

The Polanyi Society sponsored four Zoom presentations/discussions on March 5 and 6, 2021. Details about these Zoom events and the links for papers and session recordings are below. To quickly reach the beginning of the recording for the second session each day use “fast forward” to move through approximately the first half of the recording.

Polanyi Society Sponsored Zoom Presentations/Discussions

March 5 and 6, 2021

Friday, March 5, 2021

Is Polanyi's ethic of discovery corrupted in contemporary science?

Stephen Turner and Daryl Chubin with a comment from Ted Brown

Stephen Turner and Daryl E. Chubin, 2020 (Spring). ["The Changing Temptations of Science"](#) *Issues in Science and Technology* 36 (3): 40-46.

Abstract: The ethic of discovery that once governed science has evolved into an expectation of impact. The autonomy and integrity of science are now up for grabs. The changes in science over the past century have outpaced society's images of science, of what sort of activity it is, and of what scientists are and do. Today's question is this: have these changes also outpaced science's capacity to assure its integrity and quality?

Session Recording on Polanyi Society website:

<http://polanysociety.org/ZOOM-MAR21/5Mar21-Turner-Chubin-Barnes-2-zoom-sessions-recordings.mp4>

[*The Relevance of Sigmund Koch's "Millian Hypothesis" and Polanyi's Understanding of Commitment to Social Psychology*](#)

Collin D. Barnes

Abstract: Sigmund Koch transforms an assertion made by John Stuart Mill into a question, asking, “Can the methods of natural science, ‘duly extended and generalized,’ be ‘adapted’ to the ‘backward’ studies of persons and society ...?” He notes how “[e]ntertain[ing] such a hypothesis responsibly is no light matter,” and that social scientists have avoided the “ravages” of the

question by “reinterpreting” it “as a priori truth.” This paper presents social psychologists’ responses to the field’s replication troubles and political homogeneity as contemporary examples of the problem Koch’s “Millian hypothesis” points to, but it then takes up Polanyi’s understanding of commitment to show how such a framing mischaracterizes the situation. For psychologists who hold natural science modes of knowing as foundational, the extension of its methods to persons and society is *not* the reinterpretation of a hypothesis whose fruitfulness could otherwise be tested, but the establishing of an interpretative framework that defines how the world is seen. Thus, for Polanyi, the rub with a field like social psychology is not its failure to test what, properly understood, is a hypothesis, but its commitment to a vision of reality that, postcritically considered, is mistaken.

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Saturday, March 6

Object-Oriented Ontology and Michael Polanyi’s Post-Critical Thought

Martin Turkis

Abstract: Michael Polanyi espouses a realism that has inspired some spirited debate among scholars of his work, most of which was produced roughly 20 years or more ago. Since that time, however, new trends in realist thought have arisen in both analytic and continental circles. I attempt in this paper to bring Polanyi’s philosophical work into conversation with the contemporary continental realism known as Object-Oriented Ontology as it is theorized by philosopher Graham Harmon. In so doing I conclude that while the epistemology associated with Object-Oriented Ontology is problematic and in need of a dose of Polanyi’s insights, OOO (as it is commonly referred to) is full of rich material that might be of help in fleshing out a more systematic metaphysics compatible with a Polanyian epistemology.

Session Recording on Polanyi Society website:

<http://polanyisociety.org/ZOOM-MAR21/6March21-Turkis-Gulick-2-zoom-sessions-recordings.mp4>

Michael Polanyi and the Relation of Fields to Discovery and Problem Solving

Walter B. Gulick

Abstract: In the last seven pages of *Personal Knowledge*, Polanyi introduces the idea of a generalized field to illuminate how through tacit integrations persons are guided toward solutions or discoveries marked by intellectual rightness. But how well does the attractive power of a field fit with the attractive power of a solution? How do Polanyi's notions of imagination, intuition, and beauty, as contributors to discovery, relate to fields? And what of dual control: might the language of fields more cogently describe cosmological relations than the language of levels and a stratified universe?

Comments on Walter Gulick's Paper

Jon Fennell

Session Recording on Polanyi Society website:

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