

NEWS AND NOTES

Tradition and Discovery 48:2

July 2022

The “News and Notes” section of *Tradition and Discovery* includes bibliographic information, calls for papers, meeting programs, and any other items possibly of interest to members of the Polanyi Society and other persons working with the thought of Michael Polanyi. Send materials to Phil Mullins at mullins@missouriwestern.edu

Academic Papers, Blogs, Dissertations, and Publications

Esther Meek gave the Bitar Memorial Lectures at Geneva College on March 16 and 17, 2022. These two public lectures drew on a current book project concerned with philosophy for artistry.

Esther Meek recently appeared on John Vervaeke’s YouTube show that focuses on the crisis of meaning. The show is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dj1Y9ppKluk>.

Walter Gulick delivered the annual intellectual autobiography for the Institute for American Religious and Philosophical Thought in Salt Lake City on June 20, 2022. He entitled his talk “Walt’s Mutt Philosophy.”

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[Polanyiana 2021/1 \(30\)](#) and [Polanyiana 2021/2 \(30\)](#) are recently published issues honoring the life and scholarly work of the late Márta Fehér in Budapest (see the obituary included in the February 2021 TAD [News and Notes](#)). The first issue has English articles and the second Hungarian articles. The two articles noted immediately below are Polanyi-related essays in the English issue.

Dale Cannon, [“The Critical To Post-Critical Shift: What It Means And Why It’s Important.”](#) 57-109.

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to explain what is involved in what Michael Polanyi refers to as the shift from a critical philosophical perspective to a post-critical philosophical perspective as a development taking place within modern Western intellectual culture, and bring to light some of its larger but often unnoticed implications. In effect, the paper is offered as a kind of manual for negotiating and renegotiating the shift to a post-critical perspective.

Phil Mullins, [“Michael Polanyi’s Effort To Rehabilitate Liberalism.”](#) 110-148.

Abstract: This essay discusses elements of Michael Polanyi’s effort to revitalize liberal political and economic ideas in the period before his 1951 and 1952 Gifford lectures. It draws extensively on a 1945 Polanyi proposal for a new journal focusing on liberal ideas

and ideals. But it links the ideas in the journal proposal to similar ideas Polanyi developed both before and after 1945 in published and unpublished writing.

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Wu, Shu-chin and Alan Pope. 2019. "Three-Level Understanding: Recovering Self-Awareness in the Art of Critical Thinking." *Journal of Thought*: 21-37. The authors write that "our approach to teaching the critical reading of texts is inspired by Michael Polanyi's (1959) analysis of logical levels in his small book *The Study of Man*" (25).

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Leonardo Ravier (info@leoravier.com) finished his Ph.D. in psychology at La Universidad Autónoma de Madrid with a thesis "General Theory of Coaching" in Spanish. The thesis is dedicated to Michael Polanyi and Carl Rogers whose ideas are incorporated.

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On June 17, 2022, Tim Simpson and Jon Fennell presented "Michael Polanyi Meets C. S. Lewis: Character Formation and the Epistemological Rationale for Classical Education" at the Society for Classical Learning conference in Dallas, TX. This and other presentations were discussed by conference participants in a breakout session. Here is a link (that may be removed by the time TAD is posted) for the plenary presentation: https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/play/omZLgrXl4q0Jf7onBYFJd7u9dejMBFcgibjHk7yHwRS87YXn9zzToa5-ug4zC_tnn-DOOe8GT1wV9n9J.PaKyujr5L82zhE9n?continueMode=true&x_zm_rtaid=eSxCvmRLRZurCz8gHIK7IA.1655687603559.d1657c0bcb7e636d7652c9c2790aa827&x_zm_rhtaid=187

Jon Fennell's podcast on Polanyi done earlier for the Society for Classical Learning (which now has had 2498 hits--see [News and Notes](#) in the February 2022 TAD) should have stimulated interest in the above conference presentation. Fennell recently prepared a written counterpart to this podcast and this is being posted in various places on the web.

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Tim Simpson and Jon Fennell, "[Epistemological Foundations of Liberal Education for Democratic Life](#)" *The Educational Forum*. Available online May 6, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2022.20AB67276> .

Abstract: This paper explores the epistemological justification of liberal education for all, and of foundations courses for teachers, set forth by Harry Broudy, the paramount voice in philosophy of education during the mid to late twentieth century. This justification, grounded in Michael Polanyi's revolutionary theory of tacit knowing, reveals that such education and preparation, issuing in a capable and confident person, is entailed by commitment to equal opportunity and democratic life.

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Turner, Stephen. 2022. "Naturalizing Kögler." In *Hans-Herbert Kögler's Critical Hermeneutics*. Edited by Lubomír Dunaj and Kurt C.M. Mertel. London: Bloomsbury. 87-102.

Turner, Stephen. 2021. "Bulmer and the Historical Sensibility." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34(11). [10.1080/01419870.2021.1988124](https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2021.1988124)

Turner, Stephen. 2021. "The Cognitive Dimension." In *Handbook of Classical Sociological Theory*. Edited by Seth Abrutyn and Omar Lizardo. Cham, Switzerland: Springer Publishing, pp. 693-725. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-78205-4_32

Turner, Stephen. 2022. "Two Paths from Neo-Kantianism." Review Symposium on David McIlwain, *Michael Oakeshott and Leo Strauss: The Politics of Renaissance and Enlightenment*. *Cosmos + Taxis* 10(1 & 2): 9-17.

Turner, Stephen. 2022. "Unmaking Veblen." Review of Charles Camic, *Veblen: The Making of an Economist Who Unmade Economics*. *Journal of Classical Sociology* 22: 117-123. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468795X211030721>

The National Association of Scholars sponsored a Zoom Discussion titled "Scientific Culture: Has It Changed for the Better?" on June 24, 2022. It featured Stephen Turner and Daryl Chubin and was moderated by J. Scott Turner, Director of the Intrusion in the Sciences project at the National Association of Scholars. This was an online event similar to the Polanyi Society sponsored Zoom Discussion with Turner and Chubin and Ted Brown on March 5, 2021. It used the same short Turner and Chubin essay, "The Changing Temptations of Science," published recently in *Issues in Science and Technology*, to stimulate questions and discussion about the nature of contemporary scientific investigation. This essay and the videotape of the Polanyi Society sponsored Zoom Discussion is available [here](#) on the Polanyi Society website. If you are interested in the discussion in the National Association of Scholars event, you should be able to access a YouTube video [here](#) on the NAS website.

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Martin Turkis II completed his PhD with honors at the University of Navarra in Pamplona, Spain on May 25th, 2022. His dissertation, *Post-Critical Platonism: An Investigation into and Development of the Metaphysics of Michael Polanyi*, argues that Polanyi's epistemological project implies and requires a Platonist metaphysics. The abstract is below. He is currently working on publishing the project as a book.

Abstract: Michael Polanyi, Hungarian-British chemist and philosopher, is perhaps best known for his post-critical epistemology which posits necessary personal and tacit coefficients as fundamentals of all knowing. Polanyi coins the term post-critical to describe a philosophical orientation that takes as its point of departure the fiduciary nature of all knowledge. In so doing he rejects absolutely the critical orientation, characteristic of modernity, which takes methodological doubt as its foundation. For a post-critical thinker, then, methodological belief is fundamental and doubt, although it plays an important role, is secondary. Despite his just epistemological renown, I argue that Polanyi's central purpose is metaphysical and therefore

propose to investigate his metaphysics in more depth than has been done to date. I contend that his metaphysical realism ought to be interpreted as a Copernican Realism, a position I put into dialogue with three contemporary forms of realism which span the analytic/continental philosophical divide: *Ontic Structural Realism* as proposed by James Ladyman, *Object-Oriented Ontology* as put forward by Graham Harman, and the Neo-Aristotelianism/Contemporary Hylomorphism of such thinkers as Anna Marmodoro, Robert Koons, William Simpson, etc. Furthermore, I develop certain concepts derived from Polanyi's epistemological work further than he himself did, concluding that in the final analysis his position is essentially Platonic. I therefore propose a Post-critical Platonism that affirms a tripartite metaphysics:

1. A metaphysical hierarchy differentiated by Eleatic (i.e., causal) power exercised by the entity (in Polanyian terms, its production of indefinite future manifestations).
2. A flat ontology of comprehensive entities comprised of subsidiary particulars, harnessed by/in the joint meaning of the entity. Given the interchangeability in Polanyi's work of *entity* and *meaning*, I maintain that his position implies that *to be is to mean*.
3. A hierarchical mereology that describes the relations between subsidiary particulars and the joint meanings that constitute all comprehensive entities.

To exist, then, is to partake of the structure of the comprehensive entity and therefore to be comprehensible. This structure can be further analyzed in terms of the hierarchical mereology. To exist thus necessarily exercises causal power, the potency of which determines the given entity's rank on the metaphysical hierarchy. I further refine Polanyi's concept of the comprehensive entity, proposing that it telicly harnesses its subsidiary details, thus incorporating them into its being, in order to realize its *telos*. In achieving its *telos* it makes its causal impact. In its harnessing action, the comprehensive entity acts as a formal cause; in the realization of its *telos*, it is a final cause. I also investigate the topic of universals in Polanyi's corpus, concluding that they are best construed as a type of comprehensive entity. I argue that this, taken together with the Platonic affirmation (made by Polanyi himself) of the existence of uninstantiated universals, outlines a post-critical Platonist position that rejects the Two Worlds Theory often taken to be part and parcel of Platonism. My analysis includes a comparison of the theories of concept acquisition found in Polanyi, Plato, and Aristotle. Following Lloyd Gerson, I conclude that the best way of confronting our experience of *sameness-in-difference* is to postulate Platonic Forms which metaphysically ground the actual natures of entities found in the world *as well as* the Aristotelian universals which are the fallible mechanism by which we track such natures. All this takes place through an *anamnetic* recognition (as proposed in Plato's *Phaedo*) that I explain in terms of Polanyi's epistemology. This position with respect to Forms and universals is very close to the antique Neoplatonic synthesis of Plato and Aristotle. Additionally, I propose a subclass of Forms dubbed *Primordial Forms*. Such Primordial Forms – Limit, for example – are those Forms which are necessarily instantiated in any possible world that includes a material stratum.

Recent Zoom Discussions

Since the posting of the February 2022 TAD (48:1), the Polanyi Society has sponsored the following Zoom Sessions:

- “Michael Polanyi and C. S. Lewis’s *The Abolition of Man*”—February 5 and February 12, 2022
- “The Intersection of Michael Polanyi and Carl Jung “—April 23, 2022
- “Michael Polanyi on Belief in Science and Society in 1947 and the Contemporary Crisis of Belief”—May 21, 2022
- “Michael Polanyi, the Basics”—June 2 and June 3, 2022

You can access reading materials posted for these sessions as well as the video tapes of sessions on the Polanyi Society webpage in the section [here](#) with links for materials for all earlier Zoom sessions. If the copy of the video tape on the Zoom cloud will not load, try the copy (same tape) on the Polanyi Society website which is more predictable. Video players have a “fast forward” option that should allow rapid movement through a tape.

[“Michael Polanyi, the Basics”](#) was an online workshop intended to replace the pre-conference workshop originally planned for late May 2022 Nashotah Conference, but this conference was cancelled due to the pandemic. All of the materials for the online workshop are still available for downloading. There were four one-hour Zoom sessions in the workshop and three of these were focused on the following Polanyi texts: *Personal Knowledge*, *The Tacit Dimension*, *The Study of Man*, “The Two Cultures” and “Science and Religion: Separate Dimensions or Common Ground?” The Polanyi essays were posted for the last session as well as relevant pages from the set of Polanyi books for other sessions. Some sessions included PowerPoint presentations that are on the video tape. A ten-page basic Polanyi resources document (covering Polanyi introductions, bibliography, web materials, etc., often with useful links) was posted for the opening session. Although this Zoom workshop was designed primarily for those new to Polanyi (and a number of participants so identified themselves), it also included participants interested in one or another text or session. Hopefully, materials from this Zoom workshop will become a resource useful to a variety of people after the online event.