discussed two main ways the explicit law differs from the spirit of the law. One concerned method, the other concerned content. Following laws provided a training that brings one the proper background that one needs to experience the way of being of the moral virtuoso. The laws were also an incomplete explicit expression of that way of being, which was the objectively best way to be and act, given the nature of people and the community they participate in.

The moral virtuoso is free from rules in the way a piano virtuoso has mastered all the classical techniques and yet can break the rules in the right way to achieve beautiful results unimaginable to the novice. The master attains a new freedom and lives spontaneously out of the spirit rather than the letter of the law. But there are more conservative and more radical ways by which to conceive this transcending of the rules. Aristotle’s way of conceiving moral excellence is the more conservative view. But Polanyi’s conception of emergence and his notion of a logical gap allow for a much more radical—and yet at the same time more humble—view of transcendence. It is radical in allowing for a plurality of natural goals and introducing a notion of conversion; it is humble in acknowledging the possibility that we may not be capable of achieving or even determining an ultimate *telos*. Whereas “From Science to Morality” focused upon a *tension* between the letter of the law and its spirit, here in “From Morality to Spirituality” the focus will be on two ways in which there can be sharper *divisions* between the spirit and the law, as we examine various possible ways of being human, both natural and “transnatural.”

1. *The Multiplicity of Frameworks and Conversion*

For Aristotle, there is one set of first principles and one interpretive framework by which we should live in moral excellence. *Phronesis* is required to unveil, understand and properly apply these principles, and the virtuous person who lives masterfully can follow his instincts rather than any set of rules. One’s sentiments and intuitions are trained in such a way that they indicate the right moral action irrespective of the rule, which may be wrong when the feeling is right. Here, acting out of the spirit rather than the letter of the law involves having the practical wisdom to know when the law does not bluntly apply to a particular situation; it involves the freedom that comes with doing the right thing spontaneously—and the happiness that comes with being the sort of person who performs virtuous activities naturally and willingly.

For Polanyi, as with Aristotle, there is this conservative sense of mastery. When Polanyi talks about how the skill of the expert is not reducible to rules, he still talks about “dwelling in” the rules. Here we are still in the framework where the goals of the rules and their meaning may be similar for the novice as they are for the master, but the master has the tacit coefficients that allow for a better understanding and expertise. Already, however, Polanyi’s structures of tacit knowing, emergent being, and discovery allow for a more radical approach than Aristotle’s. For Aristotle, the conditions that are necessary for happiness must be linearly acquired (and have one recourse for fulfillment), but for Polanyi these conditions can be drawn into place holistically (and may be fulfilled in different ways).

For example, having the right upbringing is essential for Aristotle in a way that it is not for Polanyi. For Aristotle, one might say, the higher level of understanding is built cumulatively on subsidiary experience. But for Polanyi, the focal goal can effect a complete re-organization of the subsidiaries in its service. This may entail qualitative rather than merely quantitative and structural changes. Something new is then added to our subsidiary

awareness that was not there before. The subsidiary ground is set in concrete for Aristotle; it is malleable in the service of a vision for Polanyi. Whereas for Aristotle, someone who is raised outside of the *polis* has no chance of achieving moral excellence, for Polanyi, having a bad start does not insure failure, since we can cross logical gaps through heuristic striving. Those seeking moral excellence might then be capable of achieving it in spite of deficiencies such as not being born into the best sort of life under good laws. A barbarian might immigrate to the *polis*, partake in its tradition, acquire the right experiences, follow the right sort of exemplar, and graduate to its way of being virtuous.¹

Polanyi's way of conceiving clues and their integration thus allows for the possibility of a *conversion* to a new way of being. Since tacit integration is not aggregative but involves a gestalt, shifting to a different moral interpretive framework is likely to bring a complete reevaluation of one's existing knowledge and a different way of experiencing the world in the light of new meanings. Effecting this shift opens one up to as yet unforeseen possibilities, just as genuine discoveries that connect with reality tend to do for Polanyi (*PK*, 201). Advancing to a different understanding of the rules might then be transcending them in a more radical way than in the conservative, cumulative approach. Here, by following the spirit rather than the letter of the law, the law would embody a *different* spirit than one could previously imagine.

As there are radical shifts in interpretive frameworks in science, so there are discoveries of new frameworks in morality, i.e., discoveries of new ways of being. In a radical transformation, even if all the explicit formulations of the rules were kept, they could be interpreted in a radically different way. But even radical transformations can be hidden by the necessity of keeping the same general vocabulary of explicit signs (e.g., "all men are to be treated as equal"²). The shift in framework can thus be subtle enough to be covert; old words and rules are given new meanings, and this ambiguity promotes the conservative, cumulative view Aristotle espouses.³

Advances towards new ways of being are responses to questions that arise from and are rooted in our biology, our common human condition, and our cultural heritage. Thus the structure of knowing and discovery that Polanyi presents seems to suggest that there is not simply one interpretive framework that is understood and practiced differently by different people with lesser or greater degrees of success, but there is a plurality of possible ways to authentically proceed. In the context of morality, different fundamental questions might produce different ways of being moral with equal claim to the good. But they would have an equal claim, of course, only if it were possible to gain an impersonal metaperspective.

2. Plurality, Hierarchy and Teleology

Aristotle provides a hierarchy of being that moves from pure potency at its lowest level to pure act at its highest level, but for Aristotle the species and their *telê* in this structure are considered fixed eternally and there is one right way to be for each. Concomitantly for Aristotle, in the realm of moral discovery there is a linear progress in the inquiry that leads to the unveiling of moral principles.⁴ So for Aristotle both our biology and our morality are set to a fixed *telos*.

Polanyi does acknowledge the movement from potentiality to actualization in the evolution from inanimate matter to life and on to consciousness, but the biology and metaphysics that underwrites Aristotle's notion of a fixed universe with an ultimate *telos* must be revised. These revisions bring significant changes in how we understand the ontic, epistemic and moral orders. The notion of moral emergence—the graduation to

new ways of being—can fit well with Aristotle’s conception of a stratified reality, but does the plurality and dynamism that Polanyi allows make obsolete the sort of hierarchy that Aristotle espouses, with its notions of better and worse, its fixed structure, and its unified end? We will see here that Polanyi’s emergentist ethics does espouse a moral hierarchy and, although it allows for diversity, it also intimates some unified trajectory for the development of humankind. Looking at Polanyi’s conception of biological evolution will give us a handle on the possibilities and limits of a moral evolution.

Polanyi’s notion of emergence provides a hierarchy of being, beginning from inanimate matter, to life, to animals, to man and on to human responsibility. Higher levels emerge as an integrative gestalt that can turn round and control boundary conditions left open at a lower level (*KB*, 154). Polanyi sees no reason to believe that this evolution has come to an end, and he repudiates our ability to know any final natural ends to this process. As Richard Gelwick explains in “Michael Polanyi’s Daring Epistemology and the Hunger for Teleology,” although there is no final pre-ordained *telos* discernable for the hierarchy of being, Polanyi does see what has been called a “telic” or “telenomic” structure to the development of being (Gelwick, *Zygon*, 40:1, 65) that has a counterpart in the advance of our knowing. The notion of a telic structure, derived from the study of biology, brings in purposiveness without bringing in the theological or metaphysical implications of a final cause or goal (Gelwick, 66-67).

For Polanyi, emergence takes place in the context of a “generalized field” (*PK*, 398) or “organizing field” (*KB*, 219) that provides a “gradient of potentiality” (*PK*, 398). Biological systems evolve by being drawn along a gradient of potential to an actualization of particular possibilities that are inherent in a system. “It is a fundamental property of open systems . . . that they stabilize any improbable event which serves to illicit them” (*PK*, 384). This pattern of biological development persists in psychology as we make discoveries about ourselves and reality. Our structures of knowing are drawn to reality, even as we might chase after new emergent realities. Polanyi associates the “mental unease that seeks appeasement” of a question with a “field of forces” that has a “gradient of potentiality” (*PK*, 398; *Meaning*, 176). What was a “chance fluctuation” in nature “releases the action of certain self-sustaining operational principles” (*PK*, 394). What was the unease of a question felt at a deep existential level can become a solution consolidated in a new way of being. This potentiality provides a direction towards which our being or knowing is naturally drawn. It provides a forward focal point that is holistically orchestrated from current conditions. Towards such points we may have our anticipatory intuitions, but just as the apprentice cannot understand the master, there is no assured way of properly predicting or understanding these approaching landmarks from where we are now.

Polanyi’s structure of knowing and discovery and the indeterminate nature of being suggest that there is not simply one correct interpretive framework that is understood and practiced differently by different people; there can be multiple interpretive frameworks incommensurate with each other, each of which may grasp reality in different ways. As Gelwick states, telic structures are “purposive but not predetermined” (68). Free societies are free to responsibly develop in different directions. “Polanyi’s view of reality is essentially creative . . . any philosophical view that denies the freedom of inquiry and of expression to the individual or to the destiny of a society or culture is contrary to Polanyi’s basic standards” (Gelwick, 69). So it remains a possibility that different ontic and heuristic fields may advance in several different directions simultaneously.

But this does not lead to an ontological nor moral relativism for Polanyi, since he has a notion of one reality, one truth and a progress in science that is transferable to morality. One cannot be a responsible human being and a relativist for Polanyi. In spite of any direct incommensurability, a scientist can judge with universal

intent that one interpretive framework catches reality better than another, and she is compelled to commit herself to that framework. Similarly, in the context of morality, one can judge the superiority of one way of being over another with that same universal intent.

The shift to a new paradigm in science might be said to be “better” for explanatory reasons, but can we really say that one way of being is morally better than another? Certainly *within* a moral tradition we can rank-order actions, but how about when competing traditions have different paradigms or when a new paradigm arises within an existing tradition of inquiry? It may seem impossible to distinguish better from worse, higher from lower, especially when a paradigm is intrinsically tied together with a way of being, as it is when we rank order animals above plants, or some human moral systems above others.

We could attempt a value neutral discussion in terms of complexity. Complex systems, biological or social, might be better in that they provide more opportunities for success and reward. They also present greater hazards since there are more opportunities for failure. But the *quality* of the successes and rewards are even more important than the number. So, with regard to human fulfillment, complexity and number alone do not provide adequate measure; quality is also something that must be judged. As John Stuart Mill said,

It is better to be a human dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, are of a different opinion, it is because they know only their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides.⁵

There can be no absolute, explicit standard of proof recommending one system over another, but there is a standard set by personal knowledge. As Mill suggests in the context of judging between higher and lower pleasures, the best and most responsible judge is the person who is capable of experiencing and appreciating both. A person capable of dwelling in both competing frameworks would be in the best position to judge with universal intent which moral framework provides a better answer and a better way to be. Such a person could testify as a reliable witness to a valuable opportunity.

When Polanyi discusses ontological levels, “higher” clearly also means better in terms of quality and not merely complexity. Through evolution, systems are eventually drawn forward toward higher levels quality. There is a gradient of potentiality, an “organizing field,” pulling matter forward toward intelligent and responsible life, and there is also a “heuristic field” (*PK*, 403) present in intelligent, responsible human life that evokes for us both better ways of understanding and better ways of being.

Polanyi presents a picture in which we are drawn forward to become more than we are and to discover more than we know. But Polanyi also affirms that “true knowledge bears on an essentially indeterminate reality” (*KB*, 155). Moral excellence is therefore a precarious achievement recognized by those who are committed to its values. “For human greatness can be recognized only by submission to it and thus belongs to the family of things which exist only for those committed to them” (*PK*, 380). Otherwise put, “truth, beauty or justice... are things which can be apprehended only in serving them” (*PK*, 279).

In the pattern of evolutionary achievement, Polanyi sees that one can postulate organizing principles that bring about the emergent change and lead to the stabilization of new systems. Here Polanyi raises the question of whether these are deterministic, efficient principles *a la* LaPlace, which preordain nature’s end in the first cosmic gases, or whether there is a teleological final cause, *a la* Aristotle, which guides by a “continuous

intensification” of its “external creative agency” (*PK*, 395). The former coheres well with an understanding of science that postulates nothing supernatural; the later coheres well with the notions of field, freedom and responsibility. Polanyi attempts to resolve the dilemma by introducing a notion of a “maturation” by means of an organizing principle (*PK*, 395-396), which, as far as science can surmise, is telic and finite rather than ultimate and eternal.

The project of scientism to chart a complete reduction of all beings to lifeless simples and deterministic laws is foiled in Polanyi’s conception of emergence—we must postulate higher-order ordering and telic structures—but this does not thwart a scientist’s ability to identify and study subsidiary mechanisms, nor does it leap to a finalistic, teleological end as an all-encompassing solution to the emergence of life and consciousness: “though biotic achievements are said to be unspicifiable, we do claim the capacity for identifying and appraising them; nor is their scope unlimited or the range of their resourcefulness unbounded” (*PK*, 399). Though Polanyi recognizes that we know more than we can say, he is also careful here not to say more than we can know.

3. Society, Religion and Transformation: Two Further Senses of Spirit vs. Law

For Polanyi, in contrast to Aristotle, we may be evolving without a fixed final *telos*, and the creation or discovery of a higher level or principle is not merely a gradient of increase in the same rational framework; it can provide a meaning that effects a complete re-evaluation of all that precedes it. Two further senses of “law” rather than “spirit” derive from the plurality of natural goals and from the possibility of goals that push beyond the bounds of what we currently understand as natural.

As we have seen, Polanyi’s emergent ontology and tacit epistemology open up to a much more pluralistic view than Aristotle could entertain. The moral master’s way of being embodies the answers to the heuristic passion of a community. Since there are different subsets of society, there may be different moral masters within it. With a broad brush, one can see the difference between secular and religious morality as different types of interpretive frameworks with much overlap. Each framework has structural support in a community that engages in practices and obeys laws that carry its way of being. Each has its exemplars of the best way of being: there is the model citizen engaging in public life and there is the religious saint, or a more advanced practitioner, who is perhaps enrolled in a holy order.

When less division occurs between church and state, as in Aristotle’s culture, there is perhaps more common support for a unified moral framework with its experienced expert exhibiting its unified ideal way of being. When more division occurs, then following the “spirit”—understood as mastering a religious interpretive framework—rather than the “law”—understood as civic, secular law—can cause a larger divergence, and can create a choice between following the spirit in defiance of the law, or vice versa. This sense of spirit vs. law finds its source in conflicts between two different general sorts of interpretive moral frameworks that emphasize different questions and demand different levels of engagement.

Mystical experience or the experience of enlightenment provides for a much stronger sense for “following the spirit *rather than* the law.” Here one may break out of the human condition and natural goals into a new way of being which transcends good and evil as it is typically conceived in both religious and civic moralities. The mystic transcends, reinterprets or rejects the bulk of common cultural funds of law in order to follow the spirit and moves beyond most—and perhaps all—interpretive frameworks by which judgments are made. This prospect can present great dangers for both secular and religious traditions and cultural norms. Following

this spirit might break any common rational guidelines for action. As Kierkegaard points out, the knight of faith who is following the spirit rather than the ethical law can seem not only irrational but absurd. In *Fear and Trembling*, he provides the example of Abraham, who was willing to kill his only son to obey the higher decree of God. But in following the spirit of God, mystics such as Simone Weil and Meister Eckhart will speak of the spirit of divine love. The actions that are spontaneously called forth in this way of being would be actions consistent with a higher law of love. They would transcend our notions of good and evil, but would ultimately issue in actions that we, as novices, are likely to call good.

Polanyi also saw the advance into a religious spirit as an achievement of richer meanings and put it on a higher level of his hierarchy than scientific knowing (*Meaning*, 180; Clark, *TAD* 32:2 [2005-06], 30). Religion presents a meaningful experience of the world that is an opportunity for human development. How Polanyi conceived of religion, however, is vague and open to dispute (see, Clark's discussion, 25-36). In the next section, "From Suffering to Enlightenment," I will present the possibility that mystical experience is a religious achievement that bears a structure similar to the moral systems we have discussed so far, but that it opens up to a new order of satisfying answers to perennial questions—it may therefore present a telic advance that we are being drawn towards. Polanyi himself, however, related mystical experience to a momentary liminal awareness created after one breaks out from one system of human meaning and before indwelling a new system. Hence it is indeed a different order of experience—and also a telic advance, but not because it provides a better, more comprehensive solution, but because it undercuts all solutions rendered by ordinary meaning formation. For Polanyi, spiritual transformation is not a type of discovery similar to those in science, craft and morality, which break through into a new comprehensive integration of knowing and being; it is a break out of such integrations. What follows is therefore a Polanyian view, but it is not Polanyi's view. Polanyi's own view will be contrasted in a section III.

II. Breaking in: From Suffering to Enlightenment

Polanyi espouses a notion of higher and lower in both being and in understanding that is recognized and affirmed only in an interpretive framework capable of grasping those higher levels. There is progress in advancing from one system and its questions, to a system that dissolves or answers those questions. But progress in being is no longer necessarily assured by an ultimate causal *telos*, and progress in understanding is no longer certified by an impersonal frame of reference.

In spite of the various goals different religions and social moral orders may provide, the notion of telic advance does permit the notion of a step to a new level of being that we are drawn forward toward out of the field of our common human condition. The experience of spiritual enlightenment might then present such a level. Because of the magnitude of the logical gap involved in such a transformation, steps towards this level are perhaps faltering. But this sort of achievement appears to have been scouted by religious exemplars and may be the source of those religious structures that seek to support transformations to an enlightened way of being. These traditions can present methodologies for experiencing the same sort of transformation that the mystic who originated the tradition first experienced. This path from the human condition to a spiritual enlightenment appears to break us out of our everyday experience and breaks into an experience of the divine, or rather, it transforms our everyday experience into an experience of the divine.

1. Breaking Out of the Human Condition

The fundamental human experience that appears to open up to this illumination is the problem of human suffering asked at a visceral and personal level. Siddhartha Gautama, for example, questioned the existence of suffering and death, and his heuristic passion drove him on to his answer in a transformative experience of enlightenment. Once he achieved this new way of being and its framework for understanding, he became the compassionate Buddha and the entire aspect of the world changed from sorrow and despair to joy; all his experience with suffering was redeemed with new meaning.

Another path to a happiness that overcomes suffering is called the “way of the cross” in Christian mystic tradition. This path to a new way of being can exist outside conventional cultural bounds, and so generally moves away from society’s support for its sustenance.⁶ Through great suffering, one can come to enlightenment. But this is absurd from the perspective of most cultural or societal moral traditions. Aristotle, for example, rejects this “way of the cross” as a way to happiness. When he discusses the necessity of having some external goods for happiness, he says,

Some maintain, on the contrary, that we are happy when we are broken on the wheel, or fall into terrible misfortunes, provided that we are still good. Whether they mean to or not, these people are talking nonsense (*NE*, 1153b 19-20).

So foreign to Aristotle’s moral interpretive framework was this conception of happiness that he recognized that the word might not hold the same meaning for those who claimed to be made “happy” by such devastating torments. But one can see how old integrations—beliefs and meanings surrounding the person—can be disrupted by such experiences. Desires and aversions, constructed from infancy, dissolve. The ego, which is used as the principal focal lens through which the world is seen, becomes shattered. A new integration and answer to the question of human suffering takes its place. For the mystic, the integrating lens of the ego is completely disrupted and, if “we are still good” and not thrown into bitter resentment by our misfortunes, the new focal integration that one looks at the world *through* is described as God or an experience of love. The feeling integral to this new egoless way of being, free from attachment to egoistic desires, is a joy or happiness beyond ordinary conception, and the words in our vocabulary used to describe and express it are seen as inadequate.

The sort of apprenticeship typically involved here seems to violate the normal progression one sees from apprentice to expert. One does not merely practice the rules, as a pianist does, until the rules no longer constrain, but free one to perform masterfully and break the rules. The practice itself is often a radical deconstruction of meaning, a *via negativa*, in which one’s reason is confounded by paradox and mystery. The structure, however, is similar to that which Polanyi describes for the process of discovery; meaningful experience in the end is reclaimed, but the depth at which it first strikes down our normally constructed meanings for ego and world is profound, even to the point of altering our cognitive perception of the world.

Such a transformed way of being may answer pervasive and deep questions about the best way to live. We recognize an enlightened moral master as happy and blessed, though not in a way we understand, and we may be called to seek apprenticeship to his or her wisdom. This calling is perhaps a telic effect of our sharing in the questions of the master and having an anticipatory awareness that this way of being can provide the answers that we seek.

2. *The Law of Love and Compassion*

Two moral masters of this genre might be the Buddha and Jesus. In apprenticing oneself to them, by imitating their actions and by following the teachings expressed in their explicit sayings, one might hope to have a similar sort of transformation to a new way of being that overcomes suffering and provides happiness. The paths to enlightenment or salvation that sprung from these masters emphasize the practice of virtues, but not quite the same catalogue of virtues that Aristotle recommended. The saint is humble and selfless, and is not Aristotle's magnanimous personality. The Eightfold Noble Path and the Sermon on the Mount encourage virtuous behavior, and a new set of rules can be garnered from them, as attention is directed toward transformative power of compassion and love.

In Pauline theology there is the eschatological notion that the shift from the Old Testament to the New began a transformation in which the spirit of God broke into human history in a new way with the result that the spirit *rather than* the law should be followed.⁷ What was appropriate for one stage in the salvific history of humanity was no longer appropriate for a transformed way of being. Living out of the spirit now meant that laws could be transcended and ultimately there was only one law, as Saint Augustine formulated it later: "Love, and do what you will."⁸

To achieve, or be graced with, this spiritual transformation and to follow the living spirit was to do more than dwell in any particular set of religious or civic laws. Spiritual transformation of this order—that allows one to live out of this love—may be a precarious achievement that still requires more exemplars and more articulate structures in place to more widely sustain it, so that this love may transform not merely the occasional individual sporadically, but humanity at large.

3. *Religions and the Religious Spirit*

In part two of this series, "Morality: Emergentist Ethics and Virtue *For Itself*," I enlisted Polanyi's from-to structure of tacit knowing and the emergence of a discovery to show how doing what the good person does, without a further objective implied by one's current interpretive understanding, could open one up to the sort of reconstitution required to achieve the way of being of the moral virtuoso. I thus contend that the religions that flower from the example and teachings of enlightened religious innovators are originally meant to bring us to a place where we can dwell in the way of being of the innovator, who lived out of this experience of love in response to fundamental questions regarding how we should *be* in the world. There are undoubtedly many varieties of religious experience and many sources of and purposes for religions. What I am stressing here as spiritual transformation is the mystical enlightenment or awakening that is a theme common to many religious and philosophic traditions. Plato discussed an ascent to an experience of the Good, and a release from material desires; Hinduism has the notion of *moksha* or release, and the identification of the individual soul with Brahman; Buddhism sees the end of suffering and the achievement of Nirvana through the elimination of grasping; Christianity has the conception of the beatific vision, and the submission of the individual will to the will of God; and the Sufi tradition of Islam aims for a unity with the Friend, who becomes the air to our whistling reed.

The same structure of discovery that Polanyi outlines and that we have seen at work in the development of moral systems also seems at work in these experiences. There is a dissolution of clues as one struggles with deeper questions and a re-formation to a new comprehensive focus that provides the unspecifiable context for the solution. The ego and its will are dissolved and consciousness comes to experience a unity with a center

beyond itself and perceives this experience as the ultimate happiness. The world is then seen through this new joint comprehension, in a way similar to the way we look at particulars through concepts, or facts through paradigms. The ambient feeling of this way of being in the world is happy and the actions generated are generous and compassionate.

Religions seem to have this core religious experience at the base of their practices and rules, stressed to greater or lesser degrees, but there is reason to be cautious of saying that there is one sort of spiritual transformation. This order of experience comes in different flavors, is understood in different ways, and is supported to greater and lesser extents by a variety of religious communities.⁹ There are common aspects, but by dwelling in different systems and practices one might expect the new joint comprehension to be different as well. Also, since some practices and rules are born from the *conception* of the good rather than living through an experience of the good, there is reason for caution in the generalization from one form of mystical experience to a religion and back again. Religions tend to become vehicles of socialization rather than transformation. The morality of religions tends toward a version of spiritual transformation made safe for society, with only glimpses of the radical transformations experienced by its exemplar. And even when a religion clearly provides a way to this sort of transformation, one can practice religion as a system of rules and never achieve the religious or spiritual transformation that it could foster.

The goal of practicing morality is similar in both spiritual transformation and in the shift to a new social or religious morality: one imitates to become like the exemplar, and the process of discovery—from imitation and moral behavior fostered by law, to conversion and mastery—is the same, but the order of the change, witnessed by the intensity of the mystic vision, seems to be different. Though there is doubtless much overlap, I therefore want to maintain a distinction between this religious or spiritual transformation, and its religious spirit, on the one hand and societal and religious morality and its spirit on the other.¹⁰ Indeed, Polanyi's understanding of mystical experience will give us stronger reason to divide social and religious morality from genuine religious experience. But although Polanyi discusses the sort of happy unity with God or cosmos that the enlightened mystic can achieve, he appears doubtful that this sort of experience can be generated or sustained by Christian worship and practices.

III. Breaking Out: A New Experience of Being

In our knowing, we create structures of meaning that allow us to understand and experience being. These structures are joint comprehensions from tacit clues, and these comprehensions can connect us with comprehensive entities that exist in reality. Our joint comprehensions to a focal meaning or a unified entity can be an integration of incompatible elements. Some of these Polanyi describes as sustainable in a “natural” manner and are not achievements that require a continued effort to maintain, for example, the unity of two discrete images in binocular vision. Other integrations are achievements that do require a special effort. These integrations are not natural for us, though they may still reveal something that is independently real, and there is also the possibility that some may become more natural with the placement of more supporting structure. These integrations Polanyi calls “transnatural” (*Meaning*, 125). The achievement of the experience of God by mystics is then a transnatural integration of the incompatible elements of the universe and human living into a unified whole bearing meaning, i.e., a cosmos (*PK*, 198).

The spirit of love as witnessed in the lives of mystic saints might then display a transnatural, if not supernatural, source of religious motivation, which, in some flavors, encourages communal living with an

emphasis on manifesting the love of God, i.e., the reality revealed by the joint comprehension of clues. But according to Polanyi's epistemology and ontology, in achieving this transformation we might not be operating out of the love of an *infinite* creator, but out of a point of integration beyond our particular activities, i.e., an emergent transhuman reality revealed by a transnatural effort.

Polanyi's own epistemological theory and its application to science, crafts and morality would seem to indicate that a new interpretative structure is created through the pursuit of answers to questions. This, however, does not appear to be Polanyi's own view of religious and spiritual traditions. Apparently, Polanyi's view is that there is no *new* structure created in the experience of God, but that the ordinary structures of our human design are momentarily thwarted. Also, he suggests that the solution of the mystic, which I have described as the communion of consciousness with a point beyond the ego, does not bring about a *happy* solution to the problems guiding the heuristic endeavor wrought by the human condition (*Meaning*, 180). Following the path set by some religious innovators, including the Christian path Polanyi explicitly embraced, ultimately does not bring blessed happiness but hopeful anguish (*PK*, 198).

1. Mysticism and Breaking Out

Consistent with the picture I have painted above and in section II, Polanyi looks at God as "the focal point that fuses into meaning all the incompatibles in the practice of religion" (*Meaning*, 156). Polanyi discusses the mysticism of Pseudo-Dionysius and the *via negativa* as a way to an experience of God and says this way "invites us, through a succession of 'detachments', to seek in absolute ignorance union with Him who is beyond all being and beyond all knowledge."¹¹ Through detachment, the Christian mystic comes to see things then not focally, but as part of a cosmos, as features of God" (*PK*, 197-8).

So Polanyi here posits that the experience of God is a way of experiencing the world as clues to an unknown, unknowable joint focus and, at the same time, each of those clues radiate with a new significance provided by the integration they bear upon. As stated above, and consistent with Polanyi's recourse to telic rather than teleological causes, this new center of experience might not be infinite and all-powerful. Polanyi here may be indulging the mystic's beliefs about her own experience, since "God" here is not referring to a transnatural, finite center drawing us forward into a new way of being, but to the ultimate, infinite joint comprehension of all being.

But here is where Polanyi's understanding of what happens in mystic and religious experience becomes ambiguous. Polanyi's talk of "cosmos" seems to put the mystic's discovery in Polanyi's typical ontic and epistemological structure, in which the achievement of the Christian mystic's experience is a new integration of tacit clues, but Polanyi frames this discussion in the context of "breaking out." The mystic's experience is thus seen as a variety of an experience that takes place *after* one's old interpretive framework has disintegrated in the face of an important question but *before* a new framework is dwelled in. It is an experience of *breaking out* that comes before a new *breaking in*.

In the usual process of discovery in science, one breaks out from one framework in which the contents of the mind are constrained and understood, and breaks into another "more rigorous and comprehensive" framework. This happens in the way one might shift from seeing a rabbit to a duck in the classic illustration of a gestalt switch. But somewhere in between, after "bursting the bounds of disciplined thought" there is "an intense if transient moment of heuristic vision." Polanyi speculates that while the mind is breaking out, and before

it has broken in “the mind is for the moment directly experiencing its content rather than controlling it by the use of any pre-established modes of interpretation: it is overwhelmed by its own passionate activity” (*PK*, 196).

What we experience briefly, even accidentally, in the process of discovery, the mystic aims for deliberately. Access via a *via negativa* would seem to indicate that this experience of the universe is available only with the radical breakdown of all humanly developed meaning structures; a comprehensive disruption of all our meanings.¹² Mystical experience for Polanyi thus comes to be an experience of the universe as it is *in itself* without any of our habitual constructions from clues to focal meanings in play, or at least not those normally engaged in the process of “observation and manipulation,” both of which, according to Polanyi, take up objects in the service of a further focal meaning (*PK*, 197).¹³

For Polanyi, “mysticism...breaks through the screen of objectivity and draws on our pre-conceptual capacities of contemplative vision” (*PK*, 199). This is an experience of things without their playing a role as subsidiary clues for *our* meanings; we experience “the inherent quality of our experience for its own sake” (*PK*, 197). But, at the same time, Polanyi seems to recognize the impossibility of eradicating our conceptual frameworks. The very possibility of giving up all humanly constructed tacit structure for an original experience of things in themselves is in deep tension with Polanyi’s own epistemology. Polanyi uses the unfortunate metaphor of conceptual frameworks creating a “screen between” us and reality (*PK*, 197)—as if there were a pure way of seeing things—whereas the deep value of Polanyi’s work is to show us that our meaning structures normally provide our very *access* to reality. Our meanings provide a conduit rather than a screen—or a screen that is a better or worse interface rather than a barrier. We therefore cannot sustain a seeing that completely abandons all interpretive frameworks. This mystical experience would thus be a continually thwarted transnatural effort for Polanyi, and that insight is reflected in how Polanyi understood the practice of Christianity.

2. *Happiness or Hopeful Anguish?*

In science and in moral traditions, the heuristic of questions leads to consummatory and satisfying answers brought by new paradigms or new ways of being. One would thus think that religion could also provide an answer to the problem of suffering with an experience of God or Love that is a satisfying solution. But Polanyi sees the practice of ritual worship in Christianity to be different than any other heuristic practice geared toward discovery and achievement. Worship, according to Polanyi, does allow us to “see God” by allowing us to dwell in the right sort of incompatibles,¹⁴ but

the dwelling of the Christian worshipper within the ritual of divine service differs from any other dwelling within a framework of inherent excellence, by the fact that this dwelling is not enjoyed...The ritual of worship is expressly designed to induce and sustain this state of anguish, surrender and hope...the indwelling of the Christian worshipper is therefore a continued attempt at breaking out, at casting off the condition of man, even while humbly acknowledging its inescapability (*PK*, 198).

I have presented the possibility that something like a *via negativa* through suffering and its contemplation might be a path to a way of being that brings happiness. Mystical enlightenment might then be a *solution* to fundamental questions raised by the human condition. For me, this inquiry progressed along the stages of discovery, from the question, through the dark night, and to its *Eureka* achievement. For Polanyi, in contrast, for worshipping Christians this human question is forever nobly stalled at the dark night of the soul.

“Christian worship... is like an obsession with a problem known to be insoluble, which yet follows, against reason, unswervingly, the heuristic command: Look at the unknown!” (PK, 199).

Polanyi is unclear on whether the same stunted vision he presents for Christian worship, is also the plight and reward of the Christian mystic, or if he sees the mystic—who experiences the world as cosmos—to be happily living out of the answer to his quest. Polanyi seems to indicate that the goal of the *via negativa* is indistinguishable from the ideal experience of the Christian worshiper when he suggests that the mystic’s experience may be a short-cut to understanding Christian worship. He says that “breaking out of our normal conceptual framework[s]” makes us ““become like little children,”” which is “a short-cut to the understanding of Christianity” (PK, 198; *Meaning*, 129). But an *enjoyed* fulfillment of that ideal goal seems only available through the short-cut, if at all. So it may be that Polanyi considers mystical experience to be, like religious worship, a continually thwarted effort at a solution and a transnatural integration that is impossible to sustain.

3. Enlightenment: New Structure or the Eradication of Structure?

I believe that part of what motivated Polanyi to stop at the dark night, if he did, was his answer to the question of whether mystical experience should be understood as the consciousness that emerges when there is a *negation of all interpretive frameworks*, or whether mystical experience is the development of a new way of being with a *new interpretive framework*. Polanyi seems to look at the *via negativa* as a “radical anti-intellectualism” (PK, 198; *Meaning*, 129). He understood its forward focal point to be an unintelligible and invisible God. Perhaps he did not then see how an articulate answer could possibly be provided for our basic moral questions when reason is abandoned and when the interpretive center is so opaque as to be invisible.

Polanyi seems to have supposed that mystical experience reverts to the experience of things as they are before our purposes conscript them, and that the simple eradication of conceptual structure brings about some “unfathomable intuition” (*Meaning*, 128). There are indeed *prima facie* reasons to suspect that there is no new structure: the all-encompassing nature of the *via negativa* and its attack on our meanings; the absence of an attachment to desires stirred by our ordinary meanings; the surrender of the self or ego, which is usually the center that the *from-to* integrations serve; and the immersion in the present and the particular, which indicates a lack of concern with the further integrations governed by our meanings and their concomitant purposes.

But there are also reasons to suspect that new structure is involved: the suspicion that this experience is not available to other animals, but that one must pass through language and ego first; the heuristic satisfaction of the experience for the mystic or suffering pilgrim; the accompanying feeling of wonder or bliss as opposed to apathy, meaningless despair, or some neutral emotion; and the feeling that there is some meaning and wholeness that the self is caught up in—a new center that it is in communion with—expressed by Polanyi as an experience of cosmos.

As a method, anti-intellectualism and mystery prevail, but in the solution I see as the mystic’s experience this is not necessarily the case. Polanyi at times also seems to recognize that tacit structure and meaning again re-appear in the mystic’s achievement. He says, “religious ecstasy is an *articulate passion* and resembles sensual passion only in the surrender achieved by it” (PK, 198, my italics). The sort of experience of the world and its things that one has seems very dependent on the sort of articulate structure one is breaking out from. The presence of a submerged articulate structure that can be partially specified, by which meaning is experienced, seems indeed the main difference Polanyi sees between the religious worshiper (indwelling in service) or mystic (indwelling

in cosmos), and the Sartrean protagonist who experiences despair rather than hope when his normal structures of meaning are destroyed (*PK*, 199). Some background contexts clear the way for wonder and love, some do not. Even Aristotle's description of the "happiness" that follows from being broken betrays a clue to the presence of a deeper articulate structure at play that helps to mould the resulting experience: happiness comes when the person is broken, but only "provided one is still good."

If the experience of transformation were a simple negation that brought us to a primeval experience of the world—some original perception before the advent of human meanings—one might suppose that the experience is one that many other animals enjoy. But does every animal experience mystical unity? It seems a precondition of this experience that one first have a self to abandon and conceptual frameworks to discard or transcend.

The experience seems to be more than the ego-less experience animals have of the world. Some requirements might be the conceptualizations brought by language; the self-consciousness that the ability to conceptualize brings; the separation from the interpretive frameworks that rational thought can initiate; and even the human sort of suffering that hopes and desires bring. These all may be required stages leading beyond the way of being of animals into the way of being of the saint. We can speculate that there is no way out without going through, and if so, the ground must be prepared.¹⁵

IV. Breaking Through to Happiness: A Transnatural Achievement

In the *Polanyian* picture I presented, spiritual transformation follows the typical pattern of a discovery in knowing and being; a new paradigm of meaning and center of integration is lived out from. In contrast, Polanyi sees the achievement as a breaking free from our structures of knowing and our typical conceptual machinery for understanding being. It may be that the solution to the human condition and the next stage of human development toward which we are drawn is both a breaking out *and* a breaking in—a sort of sideways solution that uses our epistemological machinery differently than normal but *also* manifests a new meaningful way of being with a new integrated, emergent center. It may be that, as Polanyi suspects, there is no new structure of the *same order*, but new possibilities for knowing and being emerge that allow us to transcend our old meaning-making structures and our old ways of living through them.

Looking a little closer at the range of experiences Polanyi brings together in discussing breaking out and their common features helps show that we may not be dealing with a simple negation of structure, nor a new structure of the same type, but a new order of structure.

1. Loss of "Self," Living in the Present, and Virtue For Itself

Polanyi discusses the accidental breaking out that comes in between our scientific achievements; he also discusses the intentional breaking out that can be pursued in ecstatic vision, mystical experience, religious ecstasy, and the aesthetic perception of the Zen master (*PK*, 196-199, *Meaning*, 128). Furthermore, "Music, poetry, painting, the arts, whether abstract or representative—are a dwelling in and a breaking out which lie somewhere between science and worship" (*PK*, 199).

Common to all these experiences, for Polanyi, the ego is lost and the self is submerged or swept up, and what is ordinary takes on a new aspect. In worship rituals, one is caught up in a comprehensive way by the

performance of the practices and one surrenders the self and its will (*PK*, 198). The arts can also help us break out because they “enable a person to surrender himself” (*PK*, 196) and then draw on “pre-conceptual capacities” (*PK*, 199). In contemplation, the interpretive structures the self normally uses can be swept away leaving a consciousness void of the ego’s filtering observations and manipulations. The self is, however, not completely lost; according to Polanyi, we still have the developed structure that is our individual consciousness. This is why Polanyi discusses Zen and the Christian mystic tradition but consciously excludes Yoga, since it goes beyond extinguishing “the intellectual framework of perception” and attempts to extinguish “our very existence as individual transmigrating beings” (*Meaning*, 129). This, at least in intent, goes beyond the aim of an egoless self-consciousness to an extinguishing of self and its consciousness into a universal consciousness, which, in turn, goes beyond what Polanyi sees happening in mystical experience.

Polanyi suggests that by breaking out of the self and its “fixed conceptual frameworks” we are *poured directly into experience* and can “become completely absorbed in the inherent quality of our experience for its own sake” (*PK*, 196-7). Before enlightenment, the seeker drinks tea, after enlightenment, the master drinks tea. Nothing changes but everything changes, because the master is fully present in the drinking of the tea, and drinking tea means nothing beyond the act itself. Yet each act resonates with some greater meaning and satisfaction; each act becomes a sacrament. This mystical experience of being fully present to present experience is confirmed in Simone Weil’s aphorism: “The highest ecstasy is the attention at its fullest.”

This absorption in present experience, for Polanyi, accounts for the “impersonality of intense contemplation” which is a “complete participation of the person in that which he contemplates.” It is a “self-abandonment” that “can be described either as egocentric or as selfless, depending on whether one refers to the contemplator’s visionary act or to the submergence of his person” (197). Contemplation can therefore effect an abandonment of the ego as the focal lens; the ego and its desires and aversions can be “submerged” when one is completely absorbed in present experience.

This notion of performing acts simply for themselves and experiencing them with full attention in the present—and without conscripting them into our own meanings and purposes—lends another dimension to why we should practice virtue *for itself*. Doing virtuous acts for themselves is not merely a way of helping us to break out of an existing conceptual framework; it is perhaps also a way of helping us break out of *all* ordinary conceptual frameworks. Practicing a virtuous act for its own sake would then become a token case of how all our actions should be performed, not only in training, but in mastery.

The dissolution of the “self” or the ego and its concerns would seem enough to pour consciousness into an experience of the present. Conversely, the focus on the present through contemplation or the practice of virtue for itself seems a way to disengage from the ego and its desires, but does a new center with new meanings displace the ego and condition the transformed experience of the world? The ego-submerged experience of artistic contemplation may give a taste of the ego-less experience of enlightened transformation.

2. Aesthetic Experience as a Clue to Structure Beyond Structure

In *Meaning*, Polanyi and Harry Prosch describe in more detail how the self is surrendered and caught up in experience through art and Zen. Poetry, for instance, can reveal the “wonder of our being” that arises by “purging our usual chaotic experience of the film of familiarity” (*Meaning*, 128). Here Polanyi also describes the aesthetic perception of the Zen practitioner, and tells us that the experience of the Zen Buddhist can “throw light on the whole range of other mystical visions” (130).

Art can help one can break out of one's current conceptual framework. This is an important part of the aesthetic experience as understood by Kant who, as Polanyi notes, emphasized *disinterested* contemplation as the main feature of aesthetic experience (*Meaning*, 87).¹⁶ Kant theorized that in good art there was a purposiveness unconstrained by the purpose that would come with a clear concept.¹⁷ This break with a ruling conceptual frame allows us to engage the work of art in a free play of the imagination. Polanyi posits more engagement than do other theorists of aesthetic contemplation—in his understanding of art one is swept up by the meanings generated by the artist—but, in a way similar to Kant's aesthetic theory, one is still suspended by the distance created by the frame around the work of art. We see here then a species of *breaking out* similar to the one experienced by the scientist caught between two paradigms.

The frame created by the meter, the canvas, or the stage allows us to break out of our own meanings and imaginatively dwell in the meanings provided by the artist.¹⁸ But although we are drawn out of our own background meanings, we are not fully consumed within the new meanings that an integration of the artists' clues provide. This is why we do not engage with those meanings as we would our own. For example, we do not call the police when someone is "murdered" on the stage (*Meaning*, 83, 87).

Zen, like art, also aims at breaking us out of our ordinary interpretive framework, but the frame that sets off art from the self and its meanings, and allows us to step into the vision of the artist, at first appears to be missing. Polanyi sees that this frame is indeed there. It is created by the arduous training of the Zen practitioner itself, "which detaches his life from the flow of normal experience" (*Meaning*, 130). Everything is thus experienced as a beautiful artwork as the practitioner is "poured," as Polanyi says, "straight into experience" (*PK*, 197) by virtue of transcending his conceptual frameworks.

Mystical experience, like Zen and art, could be conceived as a comprehensive liberation from conceptual frameworks, but more properly it appears to be a *dwelling in* that still maintains a strange sort of intimate distance from that which is dwelled in. Rather than a new meaning structure generated by the clues of the artist, what we dwell in could still be our same own interpretive framework, i.e., our own self-created meanings. And so Zen would be similar to art, but only at a more comprehensive scale: it engages—yet is disengaged from—all one's interpretive structures. It sees rabbits or ducks as they are in the present, but judges them not—at least not in our ordinary way of judging through principles that have evolved in our typical order of conceptual frameworks.

Being able to dwell in different interpretive frames seems a requirement for aesthetic experience, and so being able to be in a particular relation to an interpretive framework, or in a particular relationship to *all* interpretive frameworks of a similar order, seems integral to the mystical experience. At the very least this points to a new use of our epistemological equipment via which we experience reality. No longer are we moving *through* our ordinary *from-to* structures in which we are consumed by the personal meanings we construct. The normal move *from* clues *to* meanings and meaningful things in conceptual schemes is now made the *to* of some different *from*. We have retained the developed structure of an individual consciousness and we now have a different relation to those meanings because we have either backed away from a familiar type level—or moved up to a new type level.

The sense of wonder at all *things* still requires things and hence, a Polanyian would suspect, some artifact of our integrated meanings; their thingness as rabbits or ducks is still generated by our meanings, but we are no longer *attached* to the meanings in the same way. Concomitantly we are also detached from our own desires. We might still have them, but we are not consumed by them as is the case when we dwell in them without

this distance. And since the enlightened mystic is no longer attached to her desires and their outcomes, one can see in breaking out a *sideways* if not a head on solution to the problem of human suffering: breaking out might somehow converge with breaking in.

3. *From Spirituality to God: A Polanyian Trinity*

Is there some new center to this sideways solution to the human condition that we are seeing *through*, or are in communion with? Is there a new comprehensive meaning, like that generated by the artist, only now generated as the solution to our quest, that is informed by—if not formed by—the experience of breaking out?

If we are breaking through one level of integrations, i.e., the *from-to* of our ordinary conceptualizations, to a totalizing experience whereby we make *that* process (of cognition and concept formation) itself part of the *to* of our *from*, the unity we are looking *from* might be that which generates all things for us.¹⁹ We can speculate then, using clues Polanyi provides regarding seeing things in themselves, that breaking out amounts to stepping behind our ordinary processes of clue integration into things and meanings and into some identification with that which is behind the process of thing and meaning construction itself. The mystic's experience of this center, which is outside of our normal construction of beings in time and space, would then seem to be an experience of Being itself.

Whereas the conception of an emergent center that fuses incompatibles harkens back to the Hegelian concrete universal, the conception of a center that breaks us out from our concepts harkens back to the Transcendental Idealists' noumenal source of the world of experience and Husserl's notion of the transcendental ego. In breaking out—if we are truly negating our conceptual integrations—the mystic would then likely be in touch with a noumenal experience of Being, or the timeless, formless source of all beings. Breaking out would then provide a third Polanyian conception of God that is different from both the telic organizing principle (the Drawing Forward) and the emergent joint comprehension (the Breaking In). We can see Beauty in this experience (since it is the very source of aesthetic experience); and a new level of Truth (since it now looks upon the process of truth and meaning making); and we may recognize, through the testimony of the enlightened, that it is Good (and beyond good and evil). But similar to the telic God, and the emergent-yet-transcendent God,²⁰ this breaking out God could be finite: it may be local to the individual and his or her epistemological and cognitive machinery rather than some universal, eternal point of origin.

But this again is a *Polanyian* conception based on some of the things Polanyi says about breaking out. Polanyi himself apparently sees the unifying center experienced in breaking out as the integration of incompatibles lived by the worshipper, or—equivalently, via a “short-cut”—as the cosmos of the mystic. Polanyi's own candidate for God here is more likely an ultimate integration of all things and meanings into a joint comprehension that *transcends* rather than *negates* of our conceptual frameworks. In Polanyi's understanding of such transcendence, all our experiences would form a new joint comprehension, i.e. the integration of incompatibles. This new “being” above beings is what we would then experience via the integration, rather than Being, i.e., some non-thing we back up into. Contrary to indications Polanyi provides in discussing breaking out, Polanyi's God therefore again appears to be something transcendent that we *break into* seeing rather than something transcendental that we might back into union with when we *break out*.

In sorting out the ambiguities Polanyi presents when attempting to apply his epistemology and ontology to religion and spirituality we have found two possible explanations of spiritual transformation that

might converge, a breaking in and a breaking out. We have also seen Polanyi posit a telic organizing principle that draws humanity and the universe forward in evolutionary achievement through both biological development and intellectual striving. Each of these conceptions brings with it a different understanding of God: God as the eternal and unfathomable Being beyond beings, experienced in *breaking out*; God as the joint comprehension of our virtuous practices and the emergent answer to the human heuristic striving, witnessed in *breaking in*; and God as the telic field that draws matter forward into the noosphere and beyond.

Do we have reason to suspect that these three candidates for God might be the same God? After all, while the experience of *breaking in* generates new goals through the development of new meanings, the experience of *breaking out* and its immersion in present experience would seem to separate one from any meaning-induced goals; the enlightened mystic has the feeling that everything is *already* alright just as it is, and there is really nothing one must do beyond simply being. Yet these apparent incompatibles may be part of a same solution to the human condition.

That these three Gods might be different dimensions of one God, following the metaphor of the Father (breaking out), the Son (breaking in) and the Holy Spirit (drawing forward) may be conjectured through the inklings of clues. For instance, while it is not odd that the mystic experiences *wonder* in breaking out beyond our conceptually conditioned experience of things, it is odd that she experiences love. And while it is not odd that the religious seeker, in overcoming suffering, experiences love (since in overcoming suffering one can properly identify with and feel compassion for those who are still suffering), it is odd that he would feel wonder at each bit of creation. One might then conjecture that perhaps the center we are breaking *through* to is the same for both the Zen master and the enlightened religious innovator. And if these sorts of transformation are called forth through our intellectual struggles with the limits of conceptualization as we search for deeper truth (e.g., in Zen and *via negativa*) or through the heuristic of our human condition (e.g., in Jesus and the Buddha) then we might also expect that the reality revealed by breaking out or breaking in is also the organizing principle that draws life forward from matter.

V. “Look at the Unknown!”

Polanyi looked upon the Christian faith as that of a crucified, rather than a resurrected, God. He saw religion as a melancholy endeavor; the worshiper is in a state of perpetual anguish and unrealizable hope, rather than in a state of happiness. This seems Polanyi’s estimation of the human condition given the limits of our knowledge and political achievements (see *Meaning*, 209, 213-214) rather than a solution to the problems of the human condition. Although Polanyi converted to Christianity from Judaism, he does not see his religion providing a solution, but as continually regenerating the problem. His religion can be comforting, perhaps, in the way that listening to the blues is comforting for the broken soul. It might be that Polanyi’s scenario is an accurate description of current practices. Perhaps the more a spiritual insight grows into a traditional institution, the less capable it is of effecting radical change. It might be that a true transformation is too difficult, or maybe the Pharisees stand at the gates to the kingdom of heaven and turn people away, i.e., they present the law without the ability to generate its spirit. But there does seem to be a solution, a key to the gates, buried at the core of the faith, that perhaps is in need of resurrection. The dark night might then pass to a dawn of a discovery, and the soul might experience an answer that resolves the tension and anxiety Polanyi describes as insoluble.

I see spiritual enlightenment as such an achievement; a solution that became available about 2500 years ago across many cultures in the era of Lao Tzu, Siddhartha Gotama and Socrates, but one still too rare and difficult

to sustain. It is thus possible to break free of the human condition, but, as stated earlier, to conceive this new experience as the unity of human consciousness with an infinite, eternal consciousness, or an ultimate source and *telos* of all, is beyond what we can claim by reason alone.

Polanyi allows for the freedom and open-endedness of being; we are creative in the project of creating ourselves and our meanings. But Polanyi also advocates the notion that we are called forth to higher levels of being and consciousness, some of which may be sustained as achievements in the course of human history. He takes emphasis away from a finalistic teleology and away from the supernatural and instead speaks of more free and finite telic and transnatural goals that are sustained by ontic and epistemic structures.

The way of being of the moral exemplar constitutes an answer to deep and pervasive questions regarding the human condition. The good person builds his character and solves the problems that new situations bring by actively engaging an ever-changing world. In this engagement, he actualizes his own being and displays his way of being in his words and actions. In a Polanyian ethic, the need to transform one's way of being in order to experience the answer achieved by the good person, provides the solution to the paradoxes. We follow the rules and principles of morality dutifully in order to surpass the law and achieve a masterful way of being. We aim to perform virtues for themselves so that we may reconstitute our own being into that of the happy person. And in the case of the saint, who acts with no egoistic desire and lives powerfully in the present, we see a new form of spiritual awareness that performing acts *for themselves* can also generate.

As moral agents we are placed in the context of a community of inquirers driven with questions about the right way to live. We look forward into the unknown with passion as we shape our being through our actions. And we understand that there may be more ahead that we cannot now fully understand.

Endnotes

¹Similarly, although we are in a culture and language distant from that of 4th century B.C.E. classical Greece, we can hope to cross logical gaps to practice virtue in a way that is structurally similar to Aristotle's.

²Another example is how Kant came to understand the command "love one another." For him this "love" was based in duty rather than emotion. How else, Kant asks, could it be possible to love one's enemies? [Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* in *Classics of Western Philosophy*, ed., Steven M. Cahn (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1995), 1066-7].

³Polanyi notices this shift and subsequent misuse of language, for example, when he recognizes how truth values shift "whenever a language apposite to one subject matter is used with reference to another altogether different matter" (*PK*, 282).

⁴See Lowney, *TAD*, 36:1, 2009, 48-49 regarding this *epagoge*.

⁵Mill, *Utilitarianism* in *Classics of Western Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, 1134.

⁶Perhaps because, knowing the outcomes and the ensuing gratitude, only God could get away with inflicting that much suffering.

⁷Consider the passages: "For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God" (Galatians 2:19), and "Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God" (Romans 7:4).

⁸This is the common translation of "*Dilige et quod vis fac*" in St. Augustine's 7th Sermon on the First Letter of St. John. "*Diligere*" can also be translated "respect", which again may bring together the notions of

love and duty.

⁹I wish to thank Drew Leder for his comments on an earlier version of this paper. Relevant here, he wrote, “Buddhists give thanks for the ‘Three Jewels’ – the Buddha, or enlightened being, the ‘Dharma,’ his teachings, and the Sangha, the spiritual community needed to support the aspirant.”

¹⁰Michael Oakeshott worked with a similar distinction between the religious, which escaped time, and religions, whose moralities had timely concerns.

¹¹Here Polanyi cites: V. Lossky, *Essai sur la Theologie mystique de l’Eglise d’Orient*, Paris, 1944, p.25.

¹²The practices push at the very bounds of even meanings that seem based on self-evident conceptual truths, as is clear in the *koans* of Zen Buddhism, e.g., “What is the sound of one hand clapping?”

¹³Intense contemplation can also lead to “ecstatic vision,” which is another instance of breaking out.

As observers or manipulators of experience we are guided *by* experience and pass *through* experience without experiencing it *in itself*. The conceptual framework by which we observe and manipulate things being present [functions] as a screen between ourselves and these things...Contemplation dissolves the screen, stops our movement through experience and pours us straight into experience...we cease to deal with things and become absorbed in the inherent quality of our experience for its own sake (*PK*, 197).

¹⁴“It is therefore only through participation in acts of worship—through dwelling in these—that we see God...God is a commitment involved in our rites and myths” (*Meaning*, 156).

¹⁵Polanyi looks at the development of the person in the psychology of Bleuler and Piaget to see stages in the development of consciousness. These stages can reflect stages of development in historical consciousness in the same way ontogenetic changes in the fetus can reflect the evolutionary stages of the biological species (ontogenesis replicates phylogenesis). We move from an “autistic” stage, similar to that present in animal awareness more generally, to develop egos and to become persons. In this autistic stage, we do not possess self-consciousness nor recognize ourselves as distinct from the world. “Only as we become divided from the world, can we achieve a personhood capable of committing itself consciously to beliefs concerning the world, and incurring thereby a fiduciary hazard” (*PK*, 313). Ironically, only after we become divided from the world can we come to experience mystical unity.

¹⁶For Kant, our ordinary cognitive faculties thus come to function in a non-ordinary way [George Dickie, *Introduction to Aesthetics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 25]. Kant, however, makes the aesthetic experience appear to be a pleasant misuse of our faculties rather than an opening to a new dimension of meaning.

¹⁷This also relates to how Kant saw teleological structures: as regulative concepts that were not about the world as it is in itself, but which were needed by our limited minds to gain some understanding of the world.

¹⁸In the experience of an artwork “...whenever our powers of integration produce a coherence, they do so by cutting off the subsidiaries of this integrated body from connection with other experiences. This, in fact, is the principle which turns every discovery, invention, or work of art into a sort of reality with life, so to speak, of its own” (*Meaning*, 85).

¹⁹If our ordinary processes of conceptual integration are stepped back from, one might expect a sense of time and space to be displaced, at least to the degree that our conceptual frameworks condition those experiences. This, according to Polanyi, accounts for the “new vivid yet dreamlike reality...not an objective reality” (*PK*, 197). But even if our ordinary conceptual frameworks are transcended, we could expect to have an experience of space and time different from the “objective reality” we’ve grown accustomed to, since we would come to experience things through a new meaning structure.

²⁰Polanyi’s ontology shows how God can be seen either as immanent or transcendent; God is “immanent” in that the particulars are part of, though subsidiary to, the intelligent gestalt, but “transcendent” in that the gestalt is more than the sum of the parts and might even provide the organizing principle that called forth the parts into being in the first place.

A Polanyian Metaphysics?

Milton Scarborough's Nondualistic Philosophical Vision

Walter Gulick

ABSTRACT Key Words: Milton Scarborough, Michael Polanyi, Merleau-Ponty, Derrida, Poteat, metaphysics, nondualism, Buddhist thought, Hebrew worldview, knowing as learning.

This article offers an appreciative review of Milton Scarborough's book, Comparative Theories of Nonduality: The Search for a Middle Way. The nondualistic metaphysics and epistemology Scarborough argues for integrating three major influences: the Buddhist notions of emptiness and nothingness, ancient Hebrew covenantal theology, and the minority perspectives within Western philosophy of Polanyi and Merleau-Ponty. What results is a vision of a protean reality that is not captured adequately by fixed essences—especially dualistic alternatives—or by a drive toward some unreachable certainty in knowledge. The article raises some questions about the implications of Scarborough's thought and how he formulates it, but as a whole praises the work as a fine example of cross-cultural philosophy.

Milton Scarborough, *Comparative Theories of Nonduality: The Search for a Middle Way*. London, New York: Continuum, 2009. Pp. ix + 237. ISBN-13: HB: 978-0-8264-3738-9. \$130.00 (paperback forthcoming).

Scarborough's stimulating book offers an extended argument for what he terms a middle way that would have a far-reaching, even revolutionary impact on Western ways of thinking and acting. Polanyi's thought plays an important explanatory role in this constructive project. Scarborough's achievement has significant ethical, religious, epistemological, and ontological dimensions, but it is the metaphysical dimension that Scarborough suggests crucially underlies and unifies the various other expressions of the middle way (see page 15). Before describing his notion of the metaphysical middle way, though, several preliminary questions beg to be answered. For instance, why should we want to search for a middle way in the first place? What exactly does Scarborough have in mind when speaking of a middle way?

Dualisms are the negativities needing to be exorcised in Scarborough's vision of insightful human cognition. They are ideally to be replaced by a nondualist perspective, as alluded to in the book's title. The middle way to be uncovered and indwelt is nondualistic in nature. And what is wrong with dualisms? They are a type of survival mechanism that are used to carve out spaces of security and protection in a world of change that is perceived to be unreliable and threatening. Dualisms are hardened oppositions inconsistent with the indeterminate flux actually characteristic of reality. The human purposes served by dualisms do not "necessarily facilitate the quest for dispassionate, objective truth or harmony or even cooperation" (10-11). Presumably, then, we should search for a nondualist middle way because it will attune us to reality in a way that produces personal harmony, interpersonal accord, and humble but exhilarating participation in the cosmic whole, qualities that are too frequently missing in contemporary life.

At this point I can imagine some readers might feel reservations about reading further: "What? Yet another work that begins by bashing Cartesian dualism and postulates a mediating or nondual alternative? Why read an account that treads upon contemplative ground already explored by thinkers as diverse as Hegel,

Nietzsche, Dewey, and Heidegger, to name just a few among the thousands who have traveled this route?”

Here I think a strong plea on Scarborough’s behalf is fitting. *Comparative Theories of Nonduality* creatively explores territory not even visible from the well trodden paths of most philosophical discourse. Scarborough interprets and integrates three distinctly different metaphysical perspectives in constructing his middle way: the ancient Hebrew worldview, Buddhist nondualism, and Polanyi and Merleau-Ponty as representatives of a minority perspective within Western philosophy. Moreover, he offers a careful discussion of the various sorts of distinctions – some useful, some problematic – that can be labeled “dualistic” or “nondualistic.” The result is a distillation of a lifetime of thinking and teaching that I find both unique and largely persuasive. It is a book that deserves serious attention.

In his first chapter, Scarborough lists four types of verbal distinctions that have legitimate uses because they have not yet hardened into the opposition that he calls a dualism. 1. Some distinctions merely point out quite legitimate phenomenal differences (for instance, “cold” and “hard” in describing ice). 2. Some apparent opposites are not mutually exclusive like dualisms; two apparently opposed terms could both be true because there is overlap in the meaning of the terms. 3. Yet other apparent opposites may be but the extremes on a sliding scale of possible positions; such polar opposites are not yet dualistic in the negative sense (“liberals,” “conservatives”). 4. The sharpest contrast between binary terms is contradiction, as between “black” and “non-black.” Yet such a dichotomy exhibits an acceptable logical division that becomes problematic only if the terms are misapplied to reality.

What then constitutes a dualism, the *bête noire* of Scarborough’s analysis? “[D]ualism consists of a dichotomy in which the paired terms, concepts, or things have a static substance or fixed essence” (6). As is well known with respect to Descartes’ two substances – for the purposes of this discussion, mind and matter – their substantial quality creates an insuperable difficulty in understanding how intangible mind might have a causal impact in a material world. In their rigid opposition, dualistic terms, like mind and matter, but also self and other, faith versus reason, cognition versus emotion, monism versus dualism, good versus reason, and so on, are out of kilter with the ambiguous and complex nature of the real and our lived experience of it. Such binaries distort the truth through their over-precision, numerical simplification, implicit denial of change, and legitimation of invidious hierarchical distinctions (7-9). The problems of conceptualization created by dualisms are exacerbated by the ease with which dualistic terms can facilitate clean-cut conclusions in Aristotelian logic and its Western successors. The precision of logic when manipulating clearly delimited dualistic terms helps create the illusion that modern Western philosophy has achieved a rigor and certainty characteristic of the disciplines this approach to knowledge is modeled after: physics and mathematics. Alas, recalcitrant reality refuses to be confined in the straightjacket of modernist thought, and postmodernist proposals are better at critiquing modernism than they are in formulating alternative visions of the real. There continues to be a need for a middle way in ontology between modernist *rigor mortis* and postmodernist explanatory looseness. To what extent is Scarborough’s nondualist project successful in charting an attractive and useful middle way?

Asia is resident to a number of systems of thought and practice that are nondualist in nature. Scarborough relies heavily for his metaphysical middle way on the Buddhist tradition, particularly as articulated by Nagarjuna in his concept of emptiness (*sunyata*) and expressed in the Zen Buddhist concept of nothingness (Chinese *wu*, Japanese *mu*). Each points to a dimension of depth in reality, appreciated in experience at a pre-reflective level. The Buddhist doctrines of no-self, impermanence, and dependent co-arising are particularly significant as descriptors of the metaphysical vision Scarborough promulgates (15). His summary of the middle way based on Mahayana Buddhism includes the following claims:

First, Mahayana denies the existence of fixed essences, inherent existence, or substances such as *Atman* or *svabhava*. All things are empty of such essences. Second, it affirms that all things are causally conditioned. Nothing is independent; rather, all things are interdependent. Third, it affirms that words are relationally defined. . . . Fourth, the source of the conceptualized, objectified world is nonbeing. *Sunyata* places all things into a wider, interdependent context, often characterized as a net or web. . . . What nonbeing as a source does is to add a third dimension, the dimension of depth. . . . Given such tools in its toolbox, Asia is far better equipped than the West to deal with all varieties of dualisms and other binary oppositions. (23-24)

Several serious questions can be directed to Scarborough concerning the very notion of a metaphysical middle way. It is easy to understand why Buddha's prescriptions about how to live came to be called a middle way as a morally tinged approach to daily living: his path follows a course between two extremes: the self-indulgent luxury of his youth and his extreme devotion to asceticism once he left his family compound. But is the *metaphysical* vision to which Scarborough calls us best described as a middle way? Here is his justification for using this term: "In the sixth century BCE, only two possibilities were available for speaking philosophically about existence – permanent existence (*astitta*) and no existence (*nastitta*). These two options constitute a metaphysical dualism" (15). It is difficult to imagine on what grounds anyone would follow a metaphysics of no existence; certainly it would not seem to be an option today. Buddha's metaphysics seems basically to be constructed in opposition to the Hindu notions of *Atman* and *Brahman*, permanent and unchanging entities. It seems more like an oppositional alternative than a middle way. It's not even a middle way between permanence and change, as Plato's metaphysics can be seen as a middle way between Parmenides and Heraclitus (71). The Mahayana way is much closer to Heraclitus than Parmenides. Neither of Scarborough's further elaborations of the metaphysical middle way – the relative naivety of ancient Hebrew thought and the philosophy of Polanyi and Merleau-Ponty – seems to be usefully construed as a middle way. Consequently, wouldn't the thrust of Scarborough's ontological argument be more accurately described in other terms, such as a metaphysics of depth, a non-thetic phenomenology, a metaphysics privileging the tacit, or perhaps even a Buddhist metaphysics? "The middle way" does not reveal clearly what Scarborough is up to in metaphysics. His project calls the reader to something more radical than a metaphysics of mediation or compromise.

On the other hand, "the middle way" is a suggestive term for Scarborough's *epistemology*. He argues, with Polanyi, for an understanding of knowledge as both personal and manifesting universal intent. The objectivist ideal of certain and absolute knowledge is rejected as incompatible with the nondualist metaphysics that grounds his thought (see, for instance, 92-93). But while we have no absolute knowledge of reality, we experience much that we can rely upon. So in epistemology Scarborough does indeed chart a middle way between absolutism and extreme skepticism. This middle way breaks asunder one of the perennial dualisms he claims operates in Western culture: that between absolute knowledge and ignorance (74).

Here, though, is another question for Scarborough. He begins his first chapter with a quote from Yuanwu: "If you are in opposition to anything, this creates duality. Then you are stuck with self and others and gain and loss, and you are unable to walk upon the open ground of reality" (1). Scarborough is in opposition to dualism. Dualism and nondualism are defined in ways that suggest each has certain essential characteristics. Does this imply that Scarborough self-contradictorily creates a dualism to attack dualism? Does his binary approach result in his inability to walk upon the open ground of reality?

The alleged inconsistency, he might assert, occurs at the level of language only. There is a deeper, tacit level of reality that language can point to, and the distinction between this pre-reflective level and the articulate level of language names a legitimate difference. But the difference is not absolute. In Polanyian terms, sometimes the tacit can be made explicit, the subsidiary made focal. Thus Scarborough's opposition to dualism is best understood not as eventuating in a new dualism of delimited terms that occludes our understanding of reality, but as an expansion of our understanding and appreciation of the depth and breadth of reality. His approach does not founder upon self-contradiction.

How does Hebrew pre-philosophical thought, the second of the three metaphysical perspectives Scarborough relies upon, contribute meaningfully to his metaphysical middle way? He devotes the second and third chapters of his book to making a case for the insightfulness of the archaic Hebrew worldview, which he believes is nondualistic in a naïve way. He admits that his interpretation of Hebrew culture and thought is a highly selective account (27, 61). The description of the creation in the first chapter of Genesis plays an important role in his interpretation: Elohim is not portrayed as a transcendent being to be seen in contrast to the created world. The reference in Genesis 1:2 to an "abyss," "waters," "earth," and "wind" suggests Elohim is an immanent force bringing order and purpose to pre-existing building blocks of the universe (162-163). In Hebrew thought, there is not the duality one finds in Greek thought between time and eternity (time in Hebrew conception "is dynamic and moves toward an open future" [36]); heaven and earth (Elohim created both); essence and existence (Elohim is not immutable, but changes his mind); or body and soul (the soul "is merely the life of the body" [34]). Rather than a transcendent being, then, Elohim is seen as involved in history and related uniquely to the Hebrew people in a covenant involving mutual obligations between Elohim and a whole community. "Relatedness to others, then, is a central feature of both God and humans" (65). Scarborough goes on, rather surprisingly, to compare and contrast what Elohim/Yahweh means to the Hebrew community with what *sunyata* means to Nagarjuna and the Buddhist community. He concludes that "there is a parallel between the inherent human potential for being in covenant relationship and the inherent human potential for enlightenment: the Elohim-nature is analogous to the Buddha-nature" (65).

Those who are familiar with Scarborough's earlier *Myth and Modernity: Postcritical Reflections* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994—reviewed in *TAD* 21:2) will not be surprised at the contrast he draws between Hebrew and Greek thought. In that work he privileges the first creation myth of Genesis as opposed to Plato's creation myth of Timaeus. Both myths, he claims, are tacitly at work in Western thought. The work of the demiurge of the Timaeus myth, who creates according to the plans provided by Platonic ideas, supports the modernist dualism of form and matter and contributes to objectivism and a mechanistic view of the cosmos. The biblical myth, on the other hand, portrays the divinity as willfully shaping chaotic material in a free, contingent manner that culminates in delight: the creation was seen as good. In like manner, the Hebrew people are invited to participate with God in the ambiguous yet meaning-laden shaping of historical possibility toward a better world. In both of his books, Scarborough offers Abraham as the model human being, one who in faithfulness to God's promise journeys toward an unknown destination. In *Comparative Theories of Nonduality* the story of Abraham is linked up with Buddhist thought and Polanyian philosophy in the following instructive selection:

The epistemological nondualism of the Abraham passage becomes apparent if his 'not knowing where he was going' is interpreted as 'non-knowing' (a rhetorical formula indebted to Buddhism) for expressing the middle way between the extremes of knowing absolutely and not knowing at all (ignorance). Such nondualism is more likely to be appreciated in the West, however, if it is put into positive rather than negative terms. Hence, I propose that in a genuinely

postmodern era knowing be understood as learning, a concept that is descriptive of Abraham's journeying, I believe, and of what Polanyi calls 'personal knowledge' or 'post-critical knowledge.' (130; see also 224)

Again, several questions arise for this reviewer. In embracing the concreteness of Hebrew culture and its view of Elohim/Yahweh, can Scarborough avoid committing himself to the creative activity of a personal god, which seems so much at odds with the impersonal *sunyata* of Buddhism which he seems to take as the foundational reality? Moreover, is the worldview of ancient Israel really all that different from the worldviews, broadly conceived, of other cultures? For instance, the cult of ancient Sumer is polytheistic rather than henotheistic or even monotheistic, as is the case for ancient Hebrew culture. But if one takes Abraham or Jacob as models, there are biblical links to the religions of Sumer and Babylon, perhaps most clearly visible in the household gods that Rachel took from Laban (Genesis 31:19 ff). Many other cultures, often preliterate, view god or gods as active in the world in ways not terribly distinct from how Elohim is conceived as involved with the people of Israel. So in endorsing the Hebrew vision of the world is Scarborough in effect not advocating a nostalgic retrieval of an archaic worldview in serious conflict with the scientific understanding of the world that is characteristic of the Western worldview, as well as being at odds with Buddhist thought? Even in the Greek world, is there not the existence of mystery religions and other archaic elements that have much in common with the Hebrew worldview? Nietzsche partially captures this perspective in his notion of the Dionysian. Need Scarborough set Hebrew versus Greek to make his point; does this scheme not set up the sort of dualism he seeks to avoid?

The contrast made between Hebrew oral tradition and Greek visual culture has a long history involving such thinkers as Adolf Harnack, but here the influence of William Poteat on Scarborough is most evident. Indeed, Scarborough's project as a whole can be seen as an extension of Poteat's critique of the logical, visual bias that dominates Western philosophy. Poteat is one of the persons to whom Scarborough dedicates *Comparative Theories of Nonduality*. However, Scarborough writes about complex issues with admirable clarity; unlike Poteat he does not think neologisms have to be coined or vocabulary has continually to be altered (as is characteristic of Heidegger and Derrida) in order to avoid linguistic sclerosis (although occasionally Poteatian terms like "embrangled," "retotends" and "mindbody" sneak into his text).

In his fourth chapter, "From Omniscience to Ignorance," Scarborough lays out a somewhat schematized history of Western dualism. The Platonic contrast between the changing world of the senses and the unchanging intelligible world of reason and the Forms sets the table for subsequent thinkers. Scarborough's basic theme is that Western philosophy has increasingly become skeptical about the possibility of comprehending reality. One of the reasons for this is that it has been assumed that knowing is a state of certainty based upon proof and rigorous verification. British empiricism culminated in the skepticism of Hume; German idealists recaptured the certainty of reason at the cost of losing contact with reality; and analytic philosophy eventuated in an examination of how language is used, which again has no necessary correlation with the way things really are.

Especially interesting to this reviewer is Scarborough's take on Derrida's style of postmodernism. Beginning from the flawed view of language promulgated by Saussure, which simplistically opposes a signifier and a signified, Derrida shows that on this basis language is arbitrarily conventional and incapable of grasping and revealing what is real. "Both Derrida and Nagarjuna oppose fixity [of linguistic terms], definability, and the sufficiency of logic and reason" (83). Poteat also believes Western logic and objectivist language are inadequate means for grasping reality, but he turns to the speech act rooted in and embracing the fullness of our tacit

sensitivities as establishing a standpoint in reality. So what steps does Derrida propose to counter the logocentrism of logically defined terms?

In the course of deconstructing such terms, [Derrida] emphasizes their opposites. For example, he moves from identity to difference, from presence to absence, from center to margin, from logic to rhetoric, and from realism to a linguistic form of idealism. Language is not determined by reality but by its own internal and arbitrary rules and practices. But he sees that since 'difference' and the other opposites to which he gravitates, are also logocentric, they, too, are problematic. Hence, if they are to be used and if logocentrism is to be avoided . . . , then the opposite terms must be placed 'under erasure' or 'crossed out,' that is, used merely provisionally. Even so, they must be changed frequently so that they don't harden and become fixed (87).

As can be seen in the foregoing passage, Derrida does not really escape the ruling web of language through his recommended solution. The fullness of experience beyond language is never more than hinted at and never relied upon as a basis for seeking to understand reality. It is at this point that Scarborough turns to Polanyi and Merleau-Ponty as offering a more satisfying theory of how we relate to the real.

Polanyi's thought, which Scarborough sees as a middle way between absolute knowledge and extreme skepticism, is featured in Chapter 5, "A Western, Nondual Epistemology." Polanyi, as a scientist, is able to incorporate nature as well as language into his philosophy. "For Polanyi, the point of view from within the process of discovery, rather than the point of view acquired after a discovery is already made, becomes the proper paradigm of all knowing" (106). The active knower is motivated by a passion to understand reality, as guided by tacit intimations of coherence. "If the search for knowledge is driven by intellectual desire and conducted largely by inarticulate powers, then the solution or discovery 'carries conviction from the start'" (107). Thus Polyanian epistemology undercuts pervasive skepticism, but it does not thereby accede to the assumption that knowledge must be absolute and certain to count as knowledge. For knowing is a personal act based on biologically endowed and learned skills that are often indeterminate and fallible.

Scarborough asserts that Polyanian tacit knowing has strong affinities with *sunyata* and *mu* because it

functions to undercut dualistic thinking. Dualistic conceptions are the product of reflection and lie at the 'to' pole of reflective acts. The absolute character of these dualities, however, is relativized or dissolved by the 'from' pole, which is the inarticulate, shadowy, background that is the tacit dimension. In other words, the ultimately unspecifiable and inexhaustible tacit dimension is a kind of Western version of emptiness and nothingness, both in description and function (109).

Moreover, Scarborough claims that "Polanyi's universal intent, along with his 'personally grounded objectivity' is his attempt to articulate for the West the nonduality of objectivity vs. subjectivity, universal vs. particular, identity vs. difference. There is a greater reality from which all these binary oppositions are abstracted aspects" (119).

Scarborough's interpretation of Polanyi is sure-footed and perceptive. He stresses the importance of Polanyi's notion of embodiment as supportive of tacit skills and as the ultimate expression of our finitude. "The body is the tacit dimension made flesh" (120). Because in a spiritual sense each person is a fluctuating but expanding system of tacit acceptances, the contrast between faith or belief and reason dissolves.

It should be clear enough that belief, as understood here, is not the assent of a separate and utterly disinterested intellect to the truth of approved doctrinal formulations lacking sufficient evidence. It is a confident reliance on tacit acceptances, a courageous indwelling of clues, and the passionate pursuit of intimations in the hope of a discovery or of fresh confirmations. It is the structure of all knowing-as-learning (125).

The notion of knowing-as-learning connects with Polanyi's inarticulate skills of trick, sign and latent learning as well as his heuristic vision of articulate discovery. Scarborough has provided us with a helpful alternative to thinking of knowledge as absolute and certain.

The last three chapters of Scarborough's book treat, roughly speaking, the notions of self, God, and world, all as understood from a nondual standpoint. This tripartite division corresponds with Kant's three transcendental ideas, although I don't believe Scarborough ever is explicit about such a correlation. As regards the self, he suggests that the American duality of self versus the other is fostered by forms of individualism that are "antithetical to a sense of togetherness, solidarity, and common ground" (135). These latter convivial qualities are supported by the interrelatedness found in *sunyata* and the Hebrew worldview. To bolster understanding of the ineluctable social nature of humans, Scarborough makes use of Erikson's psycho-historical theory, the account of the "wild-boy" of Aveyron, and the story of a son of blind parents who as a child required communal coaching so that he could learn to see.

Chapter 7, "Nondual Immanence and Transcendence," is a fascinating exploration of the notion of divinity. Scarborough brings into the discussion a diverse group of thinkers including Gordon Kaufman, Tom Kasulis, Masao Abe, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, John Macmurray, Keiji Nishitani, Charles Hartshorne, and Harvey Cox. As already noted, Scarborough favors understanding the divine as an immanent force in history. Yet finally he opts for the notion of reality as the ultimate horizon of being and becoming understood nondually. "I am inclined to say that God and the world, like the transcendent and the immanent, are parts of something more comprehensive and nondual, which I call 'Reality'" (181). In contrast to Polanyi's suggestion that worship is the ultimate relationship to be directed toward God, Scarborough supports "partnership with God in repairing Reality" (181). He acknowledges that in speaking of the divine, some degree of anthropomorphism is inescapable. He articulates his most considered view about the divine as follows:

To say 'God' is to speak humbly and haltingly of our experience of those more elusive, less determinate, less definable, and sublime dimensions of Reality, especially those that summon us to compassion, justice, courage, and creativity; that motivate, empower, comfort, and sustain us along life's journey; and that prompt surprising upsurges of gratitude and joy. (187).

It should be noted in passing that Scarborough's nondual theology does not seem to offer any resources for coping with some of the negative experiences of living that motivate many persons to look toward religions for insight or consolation. What of sin and guilt? Are there promptings of forgiveness in a nondual perspective? What of seemingly unmerited experiences of suffering? Can a theodicy be extracted from his ideas? What of the

fact of death; how should its apparent finality be understood? Are there resources for morality to be garnered from *sunyata*? Scarborough states he does not intend to present a full-blown doctrine of God (157), and these apparently unanswered questions suggest how distant his thought is from traditional theology.

The last chapter contains some practical suggestions about how to engage the world in a nondual manner. Scarborough first catalogues some horizontal, vertical and habitual obstacles to nondual engagement in and with the world. The vertical problem of privileging some planes of existence over others (sometimes powerful higher planes over lower planes; sometimes, as in reductionism, lower over higher planes) can be countered by utilizing Polanyi's notion of emergence, which he interprets as viewing levels as interdependent (196). He then lists several practices which can sustain a nondual perspective. We can learn to see rather than merely look. We see when we tame our active intentionality and patiently open ourselves to the wonder of pre-reflective experience as it wells up into reflective awareness. We can develop the habit of noticing and disempowering, in thought or action, the commanding presence of binary oppositions. Meditation and phenomenological intuiting can aid our sensitivity to our cognitive patterns and their role in our life. Above all, we are encouraged to develop habits of compassionate action, wisdom in discernment, and celebration as a counter to despair or resignation (220).

Milton Scarborough never pretends he has all the answers, and he assures us that his prescriptions are not to be taken in some monolithic way. He expresses the modesty that is also characteristic of Polanyi at his best. But modesty is not the same as timidity. *Comparative Theories of Nonduality* is a brave, groundbreaking work. I am not convinced that its insights are best described as a metaphysical *middle way*, but I would affirm that the book's nondualistic vision, however labeled, sketches out an attractive way of thinking and doing that bypasses many of the problems associated with the dominant metaphysical assumptions in the West. The deplorable cost of the 237 page book is unfortunate but not all that unusual these days. The good news is that it will soon be published in a less expensive paperback form. That Polanyi's insights are so central to the book's vision of a nondual manner of living is but one of many reasons that we may celebrate the publication of a version more accessible to all.

WWW Polanyi Resources

The Polanyi Society has a World Wide Web site at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/orgs/polanyi>. In addition to information about Polanyi Society membership and meetings, the site contains the following: (1) digital archives containing all issues of *Tradition and Discovery* and its predecessor publications of the Polanyi Society going back to 1972; (2) indices listing of *Tradition and Discovery* authors, reviews and reviewers; (3) the history of Polanyi Society publications; (4) information on *Appraisal* and *Polanyiana*, two sister journals with special interest in Michael Polanyi's thought; (5) the "Guide to the Papers of Michael Polanyi," which provides an orientation to archival material housed in the Special Collections Research Center of the University of Chicago Library, Chicago, IL 60637; (6) photographs of Polanyi; (7) links to a number of essays (available on the Polanyi Society web site and other sites) by Polanyi as well as audio files for Polanyi's McEnerney Lectures (1962) and Polanyi's conversation with Carl Rogers (1966).

Dueling about Dualism: A Reply to Walter Gulick

Milton Scarborough

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ABSTRACT Key Words: Dualism, nondualism, emptiness, nothingness, mindbody, middle way, *namarupa*, Life-world.

This essay replies to Walter Gulick's review of my book. It points out the book's double purpose, namely, finding both a Western middle way and also a middle way between East and West. It clarifies the flexibility of my use of "dualism" while emphasizing my consistency in the use of "middle way" as referring to a larger and more concrete reality as the source of abstracted dualisms. It compares the Buddha's namarupa with the mindbody of Merleau-Ponty and Poteat. It articulates six benefits of my approach. Finally, it justifies my emphasis on Hebrew thought about covenant, history, and knowledge.

Walter Gulick's review of my book *Comparative Theories of Nonduality: the Search for a Middle Way* has both praised it and also raised critical questions about it. For both I am appreciative. I will attempt to respond to the latter with more clarity and greater persuasiveness.

Gulick finds helpful my sketch of an epistemological middle way (learning) between the dualities of ignorance and absolute knowledge. On the other hand, he finds my metaphysical middle way less compelling. Perhaps one reason is that although he rightly sees that my project "calls the reader to something more radical than a metaphysics of mediation or compromise," he may not fully appreciate that not only do I seek to find a Western middle way inspired by but not identical to that of Buddhism, but I also speak of the "need to find a middle way between East and West" (26). Indeed, my original title for the book was *The Search for a Middle Way: West, East, and Middle East in Dialogue*. The middle way that I envision is a conceiving of dualism, nondualism, and the middle in a way that could work for both Buddhism and the West.

It may be helpful to say that there are three kinds or levels of dualism and nondualism. The first kind consists of a single pole with two constituents. Thus, it may be called "monopolar dualism." In philosophical anthropology the two constituents are, for example, mind or soul, on the one hand, and a material body, on the other. In cosmology, they might be God and the world or the supernatural and the natural. In India, Samkhya, Yoga, and Jainism are examples of the former, while Madhva's cosmological dualism is an example of the latter. In the West Descartes's thinking substance and extended substance are an obvious example of the former, while classical theism is an instance of the latter. For the most part, monopolar dualism has been the only kind known in the West until recently.

The second kind or level of dualism, however, has two poles. This dipolar dualism is typical of Buddhism. Here is an example from Buddhist ethics. At one extreme is attachment (to food, as in gluttony, for example). At the other extreme is detachment (from food, as in self-starvation, which was a practice among the Jains). The dualism, then, is attachment vs. detachment. Nondualism is non-attachment. Because nondualism rejects both extremes, it is called a "middle way." This middle way does not consist, however, of consuming some intermediate quantity of food but rather of giving up the preoccupation with food that both poles exhibit. Because nondualism undercuts both attachment and detachment, it could just as well be called "non-detachment." Gluttony, however, is more common than self-starvation; therefore "non-attachment" is preferred. This pattern is analogous to our

saying that an act is neither moral nor immoral but amoral.

The same dipolar logic exhibited above works for both metaphysics and epistemology, and, as was the case with the first kind of dualism, it can work in both Asia and the West. The number of constituents for each pole, however, may vary. Pluralism vs. monism, for example, is many vs. one, while Idealism vs. Realism opposes one vs. one. Indeed, I envision great flexibility in what can be opposed to what. This is implied when I distinguish “the meaning of dualism in the West and in Asia” from the somewhat less restrictive way I use the term “in the remainder of” the book (24). Hence, the two poles may be mere oppositions and not necessarily polar oppositions. What matters for the nondualism I am proposing is not the specific nature of the dualism so much as the method used to eliminate the dualities. That method does not consist in finding an intermediate position between extremes but in showing the dualities (of whatever kind) to be abstract and reified derivatives from a larger, more concrete reality, which is the middle.

The third level of dualism is reflected in the question raised by Gulick about the possibility that in opposing nondualism to dualism I may have fallen into self-contradiction. We might call it “meta-dualism.” A similar concern was expressed about Nagarjuna when he was suspected of wishing to eliminate conventional truth (expressed in dualistic language) in favor of ultimate truth (nondualism). Nagarjuna, however, had no such intention, as is clear when he affirmed that between the two truths (conventional and ultimate) “there is not the slightest difference whatsoever.” In other words, he was simply trying to dissolve the sclerosis (fixed identities, essences, or substances) of the conventional world so that it could be properly affirmed in its fullness.

Such is also my intent. I am not attempting to expunge all binaries in language—that is almost certainly impossible—but to eliminate the hardening that converts them from useful, contextualized, limited distinctions into hardened dichotomies. In the end, Gulick seems to understand that when he concludes that “Scarborough’s opposition is best understood as not eventuating in a new dualism of delimited terms that occludes our understanding of reality, but as an expansion of our understanding and appreciation of the depth and breadth of reality. His approach does not founder upon self-contradiction.” Gulick’s interpretation, in effect, reiterates what I say on page 24 of the book: “The affirmation of nonduality intends to point to a wider, deeper, more comprehensive context as the source of dualities.”

Buddhism is very familiar with all three forms of dualism (although it does not bother to distinguish them) and has attempted to dissolve each of them in a nondualism based on the concept emptiness or nothingness. The West has given scant attention to the second type, and only recently has it become acquainted with the third. Dissolving dualism is not central to Western philosophy, and its typical middle is not nondual. I am, nevertheless, urging the West to take advantage of the logic of nondualism in relation to all forms of dualism. In some quarters this is, in effect, already taking place. Confronted with the anthropological, monopolar dualism of a material body plus a permanent, eternal mind, the Buddha put forward his *namarupa* (name/form or mind/body), a nondualistic, psychophysical concept of human beings in which body, feeling, perceiving, dispositions, and minding are always already interdependent, integrated, and changing. Yet his solution is remarkably similar, even in name, to the mindbody of Merleau-Ponty, who uses phenomenological intuition and description to reveal a similar, fundamental interdependence of body, motility, perception, affectivity, and speaking that recalls the Buddha’s definition of “emptiness.” Thus, Merleau-Ponty’s view, along with that of Poteat, could with some fairness be regarded as instances of a nondual middle way.

Gulick prefers to call my philosophy a “metaphysics of depth.” I do use that and other spatial terms

throughout the book, as I did in the quote above from page 24, as a way to make the middle way intelligible. Depth language is more familiar to the West. But I also use “greater whole,” “more comprehensive context,” and “world” (as in Husserl’s or Merleau-Ponty’s “life-world”). Such terms are also familiar to many Western philosophers, have analogies in Buddhism, and are less one-dimensional.

The benefits of my approach are multiple. First, it helps build a bridge between Asia and the West. Second, the very use of “middle way” and “nondualism” alerts us to our ingrained habit of being satisfied with the oversimplifications of our analyses and descriptions of reality in merely binary terms. Third, it warns us against the zigzag effect, an important concept in my book. It refers to our tendency in the West to embrace one view and then flee in the opposite direction. We have zigzagged from Rationalism to Empiricism, from Classicism to Romanticism, from Essentialism to Existentialism, from modernity to post-modernity, from religion to secularity, from Realism to Idealism, from faith to reason, from absolutism to relativism, and much more. Fourth, it militates against privileging one duality over another, with all the negative social consequences that entails. Fifth, it helps us to recognize that polarities are abstractions and militates against reifying them. Sixth, it helps keep us focused on the concrete life-world or nothingness as the ground from which our theoretical concepts arise. These, I would contend, are significant benefits.

Somewhat puzzling to me are Gulick’s comments about my attention to ancient Greece and Israel. He observes that ancient Israel was not so different from surrounding cultures of the time and that Abraham, on whom I focus, has links to Sumer and Babylon. And he points out that ancient Greece contains “mystery religions and other archaic elements that have much in common with the Hebrew worldview.” All this I am happy to acknowledge. In fact, it was acknowledged in Chapter 2, where I state, “To be sure, Hebrew culture was not monolithic, and it must not be essentialized. It contained elements drawn from such sources as Mesopotamia, Egypt, Canaan, Persia, and eventually Greece and Rome, and its makeup was ever changing. Consequently, my interpretation of it will of necessity be a selective activity” (27). Moreover, I restrict myself to Israel “insofar as it manifests itself in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)” (26).

The passage cited above goes on to speak of Greece: “The same must be said for Greek culture, although I will pay much less attention to it and that attention will be narrowly focused on Parmenides, Heraclitus, and the Socratic thinkers (Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle)” (27). As for the mystery religions (Eleusinian, Dionysian, and Orphic), they tend to be dualistic in a double sense: they separate (1) ethical action from mystical union and (2) mortal existence in this world from an immortal existence in another world after death. While Reality is surely filled with mystery, mysticism is, I suspect, the final and extreme resort of one who chafes against the inherent limitations of a visualistic model of knowing.

Finally, Gulick suggests that I may be “advocating a nostalgic retrieval of an archaic worldview in serious conflict with the scientific understanding of the world that is characteristic of the Western worldview, as well as being at odds with Buddhist thought.”

Perhaps it was in connection with this point that he called me “brave,” but only as a euphemism for “foolhardy.” Here I can make only a few brief comments. First, to appreciate the Hebrews’ covenantal ethics, their concept of history as future-oriented, and their tendency to empiricism in the practice of watching history (40) is hardly to endorse the entirety of their worldview. Second, Hebraic thought as selectively encapsulated in the Bible influenced Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and helped lay the foundations, along with Greece and Rome, for Western civilization, including modernity. That alone, seems to justify paying it serious attention.

Third, while I do not deny there is much in the Hebrew worldview that is at odds with science, the same is true of ancient Greece; nevertheless, modern science is precisely one of the places Hebrew culture has begun asserting itself. For the first time in science Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* portrayed the earth as historical and introduced narrative into scientific discourse. Darwin's theory of evolution rejected the fixity of the species that was rooted in Aristotle and made biology historical. Nowadays, the entire universe that stems from the Big Bang is regarded as historical, and our museums that feature nature are "museums of natural history." In Deconstruction, Hebraic thought has begun to affect even our intellectual standards. I cite John Caputo's assessment that "Derrida's critique of the metaphysics of presence... is actually just good old Jewish theology" (26). Finally, when Polanyi, no slouch as a scientist, explained the scientific method—the very heart of science—by appealing to faith, hope, and grace, he both offered an explanation and a critique of science that is rooted, as he explicitly states, in the views of St. Paul, the former Jew. As for the relation of Hebrew thought to Buddhism, the very inception of my book took place at a luncheon meeting with former Old Testament Professor at Princeton, Patrick Miller, whom I cite frequently in chapters 2 and 3 and who referred in his own writing to Hebrew nonduality.

If, as Polanyi claims, we say more than we know, intellectual exchange with another person helps clarify what was said. In that regard, I am very appreciative of Walter Gulick's helping me to know my own mind.

Notes on Contributors

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Charles Lowney (lowneyc@wlu.edu) is currently at Washington and Lee University in Virginia where his teaching focuses on applied ethics and the social and political issues surrounding poverty. He is primarily interested in the limits of understanding and expression in the analytic tradition and on moral epistemology. Lowney's recent writings (other than his series of three recent *TAD* essays) emphasize tacit knowing ("Frege and the Tacit" in *Polanyiana*, 17:1-2, 2008, pp. 19-37), the irreducibility of the person ("Seeing Saying and Being the Gestalt: Further Reflections on Wittgenstein and Polanyi on the Concept of the Person" in *Appraisal*, 7:1, 2008, 21-38) and how tacit knowing & Aristotle's philosophy can provide a new understanding of value as emergent and real in contemporary culture ("Authenticity and the Reconciliation of Modernity," in *The Pluralist*, 4:1, 2009, 33-50). Lowney is a member of the Polanyi Society Speakers Bureau and is willing to speak at colleges and universities on these and other Polanyi-related topics.

Milton Scarborough (milton.scarborough@centre.edu), a native of Gulfport, Mississippi, earned a B. A. from University of Mississippi (1962), a B.D. from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (1965) and a Ph.D. from Duke University (1972) in religion (Christianity and Culture). He taught at Centre College from 1969 to 2005. In addition to his new book discussed in this issue, his 1994 book, *Myth and Modernity: Postcritical Reflections* was reviewed in *TAD* 21:2.

Walter Gulick (WGulick@msubillings.edu), a former President of the Polanyi Society, has been the *TAD* Book Review editor for many years. He is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, Humanites and Religious Studies at Montana State University, Billings. Gulick taught the spring semester of 2009 at the University of Tartu, Estonia, where he offered a graduate course on Polanyi's thought.

REVIEWS

Matthew B. Crawford. *Shop Class as Soulcraft: An Inquiry into the Value of Work*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2009. Pp. 246. ISBN: 978-1-59420-223-0. \$25.95. Hardback. ISBN: 978-0143117469. \$15.00. Paper.

In *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, a book that might best be called biographical philosophy or philosophical biography, Matthew B. Crawford combines critical reflection on the “text” of his academic and work experiences with observations of contemporary society to produce a work that is part social criticism, part reflection on the nature of meaningful work, and part call to action. Crawford holds a Ph.D. in political philosophy from the University of Chicago and, prior to opening a motorcycle repair shop in Richmond, VA, worked both at an academic think tank and as a “knowledge worker” writing abstracts of scholarly articles. These experiences motivated him to turn his back, for the most part, on academia in search of more meaningful work (I say “for the most part” because he retains ties to the academic world as a fellow with the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia).

Crawford opens the book with observations about ways that our culture has devalued manual labor. One symptom is that shop classes have largely disappeared from school curricula. Another is that “What ordinary people once made, they buy; what they once fixed for themselves, they replace entirely or hire an expert to repair, whose expert fix often involves replacing an entire system because some minute component has failed” (2). The result is that the workings of various artifacts become increasingly mysterious to us, making us more passive in relation to things and dependent upon others, ironically, at the same time that we champion our “freedom” and revel in our “autonomy.” In response, Crawford issues a call to develop “manual competence,” by which he means an authentic sense of intellectually-engaged agency. Crawford thinks

that the basic cause of this situation is a separation of thinking from doing that manifested itself in American life early in the 20th Century with the advent of assembly-line work and so-called “scientific management” (28-41). Not only blue collar work has suffered from this problem, however, for this same separation of thinking from doing has now started to colonize white collar work. Crawford illustrates the effect on “knowledge work” with a story of a stint spent abstracting scholarly articles for an information service. He had to abstract twenty-eight articles a day, a task that could not be done with any integrity and for which he received little meaningful instruction from his supervisor. The job was mindless, he says, because it “required me to actively suppress my own ability to think” (134). Moreover, it required a moral reeducation so that he could suppress his sense of responsibility to the authors and users of the information service (134). Higher education itself is not immune to this separation of thinking from doing, since it continues to socialize students for climbing the socio-economic ladder. Education must now prepare people for work, not on assembly lines as in decades past, but in large organizations where there are no objective standards by which to measure performance and where worth is measured by credentials (155-159). Higher education has therefore become more about sorting than teaching. Thus, instead of equipping students with more powerful minds by which to engage an increasingly complex world, Crawford argues that “college habituates young people to accept as the normal course of things a mismatch between form and substance, official representations and reality. This cannot be called cynicism if it is indispensable to survival in the contemporary office, as it was in the old Soviet Union” (147).

In the midst of this dire picture, Crawford draws upon his experiences of working as an electrician and repairing motorcycles to identify characteristics of meaningful work. Such work, for Crawford, develops

one's agency. Agency requires active engagement with a reality that demands something arduous of us, such as the discipline necessary for playing a musical instrument (64). What has come to be substituted for agency is autonomy, which increasingly means mostly passive consumption based on choices that have largely been predigested for us and have no basis other than personal preference (69-70).

Meaningful work that engages us as agents requires not a flight from external authority but submission to it. On Crawford's account, we submit first to an external reality that pushes back at us, as the electrician does when he flips the switch and the light comes on (or not, as the case may be). As Crawford notes, the attitude that there is no established reality is one that "is best not indulged around a table saw" (19). The fact of a reality means that there are standards intrinsic to the work that can be communally-shared, thus making possible a "circle of mutual regard among those who recognize one another as peers" (159). We submit, not only to that reality, but also to teachers who help us to see the particulars of what is there, not simply what we think is there, a point effectively made when Crawford tells about his efforts at drawing a human skeleton without reducing it to Halloween icons (91-93). Good work therefore allows for and invites growth and progress in the exercise of personal judgment, since the work cannot be reduced to rule-following, and the justifications for those judgments cannot always be articulated (167-169).

Good work is in the end inevitably moral and political in the richest sense of those terms, for it evokes virtues such as attentiveness to particulars and patterns (82), humility in view of the fact that we might be wrong (99) honesty to admit when we are wrong (100), and responsiveness to a web of fiduciary responsibilities. Crawford discusses the latter in a serious yet amusing reflection on the morality of writing a service ticket, a task that requires balancing the mechanic's obligations to the motorcycle with his obligations to the customer and honesty about how he, by his own mistakes, may have created problems and thereby prolonged the repair job, at a rate of \$40/hour (112-125).

While Crawford cites Polanyi only once (with a reference to the *Tacit Dimension* on 169), Polanyi's ideas permeate the book. The most salient points of connection come with Crawford's use of the term personal knowledge, his emphasis on a progressively-revealed reality that draws us out of ourselves as it invites attempts to discover meaning, his discussion of the uses and limits of rules, and his discussion of one's fiduciary responsibilities. At all these points, it is apparent that Crawford has absorbed Polanyi and interprets/extends his work faithfully.

Engaging and provocative, the book serves as a model of the kind of critical reflection on the text of life that higher education aspires to foster, at least in its better days. It is therefore difficult to find much of substance to criticize in *Shop Class*, although it is not a perfect work. Crawford does sometimes romanticize manual labor, despite his disclaimer that he does not intend to offer a mystical account of "craftsmanship" (5). His prophetic indictment of our economic and educational institutions may be a bit one-sided, but we would do well to heed much that he writes about the power of our systems to form or deform us.

It is perhaps to Crawford's credit that his thought-provoking book leaves me wanting more explication and clarification; I mention three places here. First, I would argue that good personal, practical judgment underlies everything we in the university try to promote, whether it is critical reading, clear writing, research, or responsible citizenship. What would Crawford suggest we change to improve what we now do? Can/should a shop class-kind of mindset permeate our teaching, regardless of subject matter? What would an institution that resisted the market-place morality of the broader culture look like?

In addition, I would like Crawford to offer a synopsis of what he takes to be the general pattern of human excellence. There are times when Crawford is explicit about the good life toward which his book as a whole points, but his examples do not connect with my sense of authentic existence. For instance, he states, "I like to fix motorcycles ... because not only the fixing but

also the *riding* of motorcycles answers to certain intuitions I have about human excellence” (196, emphasis his). What are those intuitions? While I agree that motorcycle riding can indeed be fun and invigorating, surely there is more substance to a good life than this.

More seriously, I find myself ambivalent about his solution. Crawford suggests that we should respond to the problem of this separation of thinking from doing by giving readers two pieces of advice. The first is to seek out the cracks, those places, like a motorcycle shop, where life retains a local, human, and humane scale (189 and 210). His second is to develop and nurture a progressive republican disposition that envisions a world that better protects human dignity and potential (209). Again, I do not so much disagree with Crawford as I want to hear more of the particulars. His response is therefore unsatisfying in the way that Alasdair MacIntyre’s solution at the end of *After Virtue* is unsatisfying (there, MacIntyre wistfully longs for a new St. Benedict, someone who will ride in on a white horse to establish new forms of community that can preserve civilization through new dark ages). To be fair to Crawford, however, he does acknowledge that he is at his limits at this point and that others will need to refine his suggestions (209). Moreover, it may well be the case that how we respond is a matter that cannot be decided in the abstract in advance, but instead is a matter of our own judgment and agency, always in relationship with skilled others.

Shop Class as Soulcraft has sometimes been called the next *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. While it is too early to tell whether it will catch on as that book did, Crawford certainly raises appropriate alarms and points us in promising directions. That Polanyi is both explicitly and tacitly part of the conversation is heartening.

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Susan S. Phillips, *Candlelight: Illuminating the Art of Spiritual Direction*. Harrisburg, New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2008. Pp. xvii + 251. ISBN 978-0-8192-2297-8. \$26 paperback.

In a chance conversation with Susan Phillips before the volume being reviewed was published, she revealed that she had fallen under the influence of Michael Polanyi when she had read *Personal Knowledge* and that she returns to re-read it every year or so. Dr. Phillips is a spiritual director, sociologist, and Executive Director of New College Berkeley, an affiliate of Berkeley’s Graduate Theological Union. In *Candlelight* she addresses those who are puzzled by the term *spiritual direction* and who desire to know more about what goes on in a spiritual direction session. Her description of spiritual direction makes it clear why she finds Polanyi useful, for the spiritual director is one who helps a directee discover self-implicating spiritual truths. There is a striking similarity between Polanyi’s account of a scientist making a scientific discovery and Phillips’ account of a directee making a spiritual discovery.

In describing Christian spirituality as being self-implicating, Dr. Phillips refers to *Personal Knowledge* as a seminal work. “Even the physical sciences are shaped by the personal knowledge and appraisals of scientists and are guarded by their commitments to truth, accountability, practices, and communities” (*Candlelight*, p. 6). For the directee attending to personal experiences of faith, the listening director can represent the guiding significance of tradition. For both directee and director, “Our own knowledge is molded by what we encounter, and that personal knowledge is in corrective tension with the tradition and its communities” (6). That corrective tension and commitment to truth, accountability, practice, and communities takes place both in the director’s encouraging presence with the directee and in the peer review offered by other directors. This book is, among other things, Susan Phillips’ presentation for peer review, in which she discusses her approach to spiritual direction—her assumptions and her practice—and reveals how she is further shaped by her practice of spiritual direction.

What she presents, Phillips states, is not a model for spiritual direction but is spiritual direction as she has practiced it, has grown in it and been changed by it. Although she does not give a succinct definition of spiritual direction, one might say that her whole book is a description of spiritual direction, beginning with a tantalizing picture of the listener at the ancient Hager Qim temple on the island of Malta as being a practitioner of the world's "second oldest profession" (2).

Although this reviewer finds herself much more at ease in "doing" spiritual direction than in defining it, here is a generally accepted brief description of the practice. In the practice of spiritual direction, the spiritual director listens for the movement of Spirit and then mirrors it back to the directee so that the directee can understand how Spirit is guiding him/her.

Susan Phillips writes from the perspective of a Protestant Christian in the Reformed tradition and assumes with John Calvin that "true and substantial wisdom consists principally of two parts: the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves....The knowledge of ourselves, therefore, is not only an incitement to seek after God, but likewise a considerable assistance in finding him" (13). An implicit assumption for spiritual direction is a pantheistic view of God—God is not only external in all things but internal as well. In encouraging the directee to be alert to interior prompting of spiritual significance, the director is in effect suggesting that the tacit workings of the mind and the work of intuition as assisted by imagination can be agents of in-spiration.

Dr. Phillips adopts the role of storyteller and organizes her book by following nine directees through the three stages of a spiritual direction relationship—beginning, journeying, and fruition—and includes an introductory chapter for each stage. However, this is in no way a spiritual direction handbook. On the contrary, it exposes the reader who is being introduced to the art of spiritual direction in this volume to a master teacher from whom this art is "caught" rather than by whom it is "taught." Polanyi asserts that one learns by imitative practice from "close personal association with the

intimate views and practice of a distinguished master" (SFS 43). Whereas the practice of the art of teaching can be observed in the classroom setting of a master teacher, the practice of the art of spiritual direction does not lend itself to observation by a third party. The meeting of spiritual director and directee is private and confidential, and it is not appropriate for observation. One's own experience of being in spiritual direction and the small group practicum experience during training shape one's own practice. Although one learns how to use tools and techniques, one needs to be attentive to the "cues" of the Holy Spirit, the real director, as they are observed or intuited in the directee and in the spiritual director at varying levels of depth. The power of this practice is especially evident in Phillips' description of accompanying a directee through a long-term illness and being present at the directee's death.

In *Candlelight*, Dr. Phillips provides that close personal association as she relates not only her practice but also intimate views on her practice of spiritual direction. She shares feelings that are common to and affirming of spiritual directors in practice, such as feelings of nervousness, bordering on panic, at meeting with a potential directee for the first time and wondering what she might have to offer that person, and feelings of gratitude for the gift of being a part of bringing to birth something new and wonderful in a directee's life. Her account agrees with Polanyi's description of the difficulties and rewards experienced by a scientist groping towards discovery. "We undertake the task of attaining the universal in spite of our admitted infirmity, which should render the task hopeless, because we hope to be visited by powers for which we cannot account in terms of our specific abilities. This hope is a clue to God" (PK 324). Reflecting on her practice of spiritual direction, Susan Phillips asserts that "spiritual direction is to be sacramental in bringing God's truth and love into the world. The grace cultivated within it, ideally, spills out into the world, transforming relationships, inspiring charity, motivating worship, and, one hopes, aiding in the repair of the world" (242).

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Knowing and Being: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Michael Polanyi. Ed. Tihamér Margitay. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010. Pp. 235. ISBN: (10): 1-4438-2062-8. \$59.99. £39.99.

This volume consists of thirteen essays presented at an international conference devoted to the thought of Michael Polanyi held in Budapest in June 2008. Tihamér Margitay has organized the collection around two major themes in Polanyi's thought, his epistemology and his efforts to sketch the contours of a non-reductive ontology. This accounts for a publishing decision to lift the book's title from the collection of essays by Polanyi edited by Marjorie Grene some forty years ago. Although all the essays are related in some fashion to Polanyi's thought, some engage his thinking, in my estimation at least, peripherally in order to indicate how it may be related to other philosophical traditions or questions. My aim here will be to offer brief observations on each essay in turn so that the variety and richness that Polanyi's thought stimulated at this conference might be appreciated.

The first part, "Knowing," begins with Phil Mullins' analysis of the way Polanyi progressively transformed his use of Gestalt psychology in formulating his mature position on tacit knowing. He shows how Polanyi challenged proposals in support of the centralized planning of science in the 1930's by appealing to Kohler's notion of a "dynamical order" sustaining "two kinds of order" (12-15). Appreciating the way these dynamic orders function in society requires a post-critical way of knowing that acknowledges a second way of knowing, not only the wholly critical and explicit way. Polanyi's creative adaptation of Gestalt insights led him to emphasize not only passive biological processes reaching equilibrium, but also a person's active integrations constituting the act of knowing (20-22). Eventually his mature position emerges which describes the structure of tacit knowing where the person's creative imagination risks daring new integrations (25-26).

The next essay by Iwo Zmyślony attempts to ask whether there is a basic concept or idea of tacit

knowledge. By this Zmyślony claims to be asking a "metaphilosophical" question (31), one that examines the ways the term is used, including by other philosophers than Polanyi. In this he is being guided by the philosophical heritage deriving from Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz, which he then uses to survey various attempts to discuss something like tacit knowing, ending with J. H. Newman's illative sense (36). When he finally turns to the way it is used by Polanyi, Zmyślony presents the standard understanding well-known by students of Polanyi's thought. The purpose of Zmyślony's effort to clarify the notion of tacit knowing is to subsume it into some sort of traditional epistemological position regarding justified true belief (47). In this framework, he concludes that tacit knowing requires an externalist notion of knowledge combined with a behavioral attitude of belief. Perhaps so, but I believe aiming for such conceptual clarity falls short of Polanyi's insistence on the personal participation of the knower which can never be rendered fully explicit.

Zhenhua Yu's essay picks up on Polanyi's remark in the preface of the Torchbook edition of *Personal Knowledge* that indwelling is akin to Heidegger's being-in-the-world by establishing a dialogue between the phenomenological tradition and the "Polanyian tradition" (51). One example consists in explaining how practical action involves a kind of knowing Heidegger calls circumspection, which is grounded in a "knowing how to be" (54). This provides a kind of ontological grounding for tacit knowing. Further, Heidegger's explications of being-in-the-world can strengthen both the critique of knowing as solely representational knowledge (59) and also the primordial character of our engagement with the world for sustaining our theoretical knowing (64-65). Yu concludes that incorporating such insights from the phenomenological tradition can support Polanyi's claims regarding the primacy of tacit knowing.

Another variant of the phenomenological tradition is found in Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutical theory. Chris Mulherin explores similarities between Gadamer's seminal work, *Truth and Method*, and Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge* with the conviction

that, even though these two authors were not familiar with each other's work when they were first formulated at mid-century, they both proposed views of knowing that were remarkably congruent. Both, for example, were convinced that we could make universal claims to truth without recourse to appeals of "impersonal" criteria or detached objectivity (69). The cultural contexts within which they formulated their respective theories were quite different of course – Polanyi working out of the practice of physical chemistry and Gadamer in the area of historical understanding and textual criticism. Still, they both acknowledged intellectual modesty and the reliance on traditional authorities for preliminary guidance. For both thinkers this means not only that our consciousness is formed by our reliance on our heritage but that both it and we ourselves are existentially transformed when we make responsible claims based on this structure (75). All of this is guided by the anticipation of discovering new meanings in nature or the text (77). Given these similar patterns of thinking, Mulherin is convinced that their respective approaches may enlighten each other's positions on how horizons contribute to the formation of tacit integrations and how possible outcomes of probing are judged worthy of pursuing. In this way, he believes, we may also understand how distinctive realms of knowing, such as the scientific and the humanistic, might form a continuum rather than a dichotomy – a claim I believe Polanyi's work, particularly *The Study of Man*, would endorse.

The next essay, by Paul Lewis, extends Polanyi's theory of knowing to consider how it might contribute to ethical reflection by helping us understand the process of formation of character. This essay attempts to relate Polanyi's position to the recovery by ethicists of virtue and character in moral reflection. Yet analyses of practical reasoning are notoriously difficult, as Aristotle's classic reflections on *phronesis* illustrate (82). Lewis hopes that by extending Polanyi's ruminations on tacit knowing, particularly the feature of indwelling, we may use what he calls Polanyi's notion of "dynamic orthodoxy" (in science or cultural frameworks) to assist us in understanding and perhaps even contributing to the formation of character among

our students (86). Lewis contends that a presupposition of such reflection is a commitment to "moral truths" (88) – a steep hurdle in contemporary American society, at least, where most students are caught up in the emotivism, relativism, and consumerism of late capitalism. He claims that the use of appropriate case studies allows students to begin the process of engaging in intelligent moral reflection, even though they have the significant obstacle of not being able to formulate their own moral convictions. He concludes that, in spite of these difficulties, the Polanyian context for exposing students to case studies does offer a fresh way for assisting them in the formation of their own practical reasoning.

One of the consequences of the mid-century collapse of the modern cultural ideal of objectivity was that the recognition of the social conditioning of knowing raised the specter of relativism. David Rutledge explores how Polanyi's theory of personal knowledge provides a basis for responsible claims of truth if not absolute certitude. Beginning with the embeddedness of all individuals' acts of knowing (100), Rutledge explains how in Polanyi's theory the extension of this tacit pattern into communal life grounds the universal intent of knowing (104). Rutledge explores how this "triadic" structure of a) responsible knowers relying on b) communities of inquiry that seek c) common objects (109) supports the quest for truth without succumbing to the universalizing tendency of critical rationality or irresponsible relativism (110).

In the last essay in the first part of this collection, Márta Fehér focuses on the moral features of Polanyi's understanding of the pursuit of scientific truth. Her goal is to challenge what has become increasingly apparent in the practice of science over the last quarter century, its "post-academic" phase where profit and remuneration in the service of corporate expansion and government power control its agenda (123). This commendable effort leads her, unfortunately in my estimation, to present an overly narrow view of the moral commitment to the pursuit of truth that Polanyi held animated science. For Fehér, Polanyi's "republic of science" is not a "real" republic,

but an ideal society that is autocratic, authoritarian (115) and with no obligation to or interests in the larger society (116). Science, in this view, possesses a transcendent status over the larger society (117) which allows it to serve as its spiritual center (118). She correctly affirms that scientific authority is crucial to Polanyi's view of the authentic pursuit of science (120), but her emphasis neglects the important qualifications he included, such as between general and specific authorities. Still, her basic point that Polanyi's claims that science involves the pursuit of rationality conjoined with morality offers a salutary correction to the transformation in the social context that science has undergone in the latter part of the twentieth century.

The second part of the volume begins with Tihamér Margitay's essay on what he terms Polanyi's "argument" for "layers" in reality. For Polanyi, knowing something involves integrating particulars into a focal whole. If the reality we know is a comprehensive entity, this involves integrating particulars subject to a lower level of control into their joint meaning which functions at a higher level of reality, yielding a hierarchical conception of reality. Margitay then asks what precisely is the relationship between the structure of knowing and the structure of an entity? Quoting Polanyi, he formulates what he terms the "Correspondence Thesis" (130-31) which affirms that the structure of an entity follows from the way we know it (see TD 33-34). This is a strong claim made on behalf of Polanyi's theory which, I must admit, I had never entertained previously. I understood Polanyi to be arguing by indirection, presenting an accumulation of evidence which called forth a shift in perspective in favor of a non-reductive ontology. Still pushing the strong sense of the Correspondence Thesis, Margitay shows how this holds only for ontological levels of knowing certain kinds of realities (like scientific theories), but not for reality in general (133). In order to push his case further that an argument is required for upholding the parallelism between epistemological and ontological levels in general, he attempts to show how Polanyi's argument for dual control of natural objects also fails because, say, we know a comprehensive entity like the solar system as a reality without needing to distinguish

its laws from the laws governing its parts (the planets, the stars, the gasses, etc.). Both the whole and its parts are governed by the laws of physics and chemistry (135); there are not unique boundary conditions imposed by the solar system on its parts, even though there are necessarily two levels involved (subsidiaries and focus) in recognizing and knowing the solar system as a comprehensive entity. For reasons too complex to address here, I believe this argument does not hold. Still, if we accept Margitay's critique what is the consequence? He points out the remarkable fact that, even with his stringent interpretation, Polanyi's theory is successful in demonstrating the reality of persons and realities associated with knowing, such as truth and discovery (139). And this, Margitay states, is indeed quite an accomplishment.

An alternative analysis of Polanyi's non-reductive ontology is offered by Márton Dinnyei, who examines Jaegwon Kim's moderate reductionism in light of Polanyi's position. Kim held that if the material conditions for some mental state were necessary and sufficient to cause it, then there would be no need to posit mental events causing other mental events independent of material conditions, with the result that the mental event turns out to be an epiphenomenon from the point of view of material causality (143). Dinnyei cleverly explains how Polanyi's understanding of higher level principles depending upon boundary conditions left undetermined by the lower level principles implies that there is no causation operating to control the emergent level of reality; hence any causation has to occur at the higher level (of, say, a machine) (146). In such an understanding of dual control of levels of reality, Kim's problem of downward causation does not occur since he assumes that the semantic contents of the levels have to be able to be expressed fully at the lower level (149). But on Polanyi's view, the higher level operational principles can function only on their own real level, something recognized by tacit knowing.

Another implication of Polanyi's non-reductive ontology has implications for certain standard assumptions in contemporary biology, according to Daniel Paksi. Given Polanyi's position on emergence

of higher levels and dual control of comprehensive entities, biologists make two complementary mistakes: they assume that features of life can be explained by physical and chemical laws, and that when they explain biological functions on analogy with machines, they are accomplishing the former (159). This implies that the mechanism of natural selection cannot account for the phenomenon of evolution itself, since random events may release or sustain functions of an ordering principle, but they do not account for the action of generating the novel ordering principles (163). According to Paksi, Polanyi requires not some sort of vital force to account for this teleological feature of evolution (171) but rather only a stable, open system ordering the process. Such a system-based theoretical approach provides a rationale for the genuine emergence required by evolution.

Paul Richard Blum's essay struck me as daring and innovative. He claims that Polanyi's reflections on the fact that knowing a machine requires recognizing the operational principles which define the purpose of a machine served as a proof for the immortality of the soul (173). Aside from the fact that I was quite ignorant of any published writings by Polanyi that discussed the immortality of the soul, much less attempting to prove it, I was puzzled how Blum made such a connection to Polanyi's thought. It turns on a discussion which Alan Turing presented at Manchester in 1949, where Polanyi objected to Turing's reduction of unspecifiability to routine patterns (177-79). Blum explores this in light of the medieval and renaissance distinction between passive and active intellect. He claims that a mechanistic interpretation of soul presumes the former (182); once an unspecifiable element of intellection is acknowledged, as in an active intellect, the soul cannot be reduced in any fashion, and, according to the early modern philosophical tradition, it entailed immortality (183). If Blum is correct, we have an amazing instance where an implication of the reality of the personal has revealed itself in novel ways.

In the next essay R. T. Allen explores how emotion sustains a proper understanding of knowing

and intelligence. A strict autonomy is self-destructive, as is a failure to acknowledge we understand our surroundings in light of our commitments. He concludes in a completely Polanyian manner that our emotions play a constitutive role in all knowing and meaningful action (191), provided we accept our calling within a fallible, but developing, tradition.

The final essay in the volume offers a reconciling interpretation of the Polanyi brothers' social thought. A stereotypical view paints Karl as an old-fashioned socialist and Michael as a free-market capitalist, but Walter Gulick believes that this is an unnecessarily disjunctive reading of their ideas. Gulick suggests that there are compatibilities between their ideas that are worth exploring insofar as they contribute to the realization of the social values of peace, justice, and sustainability (193). Gulick refers to Endre Nagy's presentation of their relationship as comprising an early golden age up until 1934 when disagreements between the brothers on the implementation of socialist policies in Russia led to an estrangement (194). Certainly Karl's refusal to recognize profound difficulties with Soviet communism contributed to the rift. But Gulick attempts to explain how the brothers developed different world-views about the situation in Europe well before 1934. Early on, Karl saw social institutions as playing an important role in promoting the common good and peace, while Michael placed much more trust in an appeal to properly structured individual interests (197). This is reflected in their different accounts of the causes of the first World War: for Karl, it was an institutional collapse of an illusory self-adjusting free market economy while for Michael it was moral inversion in the form of the corrosive power of malformed ideas employed by individuals. These significant differences in orientation did not lead to any early disputes between the brothers because prior to 1935 their lives had little intersection in the way of professional interests (198). Gulick next explores the positions of the brothers on social matters during the subsequent period, concluding with strengths and weaknesses of both (201). He furthers this comparison of their positions in the context of scarcity and recent global market failures, again pointing to their relative

strengths and weaknesses in light of the values of peace, justice, and sustainability. With regard to the deleterious side-effects of market swings, Gulick argues that both brothers probably would hold that too great a concentration of power today resides in corporations (206). Gulick additionally explores how the brothers grew together in terms of the notion of what Michael called public liberty, and how both affirmed that a commitment to transcendent values was grounded in overarching cultural meaning provided by religion. Gulick concludes that, even with their differing world-views, their social theories have many points in common, particularly at the fundamental level where Karl's emphasis on love and Michael's on transcendent values actually reinforce each other (213). And such mutual enrichment from both their positions on social patterns might helpfully contribute to the formulation of policies that contribute to peace, justice, and sustainability.

My aim here has been to provide an introductory overview to the essays collected in this volume. The breadth of issues addressed, sometimes in contradiction with each other, testifies to the continuing fruitfulness of Polanyi's thinking. My hope is that anyone who found the topics intriguing would be stimulated to turn to the original essay to examine the author's presentation first hand. All students of Polanyi's thought are indebted to those who organized this conference and to Tihamér Margitay for seeing to the publication of the essays presented there.

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