

# Tradition & Discovery

## The Polanyi Society Periodical

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# The Polanyi Society

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## Preface

This issue of *TAD* includes Paul Lewis' review article on the work of Darcia Narvaez, a Notre Dame psychologist interested in moral development who makes use of some of Polanyi's work. Take a close look at Paul's careful account since Narvaez will be a guest speaker at the November 19, 2011 Polanyi Society annual meeting in San Francisco. The full program for the meeting is on page 5. In addition to bibliographic information in News and Notes there is information on the travel fund which supports young scholars who wish to participate in the Society's annual meeting or other meetings. On page 6 is a short article on the new Polanyi Society endowment. You will also find again in this issue the call for papers for the next Society-sponsored conference at Loyola University, Chicago. The date for this conference, June 8-10, 2012, has now been finalized. It helps those planning the conference if you early identify that you anticipate participating in the conference. For the third time, *TAD* is featuring something on Michael Polanyi and Paul Tillich who met in 1963 at Polanyi's request. This issue includes a discussion involving R. Melvin Keiser, Durwood Foster, Richard Gelwick and Donald Musser. Walter Mead and I wrote review articles on two books by political theorist Murray Jardine, a former student of William Poteat. Jardine kindly responded to our analyses and outlined the new direction in which his thinking is now moving since the publication of these books. There are four reviews in this issue, all on subjects likely to be of interest to those who have studied Polanyi's philosophical works.

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.

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# NEWS AND NOTES

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## New *Polanyiana* Issue

A new English issue of *Polanyiana* (Vol. 19:1-2 [2010]) should be available by the time this issue of *TAD* is received. Following is a list of articles and other materials in the new issue: **Tibor Frank**, “The Budapest Roots Of Michael Polanyi’s Liberalism”; **Endre Nagy**, “The Conversion Of Karl And Michael Polanyi: An Analysis In Terms Of Mannheim, Sartre and Heidegger”; **Paul Richard Blum**, “Michael Polanyi: Can The Mind Be Represented By A Machine?: Documents Of The Discussion In 1949”; **Phil Mullins**, “Scattered Thoughts On *The Tacit Dimension*, The Terry Lectures And Polanyi’s Developing Ideas”; **Walter B. Mead**, “Michael Polanyi’s Lessening ‘Reliance On The Necessity Of Commitment’ In The Years Between 1958 And 1966, With Specific Attention Given To 1964-1966 And The Publication Of *The Tacit Dimension*”; **Daniel Paksi**, “Michael Polanyi’s Concept Of Reality: From Epistemology To Ontology And From Ontology To Epistemology”; **Mihály Szívós**, “Scepticism, Psychology And Detranscendentalisation In Merleau-Ponty’s And Michael Polanyi’s Philosophy: A Comparative Analysis”; **Polanyi Archives**: Michael Polanyi On Mind And Machines; **Review: Péter Hartl** on *Knowing And Being: Perspectives On The Philosophy of Michael Polanyi*, ed. Tihamér Margitay. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010.

## Other Recent Articles

Andrew Hawkins, “Back To The Future: Leadership, Tradition And Authority In A Post-Critical Age” *Quest*, 62:3 (2010): 237-249.

Peter Hopsicker, “Polanyi’s ‘From-To’ Knowing and His Contribution to the Phenomenology Of Skilled Motor Behavior” *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*. 36:1 (2009): 76-87.

Peter M. Hopsicker, “Miracles In Sport: Finding The ‘Ears To Hear’ And The ‘Eyes To See’” *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy*, 3:1 (April 2009): 75-93.

## Polanyi Society Speakers Bureau

The Polanyi Society’s Speakers Bureau helps organize talks to groups by Polanyi scholars. Marty Moleski, S. J. and Richard Gelwick gave talks in 2010 at universities. If you know anyone who might be interested in sponsoring a talk, send the name and e-mail address to Phil Mullins ([mullins@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:mullins@missouriwestern.edu)). 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 by Moleski and Gelwick.

## Conference on Persons

The eleventh international Conference on Persons is to be held at Brigham Young University, Provo, UT from Aug. 8th to Aug. 12th, 2011. For information on the conference and lodging go to <http://paws.wcu.edu/jmclachla/index.html>.

## New *Appraisal* Issue

The March 2011 (vol.8, no.3) issue of *Appraisal: A Journal of Constructive and Post-Critical Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Studies* was published in May. The theme for the issue is “Re-Appraisal: Max Scheler.” The following articles are included: **Soren Engelson**, “Emotional Awareness In Scheler’s Axiology And The Queerness-Argument”; **J. Cutting**, “Max Scheler’s Metaphysics”; **Robert Zaborowski**, “Max Scheler’s Model Of Stratified Affectivity”; **Anjelica Krebbs**, “The Phenomenology Of Shared Feeling.” One additional article does not focus on the Scheler theme: **Ilka Virtanen**, “Representation Of The Body As A Basis of Personal Knowledge: A Neuro-Psychological Perspective On Polanyi’s Subjective Dimension Of Knowing.” Contact **Richard Allen** ([rt.allen@ntlworld.com](mailto:rt.allen@ntlworld.com)) for information about *Appraisal* (available for subscribers on WWW).

# Travel Assistance Available For November Meeting

For students and other young scholars planning to attend the Society's Annual Meeting in San Francisco on November 19, 2011, limited travel funding is available. Society members are urged to inform worthy candidates about this assistance. Those interested in this funding, as well as those who know of potential candidates, should contact Walter Mead ([wbmead@ilstu.edu](mailto:wbmead@ilstu.edu)). Contributions to the travel fund are always welcome; those interested in contributing should e-mail Walter Mead. Related information about the travel fund can also be found on the Polanyi Society web site.

Student applicants are expected first to inquire if their school's academic department or student affairs office can provide assistance. Applications to the Polanyi Society (via Walter Mead) should include the e-mail and postal address at which they can be contacted between July 1 and November 18, information regarding the applicant's academic background and accomplishments, as well as a brief comment describing his/her interest in and study of Polanyi's thought. The applicant should identify and provide an e-mail address for someone (preferably a professor under whom he/she has studied) who has agreed promptly to supply a letter of reference by e-mail to Walter Mead. Also, the applicant should indicate estimated travel expenses and cost of lodging for the night preceding (November 18) and the night following (November 19) the two sessions of the Polanyi Society meeting—that is, the portion of these expenses requiring assistance. Applicants are encouraged to share travel, if by car, and lodging with others, wherever possible, in order to minimize costs. (Walter Mead can assist applicants by providing names of persons traveling from nearby locations and names of those seeking roommates.)

The deadline for receipt of applications is August 1, 2011, and the results will be announced by August 15. Applications received after August 1 and prior to October 1 will be reviewed and awards announced by October 14, according to remaining Fund resources.

## Duke Lectures Now On the Polanyi Society Web Site

Michael Polanyi's Duke Lectures were given in February and early March of 1964 when Polanyi was in residence in the spring term at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, as the James B. Duke Distinguished Professor in the Department of Religion. William Poteat, a professor in the Department of Religion and a scholar deeply interested in Polanyi's thought, seems to have been primarily responsible for setting up the five-lecture series that had the title "Man in Thought." The titles for the lectures delivered on Monday evenings (and followed by a discussion on Tuesday afternoons) beginning February 10 are as follows: (1) "The Metaphysical Reach of Science," (2) "The Structure of Tacit Knowing," (3) "Commitment to Science," (4) "The Emergence of Man," and (5) "Thought in Society." Transcripts of these lectures can now be downloaded from the Polanyi Society web site.

## Electronic Discussion List

The Polanyi Society supports an electronic discussion group that explores implications of the thought of Michael Polanyi. Anyone interested can join. To join yourself, go to the following address: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/polanyi\\_list/join](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/polanyi_list/join). If you have difficulty, send an e-mail to Doug Masini ([Douglas.Masini@armstrong.edu](mailto:Douglas.Masini@armstrong.edu)) and someone will see that you are added to the list.

# 2011 Polanyi Society Annual Meeting

## San Francisco, CA

### Saturday, 19 November

As is usual, the annual meeting for the Polanyi Society will be held in conjunction with the American Academy of Religion annual meeting.

The overall theme for our meeting is “Persons in Society.” Locations of meeting sessions will be posted on the Polanyi Society website as soon as they are available. They will also be included in the October 2011 issue of *TAD*. Papers will also be posted on the Polanyi Society web site prior to the meeting.

#### **9:00-11:30 am**

*Convener:* Charles Lowney, Washington and Lee University

“The Moral Person: Psychology, Neuroscience and Polanyi”  
Darcia Narvaez, University of Notre Dame.

*Respondent:* Paul Lewis, Mercer University

*Respondent:* Gus Breytspraak, Ottawa University

Business Meeting

*Presiding:* David Rutledge

#### **7:00-9:30 pm**

*Convener:* Esther Meek, Geneva College

“The ‘Hard Problem’—From Polanyi to Chalmers:  
Nonreductive Explanations for the Mind-Body Connection”  
Stefania Jha, Independent Scholar

*Respondent:* David Nikkel, University of North Carolina, Pembroke

“The Participatory Turn”  
Jacob Sherman, California Institute of Integral Studies

*Respondent:* Dale Cannon, Western Oregon University

# Invitation to Contribute to the Polanyi Society Endowment

At its October 31, 2010 Board meeting, the Polanyi Society amended its Bylaws to establish an endowment. Endowment funds will be handled by a special Board committee which has now been named and is beginning to address the problems of raising and managing dollars for the endowment. The Bylaws (which are available for viewing on the Polanyi Society web site at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/orgs/polanyi/bdofdirectors.htm>) set forth in some detail how the endowment is to function in conjunction with the regular operations of the Polanyi Society, which is an IRS 501C3 nonprofit organization incorporated in the State of Missouri. In essence the establishment of an endowment was a move intended to help put the Polanyi Society on a sounder financial basis in the future. The new endowment fund will eventually generate resources that will make Society-sponsored activities (both old ones like the ones noted below, as well as new ones) a somewhat less precarious financial adventure. At present, the Board of Directors never quite knows if we will be able to muster the dollars necessary to undertake some of the larger Society projects which we nevertheless undertake, such as the Loyola conferences mentioned below.

As most who read *TAD* likely know, the Society is a membership organization whose Spartan habits allow it to continue to have only very modest annual dues, despite its very active program. The Polanyi Society produces a journal three times per academic year; the Society manages this by handling most production matters internally rather than contracting with a large publishing house to produce the journal as most academic professional organizations do today. The Society has a web site which provides open access to a number of different Polanyi essays and lectures and thirty years worth of Polanyi Society publications housed in an indexed digital archive. The Society sponsors an electronic discussion list and recently added a Speakers Bureau and a Travel Fund to support young scholars interested in attending Society meetings. Each year there is an annual meeting featuring academic papers. Many annual meeting papers by members have later appeared in *TAD*. Some annual meeting sessions featured papers by prominent scholars not affiliated with the Polanyi Society but who took an interest in Polanyi; some meetings were joint ventures with groups like the Tillich Society. In recent years, there have been a few meetings in addition to the annual meeting that have been sponsored by the Society — certainly the most ambitious of these additional meetings have been the conferences held in 2001 and 2008, with the next one slated for June 2012, at Loyola University, Chicago. These three-day Loyola conferences have brought together 40-50 people interested in Polanyi's thought from around the world.

The endowment got off to a good start with a gift from the late William T. Scott (Polanyi biographer), Ann Scott and Peg Phillips, a patron who supported Bill's early work on the biography. Some additional small gifts have brought the total for the endowment to about \$10,000 at present. The Endowment Committee is presently seeking donations or pledges that will double the endowment by the spring of 2012. The Committee is also preparing materials that can facilitate bequests to the Society. Prospective donors, and particularly donors interested in setting up a matching program, should contact David Rutledge ([david.rutledge@furman.edu](mailto:david.rutledge@furman.edu)).

# 2012 Polanyi Society Conference

## Connections/Disconnections: Polanyi and Contemporary Concerns and Domains of Inquiry

### Call For Papers

The Polanyi Society will sponsor a three-day conference June 8-10, 2012. Conference participants will have the opportunity to spend a morning (June 8) at the Regenstein Library of the University of Chicago reviewing the archival Polanyi materials held there. The conference will include several plenary speakers or panels as well as parallel sessions in which conference participants present and discuss papers with others interested in the session's particular topic. Like the Polanyi Society sponsored conferences in 2001 and 2008, this will be a conference that builds in many opportunities for discussion and is open to persons using Polanyi-related ideas in a number of fields.

Proposals are invited for papers that examine the themes of post-critical thought in the context of the new century. The following are some suggested general categories within which specific papers might be grouped. [Please do not think of these categories as a limit for submissions but as a springboard for your own reflections. The final program will reflect groupings adjusted in light of proposals submitted.]

- Polanyi As Public Intellectual: Cultural Criticism and Reorientation in the New Global Order
- Redeeming Reason: Does “Personal Knowledge” Have a Future in a Partisan World?
- Polanyi in the Light of Developments in Psychology (and vice versa)
- Polanyi’s Work in Relation to Current Accounts of Organizations, Institutions and Authority
- Doubt and Commitment in the Postmodern Environment
- Religion and Science: Polanyi and Current Discussions
- History and Philosophy of Science: Polanyi and Current Discussions
- Contemporary Politics and Economics in Polanyian Perspective (and vice versa)
- Polanyi and the Rediscovery of Embodiment
- Language, Learning and Logic—Polanyi and Current Discussions
- Trust, Truth and Conscience: Polanyian Communal Values and Contemporary Culture
- The Good Society: Polanyi and Current Challenges
- Pluralism: Does Polanyi Help Us Address Current Interest in and Problems Associated with Diversity?
- Can Polanyi Speak to a Digital Age?
- Resources in Polanyi for Theological Reconstruction in the Face of Fanaticism and Secularism
- Skills, Practice and Virtue—Polanyian Links
- Polanyi on the Importance of the Beautiful
- Polanyi’s Antireductionism and the Logic of Emergence
- Proposals for panel presentations are invited

Proposals should be 250-300 words and will be reviewed by a panel of jurors. Send an electronic copy of the proposal without your name on it as an attachment to Phil Mullins at [mullins@missouriwestern.edu](mailto:mullins@missouriwestern.edu). In the body of the e-mail, provide a preferred mailing address (or fax number) as well a phone number of the author. The initial deadline for receipt of proposals is October 1, 2011. If there is space on the program, those who do not meet the October 1 initial deadline can submit proposals before the final deadline of March 30, 2012. Priority consideration will be given to proposals meeting the October 1 deadline. If the proposal is for a panel, the full panel needs to be identified and one member designated as the primary contact. The panel proposal should outline why a discussion of this topic is important. Future issues of *TAD* and a posting on the Polanyi Society web site ( <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/orgs/polanyi/>) will include additional conference information.

## 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 *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 Polanyi essays (available on the Polanyi Society web site and other sites), Polanyi's Duke Lectures (1964), as well as audio files for Polanyi's McEnerney Lectures (1962), and Polanyi's conversation with Carl Rogers (1966).

## 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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# The Emerging Comprehensive Moral Psychology of Darcia Narvaez

Paul Lewis

**ABSTRACT Key Words:** Darcia Narvaez, moral psychology, moral development, four-component model, triune ethics, tacit knowledge, implicit processing, moral intuitionism, Michael Polanyi.

*This review essay offers an overview of Darcia Narvaez's work in moral psychology based on a representative selection of essays published over roughly the last decade. I trace the roots of her work in post-Kohlbergian moral psychology and show how her work has developed over time into one of the few attempts to articulate a normative and comprehensive moral psychology that is conversant with both moral philosophy and the neurosciences.*

Darcia Narvaez will present a paper on “The Moral Person: Psychology, Neuroscience, and Polanyi” at this fall’s Annual Meeting of the Polanyi Society. In preparation for the meeting, this article offers an overview of her work in moral psychology based on a representative selection of essays published over the last decade or so. The development of her work appears to unfold over time such that one phase lays the groundwork for the next, leaving her poised to develop one of the more expansive and inclusive moral psychologies available today. Those who know Polanyi well will see affinities between his work and hers at several points, among them a stress on the role of tacit knowledge and the importance of perception, education as a mentoring process in which students learn to inhabit a tradition of inquiry, and a sense of the person as a mind/body whole.

Her work first came to my attention during the fall of 2008 when I was doing research on character development and pedagogy. Her work stood out to me for several reasons, not least of which is that she makes explicit reference to Michael Polanyi for helping her appreciate the importance of the tacit dimension in moral reasoning. Moreover, as her work develops over time it largely seems to offer contemporary psychological confirmation that Aristotle’s ancient account of moral development is on target. In addition, her work seeks to integrate philosophy and the neurosciences into her psychology. Finally, she is not content simply to work at the theoretical level; she explicitly develops and puts into practice a pedagogy for moral development that is informed by her research. Before reviewing her work, I begin with a biographical sketch.

Narvaez is currently Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Notre Dame.<sup>1</sup> Born in Minneapolis, MN to a professor of Spanish and a “Minnesota farm girl,” Narvaez spent much of her childhood in Puerto Rico, Guadalajara, Bogota, Pamplona, and Mexico City. She earned her bachelor’s degree at the University of Northern Colorado where she double-majored in Music and Spanish and minored in Psychology. After college, she taught music to elementary and secondary students in both the Philippines and Minnesota before earning a M.Div. at Luther Northwestern Seminary in St. Paul, MN. She also ran a business and served as church organist before earning her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology at the University of Minnesota, where she worked with James Rest, the developer of the Defining Issues Test. From 1993 until her move to Notre Dame in 2000, Narvaez taught at the University of Minnesota and worked for the Center for the Study of Ethical Development, which had been founded earlier by Rest.

Narvaez has co-edited six books, three of which have won awards from the American Educational Research Association. She has authored twenty-five articles in refereed journals and co-authored an additional forty-two, making it easy to understand why she has twice been recognized as one of the most productive educational psychologists by *Contemporary Educational Psychology*. In addition to this more formal scholarly production, Narvaez has also published textbooks and teaching materials for character education programs.

## **Recognizing the Role of Tacit Knowledge in Moral Reasoning**

Narvaez's early work with James Rest positioned her to be on the cutting edge of what some authors call a post-Kohlberg era in moral psychology. Lawrence Kohlberg (1927-1987), the widely recognized pioneer in moral development research, identified six stages in the development of moral reasoning clustered into three levels that he called the pre-conventional (Stages 1 and 2), conventional (Stages 3 and 4), and post-conventional (Stages 5 and 6).<sup>2</sup> These levels can be distinguished by the basis upon which a person makes moral decisions. According to the theory, at the level of pre-conventional reasoning, one's moral decisions are based on the impact they will have on the self and loved ones. At the conventional level, they are based more on fit with social conventions and laws. At the post-conventional level, decisions are based on so-called "transcendent ideals," such as human rights or moral principles like justice. What Kohlberg suggests, in essence, is that one's moral imagination expands to include more and more considerations in decision making.

In order to test the theory and measure the stage at which a person characteristically reasons, Kohlberg developed a moral judgment interview that presented people with different dilemmas and asked them to give reasons for what the main character in that scenario should do. For example, in one of the better known dilemmas, a man named Heinz needs to purchase medicine for his seriously ill wife, but does not have the money to do so. The pharmacist refuses to work with Heinz and so Heinz debates whether or not to steal the drug. Readers are asked to tell what they think Heinz should do and then give their reasons for it. Those answers are scored in such a way as to identify the dominant stage of reasoning one uses. For example (and overly-simplistically), someone who said that Heinz should not steal the drug because stealing is against the law would be rated at the conventional level.

This theory has been criticized extensively, including by Kohlberg himself. As he worked with and refined this process, he and others discovered that very few people seemed to attain post-conventional levels of moral reasoning, thus leading him at one point even to doubt the existence of stage 6. Some studies have found that most of those who exhibit stage 5 reasoning have participated in graduate education, while those who have attained stage 6 have all received formal training in philosophy or a similar discipline. The theory has been criticized by others on many counts, e.g., for being too wedded to a problematic philosophical understanding of moral agency (i.e., Kantianism), for being too male, and/or for defining the moral domain too narrowly.<sup>3</sup> These various shortcomings, combined with the realization that advanced levels of moral reasoning did not always lead to recognizably moral behavior, spurred others to suggest alternative theories of moral development.

One of those people was James Rest (d. 1999), who articulated a four-component model that posited four mutually-influential psychological processes that together lead to moral behavior.<sup>4</sup> The first component is that of interpretation or moral sensitivity. Persons must be able to "read" the moral import of a situation from various environmental clues, as well as attend to the emotional expressions and perspectives of others, and sort through various plans of action and their consequences. The second component is moral or ethical

judgment. Persons must be willing and able to judge a course of action as morally right or obligatory. The third component is ethical focus. One must prioritize moral considerations over other competing concerns. The final component is action: the agent must have both a strong enough self-identity and the requisite skills by which to implement action, in spite of any difficulties one may encounter.

Rest also developed a new test of moral reasoning by modifying both Kohlberg's dilemmas and the scale of development.<sup>5</sup> The resulting Defining Issues Test (DIT) has become the most used instrument for assessing moral reasoning among college students and young adults. It is a multiple-choice instrument that asks students to respond to six different stories that present a moral dilemma. The DIT gives students a list of twelve issues that the story potentially raises and asks them to rank which ones they think are most important in choosing a course of action. Student responses are then scored to determine the stage of moral reasoning they exhibit. These stages roughly correspond to those of Kohlberg, but the most significant score on the DIT is the P score, which measures the relative importance of postconventional reasoning in resolving moral dilemmas; this score roughly correlates with stages 5 and 6 in Kohlberg's schema. In an analysis of the over 500 studies that have used the DIT, Rest discovered that moral judgment does indeed become more complex and sophisticated over time, such that many people—contra Kohlberg's findings—do in fact reason at the higher stages.

It is in seeking to explain this difference between the findings of Kohlberg and Rest that Narvaez and Tonia Bock explicitly make use of Polanyi.<sup>6</sup> They argue that the moral judgment interview developed by Kohlberg puts a premium on the ability to articulate one's moral knowledge, whereas the DIT measures recognition knowledge, a form of tacit knowledge. They argue that the DIT measures three schemas by which people are disposed to perceive moral situations. These schemas (personal interest, maintaining moral norms, and post-conventional) roughly correspond to Kohlberg's levels but differ in that they represent predispositions that influence one's perceptions of a situation's salient features by organizing and applying prior knowledge.<sup>7</sup> The DIT, by the choices it offers, taps into a person's preferred schema, one that remains largely inarticulate.

At the end of this article, Narvaez and Bock suggest three options for further research in moral judgment, thereby hinting at the next phase of Narvaez's work.<sup>8</sup> If one wants to study conscious processes, they say that one should study moral experts who can verbally articulate their thought processes. If one wants to study what they call "the middle zone" of understanding, one should study recollection of moral texts. If one wants to study naturalistic human development, one should study tacit responses. Narvaez chooses to study experts, although as we shall see, she discovers that tacit knowledge is important for understanding expertise.

## **Construing Moral Education as Developing Expertise**

The concept of moral expertise seems to occupy much of Narvaez's attention from 2005-2006. Here, she draws on research into expertise to enrich her understanding of moral development. She argues that experts differ from novices in several ways.<sup>9</sup> First, they have a richer base of factual and procedural knowledge, as well as more highly developed schemas for organizing knowledge. Secondly, this richer knowledge base allows experts to perceive the world differently so that they are better able to pick out relevant information than novices. Finally, experts exhibit more highly developed skills in reasoning that draw, in part, on their memories of extensive experience in a field. Put differently, the tacit knowledge of experts is richer than that of others, thereby allowing them to make decisions quickly—even automatically.

Narvaez thus compares moral development to the development of expertise in a number of processes so as to coordinate “the entire brain-mind-body system” for the sake of moral behavior.<sup>10</sup> Building on the four-component model, Narvaez delineates 84 different skills entailed in moral action, skills in which one presumably needs to develop some degree of expertise. Take for example, the component of ethical focus.<sup>11</sup> For Narvaez, this component comprises skills of respecting others, cultivating one’s conscience, acting responsibly, helping others, finding meaning in life, valuing traditions and institutions, as well as developing ethical identity and integrity. For the purpose of classroom education, Narvaez and colleagues identified sample subskills for each skill. For example, “cultivating one’s conscience” requires one to practice self-command, manage influence and power, and be honorable. While one might wonder about some of the terminology and logic behind this classificatory scheme, it represents an impressive attempt to offer a thick description of the skills involved in moral behavior.

If one is to become an expert in these skills, one needs an account of how experts develop their expertise. Narvaez offers such an account by noting that the education of experts differs in significant ways from much regular education, primarily because education in expertise takes the form of mentorship that involves several elements.<sup>12</sup> The first is that novices are immersed in “good environments” that foster appropriate intuitions. Second, from their mentors they learn deliberative understanding and explicit theories that have been developed in the prior history of the domain, thereby learning to “see” from the perspective of those who inhabit (dare one say, indwell?) a particular domain. Moreover, novices put in significant amounts of extensive, coached practice applying theories to new situations. Perhaps most striking is that it takes upwards of ten years to become an expert in any given field.<sup>13</sup>

If an educational goal is to develop expertise in each of these interdependent processes, moral education will follow the general pattern of education in expertise. Informed by her work with character education programs, Narvaez develops a four-tiered pedagogy for instructing students in these processes that she calls Integrative Ethical Education.<sup>14</sup> The first, most elementary level, is to immerse students in examples, thereby giving students opportunity to recognize broad patterns and begin to discern some of the constituent elements in those patterns. The second level is to focus attention on details as the student moves from more basic to more elaborate concepts. The third level is that of developing skills in problem-solving through practice in applying the knowledge gained in the first two levels. The fourth and final level entails practicing the skill or procedure set in multiple contexts so that situated cognition is widespread. Through all this process of learning, student development is facilitated by mentoring relationships as they become more adept at using and adapting knowledge to respond to increasingly complex problems. All of this requires establishing a caring relationship with each student and creating a supportive classroom climate.<sup>15</sup>

It is when working through her account of the kind of education that fosters moral development that Narvaez becomes more explicitly philosophical in her reflections. For example, she notes that Integrative Ethical Education deliberately links contemporary behavioral sciences to ancient Greek ideas of *arête*, *techne*, and *eudaimonia*, also hinting at the importance of the *polis* when she worries that the larger culture, particularly the consumerism and violence promoted by the media, make it difficult to sustain moral development.<sup>16</sup> This synthesis yields three “foundational” ideas that themselves have educational implications: (1) that moral development is best construed as development of moral expertise, (2) that interactive education is by nature transformative, and (3) that human nature is generally cooperative and self-actualizing.<sup>17</sup> In the context of this latter discussion, Narvaez mentions Darwin’s view of morality’s evolutionary adaptiveness, as well as

contemporary work in evolutionary psychology, thereby foreshadowing the next step in the development of her work, one that begins a conversation with the neurosciences.

## **Identifying the Neurobiological Substrates of Moral Development**

This move takes place in part because the neurosciences have forced a paradigm shift in psychology by alerting psychologists to the fact that many human decisions are “driven by internal multiple unconscious systems operating in parallel, often automatically, and without our awareness.”<sup>18</sup> Kohlberg and much of cognitive psychology’s earlier emphasis on explicit, conscious and articulate judgments therefore must be tempered by the new findings on implicit processing. At the same time that psychology must attend to these findings, they should not be accepted uncritically, according to Narvaez. She notes that the neurosciences could inform the psychology of moral development in three ways.<sup>19</sup> One might seek to demonstrate that healthy moral functioning requires proper brain functioning. Alternatively, one might argue that studies of brain function might reinforce and/or challenge more traditional accounts of morality. Finally, one might argue that surgical, electronic, or other interventions into brain function can correct or even enhance moral functioning. Narvaez explicitly distances herself from the latter option, because even if one judged such interventions to be ethical, the current state of our knowledge of brain function is too elementary at this point to do so.

Narvaez incorporates two major insights from the neurosciences into her own works. First, the neurosciences help her identify the portions of the brain that correlate with the four component model.<sup>20</sup> For example, Narvaez suggests that moral sensitivity is hardwired in primate brains and is rooted in the work of mirror neurons and the anterior insula. Moreover, early experience is critical for developing this capacity. Moral judgment, it seems, makes use of many parts of the brain, with justice and care reasoning activating different combinations of brain geography. Drawing from studies in reciprocity using games, Narvaez suggests that moral motivation seems to involve activity in both the anterior insula, which is a portion of the brain associated with negative emotions, and the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, an area that involves reason and planning. Moral action seems to involve the prefrontal cortex.

The second insight from the neurosciences that Narvaez emphasizes is the brain’s plasticity, i.e., the continued growth and cultivation of neurons over one’s lifetime. Given this fact, initial conditions may be crucial to later development, as seems to be the case with how the development of conscience seems linked to the quality of one’s attachment to one’s mother.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, since brain structures continue to develop with aging and experience, practice becomes crucial for developing certain capacities, such as those of perception and sensitivity.<sup>22</sup>

Narvaez synthesizes the neurosciences with her previous work into what she calls Triune Ethics Theory (TET). Using Paul McLean’s schema of the triune brain as an organizing principle, Narvaez argues that “three types of affectively-rooted moral orientation emerged from human evolution.”<sup>23</sup> They are an ethic of security, an ethic of engagement, and an ethic of imagination. Each ethic can be situationally evoked and represents a dispositional tendency that develops in one’s formative years and is activated in different situations. While each ethic can be distinguished by its characteristic focus, each can also be turned in more or less adaptive directions.<sup>24</sup> The Ethic of Security is rooted in the most primitive parts of the brain that are associated with self-preservation. This ethic is especially sensitive to matters of threat and safety. It is obviously adaptive in certain circumstances, i.e., situations of real threat to physical survival, but can become problematic in one

of two ways: it can be defensively aggressive (what Narvaez calls “bunker security”) or passive (“wallflower security”). The ethic of engagement is more right-brain and deals with relationships and emotions of compassion and gratitude. In healthy form, it allows one to be fully present with others, but can also take maladaptive forms. If interpersonal engagement is characterized by stress, it can foster a co-dependent morality. If characterized by calm, it can foster a harmony morality. The ethic of imagination is more left-brain and allows one to abstract from the present moment. When combined with pro-social emotions, Narvaez says that this ethic lends itself to a communal imagination. It can, however, become an intellectualized or detached imagination (if detached from pro-social emotions) or a vicious imagination (if linked too strongly to one’s ego needs).

## **Hinting at a Normative Trajectory for Moral Development**

Narvaez hints at a normative goal for moral development in her discussion of “mindful morality.”<sup>25</sup> Such a morality emerges from the integration of all levels of TET and thus involves the entire brain. This morality maintains both an orientation to the here and now, as well as openness to others. This morality particularly builds on (1) knowledge of the competing ethical orientations within the self and the role of emotions in fostering one’s mindset; (2) dispositions toward pro-social emotions that include sympathy, being non-judgmental and the ability to take the perspective of others; (3) skills in being aware of one’s own feelings, being attentive to the moment, and controlling social biases; and (4) the process skills that are part of the four-component model.

This idea of mindful morality then gets expanded into an account of “mature moral functioning”, terminology Narvaez coins in the context of criticizing intuitionist approaches to human behavior, especially the Social Intuitionist Model (SIM) of Jonathan Haidt.<sup>26</sup> According to Haidt and associates, “social intuitions are central and occur without awareness of their source, conveying a sense of rightness or wrongness without the assistance of reasons or reasoning.”<sup>27</sup> Her critique is even-handed in that it identifies both contributions and weaknesses.<sup>28</sup> On the positive side, SIM demonstrates the power of intuitions in shaping moral judgments, incorporates the research on implicit processing into moral psychology, accounts for data that rationalist approaches to moral psychology find anomalous, and offers a credible interpretation of data, and acknowledges how moral intuitions can, at times, mislead. On the other hand, Narvaez argues that intuitionist theories oversimplify moral functioning by neglecting issues of moral motivation and other dimensions identified in the four-component model. They also ignore data on how explicit functioning contributes to moral functioning. Nor do they provide enough critical perspective on a culture’s convictions, resulting in the inability to distinguish between the morality of a Martin Luther King, Jr. and an Adolf Hitler. Her final complaint is that intuitionist theories conflate instinctive responses, primitive information processes, sophisticated unconscious processes, and tacit knowledge, which is not adequately described as either impulsive emotional reaction or nonrational knowledge. Given how both explicit reasoning and implicit processes contribute to human behavior, Narvaez calls for educating intuition along the lines of expertise training.<sup>29</sup>

She also argues that mature moral functioning largely consists of making morality central to one’s self-identity so that one is disposed to take responsibility for one’s behavior, is able to monitor one’s perceptions and reactions, and can reflect on one’s own motives.<sup>30</sup> According to Narvaez, mature moral functioning builds on several skills and capacities, such as basic socialization (especially the capacity for emotional self-regulation), commitments to ongoing self-development, the employment of moral imagination when confronted with novel circumstances, ethical expertise in some domain, such as community organizing, and the capacity for moral innovation, i.e., the ability to adapt in ways that foster positive outcomes for persons and communities.<sup>31</sup>

Narvaez develops that last point as she recognizes both that moral decisions and actions are most difficult in the public realm and that institutions have power in shaping individual action. Thus she ends this phase of her work by calling for the development of “collective capacities” that are needed to foster corporate wellbeing.<sup>32</sup> She focuses on two: practices that foster communal dialogue about moral obligations and “well-planned moral institutions” that can serve as checks and balances to poor intuitions and reasoning that undermine social good. Such communal capacities, she suggests, will be crucial in addressing global interdependence and unprecedented challenges to human survival, such as climate change.

## **Taking Stock**

In looking back over roughly a decade’s work, we see that Narvaez’s theory of moral development develops in ever increasingly expansive ways. The picture of moral development that emerges from this cross-section of Narvaez’s work is that mature moral function is rooted in neurobiological processes (TET) for which initial conditions are crucial. But moral maturity is not simply biological, for it requires the development of expertise in skills in multiple areas (the four-component model) and specific domains, skills that are learned by apprenticeship in a supportive community—all of which rely on and build on tacit knowledge—so that one may mindfully attend to the rubs of the moral life. Always solidly rooted in the four-component model first developed by her mentor, James Rest, Narvaez’s work thus digs back behind the model to explore its neurobiological roots and also expands it to hint at a normative direction, something social scientists are often hesitant to do. In doing so, she comes to identify her work explicitly with key aspects of ancient Greek philosophy.

How shall we assess this emerging comprehensive theory of moral development? Narvaez herself suggests several tests that such a theory must pass.<sup>33</sup> Such a theory will first need to describe what optimal or mature functioning means for both individuals and groups. Next, such a theory will need to describe the direction of development, identify the mechanisms that foster development, and prescribe methods that promote the development of moral maturity. Finally, a theory must offer explanations for common moral failure.

By those criteria, how does she fare? Her construal of mature moral functioning certainly identifies the general shape of mature moral functioning for individuals, from which one can infer what mature moral functioning for groups might entail. Narvaez’s work arguably addresses the next task most fully in her account of how moral expertise develops by means of a novice to expert pedagogy that relies on mentoring in a supportive environment. Narvaez says little about the last test, although one can infer that moral failure can largely be explained by poor socialization and unsupportive environments.<sup>34</sup> At this stage of the game then, by her own standards, Narvaez has made progress on the first two tests, but needs to give attention to the final. In saying this, I do not mean to imply that her work so far is beyond scrutiny. It does, however, raise interesting questions that I suspect will make for intriguing conversation.

## **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup>The information in this sketch is drawn from Darcia Narvaez’s CV and biographical information available at <http://psychology.nd.edu/people/faculty/narvaez-darcia/> (accessed 14 March 2011).

<sup>2</sup>Secondary summaries of Kohlberg are legion. I follow that found in Lynn Swaner, “Educating for Personal and Social Responsibility: A Planning Project of the Association of American Colleges and Universities,” 2004, 8-9.

<sup>3</sup>On the problematic philosophy behind Kohlberg, see Daniel K. Lapsley and Darcia Narvaez, “Moral Psychology at the Crossroads,” in *Character Psychology and Character Education*, ed. Daniel K. Lapsley and Clark F. Powers (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 22-23. Carol Gilligan, a student of Kohlberg, argues that women’s moral choices are governed more by concern about maintaining personal relationships than in establishing justice. See her *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993). For the failure to be comprehensive, see James Rest, “Background: Theory and Research,” in *Moral Development in the Professions*, ed. James R. Rest and Darcia Narvaez (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 1994), 9.

<sup>4</sup>James Rest with Muriel Bebeau and Joseph Volker, “An Overview of the Psychology of Morality” in *Moral Development: Advances in Research and Theory* (New York: Praeger, 1986), 3-18. My summary includes nuances made by Narvaez in “Integrative Ethical Education” in *Handbook of Moral Development*, ed. Melanie Killen and Judith G. Smetana (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006), 717, as well as her “The Neo-Kohlbergian Tradition and Beyond: Schemas, Expertise, and Character” in *Moral Motivation Through the Lifespan*, ed. Gustavo Carlo and Carolyn Pope Edwards (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 138-148.

<sup>5</sup>My summary of the DIT draws from James Rest, et al, *Moral Development*, 176-179. See also his “Research on Moral Judgment in College Students,” in *Approaches to Moral Development: New Research and Emerging Themes*, ed. Andrew Garrod (New York: Teachers College Press, 1993), 201-227.

<sup>6</sup>Darcia Narvaez and Tonia Bock, “Moral Schemas and Tacit Judgment or How the Defining Issues Test is Supported by Cognitive Science,” *Journal of Moral Education* 31, No. 3 (2002): 297-314.

<sup>7</sup>Narvaez and Bock, 302.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid*, 311.

<sup>9</sup>See Darcia Narvaez and Daniel K. Lapsley, “The Psychological Foundations of Everyday Morality and Moral Expertise,” in *Character Psychology and Character Education*, ed. Daniel K. Lapsley and Clark F. Powers (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 150-151.

<sup>10</sup>Narvaez, “Integrative Ethical Education,” 717. This summary draws widely from the rest of this chapter.

<sup>11</sup>Narvaez, “Neo-Kohlbergian Tradition,” 145-146.

<sup>12</sup>This summary of education for expertise comes from Narvaez and Lapsley, “Psychological Foundations,” 152-154.

<sup>13</sup>Interestingly, the ten-year window seems to apply to any field, including chess, mathematics, painting, or music composition. Narvaez’s account of expertise is also echoed in the work of Paul B. Baltes and Ursula M. Staudinger, “Wisdom: a Metaheuristic (Pragmatic) to Orchestrate Mind and Virtue Toward Excellence,” *American Psychologist* 55, No. 1 (January 2000):122-136; Elkhonen Goldberg, *The Wisdom Paradox: How Your Mind Can Grow Stronger as Your Brain Grows Older* (New York: Gotham Books, 2005), 19-20; Leslie Paul Thiele, *The Heart of Judgment: Practical Wisdom, Neuroscience, and Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 93; John L. Horn and Hiromi Masunga, “On the Emergence of Wisdom,” in *Understanding Wisdom: Sources, Science, and Society*, ed. Warren S. Brown (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2000), 262-267; and Robert J. Sternberg, et al, *Practical Intelligence in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 105 and 210. Malcolm Gladwell popularizes much of this research in his *Blink: the Power of Thinking without Thinking* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2005), 176-186.

<sup>14</sup>Narvaez and Lapsley, “Psychological Foundations,” 149.

<sup>15</sup>Darcia Narvaez, “Human Flourishing and Moral Development: Cognitive and Neurobiological Perspectives of Moral Development,” in *The Handbook of Moral and Character Education*, ed. Larry

Nucci and Darcia Narvaez (New York and Oxford: Routledge, 2008), 316-318.

<sup>16</sup>See Narvaez, “Integrative Ethical Education,” 715, 719, and 725. Although she here recognizes similarities between her work and ancient philosophies, it is only recently that Narvaez begins to put philosophical theories to empirical test. In a recent essay, Narvaez and associates set out to test three different models relating moral virtue to practical wisdom. One model, associated with Aristotle, posits that moral virtue is indistinguishable from practical wisdom. A second, associated with Immanuel Kant, equates practical wisdom with prudential self-interest and thus not a part of the moral domain. The third model, inspired by what Aristotle says about the role of experience in developing wisdom, says that wisdom develops after moral virtue. By testing how different age groups comprehend different themes in stories, Narvaez and associates find modest evidence that moral perception develops earlier than prudential, thus corroborating the third model. Although the study is quite limited, as the authors explicitly acknowledge, it does signal a conscious attempt to begin an explicit conversation between ancient wisdom and contemporary psychological research. See Darcia Narvaez, Tracy Gleason, and Christyan Mitchell, “Moral Virtue and Practical Wisdom: Theme Comprehension in Children, Youth, and Adults,” *The Journal of Genetic Psychology* 171, No. 4 (2010):363-388.

<sup>17</sup>Narvaez, “Integrative Ethical Education,” 716-724.

<sup>18</sup>Narvaez, “Moral Development and Behavior Under the Spotlight of the Neurobiological Sciences,” *Journal of Moral Education* 37, No. 3 (September 2008), 292. This article is also noteworthy for the extremely lucid primer of the research on what brain areas correlate with what moral functions (see Table 2, 293-294).

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid*, 290.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid*, 296-300.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid*, 300-303.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid*, 303-4.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid*, 305. Note that each ethic represents a modification of the three schemas measured by the DIT (personal interest, social conventions, and post-conventional), which are themselves modifications of Kohlberg’s three levels of moral reasoning (preconventional, conventional, and post-conventional).

Interestingly, Narvaez elsewhere revises her language to talk about “three attractors for moral information processing,” language that echoes chaos or complexity theory from physics. See Narvaez, “Human Flourishing and Moral Development,” 313. More detailed discussions of TET can also be found in Narvaez’s “Triune Ethics: The Neurobiological Roots of Our Multiple Moralities,” *New Ideas in Psychology* 26 (2008):95-119, and “Triune Ethics Theory and Moral Personality,” in *Personality, Identity, and Character*, ed. Darcia Narvaez and Daniel K. Lapsley (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press), 136-158.

<sup>24</sup>This description draws most heavily from “Moral Formation: Neurobiology and Virtue Cultivation,” forthcoming in *Character, Practical Wisdom and Professional Formation Across the Disciplines*, ed. Mark Jones, Paul Lewis, and Kelly Reffitt (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press), pp. 3-4 in the unpublished mss. Although not explicit, there seems to be a kind of Aristotelian mindset at work here, for Narvaez essentially identifies virtuous and vicious manifestations of each ethic.

<sup>25</sup>See “Moral Formation,” pp. 5-6.

<sup>26</sup>I draw primarily from her “Moral Complexity: the Fatal Attraction of Truthiness and the Importance of Mature Moral Functioning,” *Perspectives in Psychological Science* 5, No. 2 (2010): 163-181 (a paper that appears to be a reworking of her 2009 presentation at the Association for Moral Education in Utrecht, Netherlands, “Truthiness is Fatal: The Complexity of Mature Moral Functioning”).

That issue of *Perspectives in Psychological Science* also contains an exchange between Narvaez and Haidt. His response, found on pp. 182-184, is entitled, “Moral Psychology Must Not Be Based on Faith and Hope: Commentary on Narvaez (2010).” Narvaez’s reply on pp. 185-186 is entitled “The Embodied Dynamism

of Moral Becoming: Reply to Haidt (2010).” To summarize briefly, Haidt applauds Narvaez for trying to build a bridge between the two psychological processes of reasoning versus intuition. While he subscribes to the view that intuition is the senior partner in the relationship, he suggests that Narvaez wants to treat them as equal partners, which is a view he does not think can be substantiated by the neurological research. He then suggests that social intuitionism can account for mature morality and complexity. In her reply, Narvaez notes that deliberation is like salt in cooking: some is necessary, but can be overdone. She also identifies four areas in need of greater study before a true synthesis can emerge: the embodied roots of moral functioning, the dynamic interplay of multiple capacities, the necessary initial conditions for moral maturity, and cooperation.

<sup>27</sup>Narvaez, “Moral Complexity,” 165.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid*, 165-167.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid*, 171.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid*, 173.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid*, 172.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid*, 173-175.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid*, 172.

<sup>34</sup> Narvaez, in personal correspondence (15 May 2011), notes that she is developing ideas on this last test in a book to be submitted for publication in 2012. She has previewed some of those ideas on her blog: <http://psychologytoday.com/blog/moral-landscapes/>. Based on a quick reading, it would appear that my surmise is correct.

## Notes on Contributors

**Durwood Foster** ([adfoster@q.com](mailto:adfoster@q.com)) is a theologian who taught for many years at Pacific School of Religion/Graduate Theological Union. Foster took an A.B. at Emory University and then a B.D. and Ph.D. at Union Theological Seminary, where he was a student of Paul Tillich. He has written scholarly articles on Tillich (and other topics) and, in 1996, he edited *The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press). This book is the 1963 Earl Lectures given at Pacific School of Religion by Tillich, the occasion of Tillich’s meeting with Polanyi. Foster contributed “Michael and Paulus: A Dynamic Uncoordinated Duo” to the second *TAD* discussion (35:3 [2008-09]) of Polanyi and Tillich.

**Richard Gelwick** ([rprogel@juno.com](mailto:rprogel@juno.com)) is Professor Emeritus of Medical Ethics and Humanities at the University of New England and Adjunct Professor at Bangor Theological Seminary. Gelwick was a graduate student working with Polanyi, writing the first theological dissertation on Polanyi’s postcritical thought, at the time he helped arrange the conversation between Polanyi and Paul Tillich in 1963. Gelwick contributed an essay in both the first (22:1 [1995-96]) and second (35:3 [2008-09]) discussions of Polanyi and Tillich. Gelwick has served as a Polanyi Society leader since the establishment of the Society. In addition to many articles treating Polanyi’s thought, he is the author of *The Way of Discovery: An Introduction to the Thought of Michael Polanyi* (1977).

**Murray Jardine** ([jardimu@auburn.edu](mailto:jardimu@auburn.edu)) is Jane Dickson Lanier Professor of Political Science at Auburn University. His field is political philosophy. He completed his Ph.D. at Duke University in 1992, and has been at Auburn since 1997. He has published two books—both discussed in this issue of *TAD*—and several articles dealing with philosophical and theological issues related to questions of social and political order.

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# More on Polanyi and Tillich on Participative Knowing: A Discussion

ABSTRACT Key Words: post-critical theology, Michael Polanyi and Paul Tillich, Merleau-Ponty, William Poteat, mindbody. critical and post-critical thought.

*This discussion, featuring short comments by R. Melvin Keiser, Durwood Foster, Richard Gelwick and Donald Musser, grew out of articles in TAD 35:3 (2008-2009) on connections and disconnections between the thought of Polanyi and Tillich (featuring essays by Foster and Gelwick with a response from Musser). Keiser raises questions about perspectives articulated in the earlier articles and Foster, Gelwick and Musser respond here.*

## Polanyi and Tillich's Critical Difference

R. Melvin Keiser

I have been fascinated with the accounts in *Tradition and Discovery* (35:3 [2008-09]) of the meeting between Polanyi and Tillich in Berkeley in 1963, the consideration of Tillich's Horkheimer *festschrift* paper ("Participation and Knowledge: Problems of an Ontology of Cognition"), and Polanyi's critique of Tillich's separation of science and religion ("Science and Religion: Separate Dimensions or Common Ground?"). I feel a family resemblance between Tillich and Polanyi and a profound debt of gratitude to each for nurturing, sustaining, and transforming my intellectual soul. The writers in *TAD* (Richard Gelwick, Durwood Foster, and Donald Musser) draw out these similarities in illuminating ways. There is, however, consternation over Polanyi's criticism that Tillich divides science and religion into separate dimensions without a common ground. After all, Tillich stresses the presence of participation in all knowing so that no knowing is thoroughly detached. Nevertheless, it is worth asking how similar is Tillich's participative knowing to what Polanyi means by "personal knowledge," and how different?

Tillich has contributed significantly to affirming science's freedom to pursue knowledge of the natural world, and religion to pursue its own goals without waiting for scientific confirmation, by insisting on this separation—like Descartes' preserving truth of the subject mind while freeing science to pursue the object world. While Polanyi as scientist has enjoyed the freedom of scientific inquiry that Tillich's separation endorses, Polanyi conceives all knowing, including scientific knowing, as having greater intimacy than Tillich's participative knowing, and as arising from indwelling one reality common to all. The difference for Polanyi between types of knowing is in the different concerns and methods through which different aspects of the common lived world (to use Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological phrase for Polanyi's tacitly indwelt world) are integrated into emergent patterns and communally confirmed as true.

The clue to understanding Polanyi's unhappiness with the gap he feels between Tillich's participative knowing and his personal knowing is, I believe, in what Gelwick calls "a greater sense of distance between the knowing subject and its object" (17), and in Foster saying that Tillich "never grasped . . . the theory spelled

out in *The Tacit Dimension*" (27). Gelwick goes on to clarify his meaning by contrasting Tillich's knowing, in Tillich's own words, as having "separation, self-containment, and detachment" with Polanyi's knowing as "tacitly internal" (17).

For all his talk of existential participation, and experience of depth and mystery (so important to my own intellectual development), Tillich never understood the tacit dimension and its creative integrations, arising from indwelling the world in our bodies, which become focal objects and patterns for explicit consciousness. This is because, in spite of all his similarities with Polanyi, he was a "critical," not a "postcritical" thinker.

Fundamental to Tillich's theological method of systematic thought is the great tradition of "critical" reason, which Polanyi so admired (see *PK* 265-266), but nevertheless saw as problematic and sought to transcend. Western dualism is the underpinning of Tillich's whole enterprise. The dichotomy of essence and existence is basic to his system as he himself says (*Systematic Theology*, I:204, III:11-12). Functioning within this dualistic framework are the separatenesses of eternal/temporal (I:3), finite/ infinite (I:191, 252), subject/object (I:9, 75-77, 108-109), and self/world (I:168-174).

To go to the heart of the matter, while a subject participates in knowing an object, the subject self retains its self-contained boundaries while participating in the world. The subject does not tacitly indwell the reality it knows but participates as an encapsulated self with a bounded object.<sup>1</sup> Indwelling involves an intimacy that Tillich rejects. Indwelling involves immersion in the mystery of the tacit dimension in which the self cannot distinguish itself from the whole of reality. As one with the whole of reality in which we dwell, for Polanyi, we attend from such depths to the objects and world we know explicitly. In volume three of *Systematic Theology*, Tillich explicitly rejects such intimacy when he denies to the self-world and self-God relationships what he calls "mutual immanence" (III.114).

Tillich conceives the subject/object split to be part of the human condition, not as Polanyi thinks of it as the humanly constructed Cartesian framework of modernity. For Tillich, there are moments of transcending this split in ecstasy, but these are episodic (III: 140). For Polanyi, the "from-to" structure of tacit knowing places us always beyond subject/object dualism. We are part of the whole of reality and draw from the whole as we attend "from" it to focus on something in particular and bring it into consciousness. Tillich's "critical" view, on the other hand, would have us be a discrete self participating in relationship to realities discretely other.

This greater intimacy between knower and known in personal knowledge is implicit in the criticism of Tillich by Marjorie Grene and Phil Mullins, as Gelwick remarks (17), that Tillich's "turn away from the Cartesian view of consciousness is not radical enough because it does not stress embodiment enough" (17). Recognizing kinship of Polanyi with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, Gelwick sees such embodiment opening out into "a sense of reality that has an indeterminate and novel quality" (17). For Polanyi, I would say, we indwell the world as an indeterminate reality with a self who in its tacit creativity is as well an undeterminable mystery.

Tillich's involvement with phenomenology is a further clue to his critical framework. He is the only Protestant theologian of his generation to embrace phenomenology (except H.R. Niebuhr at the end of his life).<sup>2</sup> Tillich declares an intention at the outset to use phenomenology to begin each of the five parts of his *Systematic Theology*, although he does not carry through with it (I: 106-107). He takes up phenomenology,

however, from the early Husserl and defines it as concept-clarification: he uses it “to describe meanings” apart from their “validity” or the “reality to which they refer” (I: 106). He does not engage the bodily inhabiting of the reality of the lived world of the later Husserl whom Merleau-Ponty builds upon. Tillich, in fact, explicitly names his use as “critical phenomenology” (I: 107).<sup>3</sup>

While the styles of writing of Polanyi and Merleau-Ponty are very different—Polanyi writing with the precision of a scientist and using experimental data as examples, and Merleau-Ponty writing with an evocative and disorienting involutedness (like Kierkegaard’s pseudonymous writing that throws readers back on to their own responsibility to make sense of something)—they complement one another with their post-Kantian thought. Polanyi attends from the tacitly known components of a phenomenon to the focal object as the tacitly integrated pattern of those tacitly grasped components. Merleau-Ponty attends from the environmental background of a phenomenon to the figure drawn out pre-reflectively into explicitness from that background. For both, there is the “from-to” movement of unconscious creativity emerging as the known, but coming from opposite directions. For Polanyi the “from” is from the components. For Merleau-Ponty, the “from” is from the context. For both, though stressed much more by Merleau-Ponty than Polanyi, this tacit or pre-reflective activity is bodily (as in the lived body, not the observed object body) and engaged in reality that is indeterminate and novel.

The different conceptions of faith that Foster identifies exemplifies Tillich’s dualism. In good Reformation and Neoorthodox style, the self is entirely passive to, rather than interacting with, God’s involvement in our lives. Quoting Tillich’s “faith is not a human act” (*ST* II:178), Foster says this contrasts with Polanyi’s understanding of faith for whom “willing commitment is integral to knowing the truth . . .” (34). Faith, for Polanyi, involves our interaction with, rather than passive being acted upon by, any reality. The trajectory of Polanyi’s thought, I would say, is that faith is a human act attending from the mystery of the tacit dimension, and is therefore simultaneously a divine act—if divinity is understood as the depth dimension of our tacit indwelling, from which we ultimately attend in all knowing and acting.

To use “God”-talk, I would say that the trajectory of defining faith as interactive, rather than action from outside upon a passive self, is to affirm that faith is both a divine and human act, the tacit indwelling in God, by God, and from God. The self, for Tillich, is, however, a discrete entity in which God grasps a person. There is no intermingling of the divine and human in faith. The divine is not a dimension within our being in the world that we draw upon and bring to expression, and therefore in mutual immanence with us, but the Ground of Being that knows itself through and shines through us—as Jesus definitively shows in being transparent to the Christ. If “mystical” means indwelling divine mystery in experience, then I would say (contrary to his worry that he would be condemned for his “mystical theory of knowledge” [25]) that Tillich’s theology does not go far enough—from “critical” participation into postcritical indwelling.

To clarify the “critical” difference of Tillich from Polanyi—which Polanyi registered—amidst many similarities, does not, for me at least, detract from the magnificence that is Tillich: his evocative and transformative use of existentialism in its stress on experience of meaninglessness, anxiety, depth, and mystery; old theological words revived and new words coined; and a categorial, comprehensive, and architectonic grasp of western theological meaning. For this, I am grateful, even as I embrace Polanyi’s re-visioning of self and world, and long for a paradigmatic transformation in western thought into a postcritical world.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>The observation I am making here about Tillich is similar to Stanley Hopper's criticism of his mentor Martin Heidegger. While Heidegger intends to break the enchainment of the principle of identity in western metaphysics by leaping into the abyss beneath rationality (that is, in Polanyi's language, "the tacit dimension"), he clasps this identity to himself in his leap and so protects himself from full immersion in mystery and its creative emergence in our being and saying. See Stanley Romaine Hopper, "Walking Barefoot in the City of the Pied Cow" (245ff) and my "Introduction: The Artistry of Theopoiesis" (10-11) in *Stanley Romaine Hopper, The Way of Transfiguration: Religious Imagination as Theopoiesis*, eds. R. Melvin Keiser and Tony Stoneburner (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992).

<sup>2</sup>At the end of his life, evident in unpublished fragments and lecture notes, Niebuhr explicitly embraced phenomenology, not as concept-clarification as in Tillich's use of early Husserl, but as examination of phenomena, as in Merleau-Ponty's use of later Husserl. See Chapter Three, "A Postcritical Ambience," esp. 53-54, in my *Recovering the Personal: Religious Language and the Post-Critical Quest of H. Richard Niebuhr* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).

<sup>3</sup>I have written at greater length on Tillich's systematic thought and use of phenomenology as "critical" in "Phenomenology and Spiritual Maturity in the Tillichian Magisterium," delivered at the 1984 American Academy of Religion and published in *Religion and Intellectual Life*, v.III, No. 4, Summer 1986: 108-117.

## Mel Keiser on Michael Polanyi and Paul Tillich

### Durwood Foster

Mel Keiser's proactive brooding re: Polanyi and Tillich will hopefully appetize an ongoing probe of their intriguing interface, which I deem far from having been adequately parsed.

1. Tillich never studied *Personal Knowledge* and Polanyi never got to "Participation and Knowing," the piece Tillich most wanted him to read. How about a joint session of the Tillich Society and the Polanyi Society sometime, with Tillichians trying to state Polanyi (maybe starting with *The Tacit Dimension*) and Polanyians expounding the unread essay, each side then critiquing the other?

2. Tillich would never have been comfortable with "Post Critical" posited as an historical period, especially ours! His encomium for Buber, one of his last utterances (1965), shows him especially aware of the upsurge of criticism and religion's need to accept and exercise it resolutely. Since then, we have seen intensification of negative historiography, "the new scientific atheism," religio-cultural terrorism, and burgeoning fundamentalism. Tillich, who died thinking we are in an uphill battle for religious relevance, always was especially bothered by the attempt to use faith to avoid or circumvent criticism.

3. Polanyi also, as I construe his writing and recall the several times I saw, heard or talked with him, was definitely NOT one to relax or dodge criticism. Ironically, his pointed challenge to Tillich, in the article published just before they met in 1963, was occasioned by the LATTER's effort to make faith in Christ immune to his-

toriography. Is it possible that “post critical” is a somewhat unfortunate expression in the subtitle of *Personal Knowledge*? I have always felt Bill Poteat, for example, got too carried away with it. Tillich could have agreed with it as a phase—a terribly essential and climactic one—of humane knowledge. Compare his own “uniting knowledge” and the “mysticism” for which he feared epistemologists would damn him. This phase for Tillich did not dispense, but alternated coterminously, WITH rigorous criticism, putting him substantively, let me say again, in the same ball park with Polanyi. Ah, if we could have the two of them back and in the same room for just a few hours! Polanyi’s “greater intimacy” and “epistemology of embodiment”—these phrases are too vague for me at first blush—might well prove facilitative in clarifying Tillich. There is no doubt the “from-to” of tacit knowing offers help.

4. In my San Diego comments three years ago, I did, as Mel notes, bring out Tillich’s long standing deeply Lutheran bias against “faith as a human act.” I also adduced the remarkable turn at the end of the *Systematic Theology*, under the rubric of “essentialization,” to affirmation of free human input into the meaning of creation and history. This is still largely ignored by Tillichian scholarship, and I would rejoice at Polanyian help in saluting this aspect of Tillich’s final vision. Mel’s “divine and human act” begins well.

5. The “dichotomy of essence and existence,” however, is (*pace* Mel) anything but a “dualism” in Tillich. Existence is a universal condition of our human essence—its sinful distortion—which in every moment requires and presupposes the goodness and redeemability of essence. Creation’s essence is, though, distinct from God who always transcends even while bearing and consummating it. Tillich is an eschatological panentheist, not simply a pantheist, and individuation (of us from each other and from animals and things) is polar to and not essentially nefarious to participation. Polanyi broadly agrees, I like to believe, and in his late writing (for example, his nod to Whitehead) supplements helpfully the evolution always underway in Tillich. They were indeed a dynamic duo, and further coordination can only do us all good.

## **Towards A Post-Critical Christian Theology: A Response to Melvin Keiser**

**Richard Gelwick**

Melvin Keiser’s response to the papers on the Berkeley dialogue between Paul Tillich and Michael Polanyi in 1963 is very insightful, helpful, and procreative. Keiser is very appreciative of Tillich’s theological work, but he is also a radical Polanyian. Keiser clearly grasps the deep implications of Polanyi’s non-bifurcating, non-dichotomous, anti-Cartesian dualistic understanding of the relation of the knower and the known. Out of this Polanyian view accompanied with support from Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology and likely his Professor William Poteat’s profound meditations on embodiment, Keiser sharpens the need for further exploration of the potential of a collaborative development among Tillichian, Polanyian, and emerging post-critical thought.<sup>1</sup> In his response, however, there is a neglected dominating issue for Tillich and Polanyi of communicating the Christian message in a world going deaf to hearing it. Tillich and Polanyi in their “mindbodyliness,” to use William Poteat’s term, dwell in the experiences of the most destructive war of modern history. Just four months earlier, they saw, with the disasters of World War I in their memories, the brink of nuclear war in the

Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. Tillich and Polanyi share gravity about our beliefs and their consequences. This consideration of communicating the Christian faith affects my understanding of why Tillich and Polanyi meet. It is seen in two reasons: (1) It is why Polanyi says to Tillich that he is coming to him to explain why the theory of personal knowledge described in tacit knowing “may open up a cosmic vision which will harmonize with some basic teachings of Christianity.”<sup>2</sup> (2) The occasion for Tillich and Polanyi meeting is Tillich’s series of lectures on “The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message” and Polanyi has just listened to the second of the series on “The Nature of Present Day Thought: Its Strangeness to Traditional Christianity.”<sup>3</sup> Polanyi did not casually attend the lecture but made a special effort to come from Stanford to Berkeley to attend and to meet Tillich. Tillich’s and Polanyi’s concern for the Christian message being received in our time is why I called their meeting a Christian encounter. Their meeting is about overcoming the dominance of a flattening and destructive worldview of reality that discards the meaning of the Christian message. This worldview is a view of the reality of truth as being based on a scientific objectivism. This view is a major issue that both Tillich and Polanyi are addressing. Keiser, in his pressing for a more radical post-critical mode, points toward potential in Tillich’s theology, or as Durwood Foster so aptly described, Tillich and Polanyi as “an uncoordinated duo.” The promise of such a further discussion implied in Keiser’s discussion might pursue issues such as the following ones.

1. Comparing Tillich and Polanyi in the wider scope of their writings. Tillich and Polanyi are not on the same page in Polanyi’s criticism of Tillich about the relations of science and religion because Polanyi is addressing the statement on science and religion in *Dynamics of Faith* and not all of Tillich’s three volume *Systematic Theology*. Polanyi does acknowledge in a footnote that he is much closer to Tillich’s statement in *Volume I*: “The element of union and the element of detachment appear in different proportions in the different realms of knowledge. But there is no knowledge without the presence of both elements.”<sup>4</sup> Don Musser suggested the need for wider comparison in his presentation.<sup>5</sup>

2. Comparing Tillich and Polanyi on the analysis of the obstacles to the reception and holding of Christian faith in the current age. In Keiser’s response, he is suggestive of the wide range of intimate and of expressive feeling with Polanyi’s theory of knowing. Tillich also saw the knowledge and insight of expression as major signs and pointers to understanding the human condition. Tillich also, compared to Polanyi, has an elaborate discussion of the history of culture leading to our present age while Polanyi, though briefly, traces the origins of the scientific model of objective truth back to Democritus and focuses mostly on the nihilism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Yet much of what Tillich sees in the calculating technical reason of our era brings to the fore what Polanyi is also trying to overcome. Further, Poteat’s development of post-critical being seems to press more deeply into how our bifurcated critical consciousness denies us the entrance into the omnipresent realities in which we live and breathe, hence his deciding to use “mindbody” in his reflections.

3. Comparing Tillich and Polanyi on the relations of science and religion. Robert Russell, eminent leader in the science and theology field, briefly began this discussion in the earlier presentation.<sup>6</sup> Tillich’s statement in *Dynamics of Faith* does seem to be dichotomizing religion into separate compartments. This may be only a matter of distinctions such as one used by major theologians and scholars of science and religion such as John Haught and Ian Barbour who discern a spectrum of similar possibilities of relations of science and religion such as conflict, contrast, contact, and confirmation in Haught and conflict, independence, dialogue, and integration in Barbour.<sup>7</sup> From Polanyi’s view and also Tillich’s, all of the views in science and religion necessarily involve indwelling and participatory knowing. The distinctions seem to lie in degrees of difference in where attention in the knowing process aims in the knower’s intentionality and how much the self goes

into this indwelling. Perhaps once we recover the unity of knowing and being, we could again allow with less danger the kinds of distinctions between science and religion that are made without suggesting hegemony of one over the other. In this regard, it may be helpful to consider Poteat's more radical emphasis on indwelling to see how the relations of science and religion would develop. Poteat was appreciative of Tillich and used Tillichian expressions such as "being transparent to the ground of being."

4. Comparing Tillich's and Polanyi's ontologies. This issue may be the most fundamental and promising. Both Tillich and Polanyi are concerned about the ultimate reality in which we move and have our being. Tillich examines and builds an ontology that underlies his whole system. Polanyi talks mostly about reality and how science exhibits the human capacity to acquire knowledge through discovery. He describes reality as having "...the independence and power for manifesting itself in yet unthought of ways in the future. I shall say, accordingly, that minds and problems possess a deeper reality than cobblestones, although cobblestones are admittedly more real..."<sup>8</sup> In *Personal Knowledge* in Part Four, Knowing and Being, Polanyi presents his account of the rise of life leading from its origins to the Christian worshipping God.<sup>9</sup> In "Science and Religion: Separate Dimensions or Common Ground," Polanyi refers to his ontology in his theory of knowledge when he says that it opens the way to a stratified and unified view of the universe by applying his structure of knowing to the biologic rise of human life and its capacity to know truths about reality.<sup>10</sup> But one of the unpacked issues in the Tillich and Polanyi discussions so far is Tillich's meaning of "dimension."<sup>11</sup> When Polanyi sees the term "dimension" in *Dynamics of Faith*, he does not have nor could he have had in mind Tillich's special discussion of dimensions in the unity of life in *Systematic Theology III* since it was published shortly after their meeting in 1963.

What then is the challenge of the Tillich and Polanyi meeting? I think it is to bring together their potential for mutually aiding a post-critical theology. Poteat's challenge is for Tillich and Polanyi scholars to carry on.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>The pursuit of post-critical thought is well represented in William H. Poteat's works published in his later years after investigating "the mindbody" in the lived world. For a brief introduction to Poteat's impact and contribution, see *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 35:2 and 36:2 available in the *TAD* digital archives on the Polanyi web site: <http://www.polanyisociety.org>. For in-depth reading, see William H. Poteat's books: *Polanyian Meditations: In Search of a Post-Critical Logic* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1985), *A Philosophical Daybook: Post-Critical Investigations* (Columbia, MO: University of MO Press, 1990), and *Recovering the Ground: Critical Exercises in Anamnesis* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994).

<sup>2</sup>"Science and Religion: Separate Dimensions or Common Ground?", *Philosophy Today*, VII, (Spring 1963): 11.

<sup>3</sup>For a complete text of this lecture and the other two lectures with insightful notes by Durwood Foster, see Paul Tillich, *The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message*, ed. Durwood Foster (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1966).

<sup>4</sup> "Science and Religion : Separate Dimensions or Common Ground?", p. 4.

<sup>5</sup>*TAD* 35:3 (2008-2009): 48-50.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 40-47.

<sup>7</sup>John F. Haught, *Science and Religion: From Conflict to Conversation* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995). Ian G. Barbour, *When Science Meets Religion: Enemies, Strangers, or Partners?* (New York: Harper One, 2000).

<sup>8</sup>*The Tacit Dimension* (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1966): 32-33.

<sup>9</sup>*Personal Knowledge, Towards A Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958): 405.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid*, 11.

<sup>11</sup>*Systematic Theology, Volume III* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963). See especially p. 15 where Tillich first says dimensions cannot conflict and on p. 27 where he says that “Every act though aiming at knowledge is based on sense impressions and conscious and unconscious scientific traditions and experiences, and conscious and unconscious authorities, besides volitional and emotional elements which are always present.”

## A Response to Keiser: Is Tillich A “Critical” Thinker?

Donald Musser

Since the 1970s, my theological thinking has been influenced decisively by Polanyi’s epistemology and Tillich’s theology. I wrote my Ph. D. dissertation on the value of Polanyi’s theory of knowing for a contemporary method of articulating the essential theological affirmations of the Christian tradition. Lately, I co-authored (with Joseph L. Price) a primer on Tillich.<sup>1</sup> Previously in *TAD*, I compared sympathetically their views of historical processes.<sup>2</sup> With Mel Keiser, I agree that the similarities between the two are beckoning. Unlike him, I see significant points of contact and intersections.

At the heart of theological affirmations are the knower and the known, the subject and object. Although Keiser believes that Tillich remains mired in the Cartesian distinction between the two, I believe that, with Polanyi, Tillich agrees that all knowledge has a personal element. His notion of a dialectic that arises between the experiential, participatory involvement of the knower with objective reality is a crucial similarity. The pole of objectivity is in dialectical tension with the personal pole of subjectivity. The subjective knower seeks for the underlying meaning of religious experience, elucidating sacred texts in a faith community.

Tillich opposed the naked objectivity of truth claims in both science and theology on this basis. Like Polanyi, he opposed any version of objectivism. He would agree that all claims of truth are provisional, rejecting both propositional objectivity because it rejects the personal, and affirming the quest for truth, while knowing that theological affirmations can only be claimed with mellow certainty. Thus, Keiser is correct in sensing “a family resemblance between Polanyi and Tillich.” But, I do not share his view that Tillich remained a “critical” thinker as opposed to Polanyi’s “post-critical” position. Rather, Tillich’s view of participative knowing and Polanyi’s view of personal knowledge are more congenial than Keiser claims. Tillich affirms an “indwelling one reality common to all,” as Keiser affirms that Polanyi does.

The tacit dimension of Polanyi reverberates commensurately with Tillich’s notion of participative knowing. For Tillich, the indwelt, existential experience of the knower is in polar relationship with all knowledge claims. Subjectivity and objectivity are likewise both present in knowing. Keiser’s assertion that

“western dualism is the underpinning of Tillich’s whole enterprise” is therefore an overstatement at best, and false at worst.

In an earlier essay on Tillich’s view of theological reasoning, I put it this way: “The process of knowing . . . contains two fundamental elements, those of union and detachment. All cognitive reason contains both elements in different proportions. In . . . science, the knower remains primarily detached.” In the humanities, on the other hand, the object is indwelt in the self.<sup>3</sup>

In Tillich, both faith and knowing are immersed in the dialectic of being in and with Being. One of the reasons that Tillich was viewed with suspicion by many Neo-orthodox thinkers is because he did not see “the self [as] entirely passive to, rather than interacting with, God’s involvement in our lives” (so Keiser). It was precisely because he held that faith had a polar structure—we tacitly sense the ground of our reality and we respond in faith to that reality in commitment and affirmation. Thus, I am baffled with Keiser’s claim that “there is no intermingling of the divine and human in faith.” In one of Tillich’s most famous sermons, “You Are Accepted,” the mutuality of divinity and humanity is manifest in the sense that one must accept God’s acceptance by an act of the mind and will. Further, in Tillich’s view of faith as ultimate concern, the self actively seeks, finds, and embraces one’s object of concern. Also, the entirety of Tillich’s *The Courage to Be* depicts the person as embodying a position of active intent; namely, the courage to be.

In my response to Mel Keiser’s paper, “Beginning Where We Are: The Post-Critical Starting-Point of Systematic Theology,” presented at the annual meeting of the Polanyi Society in 1986, I said, “I join Keiser in seeking an adequate post-critical launching pad for an articulate theology.” As then, I continue to find beckoning conjunctures between Polanyi and Tillich.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price, *Tillich* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010).

<sup>2</sup>Donald W. Musser, “Polanyi and Tillich on History,” *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 22:1(1995-1996): 20-30.

<sup>3</sup>Donald W. Musser, “Theological Reasoning: A Tillichean Perspective,” *Soundings* LXIX (Winter 1986): 423-435.

# Murray Jardines's Post-Critical Political Theory

Phil Mullins

**ABSTRACT** Key Words: post-critical political philosophy, William Poteat, Michael Polanyi, Alasdair MacIntyre, orality and literacy, narrative practice, speech act, places of faithfulness, public participation.

*This review essay discusses Murray Jardine's argument in Speech and Political Practice, Recovering the Place of Human Responsibility, showing how the author skillfully draws on the thought of Michael Polanyi, William Poteat and Alasdair MacIntyre. Jardine offers a sharp critique of contemporary culture and politics as well as political theory. He develops the idea of place, drawing attention to the acritical reliance upon context in human speech acts; this motif he argues can be a component of the new political vocabulary necessary to initiate public conversations about the common good. There are interesting questions about how Jardine's account "fits" with some of the themes in Michael Polanyi's political philosophy.*

Murray Jardine, *Speech and Political Practice, Recovering the Place of Human Responsibility*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1998. Pp. 207. ISBN 0-7914-3686-1 paper.

Murray Jardine's volume in the SUNY Series in Philosophy of the Social Sciences is now a dozen years old. It was, unfortunately, overlooked as a prime candidate for a *TAD* review when it originally came out, but Wally Mead's comment on a more recent Jardine book in this issue of *TAD* provides an opportunity for belated remarks about *Speech and Political Practice (SPP)*. Below I outline Jardine's complex argument and then comment on a few elements.

This interesting book treating political theory makes use of Polanyi's thought, and its writer acknowledges William Poteat as one of his important mentors, suggesting that Poteat's graduate seminars "inspired" (ix) the thesis of the book. I am sure as a reader that I fared much better with this eloquent but sometimes dense Poteat-like reflection because I first returned to *Polanyianian Meditations* to refresh myself about Poteat's main themes. *SPP* is a bold discussion that takes large steps and is in this regard reminiscent of some Polanyi and Poteat's essays and books in which there is a sharp challenge to the status quo. What *SPP* aspires to do is to redirect much that is standard in political theory discussions. Just as Poteat digested Polanyi and then turned to meditate on other things (e.g., post-critical logic), Jardine has interiorized Poteat (as well as other thinkers Poteat appreciated such as Polanyi, Wittgenstein and Walter Ong) and then turned to the project of criticizing and re-imagining political theory and political life. *SPP* offers both a sharp *fin de siècle* cultural critique (as opposed to Polanyi's mid century critique) and a constructive philosophical alternative view. He begins by quoting Nietzsche to suggest that the emerging postmodern order is an exhausted bourgeois culture that has "degenerated into the technological nihilism of total war and insatiable consumerism" (1). Late modernity is marked by the "breakdown of any sense of human limits" and therefore any new model of political life must provide "some way of reestablishing such a sense of limits, or human finitude" (1). Jardine's constructive project explores the possibilities of reestablishing human finitude by considering "the uniquely human capacity for speech" which leads him ultimately to "rearticulate the human sense of place" (1).

Jardine provides a précis of his critical case in his introduction aptly titled “political theory and human finitude.” He argues that modern discussions of the political order are woven inextricably with broader Enlightenment epistemological and ontological suppositions; political theory and practice are grounded in a misleading Enlightenment conception of knowledge, which, like Polanyi, he dubs an “objectivist” conception.<sup>1</sup>

The Enlightenment model of acceptable knowledge “had the effect of progressively shrinking the domain of intelligible human experience” (2). First religious belief and then morality and finally, by the last of the twentieth century, even scientific knowledge failed the test of objectivity and thus culture was thrown into a “thoroughgoing subjectivism” which lead to “the breakdown of any limits of human action in late modernity,” effecting a situation in which it has become problematic “to determine the relative validity of competing truth claims and thus to rule out any belief system and its practical implications as unacceptable”(3). Political theory in the context of this worldview took its task to be “to maximize individual freedom by articulating a set of neutral impersonal rules that does not favor any individual or group of individuals, or any particular way of life over others” (3). So the ideal of a society of autonomous individuals pursuing independently chosen goals without external interference is the dominant imaginative motif underlying modern political theory. Although modernity has succeeded modestly in limiting exercise of arbitrary personal power and has improved for many the material conditions of life, by late modernity, the modern liberal political project has collapsed: it is now apparent that any set of rules privileges some and this leads to the further conclusion that there is only a chaos of subjective interpretations and society is ordered only by power.

In the chapter following his introduction, Jardin provides additional details about his diagnosis of the problems of late modernity (and particularly modern and late modern political philosophy), but he also begins to articulate a prescription, his constructive philosophical alternative, for the disease that grips us. Jardine frames his main ideas in terms familiar to readers of Poteat’s works when he explains modern nihilism and the response to nihilism in terms of necessity and contingency, an important motif that runs through his book:

... the late modern situation is one of unrelenting skepticism about every truth claim because we see all such claims as contingent human interpretations, with no grounding other than changing perceptions . . . Nihilism has resulted from our recent recognition of the extent to which the world we experience is our own creation. If we want to escape from the nihilism of late modernity by regaining a sense of necessary limitations, then it would appear that we must articulate a conception of necessity that is compatible with the interpretative dimension of human existence (17).

Jardine links his constructive project with the work of MacIntyre and others interested in narrative: his work is “an attempt to articulate a vocabulary for judging the validity of the communal narratives discussed by Alasdair MacIntyre and others” (17). He wants to develop “the concept of a speech-based place to modify and extend MacIntyre’s explication of the role of narrative—or as I will conceptualize it, narrative practice—in political communities” (17). This approach, he suggests, is a fruitful way to move beyond “the Enlightenment’s objectivist conception of knowledge which implies a very narrow understanding of necessity” (18) and re-imagine necessity as not at odds with contingency.

Much of this chapter is taken up with a review of the history of Western ideas as they bear on questions of social organization. Aristotle’s “closed cosmos” (20) is one of “unchanging necessity” (19) in which

the “natural essences of beings set necessary limits on occurrences, including ultimately the kind of social structures that will allow humans to function properly” (19). But the biblical understanding of the world as “absolutely contingent upon the paradigmatic personal speaker, God, who speaks it into existence and whose words remain ultimately always faithful” (20) is at odds with classical views, and modern science and modern political ideals grow from these biblical roots.<sup>2</sup> But the conceptual revolution represented by the biblical understanding also “has destroyed the basis for political theory available to the classical world by breaking down the necessary relations among natural beings and their ends” (20). The nominalist movement in the late Middle Ages brought the recovery of the biblical picture and the final demise of “Aristotle’s entire comprehension of reality” (21) as well as what eventually became the scientific revolution and the emergence of modern political philosophy. Objectivism, of course, grows up in the soil of modernity: “Modern objectivism with its model of exact, impersonal, context-neutral ‘facts’ can be understood as an attempt to establish necessity in the radically contingent world of nominalism, where there are no natural unchanging essences or *teloi*” (22). Although modern thought rejected Aristotelian essences, it retained a residual element of the Aristotle’s cosmos insofar as it “assumes that the world’s order—the ‘facts’ obtained by skeptical reason—must be unchanging and must exist independently of human agency” (22). The path to late modernity’s nihilism is set by the tension between what early modernity rejected and retained.

Having articulated this general framework for analysis, Jardine then goes through early modern political philosophy (Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Kant, Rousseau), natural rights theory and its successors, which he shows both reaches for a stable world backed by something like Aristotelian essences and yet “presents us with a much more contingent, changeable world than is the case with Aristotle” (24). There follows interesting discussion of the ideas of successor Kantians like Rawls, as well as Marx, Weber and Nietzsche, but Jardine’s thematic thread is consistent: “The story that I have sketched here attempts to articulate the late modern situation as a loss of any conception of necessity that can allow us to set limits on human actions” (31).

In Jardine’s account, the overt nihilism of early twentieth century totalitarian movements has now yielded to “the subtler nihilism of the emerging global postindustrial capitalist economy” (30).<sup>3</sup> What in the present cultural context of crisis is needed, Jardine assesses, is to abandon “the assumption that epistemological and moral limits must take an impersonal, acontextual form” and begin working out a way “to speak of a contextual necessity that actually derives from human creativity and interpretative capacities” (34). Jardine concludes his chapter by turning to a discussion of several contemporary political theorists (Berlin, Walzer, Bell) and ethicists (Hauerwas, MacIntyre) “who attempt to deal with the contingency implied by the collapse of the premodern cosmos” (35). About these figures, Jardine often offers penetrating insights; all (except MacIntyre), however, include latent objectivist elements. MacIntyre, as I have suggested above, Jardine sees himself as building upon.<sup>4</sup> MacIntyre most clearly sees the “breakdown of the classical cosmos” and, Jardine argues, situates “his discussion of moral virtues and their setting in the context of a narrative which is explicitly conceived not only as an alternative to modern objectivist approaches to ethical reasoning, but also as a substitute for Aristotle’s finite cosmos” (43). Modernity has abstracted moral matters from their historical-social context and has thereby “lost the teleology necessary for coherent moral reasoning” (44) but MacIntyre’s insightful discussion of moral reasoning and ethical practice in terms of the interrelation of virtue, practice, narrative and tradition move us beyond this. MacIntyre shows how “successful moral reasoning and practice takes place within a tradition enclosing a narrative or narratives that inform a number of practices, themselves successful or unsuccessful depending on the possession and exercise of the relevant virtues” (45). However, Jardine criticizes MacIntyre for providing only a “very abstract description of narrative practice”

(46); put another way (i.e., into Jardine's general framework), "... the problem with MacIntyre's conception of a narrative practice is that it does not appear to contain any elements of necessity" (46). Jardine sees his own project as a remedy for this: "... I will modify MacIntyre's conception of a narrative practice in a manner that will eliminate the need for the kind of historical teleology which it may presently imply, replacing such a teleology with speech-based places of necessity" (47).

Jardine's Chapter 2 turns from modern political philosophy and MacIntyre directly to Polanyi (one of a group of midcentury "revisionist philosophers of science" [52]) who focuses on scientific practice) to make clear what is "missing from the objectivist paradigm" (52).<sup>5</sup> That is, his discussion of Polanyi unfolds in a fashion that highlights the problems of objectivism and Jardine's alternative constructive Polanyian stance.<sup>6</sup> He acknowledges that few contemporary political theorists are overt objectivists, although subtle elements of objectivism still color thinking. Jardine also uses Polanyi's account of knowledge to provide a basis for his concept of necessity.

What does Jardine emphasize in his explication of Polanyi? The list is long—too long fully to enumerate here—but it certainly shows its author is a sensitive reader of Polanyi. Jardine carefully discusses how, for Polanyi, order and meaning involve an irreducible personal appraisal and a "temporal process, a groping toward rationality and order which is rooted in our most primordial forms of sentience and motility, and is shared with more primitive organisms" (54). He emphasizes the impassioned and the participative components of Polanyi's account of tacit knowing as a from-to process. Such Polanyian themes make clear that we must rely on the context of the knowing act (as Jardine often puts matters) whereas objectivism emphasizes knowledge as abstracted from the relevant context. "The contextual aspect of tacit knowledge" (68) Jardine later lifts up as especially important and as linked to "teleological features of tacit knowledge" (68); together, the contextual and teleological are both rooted in and the basis for practices in MacIntyre's sense. Polanyi emphasizes the ongoing process of knowing in a dynamic interactive community of inquiring agents making contact with a hidden reality. Objectivism "ignores the inescapable communal and communicative dimension of knowledge" (71) that Polanyi treats so ably. Jardine very much appreciates Polanyi's emphasis upon trust or faith as integral to knowing and suggests this grounds what he later in his book discusses as "the logic of the speech act" (63). Just as Polanyi sees that belief is more fundamental than doubt, Jardine argues that intelligibility is more fundamental than unintelligibility" (63). Polanyi, Jardine emphasizes, does not, as objectivism does, promote universal skepticism but he makes clear that doubt is not heuristic. He notes that Polanyi's solution to the problem of universals (framed in terms of his theory of tacit knowing) very helpfully emphasizes the knowing process as unfolding temporally and this affirms the "dynamic nature of universal formation" (66).

Having presented first his cultural criticism and its bearing on political theory and then a Polanyian counter to objectivism which is the root of many of modernity's problems, Jardine turns in the third chapter to a more general discussion of the written word as an experiential source of objectivism. Specifically, he turns to a review of the rich literature from the last century on orality and literacy, providing a very competent overview that complements his earlier discussion of objectivism. But he judiciously qualifies his claims about literacy: literacy is an important but not the only source of objectivism. As he puts matters, "literacy only makes objectivism probable" (76) and certainly should not be regarded as a single cause of the changes that come to be represented as objectivism.<sup>7</sup> Jardine also warns it is important to avoid romanticizing primary oral cultures as do many scholars who study differences in orality and literacy; he affirms that literacy is a major human achievement which has brought many good things to human society. His chapter provides a succinct but meaty account of the literature on orality and literature, beginning with work in classics (Parry, Lord,

Havelock) and moving to others who expanded this area (e.g., Goody); he acknowledges that he particularly relies on the work of Walter Ong. He recognizes that he is drawing primarily on the first generation of orality-literacy studies (whose conclusions now have been qualified) but this scholarship serves ably for his general purpose which is “to point out some potential limitations imposed on our thinking by literacy, so that we can be more aware of these limitations and use the knowledge thereof as a starting point for further reflection” (77). Jardine very capably summarizes much of what Ong identifies as the salient characteristics of oral cultures and the ways literate consciousness restructures human thinking. He succinctly reviews Ong’s nine important characteristics of oral mentality and then shows how the emergence of the alphabet and eventually printing decisively reshapes these characteristics. Jardine’s discussion emphasizes that oral communication is intimately linked to the dynamism of the lifeworld and primary oral cultures must structure themselves in terms of this dynamism whereas literate cultures, and particularly print culture, with its heavy emphasis upon the visual, lead people to overlook this dynamism and, as abstract thinkers, to misconstrue much about themselves and their communities.

Roughly the first half of *SPP* focuses on Jardine’s cultural critique and his discussion of objectivism and differences in primary oral and literate societies; his fourth chapter, “Beyond Objectivism: The Logic of the Speech Act,” turns to discussion of the work of writers who he suggests can help provide “an examination of speech and hearing and an application of the results of this examination to our political vocabulary” (103). This is the chapter that draws most extensively on Poteat’s discussion of necessity and contingency in connection with basic sensory orientation; like Poteat, Jardine develops conceptions of order that derive from the dynamic oral world. Jardine aims to show that from speech acts “we can derive a conception of necessity that can coexist even with absolute contingency” (104). In a visual model derived from literacy, we likely lose a sense of the world’s temporality. Change and movement cannot be accommodated in necessary relations that are regarded as forever fixed or determined. A world without necessary relations so defined is one conceived in polar opposite terms as radically contingent, underivable, and chaotic. Jardine uses Polanyi’s account of knowing to counter this dualistic visualist orientation to necessity and contingency. Knowing is a contingent act but is “still subject to necessity” (111)—its results are not derivable from context but are nevertheless reliant on context. Slowly, Jardine recasts the necessity-contingency polarity by mining etymological possibilities, by developing Poteat’s notion of a “motif” (a configuration unfolding in time which is inhabited by a mindbody), and by analyzing the speech act. The speech act is “. . . the experience . . . most closely and directly linked to the dynamism of sound as we experience it” and typically is a communal activity, which “will produce the paradigm most readily translatable into an ethical or political context” (115). Speech acts are not derivable from their context (and are thus contingent) but are depend upon the context, in that “in order to happen they must conform to certain limits” (115). Like Poteat, Jardine links speech acts, inhabited space and place. Thus, he concludes that “. . . a kind of necessity can coexist with even radical contingency, and that this necessity resides in the capacity of speakers to be faithful to their words, which is of course the central theme in the biblical stories” (122).

In “Speech, Place and Narrative Practice,” Chapter 5 in *SPP*, the discussion shifts from the development of themes found in Poteat back to MacIntyre’s discussion of virtues, practices, narrative and tradition. Here Jardine brings his Poteat-influenced account of speech acts to bear upon MacIntyre’s account of narrative practices in order to remedy what he takes to be shortcomings in MacIntyre’s approach.<sup>8</sup> MacIntyre’s hierarchically-organized scheme is not sufficiently grounded in that it does not show “how we attain critical distance from the narrative practice, of which we find ourselves a part.” MacIntyre does not make clear how “to adjudicate among apparently incommensurable narrative practices” (127). Narratives should clearly set

limits to what is appropriate in practices, and traditions should set limits to what is appropriate in narratives. Jardine argues that to see how a narrative can set limits to practices within it, one must “examine how the narrative and the practices are connected, rather than looking for some principle within the narrative from which we can deduce rules for the various practices” (129). In an ethical or political context, “necessity consists in motifs—events, situation, themes, that set limits to what may be appropriately said in a particular speech act” (129-130). A “motif” is thus a linking or connecting “place,” which provides “an acritical reliance upon context for orientation” (135). Rolling all of this together, this is Jardine’s formulation: “. . . the acritical reliance upon a context of narrative and tradition, here manifested in action and speech, generates a further context of narrative and tradition which is regulative for further action and speech” (135-136). Jardine argues that “place” constitutes “a motif of necessity” (138) when it meets two criteria: “. . . it must be such that it allows one to recognize that one’s acritical reliance upon the relevant context was justified; and . . . it must be such as to allow one to recognize the universal in the particular” (138). This complex philosophical way of putting matters becomes much clearer as Jardine illustrates his case with examples such as how the notion of the *polis* provided a connecting framework in ancient Greek society for individual narratives and how scientific opinion shapes scientific practice. There is an expanded discussion of “place” as rooted in mindbodiness (the “fundamental paradigm” [150]) but as visible also in “derivative cases” (150) and such cases are the specific places “appropriate in political practice” (147). Particularly Jardine’s discussion of apprenticeship (following Polanyi) nicely clarifies his abstract account: “Apprenticeship is a place that connects, and thus limits, practice and narrative” (153). At the end of his chapter, additional examples (the biblical sacrifice of Isaac story, the operation of ritual, and the nature of prophecy) are folded into his discussion; these round out Jardine’s effort to articulate “some basic elements of a speech-based political vocabulary” (161). He summarizes the case in his chapter thus:

. . . necessity for MacIntyre’s concept of narrative practice comes from places of faithfulness which connect practice with narrative or narrative with tradition. These places are themselves events or movements in the sense that any acritical reliance upon context is an event or movement. The structure of the process involved reveals the two features of place that serve as guidelines for evaluating the faithfulness of the speaker. First, a true place must transform those who inhabit it in such a way that they can recognize that their acritical reliance upon their context of practice, narrative, and tradition was justified. Second, a true place will reveal the universal through the particular (161).

The short but very striking conclusion (“Speech, Place and the Postmodern Public Realm”) of *SPP* is Jardine’s effort to draw from his political philosophy focused on narrative practice, speech and place his vision of a new politics. He emphasizes that he has not offered a blueprint for a good society and has not tied his discussion of place to any institutional framework but he, nevertheless, wants to conclude by putting “the concept of place in a larger political context” (163). In the most general terms, he believes that the concept of place opens the possibility for creation of a new “political vocabulary” (163) that can kindle public conversation and action to establish the common good. Clearly, Jardine favors moving beyond the discourse of modern liberalism with its distinctions between public and private, its strong individualism and its notions about competition. He contends that “what is needed to break out of the dilemma of late modern societies, then is a reconstruction of authoritative places of orientation” (166). He hopes that “constructing places of faithful speech acts” (166) will allow criticism and modification of institutional structures and replacing the monolithic sovereignty of the state with a “kind of pluralistic associational life” (167). In Jardine’s vision, the new political society would be one that articulates “those places that can allow individuals to achieve citizenship within

the bounds of overlapping local associations and practices while still binding these associations and practices into a coherent whole” (169).<sup>9</sup> A broader understanding of the politicized public domain can become the basis for deriving “a new understanding of participation in the public realm” (166). This new understanding would be grounded in a cultural and ethical transformation that moves citizens away from the now much distorted Protestant idea of serving the common good through economically valuable labor. Such an understanding would have new images of human fulfillment that are somewhat akin to “premodern conceptions . . . in that it would encompass community service . . . civic activities directed toward finding and achieving the common good, and ultimately perhaps the spiritual dimension of human existence” (172).

In sum, I find *SPP* to be a coherent and sensitive effort to wrestle with issues in contemporary political philosophy. The book imaginatively relies upon and weaves together elements of Polanyi, Poterat (and others Poterat relied upon), and MacIntyre both to criticize *fin de siècle* culture and political theory and to articulate an alternative vision. Jardine develops the idea of place, drawing attention to the acritical reliance upon context in human speech acts, and this motif, he hopes will be a component of the new political vocabulary necessary to initiate public conversations about the common good. What follow are three very briefly sketched comments about matters germane to *SPP* that puzzle me and offer an opportunity for further thought and dialogue.

(1) Jardine’s treatment of orality and literacy and how they shape thinking and the lifeworld is a careful treatment. He outlines how the written word is an experiential source of objectivism and abstraction while the oral word relies on context and is always dynamic. Jardine notes, using some of the discussions of “secondary orality,” that the media environment of the twentieth century did change, but secondary orality is overlain upon literacy and is not primary orality. Walter Ong and some of the other first generation orality-literacy scholars, despite their attention to secondary orality, in my judgment, did not reckon with the epochal shift to digital technology that began late in the twentieth century; the emerging culture in many places in the world is what I call digital culture and it should not be conflated with print culture. Nevertheless, I believe that an assessment of the way digital media are reshaping thinking and the lifeworld is not yet clear. We live in a time like the Age of the Incunabula (1450-1500 CE) when we are not sure about the possibilities (including the impact upon us) of digital media; those possibilities are only now beginning to take form. Some scholarship—most of it published after the heyday of first-generation orality-literacy studies and even after *SPP*—does try to analyze ways digital media is reshaping the tacit habits of thought of print literacy. Unfortunately, much of the discussion about digital media seems to be polarized with tenacious advocates and critics engaged in their own mini-culture war. Jardine seems disposed toward criticism of the new media: at the end of *SPP*, he comments “if the future holds an increased reliance on the new electronic media, with their tendency to create a post-objectivist or relativist orientation, then it becomes fundamentally important to develop experiential alternatives” (172). I appreciate the commonsense of critics of the new media who ask serious questions and disregard the hype of the technocratic boosters. Nevertheless, it seems to me insufficient simply to link new media with a tendency to create a “relativist orientation” that should be countered. Is it not important to struggle to understand the changing nature and impact of literacy in a global hypermedia environment that increasingly emphasizes interactivity? Perhaps a new political vocabulary grounded in what Jardine calls “authoritative places of orientation” (166) must, in part, be wrought using the new media. After all, our larger sense of what “communication” involves, our ideas about what “reading,” and “writing” and even “speech acts” are, as well as our notions about the nature of “knowledge,” are now being leveraged by our practices using the computer in a networked world.<sup>10</sup>

(2) Jardine's discussion presents both a radical criticism of the culture and political philosophy at the end of the century, and the hopeful anticipation of a new order to be grounded in a sounder, non-objectivist philosophy that creates a new political vocabulary. The scope of the indictment of contemporary culture, articulated early in the book, is very broad and seems, at times, to slide toward disgust with the status quo. In sharp contrast, the hoped for new political milieu, briefly sketched at the end of the book, is a palpable, idealized order. I discern in the ambience or tone of *SPP* a certain interesting tension with the ambience I find in Polanyi's suggestions about the social order.<sup>11</sup> There is sharp cultural criticism in Polanyi, but it seems to me that Polanyi's rejection of values and practices which take shape in the Enlightenment is only partial.<sup>12</sup> I find hope for the social order in Polanyi, but it is normally quite muted. Polanyi does envision a new day and a society of explorers, but his practical political expectations usually seem very modest; he seems determined to resist any utopian notes in his symphony. He is perhaps infected by the prophetic spirit, but he is on guard against perfectionism and charts the trouble that perfectionism has wrought.<sup>13</sup> Polanyi ends his chapter titled "Conviviality" in *PK*, on the following note:

The attempt made in this book to stabilize knowledge against skepticism, by including its hazardous character in the conditions of knowledge, may find its equivalent, then, in an allegiance to a manifestly imperfect society, based on the acknowledgment that our duty lies in the service of ideals which we cannot possibly achieve (245).

(3) My third comment is akin to my second insofar as it concerns the relevance of Polanyi's social vision to the sort of work Jardine is doing. Jardine seems to draw, like Poteat, most heavily on the Polanyi of *Personal Knowledge* and *The Tacit Dimension* which I distinguish somewhat from the early Polanyian thinking focused on science and society and the very late Polanyi who focused on the nature and kinds of meaning that a post-critical philosophy opens up. Polanyi's early social vision, although focused on the relation of science and society, outlines a broader conception of the political order as a fabric of dynamic orders.<sup>14</sup> I find echoes of this conception in Jardine's discussions. Dynamic orders—terminology Polanyi borrows and adapts from Köhler—are circles with particular practices. They are communities of inquiry and interpretation situated within broader culture and the political order; such circles are essentially self-motivated and self-governing. Motivation and governance are grounded in individuals who are pursuing common transcendent ideals (i.e., those held up in the particular community of inquiry). Such persons have accepted a calling or vocation. Self-government is achieved through mutual adjustment of persons constituting the community; while serving common ends, persons interact over time and this alters the disposition of the circle. Sometimes Polanyi suggests this is an "internal equilibration" which he contrasts with external forces directly shaping policy. Elements of this model remain part of Polanyi's later philosophy. They can be found in *PK*, but perhaps the model is most concisely described later in the 1960 essay "The Republic of Science: Its Political and Economic Theory." Polanyi's model, particularly as it was described in his early writing, seems to have the dynamism that Jardine is reaching for with his discussion of an operative sense of necessity that is at the same time open-ended and thus contingent. Jardine, of course, does draw out an account of apprenticeship to illustrate his ideas about necessity and contingency and, for Polanyi, apprenticeship was important from very early. Polanyi, sketching his envisioned political order more broadly, suggests that the larger fabric of liberal society must preserve and foster the many dynamic orders that constitute it. Government does this by allowing such dynamic orders to pursue their own transcendent ideals. Social goods thus come from many sources. The orders themselves can prosper only if they maintain what Polanyi calls "public liberty" which is not the liberty one has to do as he or she pleases but the responsible opportunity one has to participate in the public conversation within a particular dynamic order like science or the law. So judges study precedents and then issue a ruling based upon their own discernment; scientists pursue inquiries about the nature of reality and present their findings and their

responsible colleagues respond affirmatively or negatively to these findings put forward by the discoverer with universal intent. Public liberty is concerned with the freedom of the individual to be responsible, within the context of conscience, to respond to the achievements of others in a dynamic order and thus to be faithful to the transcendent ideals of the dynamic order. Public liberty helps resolve disputes and reform tradition. For Polanyi, communists and fascists alike fundamentally misunderstand dynamic orders and their role as the foundation of the social order: “The hope of progress through the pursuit of various forms and aspects of truth—artistic, scientific, religious, legal, etc.—by a number of autonomous circles, each devoted to one of them, is the essential idea of a Liberal Society, as contrasted to a Totalitarian State” (“Growth,” 448).

In sum, in the thirties and early forties, Polanyi seems to have been actively interested in articulating a vision of what he regarded as a liberal society, one that had certain features that are not standard in what Jardine dubs “liberalism,” although these features seem akin to some of the things Jardine envisions as important in a political order rooted in a re-visioning of place.

Although it is now an older book, *SPP* should not be overlooked; it is a rich reflection on political theory which develops many of the themes important to figures like Polanyi, Poteat and MacIntyre.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>David Rutledge’s early *TAD* essay on *Polanyian Meditations* (*TAD* 14:2 1986-87: 6-17) quotes an early effort by Poteat succinctly to sketch the “objectivist” notions about knowledge and reality in the critical ideal:

... it is the perennial temptation of critical thought to demand total explicitness in all things, to bring all background into foreground, to dissolve the tension between the focal and the subsidiary by making everything focal, to dilute the temporal and intentional thickness of perception, to de-historicize thought... To lighten every shadow place, to dig up and aerate the roots of our being, to make all interiors exteriors, to unsituate all reflection from time and space, to disincarnate mind, to define knowledge as that which can be grasped by thought in an absolutely lucid “moment” without temporal extension, to flatten out all epistemic hierarchy, to homogenize all logical heterogeneity; in short, the temptation of enlightenment is to doubt all of our previous certainties and to ground our knowledge strictly upon clarity and distinctness in the present... (6)

Poteat’s summary can perhaps here stand for the many dimensions of the “objectivist” problem, several of which Jardine treats in different parts of his book.

<sup>2</sup>The biblical understanding is the seedbed for “the promise of modernity—freedom, democratic equality, and scientific knowledge” but also—with the coming of a loss of religious faith—of modern nihilism construed as “an absolutely contingent, placeless chaos” (21).

<sup>3</sup>With a certain rhetorical exuberance, Jardine condemns the present order. “The recently triumphant neoclassical liberalism” (Hayek, Friedman and Nozick), he says,

asserts that the utterly arbitrary distribution of rewards deriving from unregulated capitalism is the very guarantor of individual freedom, since any “patterned” distribution of rewards imposes someone’s values on others. Legitimation comes... from the freedom capitalism

allows to will one's own values and act on them, i.e., from the system's capacity to provide an ever greater variety of demonic value choices. The moral orientation of contemporary capitalism is no longer rational self-improvement but rather aesthetic self-expression (30-31).

The last half of the twentieth century moves into a world of more inequality than ever. Reagan's "degenerate version of the Protestant ethic," that says "one can succeed against any conceivable obstacle through nothing but hard work" is no more than a "crude version of the will to power"(33). Thus, Jardine concludes, "the ultimate fulfillment of Nietzsche's prophecy seems not to be violent totalitarianism but rather libertarian consumer capitalism" (33).

<sup>4</sup>" . . . MacIntyre's idea of a narrative practice is essential to constructing a political theory to inform ethical communities which can construct a new public realm for postindustrial and ultimately post-bourgeois societies" (45).

<sup>5</sup>The "fit" between MacIntyre and Polanyi is an interesting topic in itself but one not explicitly treated by Jardine, although he certainly sees some similarities. Mark Mitchell (*Michael Polanyi: The Art of Knowing* [Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2006] and John Flett ("Alasdair MacIntyre's Tradition-Constituted Enquiry in Polanyian Perspective," *TAD* 26:2 [1999-2000]: 6-20) have, after the publication of *SPP*, laid out some of the overlap in MacIntyre and Polanyi's philosophical critiques and their constructive philosophy. Jardine might appreciate the perspectives of Mitchell and Flett and find it helpful to correlate their interpretations with his account of MacIntyre in terms of narrative, tradition, practice and virtue. Interestingly, despite being a part of the late sixties Unity of Knowledge discussions which Polanyi, Marjorie Grene and Edward Pols organized, MacIntyre seems to have misconstrued early in his career what Polanyi was up to as a philosopher of science (see "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narratives and the Philosophy of Science," *Monist* 60 (1977): 432-457, an essay that Jardine cites). MacIntyre seems not to give serious attention to Polanyi's later exploration of the importance of the realm of the unspoken (whose value Jardine does carefully exploit as a political philosopher). Also MacIntyre does not seem to know anything about Polanyi's more overtly social-political writings before *PK* (perhaps dismissed as no more than Hayek-like market philosophy) where he might have readily found some good resources to help develop ideas about the practices of skillful communities, the valence of their frameworks, and the nature of ongoing tradition-grounded inquiry which aims to reform tradition. To this Polanyi reader, it seems that MacIntyre also is more steadfastly a rationalist (actually a Thomistic rationalist) than Polanyi. Polanyi does however affirm that humans can—and it is their gift to do so—use rational faculties (empowered by tacit powers) to understand reality, which nevertheless remains partially hidden.

<sup>6</sup>The way of organizing his discussion of Polanyi (plus his concise but superb analysis of major themes) suggests to this reader that this chapter might be used, independent of Jardine's book, as an effective way to introduce Polanyi's main ideas against the backdrop of objectivism.

<sup>7</sup>Later Jardine remarks, "What is needed is not exactly a causal explanation, since we are attempting to escape such objectivist modes of thought, but rather an explanation that demonstrates that literacy can create a context or configuration where objectivist thinking becomes more probable" (93). The crucial transformation brought by literacy is "the tendency to perceive the world and ourselves abstractly, i.e., cut off from the existential context necessary for meaning" (93).

<sup>8</sup>Essentially, Jardine wants to supplement MacIntyre's account (attending briefly also to shortcomings in Habermas' discussion) by developing an account of "place" as a faithful speech act: ". . . what would hold together a particular practice . . . with the particular narrative from which I render intelligible my various activities and aspirations, is the concrete place provided by my faithful speech acts which relate my various activities to each other and to their settings" (143).

<sup>9</sup>About his conception of place, Jardine says, it “holds out the possibility of developing local traditions of self-government and citizenship without attempting to return to the tribalistic politics of the polis” (167).

<sup>10</sup>In “Sight, Sound and Epistemology: The Experiential Sources of Ethical Concepts” (*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. LXIV, No. 1 [Spring, 1996]: 1-25), an article published before *SPP* but an expansion of his third chapter, Jardine says somewhat more about the new electronic media. Nevertheless, his perspective seems to be much the same as in *SPP*:

Just as relativism is derivative of objectivism, the new electronic media are derivative of literacy, so the developing postliterate relativist orientation can be seen as the logical culmination of the earlier literate objectivist orientation. The ultimate problem remains understanding objectivism and elaborating non-objectivist modes of thought that can allow us to escape the relativism into which we are rapidly sliding” (14).

I share Jardine’s interest in elaborating non-objectivist modes of thought but I also suspect that our communication practices in digital culture, although originally built on print culture, may ultimately reshape our mental habits in ways that make us more temporally and contextually attuned. See my discussion in “Media Ecology and the New Literacy: Notes on an Electronic Hermeneutic” (in *From One Medium to Another: Basic Issues for Communicating the Scriptures in New Media*. Paul A. Soukup and Robert Hodgson [eds.]. Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1997: 310-333) and “Bible Study, Critical Thinking and Post-Critical Thought: Cultural Considerations,” (in *Critical Thinking and the Bible in the Age of the New Media*, Charles M. Ess [ed.]. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2004: 269-290).

<sup>11</sup>Jardine is, of course, not obligated to find Polanyi’s ambience or tone appropriate for his own political philosophy. In Polanyi, I find a certain patience and political sobriety toward the prevailing social order—a qualified acceptance of, for example, a market production and distribution system since alternatives he saw he recognized as inoperable. Such elements are less apparent in Jardine’s account.

<sup>12</sup>There is an excellent discussion of this point in Sanders’ “Tacit Knowing—Between Modernism and Postmodernism” (*TAD* 18:3 [1992-92]):15-210.

<sup>13</sup>“ . . . [U]nless we agree that within our lifetime we must no more than loosen the ties of a free society, however iniquitous they may be, we shall inevitably precipitate men into abject servitude” (*PK* 245). A little later, Polanyi affirms that “unjust privileges prevailing in a free society can be reduced only by carefully graded stages” (*PK* 245).

<sup>14</sup>Polanyi’s early social vision is perhaps clearest in his 1941 essay “The Growth of Thought in Society,” *Economica* 8, 428-456 (hereafter cited as “Growth”) and in some of the chapters in *LL* which develop early themes. To be sure, some of the elements of what seem to be Polanyi’s notion of a properly ordered society are only sketchily drawn. See my recent discussion in “Michael Polanyi’s Use of Gestalt Psychology,” *Knowing and Being: Perspective on the Philosophy of Michael Polanyi*, Tihamér Margitay (ed.) (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010): 10-29.

# Murray Jardine on Christianity and Modern Technological Society

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ABSTRACT Key Words: Christianity and modern technology, contemporary nihilism and its roots, mis-steps of modern political and economic theory, value relativity and the re-discovery of moral limits, ethics and speech-based places of faithfulness.

*Murray Jardine's The Making and Unmaking of Technological Society further develops several of the author's political and economic concerns articulated in his earlier Speech and Political Practice. It probes the impact and implications of both Christianity and modern technology for our understanding of, and ability to cope with, problems that have become endemic to Western and, specifically, American culture. Jardine's major continuing themes include: the importance to a well-formed self and society to be concretely grounded in a sense of place; the participation of the knower in the dynamic processes of creativity and discovery; how even a highly literate culture is nourished and equipped for its communal endeavors by the temporal and tensional vestiges of its oral beginnings; and how the crucial element of faith, understood as trust and commitment, gives to speech acts the power to shape self, society, and history. The major new focus of this book is suggested in the subtitle: How Christianity Can Save Modernity From Itself. More thoroughly than in Speech and Political Practice, Jardine elaborates how Christianity is important in shaping our understanding of the speech act as a creative force. He outlines how Christianity and the Greek tradition have been significant forces shaping modernity; he argues that Christianity offers potential for addressing the nihilism found in the consumer society of post-modernity. Jardine is critical of those who are unable to recognize the perversions of Jesus' message in Western history, but he is also critical of those who attribute virtually all positive developments during the past two millennia to Christianity. Nevertheless, he emphasizes the positive difference that Christian values and doctrine have made in the course of the past two thousand years. As in his earlier work, Jardine draws from an impressive range of sources, in order to make an original contribution. He is especially indebted to William Poteat, Michael Polanyi, and Ludwig Wittgenstein; his teacher Poteat's influence is pervasive.*

Murray Jardine. *The Making and Unmaking of Technological Society: How Christianity Can Save Modernity from Itself*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Pres 2004. Pp. 304. ISBN 13:978-1587430701, paper.

## Introduction

In his Introduction, Jardine sketches the parameters of the broader argument in *The Making and Unmaking of Technological Society*. He identifies the major source of what he regards as the present moral crisis—a crisis “far more profound than most people realize” (14)—faced by Western societies:

Specifically, I will argue that the source of this crisis is our inability to make moral sense of our scientific and technological capabilities. . . I will further argue that Christianity is the only understanding of the human situation that can allow us to make sense of these capabilities, precisely because Christianity is the source of modern science and technology (14).

Christianity is not only the source of the human drive for change and improvement, but it is also the key to recovering some sense of balance in technology-driven contemporary consumer society. However for Christianity to address the present crisis, Jardine contends, it will need to give up the extraordinary (I would add even, salvific) significance assigned to the work ethic since the Protestant Reformation. Further, addressing the present crisis will require a Christianity fully renewed and revitalized by its original ethic of unconditional love.

The Bible, with the special role and significance it assigns to the spoken word, both human and divine, has encouraged human beings (creatures said to have been created in God's likeness) to participate in God's creative act, that is, to function as creative agents who change the world. In the modern era, this has fostered important progress, which often was centered around technological development. But, Jardine proposes, we desperately need to recapture

a sense of the moral limitations inherent in our capacity for speech . . . Thanks to literacy and modern inventions . . . we live in a culture that is extremely visually oriented and relatively closed to the sound-dimension of human experience. Thus it is essential, if we are to develop a moral sense that can enable us to deal with technology, that we recapture a much richer sense of what we are doing when we speak and listen to other human beings. This in turn implies that we must rebuild local communities characterized by face-to-face contact—that is, where speaking becomes a more central part of daily life . . . (25)

Jardine contends that he is not advocating a major reformulation of Christian doctrine and practice, although some significant changes are needed to restore a sense of responsibility. Both Catholic and Protestant traditions have contributed to the present crisis but both can contribute to a moral orientation that allows us to make sense of our technological powers: “Ultimately, transforming Christianity . . . [calls for] a few relatively small but profoundly important shifts in emphasis” (10). Such a transformation he believes can be forged in serious practical endeavors that restructure local communities to promote face-to-face contact and the development of new practices and patterns of faithful action.

At the conclusion of his succinct introduction, Jardine acknowledges his book is not explicitly a textbook, although it is part of a series devoted to Christian practice in daily life. He provides a broad overview of the structure, functioning and historical evolution of modern technological societies and the ideas underpinning these elements; but his ultimate purpose is “to articulate a spiritual and moral orientation that can address the crisis modern societies are facing” (10). He identifies three areas for extensive elaboration—and these are the three main succeeding sections of his book—to clarify the précis of his argument provided in his Introduction: (1) first, there is an intricate discussion of the evolution of modern societies and modern politics which is inextricably entwined with technological and economic development; (2) following is a broad account of how the biblical and Christian traditions help make sense of both Western history and the potential of the future—Christianity provides the key to shape a society that accepts limits; (3) finally, the conclusion of his book Jardine devotes to a practical discussion of concrete examples of how a recovered Christian ethic of unconditional love can transform the social and political landscape.

## **Part 1: The Evolution and Crisis of Modern Technological Societies**

Jardine begins by tracing the evolution of liberal capitalist democracy. For the liberal, the ideal society is essentially an aggregate of free individuals. It is the initiative, creativity, and energy of the *individual* that

gives vitality and a sense of meaning or purpose to both self and society. Jardine observes that “[a]lthough the term ‘liberal’ did not acquire a political meaning until the 19<sup>th</sup> century”(39), by the end of the English Civil War (1642-1649) and clearly by the time of the Glorious Revolution (1688), a middle class was emerging as the dominant social class in England along with the spread of capitalist enterprise. Early versions of liberal political theory can be seen in 17<sup>th</sup>-century England in Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704) who, together with Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and René Descartes (1596-1650), are rightly considered the founding fathers of the Enlightenment. Locke argued that private property and wealth creation were valuable primarily for enhancing and securing the values of a liberal society; a century later Adam Smith (1723-1790) represented liberalism primarily as a means for increasing national wealth. According to Jardine, the decisive arrival of classical liberalism awaited the emergence of capitalism and the free market economy in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In mid-19<sup>th</sup> century England, in the wake of these forces linked to the industrial revolution and the end of feudalism, the most important of the 19<sup>th</sup> century classical liberals, John Stuart Mill, emerged.<sup>1</sup>

Jardine observes that liberals have generally perceived the proper operation of liberal institutions—political or economic—as essentially neutral, that is, as not favoring one class or interest over another. This perception of governmental and economic operations was not shared by ancient pagan societies or by Christianity. Jardine characterizes this assumption that a neutral system can be created as a major flaw in classical liberal thought—a flaw that, if not corrected, could bring liberal institutions to self-destruction.

Just as liberals have, to the detriment of society, misconstrued liberalism as a “neutral” mode of social, political, and economic conduct, so, too, has technology commonly been misconstrued as “neutral” in its broad impact. However, in our present age of increasingly sophisticated and constantly changing modes of technology that increasingly impact on our lives, Jardine recognizes that, fortunately, some people are beginning to question this assumption. In my judgment, probably the most important 20<sup>th</sup>-century thinker to do this in a thorough and systematic manner is the French philosopher Jacques Ellul, primarily in his *The Technological Society* (1964) and his *The Technological System* (1977).

I see Ellul’s unique contribution to our understanding of the impact of technology as essentially two-fold: (1) He relies for his understanding of the concept of “technology” upon the French word *techné*, the latter term encompassing far more than the English term, thereby including within its ambit not only our usual association of “technology” but also the psychological, managerial, advertising, propagandistic, public relations and other techniques to order, manipulate, and control human thinking and behavior. (2) Ellul’s other major contribution is his representation of technology as systemic in its cultural embeddedness and its social effects, and yet essentially autonomous.

Although Jardine cites the earlier of Ellul’s two major works, *The Technological Society*, and, indeed, addresses technique in his attention to styles of management, his treatment of technology would be even more fruitful if he applied more of Ellul’s profound insights into this particularly human dimension of *techné*. The first direct attention Jardine gives to technology appears in the course of his treatment of Adam Smith: “[Smith] argues that the key factor in wealth creation is not technology by itself but rather division of labor. Technology is actually a result of division of labor” (52). Ellul would clearly press further to insist that the demands of technological efficiency have led to the division of labor. But he would also insist that this debate, inasmuch as it presupposes a significant distinction between mechanical and human organization for the purpose of efficient operation, misses the point: forms of human organization, as much as the structuring of machines, form integral parts of a common fabric for a common purpose—in the case of Adam Smith, for

the purpose of maximizing the creation of wealth. Neither Smith nor Jardine, have an appreciation of Ellul's second important contribution: the broader systemic implications and impacts of technology. Both Smith and Jardine, to be sure, deal insightfully with some of these implications and impacts. However, when Jardine turns to dealing with technology directly again, later in his book, the limitations of his understanding of the technological phenomenon, itself, (again, as I'll point out) become apparent.

Jardine convincingly argues, as a major thesis, that modern technological society, permeated by the individualizing and creative dynamics of market forces, is both a product of the Christian work ethic and is what we have come to identify as a liberal society. Indeed,

we tend to be unaware of how unusual this arrangement [of market-based liberalism] is in human history. Most human societies are structured in such a way that people typically have much more substantial long-term obligations to each other, and agreements between two individuals are usually subject to the approval of other members of the community . . . [For example,] in premodern societies, marriage was generally understood as a lifelong relationship . . . In modern liberal societies, . . . the market has increasingly become the model for marriage . . . Marriage is regarded as purely a matter of individual choice . . . Furthermore, it has recently become much easier to dissolve marriages . . . Indeed, the marriage ceremony—which ritualistically indicates the couple's obligation not just to each other but to other people and to God—has been largely dispensed with, and it is common for couples simply to live together.

. . . [In his political theory,] Locke . . . actually takes market relationships as his model of how human society should function . . . The government [itself] . . . exists only because people find it useful and it can be discarded, that is, overthrown, if it fails to keep its end of the bargain . . . (53-54)

This market model for society, as for marriage, cannot provide for enduring relations among individuals. Indeed, the market's demand "that everyone attempt to keep pace with the most productive individuals and firms" (55) reveals liberalism's secularized distortion of the Protestant work ethic: work, if one is to survive in the competitive market place, must become, as it has, the dominating obsession of both individual and society. But even this, Jardine points out, does not assure individual survival:

In a market economy, one labors incessantly to avoid extinction, and doing one's best is not enough—one must be better than everyone else. The market is an utterly unforgiving institution.

This characteristic of the market explains two of the strangest paradoxes . . . [1] People in capitalist societies work much more than people in non-capitalist societies, even though the greater productivity of capitalism should allow people to work less . . . In precapitalist societies, people worked to live, whereas in capitalist societies, people live to work. [2] . . . Less productive individuals who had [in early capitalist societies] been shielded from the full impact of the market by various social institutions and customs were forced into a situation of full exposure to market forces and were crushed. Thus an increase in overall national wealth was accompanied by a significant decrease in the income of the most vulnerable individuals (64).

In as much as John Locke's political theory was based on free market assumptions, the social institutions he proposed were subject to the same self-destructive forces as those of the free market. Indeed, Locke's doctrine of religious toleration, Jardine insightfully notes, contributes further, although unwittingly, to this ill-fate of society as that doctrine, influenced as it was by the Enlightenment's disregard for metaphysical groundings, encouraged subjectivist, and later relativist, understandings of religious tolerance.

Summarizing what he perceives to have been the negative practical impacts on Western culture of classical liberal theory, Jardine lists (1) an accompanying narrowly materialistic worldview, (2) a tendency to rationalize the inhumane working conditions frequently found in 19<sup>th</sup> century factories, and (3) a similar rationalization of the dehumanizing paternalism and racism of 19<sup>th</sup> century imperialism.

Jardine's treatment of classical liberalism, early in his discussion, focuses primarily on the English tradition; he then suggests that the French and German variations on the basic liberal idea attempted to address some of the shortcomings he has identified. Kant recognized the biases inherent in early liberal political theory and tried to reframe a more neutral theory of government. While English liberals were preoccupied with how to limit government, Hegel considered the role of an active, centralized government as a creator of equal opportunity. Montesquieu shifted the focus to the liberalizing effects of a governmental separation of powers, and Rousseau de-emphasized freedom in the market, giving more attention to the importance of popular participation in the government of a democratic republic. According to Jardine, "it is with Rousseau that the idea of democratic government changes from a secondary to a primary element of liberalism" (67).

Classical liberalism, in its various versions, triumphed over the older aristocratic order by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Despite their predictions of a more peaceful, progressive, and prosperous 20<sup>th</sup> century, "what happened instead was one catastrophe after another: World War I and the Russian Revolution, the stock market crash and the Great Depression" (67) and then the spread of communism and the rise of fascism, and World War II. Jardine concludes, "[B]y the end of World War I, classical liberalism was severely shaken, and by the end of World War II, it was almost completely discredited even in the English-speaking countries" (67).

The consequent resurgence of European conservatism and the simultaneous emergence of both communism and fascism, with their respective critiques of classical liberalism, gave impetus to the development of what Jardine identifies as "reform liberalism, and its European cousin . . . democratic socialism" (73). Reform liberalism articulated two basic criticisms of classical liberalism. In the 1930s and in the immediate postwar period, it focused on the apparent failure, during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, of the market economy, made evident in the emergence of tremendous concentrations of wealth and power as well as in the instability of business cycles as they fluctuated between "boom" periods of rapid growth with inevitable overproduction and low unemployment and "bust" periods of negative growth and high unemployment. Exacerbating these market swings, as we have been reminded in the current recession, are the promotional excesses of financial markets and the excesses of retail consumption, leading to overleveraged and unsustainable levels of both public and personal debt. Jardine provides an astute historical analysis of this dynamic of the insufficiently controlled free market economy. He concludes that

whereas classical liberals thought that government was the greatest threat to individual freedom and therefore should be strictly limited, reform liberals argued that . . . the immense concentrations of corporate power that had developed within capitalism, and the very instability of the capitalist system could be even greater threats to freedom than government

. . . [reform liberals and social democrats] simply wanted to use government to smooth out the rough edges of the capitalist system (77).

And, indeed, these new forms of liberalism demonstrated by their encouragement of such non-governmental organization as that represented by labor unions that, in order to check the excesses of corporate power, their first recourse need not inevitably be to enhanced government powers. But ultimately, of course, reform liberals sought a large and stable consuming middle class by a redistribution of income. Thus, stability was accomplished both by ameliorating the condition of the relatively poor and also by minimizing unemployment. Some forms of democratic socialism advocated gaining control of the economy also by handing over to the government the task of management, and sometimes even the power of ownership of key industries.

Reform liberalism and democratic socialism were confronted in the 1960s and 1970s by an entirely different problem than the earlier apparent failure of market economics. It was, by then, clear that these liberal reform models were not neutral in the impact of their workings upon their host cultures, but, in fact, fostered certain unexpected and negative results. In all liberal societies, Jardine suggests, the policies created by reform liberalism in the 1960s and 1970s, led to an eventual relaxation or abandonment of many of the principles earlier embodied in Christian morality.

Among other things, abortion was legalized, divorces became easier to obtain, censorship of entertainment was discontinued, and restrictions on gambling were reduced. Additionally, . . . state laws requiring prayer and Bible reading in public schools were declared unconstitutional. Reform liberals justified these actions on the grounds that such laws violated the principle of neutrality. In one sense, of course, these later reform liberals were correct . . . But were the policies created by reform liberalism themselves actually neutral (77)?

The policies flowing from reform liberalism, no less than those that were the product of classical liberalism, are value laden. This has been made unmistakably evident particularly in the destruction wrought upon both the principles and the practice of Christian ethics by the principles inherent in the secular goals and achievements of reform liberalism. Classical liberalism, however brutal its workings, still was subject to being judged—whether well or ill—by the values of Christianity. Reform liberalism, in its discarding of these traditional values, did not abandon all values but replaced the eroded spiritual values with essentially material values.

Jardine carefully discusses the account of John Rawls, a latter-day reform liberal, who in his major work, *A Theory of Justice* (1971), was confident that he could create “a theory of individual freedom without the cultural biases of early liberalism, that is, a truly neutral version of liberalism”(77). He approached this by imagining that the founders of a society are all acting under a “Veil of Ignorance,” as they formulate and decide upon the rules of their society, totally ignorant of what position—privileged or non-privileged—they will finally find themselves in, in that society. By departing from Locke’s theory which insisted that all members of a society be bound by the norms of rationality, defined in terms of the basic principles of the “Law of Nature,” Rawls recognized the Christian “bias” of these natural laws. This was sufficient, he felt, to assure that even the worst-off person would receive optimal treatment in accord with the two basic principles of justice governing society: (1) each person’s right to “the greatest possible amount of freedom compatible with the same amount of freedom for all other individuals” in society and (2) “all inequalities should benefit the worst-off person” (78-79).

Jardine reminds the reader that, despite Rawls' emphasis in his second principle of justice, his formula still allows for substantial inequalities. Indeed, Jardine brings his point home, in a most personal but appropriate manner: "Rawls would certainly argue that Harvard philosophy professors like himself should continue to receive six-figure salaries because they make an important contribution to society" (79-80). Rawls' motive in devising his formula is not self-serving. Rather, Rawls defends his scheme of justice as one that requires a certain amount of inequality of benefits if individual freedom is to be equalized and individual benefits are to be optimized for all. The "Veil of Ignorance" is required when individuals consent to their social contract precisely because that contract must necessarily leave some people better-off than others if all are to enjoy equal freedom; at the same time, that contract assures sufficient benefits to the worst-off so as to provide for their individual satisfaction as well as for the flourishing of their society—with the recognition, of course, that these two conditions cannot be separated. Implicit in Rawls' rationale is both a practical concern for the social morale necessary to maintain social stability and a more normative concern for what constitutes fairness, or justice.

As Jardine ultimately points out, with all the judgments that must be made and all the balances that must be struck in effecting Rawls' formula of reform liberalism, it is no more successful in achieving value neutrality than its predecessors. The central objective of Rawls' theory—to provide an optimal situation for the worst-off persons—rests on a fundamental qualitative assumption regarding who are the worst-off people in a society, a judgment on which there is often no consensus. Jardine provides an example from 1978, when a Nazi group petitioned for permission to march through the largely Jewish Chicago suburb of Skokie, which included many concentration camp survivors. He asks: "If we attempt to sort out this issue according to Rawls' criteria, the critical question is, again, who is worst-off?" (80). The Jews, who would suffer from such a march because of their traumatizing experience of the Holocaust? Or the Nazis, who would be deprived of arguably their most fundamental right, that of freedom of expression? There is, Jardine concludes, no completely value-neutral answer to such a question. And, I would add, it would be similarly impossible to come to a neutral conclusion in regard to the point at which the inevitable disparities encountered in Rawls' attempt to achieve an optimum distribution of wealth represent a "right" or "just" balance between the wealthier and poorer members of a society, all things considered including the requisites for economic vitality and social stability.

The solution to providing "neutral," or "objective," answers to such questions, according to Rawls and other reform liberal theorists, is to turn these questions over to a body of "experts," specialists in dealing with such matters. There are however sharp differences among experts, even in regard to what they choose to view as a "problem." At what degree of inequality is justice, as Rawls defines it, no longer served? In other words, at what point does inequality of wealth amount to *excessive* inequality? Another reform liberal economist, contemporary with Rawls, E. F. Schumacher appears to consider the substantial differences in wealth permitted by Rawls' formula to be excessive. Schumacher spells out his liberal reform formula in his book, *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*,<sup>2</sup> but he also describes the successful implementation of his formula in the Scott Bader Company, one of whose principles regarding income disparity is that irrespective of age, sex, function or experience, remuneration for work shall not vary, between the lowest and the highest paid, beyond a range of 1:7 before tax. Although Schumacher has succeeded in applying his principles only to that one company, he implies that roughly the same ratio of maximum income disparity should, and could, pertain to the society at large if his ideals of community and economic justice were to be broadly achieved. Contrast Schumacher's proposed ratio of disparity between the lowest and the highest incomes with the Economic Policy Institute's report that, in the United States in 2007, "the ratio of average CEO pay to average wage was 1:275."<sup>3</sup> This ratio would appear to be much closer to that allowed by Rawls' formula than that permitted by Schumacher's, even though the ratio reported by the E.P.I. is based on income averages (thereby

lessening the ratio from that based on individual extremes) and even though it does not eliminate from its calculation what might be considered by Rawls to be poverty-level, or below-minimum-wage-level, income (thereby increasing the ratio reported by the E.P.I.).<sup>4</sup>

Rawls assumes, in imagining how one would think behind the “Veil of Ignorance,” that people are generally risk-averse, not wanting too much inequality because, in Jardine’s words, they are more “willing to forego the possibility of becoming millionaires to avoid the possibility of being impoverished”(82). Jardine notes that, while the corporate managers and, indeed, most of the business people in America, who began to dominate Western societies early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and became completely dominant after the Second World War, were technocrats—those very “experts,” or “professionals” in human management that Rawls proposed for crafting the “neutral” economic policies of his model society—these experts in applying managerial techniques to their corporate co-workers (and, Ellul would add, to society at large through their manipulative advertising techniques), in fact, were not inclined to exercise the caution Rawls assumed would be induced by the original structuring of society under the conditions of the “Veil of Ignorance.” As events have dramatically made evident to us now, some six years after the publication of Jardine’s book, these corporate experts were, in fact, willing to risk bankruptcy and a destabilization of society for a chance at acquiring for themselves great wealth. And through their rationalizations that persuaded them of their own “neutrality,” they were blind to their own technocratic biases, as was Rawls, himself, to the biases of his own liberal-reform economic theory of justice.

In sum, it is clear that, despite Rawls’ elaborate efforts, as well as the efforts of other radical reform liberals, the attempt to achieve a value-neutral formula for economic reform, and therefore one amenable to a consensus among those presuming to pursue a “science” of economics, was a complete failure.

Even more disturbing than the chaotic state of economic theory is Jardine’s report on the verdict that modernity has rendered that moral principles are “purely subjective ‘opinions’ . . . thus destroying any possibility of public discussion of moral truth” (84). Humans abhor a vacuum of moral truths and into that vacuum has flowed what might be called the operating norms of the technocrat, with devastatingly dangerous negative results. Jardine describes three of these. (1) “To an even greater extent than was the case under classical liberalism, Western people became locked into a narrowly materialistic worldview” (83). (2) People began to experience the tyrannical impact of the rule of experts in their lives: “The tendency of the liberal goal of neutrality to degenerate into nihilism can be seen much more clearly in reform liberalism than it can in classical liberalism.” (84). Classical liberalism did embody, although in distorted form, certain ingredients of Protestant morality, but reform liberalism denied any substantive, or objective, status to moral values. Even the technocratic experts themselves experienced the tyranny of expert rule, as Jardine insightfully explains : “Since an expert is an expert on only one thing, when that expert turns to other aspects of his or her life, he or she will be subject to the power of . . . other experts” (83)! (3) Beyond whatever guidance might be available through the incentives of materialism or may still be relevant to the extent that tyranny has not become total, the only available default model for the shaping of human behavior in the modern culture of value-nihilism appears to be nothing other than the fortunately somewhat tamed but still largely autonomous market forces themselves:

[A]lthough reform liberalism did curb some of the most destructive effects of an unregulated capitalist economy, it ultimately takes the market as its model for society to an even greater extent than classical liberalism. This is most obvious in that reform liberalism creates a more highly individualistic society in its abolition of a common moral culture. But the reduction

of human social relations to the model of the market also occurs much more thoroughly in Rawls' theory than in Locke's [classical liberal] theory. Although Locke's social contract is based on the model of market transactions, his theory [conceived in a culture of traditional values] doesn't completely abstract the individuals who form society from their personal attributes or histories. Rawls, however, by placing the individuals in the Original Position under the Veil of Ignorance, actually creates a much more extreme market situation; the inhabitants of the Original Position have absolutely no connection to a larger social context (84).

Still, American reform liberalism and European social democracy seemed to be quite successful for about two decades after the Second World War. But American youth in the 1960s rebelled against the technocratic system, and by the 1970s the postwar economic boom had run its course, yielding to "relatively slow economic growth, relatively high unemployment, and . . . high inflation" (85). This produced dissatisfaction with reform liberalism and its demise as the dominant political and economic theory in the United States; similar trends led to significantly weakened social democracy in Europe. During the 1980s, conservatives were elected to major government posts, the economies of all English-speaking countries were deregulated, and government social programs were significantly reduced. To a lesser degree, similar trends occurred in Europe. Jardine observes that "by the end of the 1980s the free market was back in vogue" (85). But while classical liberal ideas were revived in regard to economic and governmental policies, the cultural rejection of commonly held moral norms that began in the 1960s (and which the early, or classical, liberalism—in the form of capitalism—had regarded as crucial for its moral functioning), continued and, indeed, accelerated throughout the ensuing decades. This became evident in 1980 "in movies, television, music . . . but . . . even more clearly in public attitudes. Legalized abortion, for example, is now supported by a larger proportion of the American population than when Reagan was first elected" (87). And this increasing moral permissiveness characterizes Western societies generally.

This revived, or neoclassical, political and economic liberalism—sometimes identified as libertarianism—has received its theoretical articulation, most famously by two economists, Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, whose *laissez-faire* theories are viewed as having completed the task, undertaken by reform liberalism, of establishing a completely value-neutral system of governance. Jardine makes the astute observation that "the breakdown of the old Protestant morality of hard work, thrift, and self-denial is, ironically, the result of that very morality. That is, the secularized version of the Protestant work ethic . . . has, in fact, a self-destructive internal logic" (89). Specifically, the labor of generations of people motivated by the work ethic resulted in highly productive societies whose abundance of goods and services needed to be consumed, and therefore people were encouraged to consume extravagantly beyond their basic material needs. The Protestant ethic of disciplined self-denial, so instrumental to the dramatic emergence of free-market economies, consequently became dysfunctional and, instead, the immediate gratification of one's desires was encouraged. "Instead of responding to demand, as in classical liberal economics, business had to *create* demand" (40). It is, therefore, not at all surprising, Jardine suggests, that the revival of market economics would go hand in hand with the ascendance of libertarian morality. We begin to get a sense here of the author's title theme, which suggests that Christianity, or the values associated with Christianity, have had an effect upon both the "making and unmaking of technological society." Jardine describes the increasingly individualistic, self-serving, and superficial nature of the social values that, through the skillful techniques of advertising and the popular media, finally displace values that were once concerned with social obligation and were, at least vaguely, associated with our religious heritage. Not only utilitarianism but also, and even more severely, a superficial aestheticism, which

the author illustrates by attitudes as diverse as devotion to celebrity and what he perceives as “the elevation of art to the status of the sacred” (97) are included in the author’s criticism of the values that presently shape our society.

With the emergence of the present global economy, Jardine notes, those who support positive standards of accountability in the public interest (e.g., political oversight and regulation of the increasing power of economic self-interests) are confronted with greater obstacles than ever before. Production is more decentralized, and labor has become more dispersed globally and is much more vulnerable to exploitation while it has become less able to organize effectively. The greater mobility of businesses in the global economy has enabled them to escape both governmental supervision and taxation. As economic activities have come to transcend the traditional national boundaries of jurisdictional authority, it has become increasingly difficult for national governments to effectively track and hold accountable those engaged in these activities.

Jardine summarizes what he sees as the outcome of these trends as follows:

as the world economy becomes harder to regulate, and as relative income [equality] no longer seems essential to the functioning of that economy, reform liberal and social democratic policies will seem obsolete, and the older laissez-faire policies of classical liberalism will experience a renaissance, At the same time, the extremely productive global economy requires a veritable orgy of consumption to continue functioning, so an expressive individualist culture characterized by saturation advertising, a mountain of consumer debt, and an obsession with personal “choice” will be the inevitable result (102).<sup>5</sup>

One should note that Jardine wrote this more than three years before these very developments in our society culminated in the recessionary crash of 2007.

Jardine next turns to describe the political and economic theory of re-emerging classical liberalism, now referred to as “neoclassical liberalism.” Hayek and Friedman, the chief articulators of this theory, ironically agree with the reform liberal Rawls, that one’s success in a free market economy has more to do with the luck of being in the right place at the right time than with one’s falsely assumed, reward-deserving achievements. Hayek and Friedman, however, added to this rationale the assumption that there are no objective standards by which even to judge what is “success,” or an “achievement,” or even what is a “good” or a “bad” person. Whereas the focus of the classical liberal had been on man as producer, neoclassical liberals such as Hayek and Friedman preferred to view men and women essentially as consumers. Wanting to achieve “value-neutrality” in their political and economic theory, as both the classical liberals and the reform liberals had attempted, the neoclassical liberals passed the production and policy choices of society to the consumer-citizens, driven only by whatever happened to be their wants. In neoclassical liberalism, there are no standards, secular or liberal, by which to really justify a tacitly assumed distinction between “good” or “bad,” or even between “productive” or “unproductive” forms of work.

Jardine formulates three major criticisms of neoclassical liberalism. (1) It is misguided and inevitably fails to reach its stated goal of neutrality. (2) It is ultimately nihilistic, making it “virtually impossible to say that anything is really right or wrong,” and thus is far more blatantly socially disastrous than in classical liberalism or reform liberalism; Jardine says that “the early liberals would have been horrified at Hayek’s argu-

ments about distributive justice” (112). And, finally, (3) Jardine’s primary criticism of neoclassical liberalism and global capitalist economics is “that it completes the process of reducing all human social relations to the model of the market and subjecting all human life to market forces” (112).

What we are now facing, according to Jardine, is a “crisis of liberal capitalist democracy” (113). Alexis de Tocqueville, almost two centuries ago, despite his admiration of American democracy, warned of the danger of an excessive individualism. Without some kind of hierarchy of authority and some traditional social ties, Tocqueville warned, radical, egalitarian democracy is likely to result in a society of isolated individuals who will accept subjugation to dictatorial government. Tocqueville anticipated a new kind of despotism in democratic nations, one more widespread and milder than violent despotism, one that degrades rather than torments human beings. Jardine observes that Tocqueville failed to anticipate the kind of extreme governmental tyranny that came to the fore in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, one that has been given the special label of “totalitarian” and characterized by its ability to control not only men’s bodies but also their minds. Of course, Tocqueville can hardly be faulted for not foreseeing these developments. Jardine includes, also, among the new, and more subtle, facilitators of tyranny, the individual’s captivity to the present-day consumer economy, including what he calls “aesthetic consumption” (126). As he states it: “. . . a culture of aesthetic self-expression logically leads to a society where only beautiful people are allowed, that is, to a totalitarian tyranny of the aesthetic”(126).

Jardine sees a more significant parallel between the crisis of our time and the period of the Renaissance in the late Middle Ages than the more commonly perceived parallel between our time and the decline of ancient Rome. Despite the monumental innovations (the printing press, the clock, firearms, and the compass, plus the great voyages of discovery), European culture was in the Renaissance in a state of decadence, most vividly represented in the corruption of the Roman Catholic Church. In the midst of this was born, in the towns of this period, a rational and urbane bourgeois culture crystallized by the Protestant Reformation, productive of the whole new era of modernity. However, in the aftermath of the First World War, and only a few decades after it had reached its peak toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we begin to see the decline of this vital bourgeois culture and a prevailing irrationalism “skeptical of any claim to truth” (130). Jardine suggests

that in both the late Middle Ages and our own time, a similar situation existed: people had discovered new creative capacities, and in particular had developed significant new technological powers, but were unable to make moral sense of those capacities, resulting in psychological disorientation, cultural decay and institutional breakdown (130).

The spiritually inspired Protestantism that had brought new life out of the cultural decadence of the late Middle Ages and that came to inform reform liberalism, now essentially secularized, finds itself unable to answer the essential question of our time, namely, “what to do with the hyperproductive capitalist economy once it has met people’s basic material needs” (130). Liberalism’s inability to address this question adequately, Jardine tells us, is due to its underestimation of the capacity, or creativity, of human agency. It assumes that people “can create wealth only through a single-minded work ethic and a ruthlessly competitive market economy” (130). Liberalism forgets that people have, from time to time, been able to “produce enough to live quite comfortably without living only to work and without the merciless competition of the market” (130). The present system inevitably results in periods of vast overproduction, which requires then, for its solution, the creation of a consumer economy, which is not only socially and demographically unsustainable but also destructive of moral character. Jardine summons us to build a culture that “recognizes the full extent of human creative capacities and thus is able to establish moral limits on those capacities” (130-131).

It is important to note here that Jardine is not disregarding the valuable contributions that a market economy can make to the quality of human existence. Distinguishing between a “market economy” and a “market society,” he points out that it is only in a society that is *dominated* by the market model, or in a market society, where all human relations are reduced to contract and the longer-term bonds necessary for sustaining human community consequently disintegrate. He also acknowledges the validity of the cautions provided by present-day conservatives to encourage the development of virtuous individuals and to keep certain sectors of life, such as the family, isolated from market forces. However, he tells us,

what these conservatives fail to understand is that the model of virtue they uphold—essentially the secularized Protestant ethic of John Locke—is itself utterly destructive, leading inevitably to decadent consumerism, as we have discussed at length . . . [Indeed,] the moral virtue that early reform liberals wanted to promote was the same self-destructive work ethic of classical liberals and present-day conservatives. The only way that markets can be used extensively in a complex economy but kept from dominating and thus destroying society is through the development of a new kind of culture with a very different attitude toward work (132-133).

Jardine concludes the first section of his book on the evolution of liberal capitalist democracy by observing that, although modern people have developed dramatically their capacity to control and change their environment, they have failed to understand and to affirm the fundamental nature of morality. Moderns have consequently drifted toward nihilism “manifested first in the catastrophic world wars of the twentieth century and then in the decadent consumerism of the postwar period” (133). Jardine’s narrative of the evolution of modern liberalism focuses on how we came to avoid “the central question of pre-modern moral reasoning, that is, the question of how people should live” (133). Modernity has succeeded in avoiding this fundamental question

by taking as its basic principle individual freedom, and stating that every individual should be free to do as he or she wants, within certain limits, which themselves would be neutral in the sense that they did not favor any particular social group or impose any particular belief system or way of life on society (133).

But this very attempt by liberal theorists to attain moral neutrality eventually eliminated the possibility of the adoption of any conceivable moral standard. The result was an overly producing capitalist economy and a consumer economy that has proved to be destructive of both itself and its underlying culture. Jardine urges that, before that destruction becomes complete, we must develop “a new kind of culture with a very different attitude toward work.” In the Bible, he proposes, we can find what this new culture might be like, for it “contains a conception of human agency that recognizes human creative capacities and thus can place limitations on them” (133).

## **Part 2: Christianity and Its Relation to the Modern Crisis**

The second division of *The Making and Unmaking of Technological Society* turns from close attention to political philosophy and politics to a broader cultural analysis of the development of Western tradition and Christianity’s role in culture. The five chapters here lay out Jardine’s overarching themes and clarify the larger context within which the more politics-centered opening division of the book is nested.

Jardine starts his discussion in the second section by commenting on pre-literate pagan cultures, exploring the special significance of orality and myth. He briefly analyzes *Enuma Elish* and the Greek oral epics *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. Pre-literate cultures rely on fragile memory shaped by the telling and hearing of stories. Unfortunately, in modern, literate cultures, “myth” has come to mean “untruth.” Jardine argues that “in an oral culture, the question of whether the story is literally true never really comes up, because people don’t think in these terms” (140). Literates are much more visually—rather than aurally—oriented. Literates generally use the term “literally” to mean something like “physically” or “materially.” Only literate people think of the world—what they call “reality”—primarily in materialistic terms. Ironically, the modern religious fundamentalist and the modern religious liberal, respectively, accept or reject the truth of the story of Moses’ parting the Red Sea on the same materialist terms. Both miss the point of the creation story that the earth and all within it were brought into existence by God’s creative act. Jardine contends “it is not accidental that the decline of religious faith in the Western world followed the development of universal literacy . . . because in a culture with an increasingly extreme visual orientation, spiritual things seem less real to people” (140).

In the pre-literate pagan past, only the gods, in any fundamental sense, had the capability of acting effectively thus “humans have no control over what happens” (146). Cosmology was reflected in the ordering of ancient societies and therefore it is not surprising that

most humans are servants of the warrior class, and even this privileged class is fated to suffer . . . this understanding of the human situation, or something close to it, has been the dominant view of most humans for most of history . . . It is found in all the world’s ancient societies . . . Only the biblical tradition puts forward a truly different understanding of the world and humanity (146).

The social/political implications of pre-literate paganism are threefold. (1) Since the only immortality available to humans was in their being remembered for their great deeds, the pagan social order was not very peaceful. (2) Because of this nearly constant threat of war, the social order was quite tenuous, and the nature of the ruling class’s relationship to the servile class was generally harsh, often brutal (3). Because in pagan cultures it was assumed that one’s birth or bloodline determined his and his descendants’ place in society, the concept of social mobility and certainly the concept of universal human equality were alien to those cultures. Although Christianity from its beginning, Jardine notes, represented a radical challenge to such dehumanizing distinctions, the power of the aristocratic classes who owned land was fully broken only with the coming of industrialism in the nineteenth century. Even now, Jardine suggests, most of the world still considers allegiance to one’s family ethically prior to allegiance to one’s church or to one’s nation and its laws. The contrast between pre-biblical and biblical cosmologies and their respective social/political implications is a dominant theme Jardine’s discussion develops.

Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, began the break away from the pagan worldview. Jardine particularly focuses on Aristotle who he recognizes today is often seen as offering a convincing philosophical counter to liberalism’s ultimately futile attempts to create a neutral system. Although Aristotle develops an ethical system with elements important for any workable ethical system, Jardine concludes that none of the Greeks successfully addresses “the central issue in this book, that is, the question of human creativity” (148). Greek philosophy transforms the earlier emphasis upon the warrior, replacing it with an emphasis upon the philosopher, a figure who understands the world’s order and is best suited to rule. Jardine notes that it is not coincidental that Greek horizons changed as literacy took root; abstract analytical thinking supplanted mythological accounts.

I have no quarrel with Jardine's claim that Aristotle presents an interesting counter to modern liberalism's commitment to value neutrality, a commitment that Jardine argues devolves ultimately into value relativism. I am less clear about why Aristotle is much preferred to Socrates or Plato who also seem to offer firm grounding for values regarded as absolute and from which the articulation of virtues (or a character-based ethic) is possible. Aristotle gives more attention to details but all of these Greeks stress the community and the nurturing of character and this is, as Jardine sees, a corrective to the social isolation and shallowness of consumer-driven culture fostered by the nihilism of modern liberalism. Aristotle does, of course, temper Plato's speculative metaphysical dualism, grounding matters in a more empirically accessible normative natural order. Aristotle, Jardine reminds his readers, suggests "humans . . . cannot choose different goals than they are constructed to want by nature" (162)—that is, if they are to be truly responsible and, therefore rational, in their choosing. Compared to Plato, Aristotle provides, in his *Ethics*, a more "user-friendly" and rationally demonstrable manual of "prudential" instruction for both private and public behavior; and one might argue that, correspondingly, the Roman Catholic church, through both its official doctrine and formal ecclesiastical structure (themselves much more indebted to Aristotelian than to Platonic thought), offers a more explicitly articulated and worldly representation of a prudential ethic. Jardine seems to acknowledge this in the context of his effort to find grounds for challenging the liberal search for neutrality: he reminds us that "the Roman Catholic priesthood . . . attempts to establish a hierarchy of spiritual wisdom and character" (150). Still, it would be good to know more of Jardine's rationale. While Aristotle provides one with considerable philosophical and theological insight for challenging modern and post-modern trends in moral and ethical thought, I find Plato's more speculative, but still firmly grounded, mode of inquiry is much more akin to Michael Polanyi's fundamental epistemological principles and concepts (e.g., his "tacit intimation" and "fiduciary commitment,") and Jardine has indicated his own indebtedness to Polanyi.

Surely Jardine is right to emphasize that Aristotle represents an advancement of social and political thought beyond the earlier phases of pagan thought. However, I must point out one respect in which I think Jardine has misinterpreted Aristotle, and this is in regard to what he asserts as Aristotle's denial of the agency of human will. Rationality, he says, is what distinguishes the human being from all lower forms of being. In his words, according to Aristotle,

humans cannot *choose* their goals. There is nothing like a concept of free will in Aristotle. Humans, like other animals, plants, and inanimate objects, have their goals set for them by the natural order. Humans . . . cannot choose different goals than they are constructed to want by nature (162).

If Jardine means that Aristotle's embrace of the concept of natural law does not allow him to suggest that one's *proper* goals are determined by free choice ("free" understood here to mean not even *morally* constrained, which is what modern liberalism has come to believe), then I must agree with him. But his words suggest much more than this, indeed, a determinism more encompassing than Calvinism, namely that human beings cannot choose for right or wrong, good or bad—and this is not completely true to Aristotle. Aristotle, like Plato, assumed a tripartite structure of the human *psyche* (intellect, will, and desire). Both assumed the capacity of men to choose the wrong behavior and poor institutions of government. Otherwise, there would have been no point in either of them constructing elaborate arguments to advance the best form of society for them, and it would hardly have been possible for Thomas Aquinas, much later, to construct a Christian theology that incorporated the fundamental principles of Aristotelianism and that insisted upon an understanding of man capable of making morally wrong decisions.

At the same time, it must be admitted that, for both Plato and Aristotle, their understandings of the faculty of human will were grossly inadequate. Both based their understanding of will upon the supremacy assigned to human intellect, or rationality, over will and Plato's articulation of this ranking is his famous formulation, "To know the good is to do the good." I have argued elsewhere that, although this eliminates specifically *moral* choice in his exercise of will, it does not, however, eliminate *all* willful choosing.<sup>6</sup> It, instead, limits the exercise of choice primarily to choices of whether and what one is willing to know, or to learn. In other words, the focus of human choosing is shifted ostensibly from questions of morality to questions of cognition—which, admittedly, is an extremely inadequate understanding of the actual functioning and range of focus of the human will. It is similarly inadequate, to my thinking, in its implications for coming to an understanding of the processes involved in learning and discovery, which—as Polanyi points out—cannot be separated from moral, or fiducial, commitments. Still, Plato's understanding of *periagog* (literally "turning around," or "conversion"), as it is represented in his Allegory of the Cave,<sup>7</sup> readily suggests a process of—not just moral—learning and discovery that is an essentially passive response to transcendence, not something, at least initially, actively engaged in, or chosen. And, although Plato in his larger corpus is ambivalent on this topic, it is arguable that this passivity in regard to moral choice could have conceivably influenced Aristotle's thinking in regard to the latter's alleged claim of a total absence of a human capacity for moral choice. I find nothing in Aristotle to suggest that, as Jardine seems to assume, there is no substantial ambiguity in Aristotle on this topic and, indeed, much to suggest that Aristotle assumes the presence of moral choice even though, like Plato, he does not adequately provide theoretically for it.

The issues I've just raised above do not necessarily distract from the rationale of Jardine's major endeavor in this book, i.e., to re-establish, in response to the value relativity of present-day liberalism, a more firmly grounded moral sense of direction. Whether one looks to Plato or to Aristotle in this pursuit, both can be reasonably interpreted to offer substantial corrective guidance. It would simply be satisfying to detect in Jardine's treatment of Aristotle some recognition of his ambiguity on the subject.

As a reader, I was somewhat surprised to find that Jardine's narrative, having welcomed Aristotle's concept of natural law as a firmer grounding of values and a major challenge to claims of value neutrality, later in his book, turns his analytical attack upon this Aristotelian contribution. In a word, Jardine argues that in Western history the more encompassing worldview of Christianity, with different values and virtues, took root and undermined much of Aristotle's credibility: "For Christianity, the three main virtues are faith, hope, and . . . love. These three virtues are not found in Aristotle's list, and indicate a profound difference in worldview" (169). Equally important in terms of the implications for Western development and the limits of Aristotelian vision was a shift from a worldview with an uncreated and therefore, eternal or unchanging cosmic order to a worldview with "a created world that does change" (169). At least in the modern world shaped by Christianity, any contemporary reader of Aristotle can see that he accepted glaring inequalities (think of his view of women, slaves, and barbarians) and regarded most people as not philosophical and thus inferior by nature and incapable of the highest human virtues. Moderns can also see that there is a fundamental problem with Aristotle's understanding of the "natural order." Things simply are not as stable and unchanging as Aristotle assumed and predicated many of his ethical ideas upon. The world is changing and can be changed and thus we cannot build a system on "certain unchanging goals and . . . certain virtues that must be practiced to achieve those goals" (170). If we change nature, we must also change our goals and this, Jardine points out, ultimately leads back to the major problem of modern liberalism, the problem of philosophical relativism, which we recognize as an inadequate response to change.

Today we readily accept the essential equality of all human beings and we recognize that human beings have and continue to make major changes in the world. What Jardine suggests is that we take a closer look at the Bible as a source that shaped Western history and as a future resource for self-understanding and reshaping common life. He, of course, outlines such a closer look—significant elements of his book’s discussion thus provide what is essentially cultural analysis driven by a particular biblical theology. Jardine argues “the Bible represents a revolution in human understanding” (171). After Christianity became the religion of imperial Rome, it came significantly to shape the major social and political institutions of Western societies. Christianity fundamentally transformed human thinking and human practices, Jardine argues, by describing the world as created by God’s pronouncements and as fundamentally ordered and good as opposed to chaotic and evil:

It is impossible to overestimate how important this difference is. With the idea that the world is good, that it makes sense, comes the possibility of scientific investigation of the world . . . similarly, with the idea that humans are good comes the possibility of escaping the brutal warrior ethos of the pagan world (174).

Since the God of the Bible is a creator, humans should recognize their own capacity for creating. And as God is known to have created by his spoken word, so humans came to acknowledge their own creative capacity through language; it is through words that humans are able to construct conceptually new worlds and, from these concepts, to actually improve their own world. Whereas the mythic portrayals of pagan culture tell us that tools were given to human beings by the gods (indeed, in some instances, stolen from the gods), in Genesis 4:22 human beings are confirmed in their capacity to create tools. Genesis narratives present a new lofty image of humanity as no less than a partner in God’s own act of creation, but also as creatures subject to misuse human powers. To have been created in the image of God should not be taken as license for thinking of themselves as God. The myth of the Garden of Eden tells of humans yielding to this temptation and becoming prideful. The narrative corollary to being encouraged to learn something of the order of the world is the story of humans learning about moral limits and of the danger of sin, that is, of ignoring those limits.

Man’s capacity to create, unlike God’s, is *limited* . . . We cannot create physical objects out of thin air by speaking. More importantly, we cannot create just any conceptualization of the physical world and expect it to work, nor can we create just any social structure and expect it to work (175).

Human beings, in Jardine’s account, must both recognize and accept their creative powers and at the same time not presume to exercise all of the powers that are at our disposal. We must, in other words, choose to operate within the self-limiting context of certain moral principles. Human beings must concentrate on discovering moral principles and defining and redefining their particular implications and applications in ever-changing situations that emerge in our dynamic world. Modern technology is both the cause and the embodiment of this dynamism. The morality represented in the biblical traditions, Jardine holds, is more suited to guiding humanity in such a dynamic technological world than any other system or tradition that we know. Christianity views the world as one of infinite possibilities. Even when the world seems in disorder, there are indications of a more fundamental order and Christians are taught to live faithfully in trust. But the world changes each time we use our creative capacity for speech. God and humanity have infinite possible ways to act but in fact the order we find in the world suggests that concrete choices are also limited according to the structure of human existence. In Jardine’s analogy, there are an infinite set of whole numbers but at the same time the set of all whole numbers is limited since it does not include those numbers that are not whole numbers. To this reader, when Jardine speaks of having indications but not proof of a fundamental orderliness in the world, he comes close to Polanyi’s idea that humans have “tacit intimations.” In perceiving indications or having “tacit

intimations” of a basic order, we are provided with what we need to act as trusting or faithful beings. It is this fiduciary relationship to our world and our fellow beings that allows us to act responsibly.

In his discussion, Jardine makes the surprising observation that “modern historians of science agree that the conceptual basis for modern science comes from the Bible, and that in fact incorporation of Greek philosophical ideas into Christian theology actually retarded the development of science” (183). The Greek sense of order emphasized deductive reasoning. As a result, Greek science is not much akin to the productive power of modern science which emphasizes inductive reasoning. Induction implies having to trust in the order or reasonableness of the world prior to that order becoming more apparent. The biblical notion of sin revolves around the lack of trust in God and God’s created but unfinished created order. Sin manifests itself in the human attempt to replace God’s creation with our own and in unfaithful human acts such as lying to and dominating others. What characterizes the pinnacle of Christian virtue, in Jardine’s account, is unconditional love as this is presented in the Bible:

the ethic of unconditional love implies that humans must practice both forgiveness and mutual correction . . . But from the biblical standpoint, revenge destroys the capacity of humans to fulfill their role as cocreators. On the other hand . . . forgiveness does not mean allowing a person to continue sinning. Thus people must correct each other when they sin.

Seen in this context, we come to understand liberalism as a reductionist version of the Christian ethic of unconditional love. Liberal tolerance does not involve deep respect or caring for people. Rawls’ liberal concept of the “Veil of Ignorance” is “essentially a technocratic attempt to conceptualize the idea of putting oneself in another’s place” (189). In liberalism, the market economy is ultimately the model for all social relations. Ironically, however, it was only in a Christian culture that the idea of a market economy could arise because the necessary trust underpinning a market economy simply does not exist in pre-modern economies where individuals generally tend to be distrustful of those not a part of their extended families.

To summarize, Jardine’s discussion is a grand narrative that leads readers from early pagan culture through the various stages to contemporary Western culture with its serious governance problems. He affirms human creativity and outlines how technological advances led to modern styles and standards of living unimaginable in earlier periods. Our capacity for creativity seen in this development has not been adequately guided by a system of morality that provided correctives. We have slipped into the excesses of consumer-oriented materialism which threatens our survival. A solution is desperately needed and Jardine suggests the high virtues represented in the Bible and the best of the Christian tradition—particularly Christian compassion—can provide proper limits and directions.

Although I share the author’s respect for Christian faith and values, I (and I suspect others will also) sense that at times Jardine overstates his case. He draws at times on very specific doctrines of Christianity as directly relevant to the issues shaping the development of Western culture. Also he makes too exclusive a case for what Christianity has to offer, ignoring possible contributions from other traditions. This is not an irenic discussion. Regarding my first criticism, I simply do not find Jardine persuasive in his attempt to include the specific doctrines of Nicaea—e.g., the specific relevance and virtues of trinitarianism—as part of his argument. Regarding my second concern, it would be interesting to have Jardine engage with some of the recent writing of Karen Armstrong who argues persuasively that the virtue that the author makes central to his solution, compassion, is an important virtue in all of the major world religions. Nevertheless, Murray Jardine’s reflections are an invaluable contribution, giving readers attuned to cultural history, contemporary politics and Christian faith much to think about.

### Part 3: The Christian Response to the Moral Crisis

The final two chapters and the conclusion of Jardine’s book can be dealt with more concisely. This material comes after the author has made his argument; this concluding discussion is a practical coda in which Jardine says he will “examine closely how the biblical conception of human agency does place moral limits on human creativity” (235). Otherwise put, this section turns to the arena of concrete practice, an arena wherein Jardine says that he wants to display “an ethical concept of speech-based place” which he links to biblical notions of “places of faithfulness” (235). Jardine initially provides some further discussion of “place” in terms of the biblical tradition and stalwarts like Calvin and also briefly develops ideas about interesting “place”-related topics such as apprenticeship, ritual and narrative. But the main elements of this final discussion are focused on very concrete matters such as the need to redesign cities, to re-construct work life and move toward a new social order. Such concrete matters are part of a program to re-establish Christian communities and Christian life grounded in an ethic of unconditional love.

Jardine’s practical program for the redevelopment of communities and the revitalization of an ethic of love strikes this reviewer as a breathtaking challenge to readers. However compelling this book’s case to address this challenge is, such a challenge is likely far more daunting than Jardine appears to recognize. Those who have in the past attempted to persuade powerful economic interests involved in community development (the real estate and construction industries, along with the banking and advertising interests that support them) have generally failed.<sup>8</sup> It perhaps would be a most worthy and practical follow-up project for Jardine to study the history of attempts to restructure, according to humane values, our communities in order to identify the causes of past failures and learn how to avoid them in the future.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Although John Stuart Mill was clearly a champion of the individual’s freedom, there has been a tendency, even among political theorists, to overlook the significant role Mill assigned, in rare but important instances—but for the purpose of protecting freedom for all—to the placing of legitimate limitations upon not only an individual’s actions but even his words. In this sense, he might well be regarded as a precursor of reform liberalism.

In 1859, Mill published his *An Essay on Liberty*, which remains to this day, at least in the mind of the present reviewer, the most impressive formula ever designed for protecting, by a proper balancing, distribution, and limiting of both social and political powers, the freedom of the individual from not only an excessive exercise of the powers of government but, also, from the less recognized and, in his judgment, more subtle, and therefore more threatening, forces and manipulations effected by majority opinion. His formula, as I have paraphrased it and as it emerges from my reading of the sum of caveats and considerations he provides in his essay (I’ve capitalized those concepts to which he gives special and thoughtful attention in explaining his formula), can be, succinctly but comprehensively stated as follows:

The GOVERNMENT or SOCIETY of a CIVILIZED COMMUNITY can property intervene COERCIVELY in the affairs of a MATURE and MENTALLY COMPETENT member of that community only when the ACTIONS, WORDS, OR INACTIONS of that individual threaten to cause SERIOUS, DIRECT, AND REASONABLY AVOIDABLE harm to OTHERS.

A proper understanding of this formula and the balances it attempts to strike between an individual's freedom and justifiable coercive limitations of that freedom (the latter, for Mill, substantial but still the exception rather than the rule) requires a thoughtful reflection on his entire, roughly one-hundred-page essay. Unfortunately, Mill's social/political philosophy has often been unappreciated, often because ignored, by those who take issue, as I do, with some of his more epistemological, metaphysical, and theological thoughts, and thereby the socially and politically practical "baby" has often come to be thrown out with the more abstract and (although not insignificant in itself) not-directly-relevant "bathwater."

However, in his earlier *TAD* essay, "Some Implications of the Political Aspects of Personal Knowledge" (v. 34, no. 3 [2007-08]), Richard Allen's abrupt dismissal of Mill appears to be for quite different reasons. Allen provides valuable insights into the inadequacy of rules and laws deemed to provide sufficient guidance for human behavior entirely through their explicit and simple formulations. But, on page 12, he unfairly refers to Mill's articulation of a rudimentary formula for a free society in Chapter One of his *Essay on Liberty* as an example of such a simplistic endeavor, not seeming to realize that Mill did not intend this to be an adequate statement, but one that required the remaining four chapters of his treatise to develop, as thoroughly as possible, the tacit implications of freedom, resulting in (as I've attempted to demonstrate by my above paraphrasing of these implications) perhaps, the most nearly adequate formula for social and political freedom ever articulated.

<sup>2</sup>New York: Harper & Row, 1973.

<sup>3</sup>Christopher Hayes, "The Twilight of the Elites," *Time*, March 22, 2010, p. 58.

<sup>4</sup>I have cited figures from the E.P.I., even though Jardine provides his own comparably-based figures (i.e., they, too, are based on averages and also bracket out averages for those in the poverty range), because Jardine's figures, calculated by the Institute of Policy Studies and reported in the November 2002 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly* (p. 46) are at least five years older. However, it is interesting that during the half-decade between the height of the economic "bubble" and its bursting, the ratio between the pay of the average wage earner and that of the average CEO changed from 1:411 (according to the I.P.S.) to 1:275 (according to the E.P.I.). With unemployment figures mounting toward the end of that period, one might speculate that an increasing number of lower-paid wage earners had transitioned into the unreported range of those receiving less than a minimum wage.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid*, p.102. I have bracketed the word "equality" to indicate that it is a replacement for the author's word in the text, "inequality," which he recognized as a typographical error when I called it to his attention.

<sup>6</sup>See Walter B. Mead, "Will as Moral Faculty" in *The Ethical Dimension of Political Life* (Francis Canavan ed., [Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1983]).

<sup>7</sup>Book 7. See also James L. Wisner's treatment of *perialog* in his "Philosophy and Human Order," *The Political Science Reviewer*, v. II, Fall, 1972, pp. 137-161.

<sup>8</sup>The impressive model of community design created by the brilliant Swiss architect, Le Corbusier, for Chandigarh, the then-new capital of the Punjab, is perhaps a major exception. Interestingly, here we have an instance of an architect, although doubtless influenced by his own native Christian culture, designing for a populace dominantly Hindu. However, my own cautious assessment of the chances for successful community planning in accord with the unquestionably laudable principles laid out by Murray Jardine, has been influenced by not only my study of numerous unsuccessful attempts within our own society but also by my own unsuccessful efforts over a period of several decades, from both a seat in local government and in my role as citizen, to persuade local developers, zoning commissions, and planning boards to curb urban sprawl, to implement development impact fees, to allow for green areas, to reverse the trend away from sidewalks, to provide for more neighborhoods that are situated around cul du sacs, and to promote front porches, hiking and biking trails, and community centers. Even an effort to persuade local air and print media to provide forums

to apprise citizens of the relative merits and disadvantages of larger vs. smaller communities, to engage their opinions, and to follow this up with an electoral referendum to inform government officials of their constituents' preferences, was constantly thwarted by the managers of the local media, who felt their advertising revenue would be threatened by even discussing these issues.

**continued from p. 18**

## **Notes on Contributors**

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# Political Theory and Political Theology: A Response To Mullins And Mead

**Murray Jardine**

**ABSTRACT** Key Words: Polanyi, Poteat, Habermas, Lubac, Gunton, von Balthasar, epistemology, orality, literacy, communications media, liberalism, capitalism, Enlightenment, Christianity, Trinity.

*The author responds to reviews of two of his works, eventually extending the analysis of both books to argue that Michael Polanyi and William H. Poteat have, in their epistemological and phenomenological theories, articulated what amounts to a conception of the Holy Spirit in non-theological terminology, but that this conception needs to be more explicitly theologically informed to be refined.*

I would like to thank Phil Mullins and Wally Mead for their reviews of my books, *Speech and Political Practice* (SPP) and *The Making and Unmaking of Technological Society* (TS). I find many of their criticisms quite valid, and in fact some of the issues they raise are ones that have occurred to me since the books were published. I will respond first to a couple of specific criticisms made by each and then to some more general issues raised by both reviewers. I will next use these general issues as a springboard to relate my discussion back to ideas found in both Michael Polanyi and Bill Poteat.

## **Communications Media, Greek Philosophy, Christianity, and Social Transformation**

In his review of SPP, Mullins raises an extremely important question about one aspect of my analysis. After summarizing my discussion of the effects of various communications media on human consciousness, he argues that my treatment of the new electronic media is too brief and oversimplified. In retrospect, I think this criticism is entirely justified. My discussion notes that some of the earliest writers on oral-literate differences, such as Walter Ong and Marshall McLuhan, thought that the new electronic media would break down the intensely visual orientation brought about by print literacy and bring about a “secondary orality” which would share some features of pre-printing press “primary orality” but would also be different in certain ways. But then I dismisses this argument and, drawing upon more recent theorists such as Neil Postman, argue that the electronic media produce an even more intensely visual orientation which results in a relativistic irrationalism as opposed to the objectivist rationalism produced by print literacy. (My argument, briefly, is that Ong and McLuhan based their theses on the effects of such media as radio and early, primitive television, which rely exclusively or very importantly on sound, but failed to recognize how television, once it had more fully developed, would become an overwhelmingly visual medium.) I now think this argument is wrong, for at least two reasons: it is too deterministic, and, as Mullins points out, it is simply too early to really know what changes in consciousness and social organization the new digital media might bring about. More generally, I think it would be most correct to say that any new type of communications media opens up a number of possibilities, and which ones a society eventually pursues will depend on a number of factors—none of which is completely determinative, since humans are, ultimately, at least somewhat free. And indeed, I think we can see such a situation emerging with the new electronic media. Enlightenment rationalism, which was clearly heavily influenced by print literacy, is unquestionably dead, no doubt at least partly because of the new media,

but it is not clear what will follow it; postmodernist irrationalism may emerge triumphant but this will not necessarily be the case (and hopefully will not be). It is quite possible that a new model of rationality, less dependent upon the metaphors encouraged by print literacy, could emerge, and that theorists such as Polanyi, Poteat, and Alasdair MacIntyre will be seen as among its pioneers. Certainly if the argument briefly described above—that digital media almost certainly produce a relativistic irrationalism—is correct, it becomes very difficult to explain the fact that many people today, including younger people, do find the work of Polanyi, MacIntyre, and other similar writers appealing.

TS is actually intended for a general audience, and as such inevitably contains some oversimplifications. Nevertheless, I think Mead is correct in pointing out a couple of places where I oversimplify a bit too much. As he notes, the discussion of the Greek philosophers focuses almost exclusively on Aristotle (with just a couple of paragraphs on Plato), which he finds disturbing, since he thinks Plato's philosophy articulates a grounding for morality at least as well as Aristotle's. My heavy concentration on Aristotle is actually just a function of the fact that most of the book is based on the lecture notes from my Introduction to Political Theory course (except, of course, that the book states my own views much more plainly than I ever could in class) and that there simply isn't enough time in a semester to cover both Plato and Aristotle in adequate detail, so I concentrate on Aristotle, because the students find him much more accessible. I think now, however, that (in the book) I should have discussed Plato more extensively, especially because his metaphysical vision can be very fruitfully contrasted with the early pagan, biblical, and modern worldviews.

Additionally, Mead points out that my discussion of Aristotle is potentially misleading in that it may give the impression that he sees human actions as essentially determined. I think this could be correct: in attempting to convey, in a way intelligible to a general audience, that Aristotle has a much more limited sense of human agency than modern people—or what is implied in the Bible—I may have made it sound like he has no real sense of human agency at all. This problem actually goes right to the heart of the central issue in the book: modern people have such an extreme sense of human agency that it is quite difficult, at least without getting somewhat technical, to explain theories, such as Aristotle's, that have a more limited sense of human freedom. (In the introductory class mentioned above, most students initially either get the impression that Aristotle sees humans as determined or else read a modern, that is radical, conception of choice into his discussion of that concept.) But in any case my explanation of will in Aristotle probably needs more detail to be clear.

I think there are two places where Mead does misread me. The first is in his third-to-last paragraph where he says that I overstate the case for Christianity and then elaborates by saying that I am mistaken in attributing the virtue of compassion solely to Christianity. But I am not arguing that compassion (not a term I actually use) is unique to Christianity; rather, a substantial sense of human creativity is. (And this heightened awareness of human creative capacities is very much a doubled-edged sword: it greatly expands human possibilities for evil as well as good.) Of course, I do also argue that an ethic of unconditional love (again, not the same thing as compassion) does logically follow from the biblical anthropology and is unique to Christianity, and that this ethic, however imperfectly realized, has eventually made a dramatic difference in the conditions of life in Western societies: democracy and individual rights developed in the Christian West, not elsewhere.

The second place where I think Mead perhaps misunderstands my intentions is in his very last paragraph where he states that “such a challenge [to create a new, truly Christian culture] is likely to be far more daunting than Jardine appears to recognize.” But I have no illusions about how difficult it will be to bring

about a fundamental transformation in human societies. It took centuries and centuries for Christianity even partly to dismantle the old pagan aristocratic culture, and it will undoubtedly take a very long time to construct an alternative to Enlightenment liberalism. Indeed, in my closing paragraph I hint that such a transformation may never actually take place. Also, the policy proposals discussed in the concluding chapters would hardly, in themselves, fundamentally change the structure of liberal societies; they are only a beginning. But one must begin somewhere.

In this regard, I recently read again *The Great Transformation*, the classic economic/historical work by Karl Polanyi (Michael's brother), and it has probably made me more pessimistic about the possibility of any significant social transformation in the near future. As Mead points out, I make a distinction between a market economy and a market society, arguing that a market economy becomes a market society (that is, one in which markets come to completely dominate social life and even define human self-understanding) only under certain cultural circumstances, such as occurred in the Western world as a consequence of the Enlightenment. But Karl Polanyi argues that a market economy (as opposed to an economy that makes some, but very limited, use of markets) necessarily requires the creation of a market society, because unless market relations become normative throughout society, markets themselves can never constitute the primary form of economic institution. Since, at our present point in history, it is very difficult to see how an economy of any complexity could function without making extensive use of markets, it would seem that a workable alternative to capitalism is simply beyond the imagination of any currently living person, at least in the Western world. This is a truly chastening thought.

## The Nature of Modernity

A more general point made by both Mullins and Mead concerns my evaluation of modern liberal society; both of them understand me to be harshly critical of it, and Mullins even detects what might be called an apocalyptic or millenarian note, that is an expectation of radically new social order rising on the ruins of liberalism. On this basis, he urges a greater appreciation of Polanyi's conception of a free society and liberal government. But my assessment of modernity is by no means negative; in both books, I acknowledge the dramatic improvement in material living conditions, and particularly the spectacular increase in life expectancy, as well as the greater degree of individual freedom, achieved during the modern age. My evaluation of modernity is rather that it is highly ambiguous: its legitimate achievements have been accompanied by disastrous failures. And this is because the modern worldview partly, but only partly, embodies the model of human agency implied in the biblical anthropology (or, as I put it in TS, modernity represents the biblical conception of human creativity in confused and distorted form.) And this in turn is the case because Christian theology and the institutional church never clearly grasped all the dimensions of the biblical understanding of human agency.

One formulation of the essence of modernity that I find quite appealing is that of Jürgen Habermas, who argues that the modern age is characterized by a tension between what he calls *communicative rationality*—that is, what has allowed science, parliamentary democracy, and other positive features of modernity to develop and flourish—and what he terms *subject-centered* reason, that is, the Enlightenment's misinterpretation of the Scientific Revolution as embodied in Cartesian and Kantian rationalism (which inevitably degenerate into Nietzschean nihilism) and which is practically manifested in various forms of reductionism, including both laissez-faire and statist political theories. Habermas argues that communicative rationality has never been

adequately theorized and sets such a theorization as his fundamental task.<sup>1</sup> It might be argued that Polanyi also holds such a view of modernity, although he never states it quite so explicitly. Like Habermas, he makes a distinction between the institutions and practices, found particularly in the English-speaking world, that have allowed science and ordered liberty (or freedom in the positive sense) to flourish, and the reductionist interpretations of these phenomena, characteristic of the continental Enlightenment, which lead inevitably to radical conceptions of freedom and thus to nihilism and ultimately totalitarianism. Furthermore, I believe Polanyi does a vastly better job of beginning to articulate the outlines of a communicative conception of rationality than Habermas, who, despite recognizing its origins in Christianity, ends up with a formulation that contains a distressing level of Enlightenment residue. But ultimately Polanyi has to admit that even English-speaking traditions have been corrupted by the Enlightenment and that classical liberalism is parasitical upon older social traditions and could never provide a workable basis for a free society.<sup>2</sup> And I would argue that this is because even the positive traditions that predate (and were misinterpreted by) the Enlightenment only partly embodied the biblical anthropology and the conception of rationality it implies.

This point leads to the broadest issue in TS, that of the ambiguous nature of the Christian tradition itself. In his third-last paragraph, Mead states that “I simply do not find Jardine persuasive in his attempt to include the specific doctrines of Nicaea—e.g., the specific relevance and virtues of Trinitarianism—as part of his argument.” What he is referring to is a discussion that I now regard as the weakest part of the book. Briefly, I first make the argument that the doctrine of the Trinity contributed crucially to the development of a greater sense of human agency in the Christian West, since it implies that the creative power of God can, as the Holy Spirit, act through human beings. I then argue that its formulation using Greek philosophical concepts may have contributed to later confusion and specifically to the tendency for a sense of human creativity to emerge in a distorted way in modernity. My point here is that in the biblical understanding, reality is dynamic, whereas the Greek philosophers conceived the world in essentially static terms, so that using Greek philosophical terminology, and particularly the concept of nature (actually more relevant to the Definition of Chalcedon than to the original Nicene doctrine itself) could tend to retard and thus possibly distort development of the implications of the biblical picture.

I would now say that this argument is not exactly wrong but is certainly too simplistic, even for a book intended for a general audience. After completing TS, I realized that I needed to read much more extensively in theology and have since done so. As a result of this reading, I would want to make three, admittedly still simple, but I think more adequate, formulations. First, the critical problem for Christian theology has been perhaps not so much its use of the concept of nature as its use of the particularly Greek, and therefore static, conception of nature. TS treats this issue quite crudely, simply discussing the essentially static conception of nature found in Aristotle, contrasting it with the dynamic picture of reality found in the Bible, and concluding that the two are completely incompatible, so that the introduction of the Greek concept into Christian theology was bound to cause confusion. It never considers the possibility that a dynamic concept of nature could be worked out. If this could be done, then, to consider just one possibility, a new conception of natural law, one which could be applied in a situation where the full extent of human agency has been recognized, could be developed. Some twentieth century theologians, such as Henri de Lubac, and in a different way, the Radical Orthodoxy school, have made an argument something like this, and indeed Lubac argues that Thomas Aquinas was in fact working on such a project but was later misinterpreted (which is why his positions are frequently regarded as not greatly different from those of Aristotle).

From this standpoint the problem, at least for Catholic theology, was the tendency of sixteenth-century neoscholastic theology to abandon the beginnings made by Aquinas and retreat to an essentially Aristotelean conception of nature. Lubac argues that the derangements of the French Enlightenment are primarily the result of this failure.<sup>3</sup> Thus, as noted above, my formulation in TS is not entirely incorrect but certainly much too crude.

A second, and I think even more interesting, line of thought has been developed by Colin Gunton, Robert Jenson, and several Eastern Orthodox theologians. On this view, modernity—or at least the negative features of modernity—is primarily the result of the failure of Christianity to follow up on the framework established at Nicaea and develop a truly Trinitarian theology. Beginning as early as St. Augustine, post-Nicene theology tended to focus primarily on the Father, only secondarily on the Son, and hardly at all on the Holy Spirit. Thus Christianity drifted toward a rather one-dimensional picture of God, conceiving of him primarily as creator—and as creating primarily, if not exclusively, through sheer, perhaps arbitrary, will; it tended to conceive of nature in static terms, as the product of a “one-shot” creative act, rather than an ongoing creation; and it was very slow to recognize fully the extent of human freedom implied in the Trinitarian formulation. These tendencies culminated in late medieval nominalism, which, with its proto-mechanistic conception of God’s action, set the stage for the mechanistic ontology that informs modernity, or, rather, that aspect of modernity characterized by Habermas as subject-centered reason.<sup>4</sup> Here again, my “static nature” formulation in TS is correct in some general sense but also quite vague.

A third approach can be found in the work of Hans Urs von Balthasar, who claims that modernity has developed from the failure of Christianity to develop a proper theological aesthetics. Von Balthasar argues that the Greek philosophers properly recognized that Truth and Goodness cannot be understood apart from Beauty and therefore made a start on developing a theological aesthetics. Lacking Christian revelation and therefore an adequate conception of God, however, they made only minimal progress. Early and medieval Christian theology made significant strides toward this goal, but toward the end of the Middle Ages, Truth started to become detached from Beauty, leading eventually to the one-dimensional conception of knowledge characterizing the Enlightenment (and the one-dimensional utilitarian social order characterizing eighteenth- and nineteenth-century bourgeois culture). This repression of the aesthetic dimension eventually resulted in its return, now completely separated from considerations of Truth and Goodness, in romanticism, which in turn led inevitably to the complete triumph, in utterly demonic form, of artistic creativity as the fundamental human capacity in Friedrich Nietzsche (and practically in both the fascist and expressive individualist movements of the twentieth century).<sup>5</sup>

## **Polanyi, Poteat, and the Theological Dimension**

Ultimately, I think the three theories just described could be understood as recognizing different dimensions of the same problem, although any possible synthesis would be far beyond the scope of this essay (or probably even a single-volume book project). But what is important for my purpose—and what has undoubtedly already occurred to the reader—is that several of the issues discussed above are clearly related to ideas found in Polanyi and Poteat.

The most obvious connection with Polanyi is of course von Balthasar’s analysis of theological aesthetics. Appreciation of beauty is central to Polanyi’s conception of truth, and it is quite possible that his

formulations could be very fruitfully applied to theology. But even more intriguing is the possibility that Polanyi's epistemology and implicit ontology could be applied to the question of the Holy Spirit. In SPP, I point out that

it appears that the only test of the validity of our present knowledge is its ability to lead us to new and unexpected knowledge, itself ultimately untestable unless and until it produces more new and unexpected knowledge . . . In other words, the implication of Polanyi's epistemology is that there can be no certain knowledge, at least in the sense that we normally think of certain knowledge, i.e., as something exhaustively specifiable. This is indeed the case, but it by no means implies that there can be no knowledge. In fact, in one sense it is this very uncertainty that allows knowledge to grow; our awareness that we are constantly relying upon pieces of an unsolved puzzle is part of what fuels our intellectual passions.

Somewhat more generally, it will be seen that when Polanyi says that we know more than we can say, and say more than we know, or that we rely on intimations of things we do not yet explicitly know, he is saying that our scientific theories and even our everyday utterances are overdetermined. This is true, but it by no means follows that this overdetermination is irrational or chaotic; indeed, it is our tacitly-grounded faith that it is not that allows us to pursue knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

I then go on to say that "Polanyi is actually making a very large ontological claim here." This "large ontological claim" could indeed be interpreted as an intimation, in non-theological terminology, of the action of the Holy Spirit, as I will now attempt to explain.

The fundamental idea in Polanyi's epistemology, that we tacitly know something before we explicitly know it, indicates that there must be some sense in which we "know" everything, that is some sense in which we are aware, however dimly, of the ultimate structure of reality. That is, in terms of the metaphor used above, that we are aware in some sense that the puzzle we are working on does indeed have a solution. Otherwise we could not trust our tacit acts of knowing. It is important to note that this fundamental experience underlies the Greek philosophical conception of reality as an ultimately unchanging cosmic order. If we attempt to define anything, we can only do so in terms of other things, and if we attempt to define those other things, we can only do so in terms of yet other things. . . so that in order to know anything, we must in some sense "know" everything. But we certainly know all sorts of things, so we must indeed somehow "know" everything. That is, there must be some kind of overarching cosmic structure, encompassing all beings, which we are somehow at least vaguely aware of.<sup>7</sup> It is also the source of the postmodernist denial of order, knowledge, and meaning. Since we don't know everything, we ultimately know nothing. But Polanyi takes this fundamental insight in a different direction: our reliance upon hidden clues and tacit sense of a solvable puzzle implies neither an ultimately unchanging cosmic order nor a meaningless chaos but rather a *process*. In the concluding section of *Personal Knowledge*, entitled "First Causes and Ultimate Ends," Polanyi paints a picture of a universe striving towards some ultimate but very dimly sensed goal:

So far as we know, the tiny fragments of the universe embodied in man are the only centres of thought and responsibility in the visible world. If that be so, the appearance of the human mind has been so far the ultimate stage in the awakening of the world; and all that has gone before, the strivings of myriad centres [of possible achievement] that have taken the risks of living and believing, seem to have all been pursuing, along rival lines, the aim now

achieved by us up to this point. They are all akin to us. For all these centres—those which led up to our own existence and the far more numerous others which produced different lines of which many are extinct—may be seen engaged in the same endeavour towards ultimate liberation. We may envisage then a cosmic field which called forth all these centres by offering them a short-lived, limited, hazardous opportunity for making some progress of their own toward an unthinkable consummation.<sup>8</sup>

Taken out of context, this passage might be (mis)understood as indicating that this process is a rather disorderly, even random, affair. But certainly this is not Polanyi's position. He does see this process as having an order, or logic, to it. But it is Poteat who develops more fully what Polanyi seems to mean by this. Poteat claims that Polanyi's epistemology appears to be trying to articulate a kind of "temporal logic," that is, an ordering of reality in time rather than spatially. Using a phenomenology of speech and hearing (discussed in SPP) Poteat argues that it does make sense to talk about a kind of logic in time. This logic is not the rigid determination of conventional logic (which he argues is derived from visual experience) but rather a logic that sets limits to possible occurrences, even in a situation of infinite possibilities (or what he calls radical or absolute contingency). Poteat then argues that this idea of a temporal logic, which tacitly informs Polanyi's thought but is never explicitly worked out by him, is really what (again, tacitly) lies at the basis of the biblical picture of reality. More specifically, this temporal logic is essentially a more abstract conceptualization of what the ancient Hebrews understood as God's faithfulness.<sup>9</sup>

Here, however, is where Poteat's extension of Polanyi's analysis breaks down, or rather, comes up short. A theologian like Gunton, mentioned above, would say that Poteat has slipped into the one-dimensional picture of God that, as we discussed, has dominated Christian theology since the late Middle Ages, if not earlier, or at least that Poteat has not been able to take the next step and clearly distinguish God as Father or Creator, as Son, and as Holy Spirit. Specifically, the temporal logic that Poteat has identified with God's faithfulness probably corresponds to what in more conventional theological terms would be called the Holy Spirit, but he has not clearly differentiated the action of the Spirit from the action of the Creator. To fully unfold the theological and philosophical implications of Poteat's analysis of Polanyi would require the context of the Trinity.

If this analysis is correct, then we can draw at least two conclusions. First, the concepts developed by Polanyi and later Poteat could be extremely powerful tools for theological analysis; but second, those concepts must themselves be modified, or better, worked out more completely, in light of recent theological research. If this were done, however, some extremely exciting possibilities might be opened up, such as (just to mention a couple) articulating the concept of the Trinity in a way that would be intelligible to modern (or postmodern) people and developing what I above referred to as a dynamic concept of nature.

Obviously such a project is vastly beyond the scope of this brief response. But I hope I have been able to at least demonstrate how the weakest part of my analysis in TS could eventually point toward some tantalizing theoretical possibilities—a very Polanyian/biblical result.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>See Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. Jeremy Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971); *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 2 vols., trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985); and *The*

*Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Boston: MIT Press, 1990).

<sup>2</sup>Polanyi's main discussion of these issues is in *The Logic of Liberty* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1951). See also the very helpful analysis, which examines the evolution of Polanyi's political views, in Struan Jacobs and Phil Mullins, "Faith, Tradition, and Dynamic Order: Michael Polanyi's Liberal Thought from 1941 to 1951," *History of European Ideas* 34 (2008): 120-131.

<sup>3</sup>Lubac's most important work, at least with regard to this issue, is probably *The Mystery of the Supernatural* (New York: Crossroad, 1998). This book, originally published in 1965, is actually a revised version of *Surnaturel*, originally published in 1944 and yet to be translated into English. See also John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle: Henri de Lubac and the Debate Concerning the Supernatural* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005). Milbank is the best known theologian in the Radical Orthodoxy school. The best introduction to Radical Orthodoxy is probably James K. A. Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy: Mapping a Post-Secular Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004).

<sup>4</sup>See Colin Gunton, *The One, the Three, and the Many: God, Creation, and the Culture of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) and *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, 2nd ed. (London: Clark, 2003); and Robert Jenson, *Systematic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). The best introduction to the debate within the Eastern Orthodox tradition is probably Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (New York: St Vladimir's, 1997), originally published in 1957.

<sup>5</sup>See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, 7 vols. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), originally published 1961-67; see especially Volume 1.

<sup>6</sup>Murray Jardine, *Speech and Political Practice: Recovering the Place of Human Responsibility* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1998), p. 63.

<sup>7</sup>See Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), especially pp. 125-130.

<sup>8</sup>Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 405.

<sup>9</sup>See William H. Poteat, *Polanyian Meditations: In Search of a Post-Critical Logic* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1985), especially pp. 50-132. See also my discussion in *Speech and Political Practice*, pp. 103-126.

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## REVIEWS

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Gerd Gigerenzer. *Gut Feelings: The Intelligence of the Unconscious*. New York: Penguin Books, 2007. Pp. viii + 280. ISBN 978-0-14-311376-8 (\$15.00, paper).

Michael Polanyi's well-known observation, "We know more than we can tell," serves as an epigram for Part I of *Gut Feelings*. It is an appropriate use of the quotation, for this book, by the director of the Center for Adaptive Behavior and Cognition at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin, who attempts to articulate what that "more" is. Gigerenzer calls it intuition, gut feeling, or hunch, by which he means "a judgment that . . . appears quickly in consciousness . . . whose underlying reasons we are not fully aware of, and . . . is strong enough to act on" (16). His goal is to uncover intuition's hidden rationale in order to "understand when intuitions are likely to succeed—or fail" (19). He does so in two steps, the first of which is by offering an extended description of what he calls "unconscious intelligence." In the second step, he applies those insights to five different domains (recognition memory, decision making, health care, moral behavior, and social instincts) in order to uncover when intuition works and when it does not.

While the book may be formally divided into two sections, there is considerable overlap. Overall, Gigerenzer's argument consists of three main points. The first point is that intuition operates by means of "rules of thumb," i.e., heuristics that enable fast action (18). Gigerenzer identifies several different heuristics over the course of the book. One of them is the recognition heuristic, which suggests that when offered a choice between two items, one should choose that which one recognizes. For example, when German students were asked to identify which city was larger, Detroit or Milwaukee, more of them did so correctly than did American students. Gigerenzer explains the better performance of the German students by noting

that they were more likely to have heard of Detroit than Milwaukee, thereby inferring it was the larger of the two cities (7-8). Put differently, their judgment represented an intuitive leap based on name recognition.

A second heuristic or rule of thumb is what he calls "take the best," a heuristic that builds off of the propensity of people to base intuitive judgments on a single reason (or at most a few), thereby excluding information rather than gathering more (this heuristic also bears affinities with a heuristic Gigerenzer calls "less is more"). For example, Gigerenzer and his associates studied dropout rates in 57 Chicago schools. After gathering information on eighteen variables such as SAT scores, demographic information, and support systems, they identified the actual dropout rates. They then set about testing two different strategies for predicting the dropout rates of two schools. They set up one computer to perform a complex multiple regression analysis of all of the clues. They programmed a second computer to sort through clues and make a prediction when the first clear difference between schools appeared. They found that a strategy of "take the best," i.e., stopping when a clear difference first appeared, did a better job of predicting actual dropout rates than the complex analysis—and did so after considering on average three clues, rather than all eighteen (83-84).

Gigerenzer identifies several other heuristics as well. One is what he calls the "gaze heuristic" that applies when playing baseball and says to "Fix your gaze on the ball, start running, and adjust your running speed so that the image of the ball rises at a constant rate" (11). Another is "tit-for tat," the rule of thumb that says that in a relationship, it is better to be kind first, remember the last behavior of the other person in the relationship, and imitate it (51). Still another is the "imitation heuristic," i.e., to do what one's peers do (191).

Gigerenzer's second main point is that these rules of thumb make use of the evolved capacities of the brain such as language, recognition memory, object tracking, imitation, and emotions. Here it is important to note that Gigerenzer acknowledges that these capacities have evolved in response to *both* natural selection *and* the environment (58-59). Thus cognition is, for him, always embodied in both bodies and society and thus "one will not understand human behavior by studying either cognition or the environment alone" (79). Another key point is that an evolved capacity can be used in multiple ways. Take for example the gaze heuristic used by baseball players. While it builds on capacities for maintaining balance while running, for tracking objects, and for making finely-tuned adjustments between visual and motor input, it did not evolve for playing baseball. Its more likely evolutionary origins lie in hunting, as humans learn to track and kill prey for food (61-63).

Gigerenzer argues that rules of thumb not only make use of evolved adaptive capacities, they are themselves adaptive for at least two reasons. The first is that one feature of our environment is uncertainty, a corollary of which is that optimal solutions are often out of reach, even when problems are well-defined. In such environments, simplifying strategies like "take the best" actually work the best (79-92). Another reason that rules of thumb or intuitions are valuable is that logic has its limits; it cannot go beyond explicit information and is therefore blind to the particularities of content and culture, as well as environmental structures that reinforce some behaviors over others (103). One example of this failure of logic that Gigerenzer discusses is the sentence "We invited friends *and* colleagues." According to Gigerenzer, strict rules of logic would lead one to conclude that the invitation was extended to people who are both friends and colleagues, whereas people intuitively (and correctly) infer that the invitation went out to two different groups of people, those who are friends and those who are colleagues (98).

Gigerenzer's final point is that we can identify both those times when we should rely on our hunches and when we should not. Take, for example, the rec-

ognition heuristic by which German students were more likely than American students to identify Detroit as a larger city than Milwaukee, a case in which less knowledge is more. Gigerenzer and others have found that this effect disappears the more one knows (119-124). The heuristic, "take the best," is better than complex analysis in those circumstances in which one has to predict what would seem to be a murky future with little information. In situations where one must explain the past, or the future is fairly clear, or when large amounts of information are available, "take the best" does not do as well (151). Likewise, the imitation heuristic works in relatively stable environments where little feedback is available and mistakes can be dangerous (218).

Along the way, Gigerenzer connects his analysis to many features of everyday life, such as explaining the mechanics of advertising's emphasis on brand recognition in light of the recognition heuristic (126-129). Nor is he afraid to do more than explain. At times he suggests ways to alter the social environment in order to make best use of the possibilities and limits of intuitive judgments. For example, he tells of how emergency room decision-making was improved significantly by developing a simple decision tree based on "take the best," which recognizes that less information is sometimes more (169-178).

This analysis of intuition certainly resonates with Polanyi as it admirably and consistently argues that cognition (mind) is embodied and embedded in bodies, as well as natural and social environments. What Gigerenzer adds to Polanyi is grounding these perspectives in the latest psychological research. While Gigerenzer's goal is not to defend Polanyi, his analysis certainly reinforces the conviction that Polanyi was, in many ways, ahead of his time. Unfortunately, Gigerenzer refers to Polanyi only in this epigram and therefore, like many who know this "sound bite," he misses the fact that Polanyi is concerned with much more than intuition. It could be an interesting and potentially fruitful exercise to explore how Polanyi's epistemology might enrich this work.

Overall, Gigerenzer accomplishes what he promises to do. He provides a largely persuasive account of intuition along with an analysis of when it is appropriate to trust intuition. Gigerenzer does this, as well, with a degree of clarity not often seen in works of this sort. The book should therefore be accessible to a wide audience. The biggest weakness of the book is that sometimes the evident enthusiasm may trump more careful analysis. One wonders, for example, if all of the heuristics discussed are as discreet as Gigerenzer's language indicates, as "less is more" and "take the best" often seem to overlap. One is therefore left wishing for a bit more conceptual clarity, as well as more insight into how intuition can be trained. It would also be interesting to explore how work on intuition relates to work on wisdom, much of which is also being done at the Max Planck Institute. Nevertheless, the book makes this intriguing line of work available to non-experts and contributes to a richer understanding of epistemology, anthropology, and morality.

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Robert E. Innis. *Susanne Langer in Focus: The Symbolic Mind*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009. Pp. xvi+ 278. ISBN 978-0-253-35278-1 (\$65.00, cloth), 978-0-253-22053-0 (\$24.95, paper).

If the quality of an academic book can be judged by the density of underlinings and marginal notes it inspires, then my copy of Robert Innis's study of Susanne Langer would merit giving the book a grade of A+. To be sure, I am a fan of Langer's thought, but hardly an uncritical one. Much more than most authors, Langer has provided me with stunning, memorable insights, but at other times her writing seems murky and convoluted. Innis's perceptive commentary has augmented and sharpened both my appreciation and my much more limited criticism of Langer's accomplishments in philosophy.

Innis examines Langer's leading philosophical writings in chronological order. He especially emphasizes the ideas developed in *Philosophy in a New*

*Key, Feeling and Form* and the three volumes of *Mind*. By pointing out persistent themes and shifting emphases in Langer's intellectual development, and by casting light on some of her murkier passages, Innis provides persons investigating her works with the sort of assistance one might expect from a map and a flashlight. However, just as a map cannot wholly ease the passage over difficult terrain, and just as illumination of an overgrown swamp will not create pastoral beauty, so even Innis's expert guidance cannot transform the journey through the jungle-like areas of Langer's writings into an easy stroll in the park.

Lest I leave the reader of this review with false impressions, let me emphasize three things. 1. The study of Langer's thought is worth the effort involved. 2. Her ideas both overlap and helpfully extend Polanyi's work. 3. Innis does much more than merely paraphrase Langer's philosophy; he interprets its significance within the context of twentieth century philosophy. Let me deal with this last point first.

Langer was the translator of Ernst Cassirer's *Language and Myth*, and Innis on a number of occasions points to the seminal influence of Cassirer's study of symbolic forms on Langer's thought. "Langer, like Cassirer, wanted to show how the world *at every level* is accessed, projected, and interpreted through the construal as well as the construction of signs and symbols"(4). Langer's work of interpretation, it is crucial to understand, is not simply carried out at the levels of language and culture. She is particularly interested in the interpretive aspects of what Polanyi termed the tacit dimension. Cassirer and Whitehead, to whom she dedicates two of her most important books, each bore witness to themes of fundamental importance for Langer: process (act), pre-linguistic experience, and the linked reach of abstraction and symbolism.

Langer wrote a text on symbolic logic, but her philosophical accomplishments have little to do with the sort of logical or linguistic analysis and the empiricism that have characterized so much Anglo-American philosophy in the twentieth century. "Symbol and meaning makes man's world, far more

than sensation,” she claimed (Langer quoted by Innis, 32). Innis points out, however, that in many respects Langer’s thought is best interpreted as a continuation and extension of the thought of classical American philosophy. He particularly compares her thought to the ideas of Peirce and Dewey. He also foregrounds (one of Innis’s favorite terms) the semiotic aspect of Langer’s philosophy and comments on how it relates to many contemporary theorists, including Deacon, Lakoff and Johnson, and such interpreters of Langer’s thought as Rolf Lachmann, William Schultz, Donald Dryden, and himself in earlier writings.

*Susanne Langer in Focus* is primarily an exposition of Langer’s work rather than a critical reconstruction of it. Sometimes Innis signposts his possible disagreement with Langer through such phraseology as “Langer contentiously claims that . . .” Occasionally, he is more explicit in his criticism, but he typically does not go on to construct superior alternatives. His focus is on what Langer claims, not on going beyond Langer. He disputes Langer’s reliance on Donovan’s theory of the festal origins of language (see 54-55 and 218-219), and he suggests that her reliance on Charles Morris’s classification of signals and symbols as species of signs tends to replace her functional analysis with a reified account of meaning (see 39 and 97).

While I would acknowledge the danger Innis points to in the latter case, I would also note the importance of reified signals and symbols in Langer’s thought: stop signs, sirens, and lightning as examples of *signals*, and words, propositions (discursive symbols), and works of art (image-based presentational symbols) as examples of Langer’s two varieties of *symbols*. The sort of conception that Langer claims is the mark of human consciousness is dependent on our indwelling and utilizing the reified conventional objects that comprise a culture. As Innis notes, Langer “speaks of the function of words as carving out and fixating objects, thus giving them a defined status and allowing them to maintain their identity across situations and perceptual occasions” (220; see also 112 and 133). Object and process each have a crucial place in Langer’s theory of meaning; I am unconvinced that

“signal” and “symbol” need to be replaced as terms.

Innis is a reliable and perceptive interpreter of Langer’s philosophy; his book is an outstanding, sophisticated accomplishment. In the balance of this review, I will turn, all too briefly, to several ways his book helps us see how the philosophical visions of Langer and Polanyi reinforce, call into question, or augment each other (point number 2 above). I will try to avoid replicating the comparisons and criticisms I have made in my article on Polanyi and Langer in *Tradition and Discovery* 36:1.

First, Langer’s understanding of logic as “a relational structure” (see volume I of *Mind*, 84, quoted by Innis on 157) correlates nicely with Polanyi’s informal understanding of logic. Innis claims Langer develops “in a very different way the philosophical dimensions of logic without contradicting the main thrust of modern developments in logical theory” (11). In seeking to expand the scope of philosophical rigor (developing philosophy in a new key), she deals with such processes as the logic of sentience, of consciousness, of cultural forms, even as she avoids all forms of logocentrism (62, 256). The correlation with Polanyi’s notions of a logic of discovery or a logic of achievement is evident.

Second, Innis convincingly interprets Langer’s overarching vision as fusing together a philosophy of experience with a philosophy of meaning (254). This also seems like a good summary of where Polanyi’s philosophical journey ends up. There are suggestive parallels between Polanyi’s (and Prosch’s) project in *Meaning* of outlining the different ways meaning is created and Langer’s ongoing project of articulating the many ways humans create and find meaning. Langer thinks dreaming exemplifies meaning creation in its simplest form where there is “no thematic difference between object and meaning” (67; Langer asserts that there is a similar identity in the art work). Polanyi stresses the role of integration in creating meaning. This suggests there is a difference in emphasis when the two are compared: Langer tends to highlight the felt objective presence of meaning when

discursive and presentational symbols are experienced, while Polanyi tends to focus on the creative process of meaning creation within the from-to structure of consciousness. But I think these different tendencies are complementary rather than disjunctive.

Third, Polanyi makes a powerful case for viewing “understanding” as a better term than “knowing” for articulating cognitive depth and for acknowledging the presence of the tacit in all cognitive acts (see *SM20* in particular). Langer sometimes correlates knowing with discursive (language-based) thought, and understanding with presentational symbolism (61). This leads to an intriguing way of looking at cognition. If understanding is grounded in images, in the realm of presentational symbolism, this would explain the reason spatial part-whole distinctions and Gestalts, in contrast to the narrative and logical attributes of discursive symbolism, are of such importance to Polanyi. Some form of presentational symbolism would form the realm of intelligibility, of meaning, to which we attempt to adjust our language so we can say what we mean. Since presentational symbolism is also for Langer the realm of artistic significance, we can see why she regards understanding the arts as crucial for her epistemology. For Polanyi, the basic model of understanding is perception, another variety of presentational symbolism in Langer’s view. Both the imagery of perception and feelings of artistic significance convey the elusive, embodied sense of meaning that forms the basis for existential understanding, which may be contrasted with the thinness of strictly verbal information.

I have barely suggested the richness of Innis’s book. It is worth careful study. It evokes fruitful reflection.

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Kevin Kelly, *What Technology Wants*. New York: Viking, 2010. Pp. 406. ISBN-978-0-670-02215-1 (\$27.95, cloth).

*What Technology Wants* (henceforth WTW) is an ambitious book whose purpose is to help us find our way “to optimize technology’s blessings and minimize its costs” (17). It is a bold attempt to figure out where technology is headed in order to bring humans and their freedoms into a convivial relationship with it and its “wants.” Kevin Kelly, its author, freelanced in the 80s for Stewart Brand’s *The Whole Earth Catalog*, helped found *Wired* magazine in 1992, and in 1994 wrote the bestseller *Out of Control* (one of the three books the producers of the movie *The Matrix* required their actors to read). Kelly, as he reveals in his introductory comments to WTW, has devoted most of his life to thinking about technology and how it might be used to liberate and elevate rather than enslave and eviscerate the human spirit.

WTW begins tracing the origins of technology on earth to reveal that it pre-dates our humanness, appearing in primates and even earlier, and that its present dominance of the planet derives from the same emergent cosmic forces responsible for the existence of galaxies, life, and mind. Then we are introduced to the “imperatives” of technology, i.e., its insistence on existing and playing out its hand. Kelly claims that technology’s large-scale outlines are “pre-determined,” as evidenced by the astounding number of cases of equivalent technologies independently invented (152). He puts his ear to the machinery and listens to its wants, noting that it wants to get smaller, faster, and lighter—all things, he says, it will accomplish “regardless of the social climate” surrounding it, so all we can really do is choose the inevitable, i.e., “choose to modify our legal and political and economic assumptions to meet the ordained trajectories ahead . . . [W]e cannot escape from them” (173). Kelly takes his readers on a journey into the paranoid musings about technology found in Unabomber Ted Kaczynski’s anti-technology manifesto, explores the Amish’s systematically delayed and highly selective uptake of technology, and implores his readers to opt for neither approach, although he

is surprisingly sympathetic with elements of both approaches. His advice is that we get on board emerging technologies early on so we can ride them from the start, training them to yield convivial effects, i.e., effects “compatible with life” (263).

In the concluding section of *WTW*, Kelly discloses the underlying anthropological premise of his outlook on technology: “Our role as humans, at least for the time being, is to coax technology along the paths it naturally wants to go” (269). There are two related and never quite resolved tensions sustained through this book that are discernible in this quotation, tensions that Kelly acknowledges but dismisses as merely temporary: (1) a tension of agency where the presumed efficacy of human intentionality often pulls in the opposite direction of technology’s ever increasing autonomy, and (2) a tension of ultimacy where human invention and deployment of technology to serve human interests often seems to go against technology’s use of humans to serve what it wants. In the few comments to follow, I will try to highlight these conceptual stresses and then bring them to bear on *WTW*’s relevance for readers of this journal.

Kelly’s book orbits around what he calls the “technium,” a word he coined to denote “the global, massively interconnected system of technology vibrating around us” that includes “culture, art, social institutions, and intellectual creations of all types” (11-12), as well as bird nests and beaver dams—an organism of techniques and technologies moving inexorably towards self-awareness. He sees the technium’s evolution as a natural outgrowth of the same forces behind the evolution of life and mind (118-119). It is thus the “seventh kingdom of life,” a self-organizing system of information that has formed its own evolutionary trajectory and has “grown its own agenda” (186), wanting to evolve from simplicity to complexity, from uniformity to diversity, from profligacy to efficiency, from matter to mind, and from mind to an immaterial flow of information (334ff). According to Kelly, human volition operates at the micro-level of the technium, but at the macro-level the technium

calls the shots—our “freewill” is like the jostling of molecules in the wheel whose macro momentum rolls us where it will. The forces of the technium stretch all the way back to the Big Bang, before which actuality was compressed into an absolute uniformity because the infinite density of the original singularity gave no space for difference. The Big Bang was the beginning of a cosmic force seeking the expansion of space for possibility and difference—something both the evolution of life and the evolution of technology are all about (i.e., what they *want*). In fact, technology is the means by which this ancient cosmic force channels into human minds the drive to evolve more possibilities of evolvability (342). Kelly takes what might be called a “technology-eyed view” of the world (17), i.e., a view of the world from the perspective of the seventh kingdom of life and argues that the technium is oriented toward “mindfulness” (328) and de-materialization/disembodiment, noting that our present economic trend away from a material-based industrial economy to a information economy of intangible goods (e.g., software, design, and media products, etc.) is just the latest indicator of the technium’s cosmic path from “it to bit.” The universe is self-organizing for an “irreversible liberation from the ancient imperative of matter and energy” (69).

*WTW* is suffused with Kelly’s endorsement of a “proactionary” approach to, rather than a precautionary hesitance toward, new technologies. He believes the best way to harness a new technology’s gifts to humanity is for us to ride technology with both hands around its neck (262), doing our best to deflect its selfishness in our direction. Kelly’s understanding of technology’s ingress into our lives is, at times, disturbingly fatalistic. For example, he claims “technologies can be postponed but not stopped” (243), that “[t]here are no technologies without vices and none that are neutral” (246), so precautionary prohibitions will only serve to slow down the inevitable, making the endeavor of maximizing a technology’s benefits and minimizing its costs a slower and more difficult process. He admits that of all the spheres of influence on the technium, the human mind “may even be the

weakest” (15). “[O]ur response to the technium should be similar to our response to nature” he counsels. He is alarmingly comfortable conceding that “[w]e can’t demand that technology obey us any more than we can demand that life obey us” (17).

As the title of the book so clearly reveals, Kelly isn’t afraid of the “pathetic fallacy” or the anthropomorphisms it underwrites. This is because the technium has shown him that the line separating life and technology is, like the ozone layer, thinning out. As he says, there “must be a certain equivalency between the made and the born.” In fact, he believes that “[t]echnology and life must share some fundamental essence,” surmising that computers and DNA share an essence not to be found in the materials they harness—whether silicon or protein. Rather, their common essence is found in “immaterial flows of information” (10). And although Kelly notes that the technium doesn’t yet have an idea of self or conscious desires, it has developed tendencies or “wants” through its complex of billions of amplifying relationships and circuits of influence such that it has gained widespread and significant degrees of autonomy, making its trajectory through time and space increasingly independent of the intentions and designs of its human sub-systems. This “ever-ripening superorganism” of which we are a part, is following “a direction beyond our own making,” and we, according to Kelly, should not be concerned about whether to embrace it because “[w]e are beyond embrace; we are already symbiotic with it . . . our choice is to align ourselves with this direction” (187). He suggests that we rely on technology itself to “help us make better choices about how we adopt it” (216). In fact, to reject technology, says Kelly, is tantamount to “self-hatred”, because “[b]y following what technology wants, we can be more ready to capture its full gifts” (188). He has a genius for drawing together a welter of captivating facts and less than mainline theories and spinning them all to support his belief in the good news that ultimately “technology wants what we want” (269).

Devoted readers of Polanyi will likely find this book both enlightening and infuriating. On the one

hand, Kelly’s discussion of how our genes coevolved with our inventions and his observations about the role of language in the development of our minds (26-37) helpfully fill in some fairly large gaps in Polanyi’s own discussion of the role that the invention of language played in creating a lasting articulate framework of thought (PK 388-389). On the other hand, however, I suspect that despite Kelly’s account of the emergence of life and mind sounding familiarly reminiscent of Polanyi’s account of emergent strata of being in the epic process of anthropogenesis (PK 389ff), followers of Polanyi’s post-critical philosophy will struggle with Kelly’s placing of human personhood and its responsible agency in the wake of the technium’s ascension to cosmic sovereignty, reducing human beings to mere “reproductive organs of technology” (296). Although Kelly’s entrancing discussions of the history of convergent discoveries and inventions are recognizably cognate to Polanyi’s speculations about the heuristic function of gradients of meaning and finalistic fields, readers who side with Polanyi’s vision of the indeterminacy of discovery will likely chafe at the necessitarianism in Kelly’s claim that “the conceptual essence of an invention or discovery is inevitable” (143), and that the “technological fate” this portends is something we “should lurch forward in preparation [for]” rather than “reeling back in horror of its inevitability” (173). In spite of recognizing in Kelly’s technium something vaguely similar to de Chardin’s “noosphere,” a notion Polanyi himself called upon to describe the layer of meaning generated by the rise of the human mind and its overcoming of mere subjective interests with universal intent, Polanyians will surely want to challenge Kelly’s ascribing to humans the status of a transitional species and the primacy he gives to the technium, making humans “but an intermediary, smack in the middle between the born and the made” (356) whose mission as humans is to discover their “fullest selves in the technium” (237). Neither will those who align themselves with Polanyi’s vision of a society of explorers immersed in potential thought (TD 91) be happy with Kelly’s subordinating human thought to the technium’s “selfish nature” which he predicts will “increasingly maximize its own agenda” (352),

effectively reducing human agency to just a little above an epiphenomenon of the technium. He argues that we are at a tipping point “where the technium’s ability to alter us exceeds our ability to alter the technium” (197). Whereas Polanyi’s commitment to liberal humanism and his vision of a stratified ontology situate humans at “the top of creation” for their capacity to transcend their “self-centeredness” in pursuit of truth for its own sake (SM 62), Kelly’s transhumanist techno-libertarianism leads him to place humans not at the top of creation nor in the service of truth for its own sake, but in the service of the technium’s *wants*. If we play our cards right and deflect our inevitable technologies into more convivial forms, we might just find that the technium’s wants will include the multiplying of our options of things to want (307-311).

WTW is a must read for anyone interested in technology and in what one of the most influential technophilic voices in contemporary technoculture is saying about our role in technology’s colonization of our lives.

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David W. Long, *Body Knowledge: A Path to Wholeness: The Philosophy of Michael Polanyi*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2011. Pp. 237. ISBN 978-1-4568-7035-5 (\$19.99 pb); 978-1-4568-7036-2 (\$29.99, hb).

*Body Knowledge*, by David Wesley Long, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of California at Sacramento, is unusual. Let me note some of the ways. It is a self-published dissertation in philosophy (not religion or one of the social sciences) and not rewritten since its approval in the 1960s by the faculty at Florida State University, a department which, although it contained Eugene Kaelin and W. H. Werkmeister, was heavily oriented toward Positivism and Logical Empiricism. In fact, one member of

that faculty was a student of Rudolf Carnap, and he nearly refused to sign the dissertation. Also, the book is sometimes critical of Polanyi.

It begins with a lengthy autobiographical Prologue (40 pages, including the annotated footnotes) that provides, among other things, an account of Long’s 20-minute trance/epiphany on the acropolis in Athens, where he felt a call to study philosophy; an explanation of his pedagogy (based on the paradigm of the *Heyokha*, a Lakota word for a sacred clown, and Socrates as storyteller); ten stories he used in his classes; a description of several international conferences he helped plan and in which he participated; and an account of his heart problems. It focuses on Polanyi’s thought rather than how Polanyi’s epistemology may be useful in elucidating and advancing other disciplines, and in that sense and also because it is amazingly lucid, being devoid of stilted dissertationese, it could serve as introduction for those unfamiliar with Polanyi.

Literary profiling to this point, however, is misleading. What truly makes the book special lies elsewhere, namely, in elucidating Polanyi in the philosophical world of his time, and that renders the book valuable even for those already well acquainted with Polanyi. Early chapters deal with Polanyi’s biography (Ch. 1); his theory of tacit knowing and personal knowledge (Ch. 3); and with appraisal, commitment, and universal intent (Ch. 4). Chapter 2 begins to lay the groundwork for the most significant part of the book by sketching the philosophical background of Polanyi’s era. Long identifies Polanyi’s “antecedents” (Karl Popper, Henry Margenau, Wilhelm Dilthey), his “supporters” (Maurice Merleau-Ponty, A. D. Ritchie, Stephen Toulmin, Jacob Bronowski, Norwood Hanson, Konrad Lorenz, Thomas Kuhn, Gerald Holton, Chaim Perelman, and A. I. Wittenberg), and his “opponents” or “competitors” (Ernst Mach, Hans Reichenbach, H. Mehlberg, Bertrand Russell, R. B. Braithwaite, Clark Hull, E. C. Tolman, and Gilbert Ryle).

The remaining chapters (5-10) are the most significant ones, in my estimation. They seek to explain

to Positivist philosophers (doubtless, including Long's own professors) what Polanyi's strange (to them) enterprise is all about and to lay out a justification for it in terms Positivists would understand, even if they did not agree with it. To them, Polanyi was sidetracked into history and psychology, rather than the proper domains of logic and epistemology.

To accomplish these purposes, Long makes heavy use of Polanyi's Duke Lectures (still unpublished, but just now available on the Polanyi Society web site) to construct a "dialogue" (not in the strict literary sense but by using alternating chapters) in which the Objectivists (especially Mach, whom Long regards as Polanyi's main target) and Polanyi engage the fine points of each other's positions on such topics as meaning, truth, the ideal of strict detachment, the bifurcation of experience, discovery and justification, the criteria of theory evaluation, and the presuppositions of science. To deepen the engagement between Mach's conventionalist position and Polanyi's commonsense realism, Long takes advantage of his thorough grounding in both Polanyi's thought and in the mainstream philosophy of the time to expand on and sharpen their sometimes cryptically-stated views and even to construct responses each side could make to the other in the back-and-forth of the "dialogue." This part of the book was unique in my experience and invaluable.

Finally, Long appraises the strengths and weaknesses of both positions, siding often, but not always, with Polanyi. Long argues, for example, that Polanyi can be criticized, especially where he treats Copernicus's thought (in the Duke Lectures and the first part of *Personal Knowledge*) and where he makes the case for theory acceptance, for his "ambiguous use of *predictive content*, for his misuse of the fertility criterion, for his misreading of the development of De Broglie's wave theory, and for his misreading of Mach." Long calls the last item a "caricature." Yet he judges that none of these deficiencies is fatal.

Although I was introduced to Polanyi's work by William H. Poteat at Duke, taught Polanyi multiple times as part of a course in the Philosophy of Science, relied heavily on Polanyi in my own thinking, and wrote about Polanyi in both of my books, I believe Long has helped me, especially in the "dialogue" chapters, to understand Polanyi significantly better than ever before. I wish I had had his book many years ago (but with an index).

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