

## Further Polanyian Meditations\*

by

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Michael Polanyi begins his consideration of whether the premises of science can be known by posing the following question:

Can science be said to rest on specifiable presuppositions, be it on rules of correct procedure or on substantial beliefs about the nature of things? (*Personal Knowledge*, p. 160)

The form of the question taken in context clearly implies that a scientist, alive, sentient, oriented in the world and engaged in the activity of inquiry, is governed by a *practice*, a way of *doing* which may or may not be exhaustively reflected and identified. The very formulation of this implication suggests yet another puzzlement: when and to the extent that the elements of such a way of doing come to be reflected, yielding thereby *explicit* rules of procedure, what is it to which reflection has attended in doing so? Which is really to ask a bed-rock epistemological question: what is reflection; how and by what means is it accomplished; what are our reflective instruments?

Polanyi's question also implies that this same scientist's inquiry is shaped, as he says, by "substantial beliefs about the nature of things" which equally may or may not be exhaustively reflected and identified; and this formulation suggests again the puzzlement over what it is to which reflection attends when it reflects and identifies these beliefs. In other words, we are led to ask, how are we to identify our substantial beliefs about the nature of things? — on its face, an odd-appearing question in the ethos of the Enlightenment where the answer usually would be self-evidently: either one approaches inquiry free of any such beliefs; or one approaches it only in a state of lucidity about them! No third view seems to be afforded by our philosophic tradition.

The "picture"<sup>1</sup> we seem invited by Polanyi's questions to contemplate is that of an inquirer whose very being is, in any ultimate sense, inextricably trammelled within the world's body in the very musculature of his activity

in inquiring, the activity *itself* shaped among many other things: by "rules of procedure" of at least some of which he is, perhaps, unaware and, what's more, of which it may be logically impossible for him to become aware; and by "substantial beliefs about the nature of things" which may be equally elusive.

It is of course not being claimed that there are *never* any "rules of procedure" or "substantial beliefs about the nature of things" of which we are or at least can become explicitly aware — aware antecedent to and as the explicit directives for inquiry. The supposition is rather that there are some "rules of procedure" and "substantial beliefs" of which we are not and may not be able to become explicitly aware; yet that *these* "rules" and "beliefs" actually guide inquiry; and finally that, even if we have become aware of them, this awareness was arche-genetically achieved only "after" unreflected but productive *inquiry* and then only by our noticing, in reflection, after the fact, what "rules" and what "beliefs" we recognize to have been implied in our actual *doing* of the inquiry. The very notion of unknowable rules of procedure is largely alien to our philosophic tradition regarding such matters. The introduction of such a conception into the interpretation of our feats of scientific knowing not only raises questions about methodology, especially about second-order accounts thereof; it raises questions, too, about the nature of logic, i.e., the form of the connectedness of things in the processes of thought, hence about the nature of mind — and by implication, about the nature of the body and its relation to the mind.

If then, there are "rules of procedure" and "substantial beliefs about the nature of things" of which we cannot or at least do not know and, in any case, may not/cannot/need not know prior to the beginning of inquiry, then two striking inferences may be drawn. First, the concepts 'rule' and 'belief' are doing duty largely unfamiliar in our philosophic tradition. Second, the "picture" of an inquirer's way of being in the world in his activity of inquiry, classically formulated for the Enlightenment by Descartes' *Discours de la Methode*, is implicitly under drastic revision. For that picture, taken strictly in terms of its own logic, is the paradoxical one of an inquirer divested of all previous beliefs, speaking and writing no language — hence without a culture — and armed before the fact with explicit rules of procedure (!), therefore disentangled from his own being in the world in his inquiring activity.

As I appear to myself moiling amidst the words you have just read, embrangled here in my own inquiry, immured it seems by the intractable stuff of my native language, with its complex history, its dense plaiting of verbal roots and its rich plexuses of metaphorical intentionalities, dragging me this way and that, and not suffering itself to be more than provisionally, tentatively and partially unpacked, in order that I might reflect upon knowing, being and reflection, *while I am in the very midst of my activity of knowing, being and reflecting*, the Polanyian picture strikes me as much closer to the mark than does the Cartesian one.

But there is another picture in view of which we may establish our relation to Polanyi's question. We may depict a speaker/writer using words and in using them giving form to concepts in the texture of their over-

lapping-intersecting nexuses. The "logic" of *this* picture will lead us to ask: How is Polanyi using concepts such as 'assumption,' 'presupposition,' 'logic' ('logical'), 'belief,' 'valuation,' 'rule,' 'method,' 'fact' ('factuality'), 'procedure,' and the like? We must, I think, assume that any attempt to construe their force in the terms laid down by the received philosophic tradition will confuse or mislead us.

Our interest in this question arises from the realization that Polanyi's explicitly stated attack upon the regnant view of the nature of scientific knowing — indeed all knowing — is less radical, less obviously "non-trivial" (in the received philosophical sense of this expression) and less broad in its general philosophical import than the "criticism" being accomplished in his often quite unwitting innovative use of the above concepts. It is in fact one of the achievements of *Personal Knowledge* that it intimates a different "logic," an alternative picture of our knowings and sayings, so that in its light we can appreciate how there can be this difference between what a writer *knows* he intends to say and what he "intends," but in a different sense, to say. And I do mean to claim that what he *knows* he intends and what he "intends" in a different sense are both his intentions, albeit the force of 'his' and 'intends' will vary in the two cases. Indeed, it is one of the goals of these meditations to show that the consistent tacit logic informing even Polanyi's unwitting feats of conceptual innovation is a function of the specific mode in which he is mindbodily made present to the world as he actively shapes and is shapen by the language which begins to form the text of *Personal Knowledge*, himself sinewed into and innervated by its metaphorical bonds and vectors, toward the text's peculiar comprehension of its own constituent particulars. For example, to take a crushingly obvious case, an author appears very differently in his text, if, say, "I have found" is substituted for "It is found."

This means that in *explicitly* examining the actual procedures of scientific inquiry and *doing so while using the above concepts in novel ways*, concepts such as 'logic,' 'belief,' 'valuation,' 'rule,' Polanyi is at the same time *tacitly* fashioning an alternative picture — albeit all unwitting — of the way a scientific inquirer, namely, himself, sees his relation to the world as he brings that relation into reflection; and at even a "deeper" tacit level, an alternative picture of the way the inquirer is *in* the world "behind" his acts of inquiry is being expressed in the very reflection whose medium is *these* concepts used in *this* way. From this will perhaps begin to emerge an importantly different view of the way in which knowing and being are implicated with each other in the actual knowing and being of Michael Polanyi as these appear in the text of his book.

Now all this entails that Polanyi in writing the book *Personal Knowledge* is "borrowing," "putting on," "taking up," relying upon the grammatical, syntactical and semantical resources of the English language together with much else; that insofar as he *relies* upon these, he *assumes* them, they are *assumptions* for him. Further, we may say that in a different but non-trivially analogous way he *relies* upon, he *assumes*, that is, *takes as his own*, the explicit arguments which he formulates and which he in turn, having taken them as his own, assumes, that is, takes for granted, relies upon these arguments as the ground of still others. And again, he states

and in stating relies upon, that is, he assumes, takes for granted, lays claim to as his own the explicit premises on which these arguments are grounded. Finally, and most important for the argument at this juncture, he *assumes*, lays claim to, takes for granted, relies upon his own mindbodily being in the world *in the particular way afforded him by the metaphorical intentionalities of the very language which is the instrument of his reflection and in which he is entangled as he writes*. Tacitly, at the deepest conceivable level, Polanyi takes for granted, relies upon, *assumes*, dwells in his own way of being mindbodily in the world as he is linguistically shaped and entangled in the very words he is in the act of writing down. This is the *ground* of his whole enterprise. This is where he could not help but "stand" as he first sat down to write, pen in hand, with a particular working repertoire of English words at his beck.

There ought to be nothing either unfamiliar or controversial in such a claim. You and I are not in the world in the way that a stone is. We are at once both distanced from and sinewed into the world as a stone is not. As we and our world are being reflected into being in us, we simultaneously both *have* and are *in the midst* of a picture. The structure of this picture is expressed in "language": in the style of our movement; in the bearing and mein, the timbre and mood of either our erect or of our recumbent bodies; in the pitch and the color of our voices; in the key, the tempo and phrasing of our gaits; in the resonance and the hue of our glance; in the pace, the diction, weight, momentum and metaphorical intentionalities of our speech.

If, then, a man at once invariable both *has* and is *in the midst* of such a picture — if, that is to say, he both *has* and is *in the midst* of an audial picture in hearing Mozart's G Minor Quintet, a proprioceptive or haptic picture in practicing a motor skill, an olfactory picture by virtue of an orientation to an odorscape, a *praxis* in "knowing how to go on" — then his knowing where and how he is and his being where and how he is are *radically* connected: opposing sides of a single coin. The one is a reduplication of the other. Upon this connection he relies, it is the bed-rock "assumption" of his existence.

Polanyi's own *implicit* "assumptions," then, including that "assumption" which is his own mindbodily grounding in the world as he generates and reflects the question about the premises of science, suggest that the structure of his way of knowing is a reduplication of the structure of his way of being in the world. For Polanyi then a theory of knowing must be inextricably implicated with a theory of being. And this is so since knowing, hence coming to know, hence seeking to know are all things we have been *doing* both before and after reflection because we are alive, sentient and — usually — oriented in the world. Knowing (and this not one but many sorts of thing) is merely a special class of human activity subsumed under the larger class, viz., the complex repertoire of ways of humanly being in the world. Our account of our knowings must therefore express and retain this bed-rock, irreducible logico-ontological reality else it will generate all manner of dualisms which in practice we will find to be quite incredible. And yet because this reality is itself the very radix of knowing-being or of being-knowing, it is meta-problematic, to use Marcel's coinage: that is, the

ground of reflection is finally opaque to reflection.

My acts of seeking, coming to know, accrediting, holding, and upholding my knowledge in the world, then reflect (indeed, quite exactly, they are reflections of, that is to say, they are "back-upon-bendings" or "inward-curvings toward") my hitherto unreflected acts of living in the world.

But before going ahead let me return to my reference above to Polanyi's implicit "assumptions"; some of which, I have claimed, are embodied in therefore implied by what he *does*, and are therefore grounded in his mindbody; another of which is the very actuality of his mindbodily being as such. In taking these up he "lays claim to" what he *does* and to what is therein implied; in being and in persisting in being alive, he lays claim to his own actuality.<sup>2</sup>

I have placed the word 'assumption' between double quotation marks as a warning. Very often an assumption is taken strictly to be the sort of thing which is only "made" or "taken up" or "claimed" in the mind and therefore not in the mindbody; and what's more, it is taken, once made, to reside *in* the mind explicitly, that is, in the manner of a proposition that we could readily utter; in other words, as our picture often has it, an assumption is *in* the mind and even if not in fact reflected, at least readily reflectable. The picture also has it that the move from "reflectable" to "reflected" does not depend upon a mindbodily act.

This warning seems appropriate, since we shall find that Polanyi places the word 'assumption' in such novel logical environments as to give it a logical force very different from that which it usually has in the received tradition.

Indeed, it is well that we early on draw a further inference from my suggestion. This claim about the "assumptions" grounded in Polanyi's bodymind as he is thinking-writing *Personal Knowledge* implies no less that my oriented bodymind in the world as I read it is simultaneously also making assumptions. As I am just now mindbodily oriented to my emerging argument, reflecting it into being by means of the medium of my words that are in my "memory," in my "mind," in my "ear," in my "hand" and in the tip of the ball-point pen with which I am just now writing down words in full view of my "eyes," I am *now*, and was earlier when reading the words on page 160 of *Personal Knowledge*, mindbodily and therefore *a fortiori* in some sense *bodily*, making assumptions, by the very act of "taking up" existence in the world. In short, it implies that my own mindbody, is an assumption which I take up and rely upon and is "present" even if only tacitly in my words, for me as I write and for you as you read.

This further means, of course, that one of the theses of these meditations bears reflexively upon its own formulation on these pages in these words. As I articulate it in my words, embrangled in their metaphorical intentionalities in virtue of which I both *have* and am *in the midst of* a picture, I at once make a comment upon this phenomenon and instantiate a particular case of it.

To be more concrete, all this implies, for example, that it would certainly be legitimate and sometimes may be logically demanded that we say of the structure of a physical skill that some of its particulars, whether gross or fine-grained, stand to others of its particulars in a way analogous in

certain respects to that in which assertions stand to assumptions when the latter are the logical ground of the former – whether these are tacitly held or explicit.

Doubtless it will be rejoined that this is a mere analogy and not an illuminating one at that, since one cannot literally say: "Muscles make assumptions." Indeed, so. Given the complacency that quite naturally attends our invocation of the too neat distinction between literal and figurative meanings in a presumably familiar and unproblematic language-game, and taking the bare words, "muscles make assumptions" in the context which, without alternative directives, they will have by default in the common-sense discourse of modernity, it is difficult not to acquiesce in this rejoinder.

However, if what is underway in Polanyi's thought is a largescale, even if rarely an explicit, re-arrangement of concepts in order that we may think post-critically about our knowing and being, then we must discover how to fit the words, "muscles make assumptions," into a new context, an alternative picture: one in which this conceptual re-arrangement, hence this new way of thinking, will be allowed to occur.

Therefore I shall claim that as certainly as the component particulars of a motor skill do "hang together" and are perceived by us as "hanging together," and jointly mean that skill, they stand in "logical" relations with one another and with the skill as their comprehension. The elements of a skill are *integrated* in the skill. Their mode of hanging together and of meaning the motor skill which they jointly intend as their own comprehension is their logical relation; is indeed, their logic. Surely, if one remarks the marvelous disposition of the body's several parts to the totality which they jointly comprise, then to say: "There is a grand logic to the body," is not to say anything in the least problematic.

Finally, as such an integration this motor skill *supports*, can be the *ground* of the action which depends upon this comprehension. It can, in other words, be the "assumption" upon which the act is based. When therefore I rely upon my mindbodily being in the world as the *conditio sine qua non* of my action, it is the assumption in which the act is grounded. My mindbodily being in the world, itself finally opaque to reflection is my bedrock assumption; nor is this something given once-for-all: static, fixated.

For example, when I am stroking a tennis ball whose flight across the net I have picked up as soon as possible after it has left the strings of my opponent's racket, my whole body from my feet on the ground up flows in one seamless, integral arc through my calves, thighs, buttocks, back, shoulders, arm and hand and into the rackethead toward the point on the court where, as I follow these with my eyes, the flowing arc of the racket and the flight of the ball converge. What you will find immediately above, on this page, is not the *actuality*: "Poteat stroking a tennis ball." Rather (in relation to my act, just now, of stroking a tennis ball in fantasy, which fantasy depended upon words, if at all, in a most equivocal way) you will find the issue of a second-order act: *viz.*, "a written down description of Poteat stroking a tennis ball."

When I stroke a tennis ball, my body and I are in the world, "behind" the

seamless arc which ends in the impact of racket-head and ball and in the follow-through: "behind" the seamless arc as the ground of its integration. But I am able to stroke the ball at all only because I have *disattended from* the way I am in the world "behind" the seamless arc in order to *attend to* the flight of the ball that I may strike it.

The tennis professional from whom I am taking a lesson attends instead to the way in which I and my body are in the world "behind" the seamless arc and to the way I dwell in that arc as I execute the stroke and follow-through. He has disattended from his own being in the world in order to attend to my being in the world. This I can do, if at all, only marginally while stroking a ball. Yet if my mindbody were not able to integrate, quite seamlessly, to my own motor acts the tennis pro's explicit analysis of my stroke — *and, in time, to do so quite flawlessly*, without even vague maxims for how this is to be done, — then tennis lessons would be impossible.

Now, in the light of this example, I want to make the perhaps extraordinary suggestion that between stroking a tennis ball, as just described, and formulating and asserting a theory or devising and stating a description of something in the world there are important analogies that should be remarked. And I would ask you to note immediately that what I have *just* done in asserting the preceding sentence is *itself* the act of "proposing a description of something in the world" — namely, a description of the phenomenon of devising and stating a description of something in the world. What I have just done is to suggest that devising and stating a description, hence *a fortiori* any mindbodily act of speaking or writing down words, is like stroking a tennis ball! Indeed, in the very act of choosing the words I have *just* written down in order to shape the aforesaid description I am already coming to see the relation between the words I am in the very act of writing down and the world which they are being written down "about" in a way dictated by the words that are being written.

What are the implications of this proposal of mine? Had I suggested, for example, that devising and asserting a description of the world were like putting round pegs into round holes and square pegs into square — *and, in saying this, obviously had in mind that the pegs were like my words and the holes were like the world I was trying to describe* — you would be induced to think about the world and my (our) relation to it through language in a certain way; and to have one rather than another picture of my way of being in the world "behind" my words, since I have preferred to any other *this* particular way of describing my (our) relation to the world through language.

Inasmuch as I have claimed instead that devising and stating a description is like stroking a tennis ball, it should be obvious that in the very course of saying this I am both *having* and being *in the midst* of a very different picture of the world "behind" my uttered words. You may also readily guess the kind of pictures I am likely to devise, if you were to say: "Tell me, Poteat, how do you see yourself in the world?"

As then I rely tacitly upon the several parts of my body and upon my integral mindbody as a whole in order to produce the impact of racket-

head upon ball, so also do I rely tacitly upon the grammar, syntax and semantics – the “logic,” if you will – of what I have just said in our mutual native language, in order then to go on to say what *follows* from what I have said (follows in both *follows* from what I have said (follows in both a temporal and “logical” sense) in the setting of what I am at *the same time* in the course of “saying,” viewed in some more global way; viewed, that is to say, from the standpoint of what the “whole” of our conversation is about. So also do I rely tacitly upon my mindbodily apprenticeship to and appropriation of the rules of a formalized system such as logic and mathematics in order then explicitly to deduce valid conclusions from their application. I know “how to go on” with them because I have been apprenticed to a practice: the practice, say, of construing the printed page of a book as a text to be read, not as a design – “Black on White,” say, – to be contemplated.

The tacit component upon which relies any inquiry into our acts of knowing and an account thereof cannot itself be explicitly known *in* that inquiry. The dependence upon tacit components of a given feat of explicit knowing which has issued from a given skeptical inquiry cannot itself be known explicitly *in* that skeptical inquiry. The tacit all but systematically vanishes before explication. Obviously, this kind of complexity exists in *accounts* of knowing, not in *knowing itself*, since the complexity of the reflected exists at all only for reflection. This puzzlement of mine (itself fueled by the Enlightenment dissatisfaction with anything short of total lucidity) over the relation between the tacit and the explicit and over the way to *express the nature of this relation* (as well as my present choice of *this way to express it*) is implicated with our inherited model of what it means for there to be a “logical” relation both between the elements of a *given* discourse and a different relation between one order of discourse and another, “logically” heterogeneous, one. Here it is a question of the many ways in which we might express how it is that things “hang together”: for example, to take but a few cases, we might say that “things” hang together and are perceived as hanging together in the way in which muscles do within the integration of our motor acts; they hang together and are perceived as hanging together in the way in which words in a sentence do; they hang together and are perceived as hanging together in the way that notes in a melody or movements in a dance do; they hang together in the way that ground and figure do for Gestalt psychology; they hang together, too, in the way that premises and conclusions do; and in many other ways as well. And when we undertake to express the way in which the elements in our feats of knowing hang together, it matters very much which of the above ways (or some other) is taken to be the paradigm for a second order account for them. For example, the tension and intentionality embodied in the “hanging together” of ground and figure would seem a far better picture for reflectively expressing the structure of knowing, perceived as essentially an occurrence in time; whereas the kind of hanging together of premises and conclusions as embodied in a logical notation is, at least as this is depicted in the philosophic tradition, a model more suited to expressing the atemporal, “transcendentally deduced” relation among the elements of knowledge which is being described as an



already "accomplished fact."

I should then conclude epistemo-genetically (as indeed also *logically*) that when we view our mindbodily being as an integral totality, embrangled in the temporal thickness of the world, it is the logico-epistemological sense of 'assumption,' the sense, namely, of the philosophic tradition, which is *derivative*, while it is the mindbodily sense which is radical, the sense that my own mindbody is the ultimate "logical" ground and condition for me, the logical matrix in which the derived is rooted and from whose own intentional logic they have their meaning; that in other words our formal, reversible logic is reflected out of our mindbodies and that therefore concepts such as 'cause' and 'imply' could mean nothing to us, if we were not, anterior to their explication in our acts of reflection, both motile and oriented mindbodies in the world.

What I have just claimed is pregnant with my most archaic perplexities and with the most fundamental assumptions which have given rise to them; some buried so deep in the history of my own mindbody as to be quite beyond the reach of reflection, hence of articulation; indeed, some of which, e.g., the several particulars which can be integrated to a motor skill and it to an act, could not by definition achieve a standing in reflection. Yet how can I say this, for how can I "know" it? One of the root "assumptions" which lay buried until it achieved articulation – the assumption, namely, that what I have just said in the preceding sentence concerning my archaic perplexities and the assumptions which issue in them – is the assumption that what the sentence asserts is true. I have given articulate form to a "claim" to "know" things and to "know" of their "logical" connectedness, some of which I am, in this very sentence, suggesting cannot be known. Therefore, if what is being claimed in this sentence is true, then at least part of what is claimed in this sentence *cannot* be true – namely, the part claiming that there are unknowable archaic "perplexities" and the "assumptions" which give rise to them in the history of my mindbody of the existence and the unknowability of which I can claim to *know*. But how can this be? The "logic" of this self-referential sentence, thus disclosed, seems to reduce my claim to absurdity. And yet this disclosure, while deepening my perplexity, does not weaken the hold of the original claim upon my mindbodily being. It in no wise impeaches for me my mindbodily confidence in and sense of the "logical" decorum of my intial utterance of the sentence as I wrote it down at the beginning of this paragraph. Indeed, I want to say that the words of the uttered sentence, so inextricably trammelled with my mindbodily being as, relying upon it, I write it out from within the history and contemporary being of the very mindbody upon which these words "reflect," – the words of the sentence, I say – address themselves to a more primitive appreciation of meaning for my mindbody than the lucid unpacking of the sentence's "logic." Its words satisfy a more radical, a more archaically ontological sense of meaning and decorum in me. And in so doing they express, embody and bear in themselves the compelling sense of their own appositeness, a sense bordering upon necessity, which, as I read my own words, I find elicited from my mindbody which is reading them.

This surdity hopelessly embrangled and implicated at the radix of speech

and reflection will not suffer itself fully to be reflected; but nevertheless it "shows itself." It is this mute but eloquent oppugnancy which will always appear, soon or late, so long as I begin, finally end and, in the meantime, continuously vest my inquiry into meaning, sense, order, logic and speech within my own lively and concretely actual mindbodily activities of shaping and discerning meaning, sense, order and logic; and in speaking. However great may be the impetus in the practice of other methods for reflection to outstrip and disown its prereflective roots, to sublime itself and impute infinite flexibility and reflexivity to itself – subject to the *Gestalten* and "logic" of different pictures, in my above sense – unfailing fidelity to that method which initiates and grounds reflection upon the nature and *arche* of reflection from within my actual mindbodily activities, including reflection itself, will return again and again to this surdity which, while oppugnant to reflection, is reflection's ineffaceable source and antecedent.

The radical truth about our being in the world is then simple, though it is not simply said; since it can be said at all only by means of a feat of estrangement from that simplicity. Only speech, our preeminent human power, which in second order accounts of our doings and knowings can alienate us from ourselves, is powerful enough, this being done, to disenthral us from these sometimes self-estranging pictures.

The "biography" of my mindbodily unity, no less than in the grammatical and syntactical hierarchies of language and speech, is rooted in a hierarchy of forms, structures, orders, systems which are more ancient than my reflective intelligence. It is these forms in harmony which give to my archaic mindbody, even long before it has moved for the first time in my mother's womb, within which her beating heart rhythmically pumps the blood of life through my foetal body, forming itself toward my primal initiation into the very foundation of my first and most primitive cosmos, its growing towards wholeness destined to become a person who will have discerned the meaning in human speech, since even before this it will have indwelt the beating rhythm of patterned and hence meaningful sound. These forms are for me, even *still* for *conscious, reflective, critical* me, archetypically the forms of measured time: tempo, beat, strophe, pulse.

There is then an archaic prejudice far older than I in my prereflective and unreflecting mindbody to indwell *all* form, meaning and order in the world as the kindred of the first order I have known, the order of my mother's beating heart. And this prejudice which is older than I is nevertheless always present, even at this very moment, as the measured beat of my own heart, the pulsing at my temples of my own blood.

Even though therefore these archaic forms which give me a "body" before I am a knowing person do not know themselves, it is only by virtue of them that I am a mindbody which in time becomes the instrument of speech and hence the embodiment of reflected intelligence.

When therefore I make the claim that it is by means of the blind, mindbodily, motoric rootedness of a sense of being myself an *agent*, hence of being myself a *cause* that, learning language, I am given the prelingual infrastructure for acquiring the competent use of the very word

'cause,' I make it as the outcome of the practice of the phenomenology exhibited in the foregoing paragraphs.

If my claims about the assumptions underlying Polanyi's question concerning the specifiability of rules of procedure and of substantial beliefs about the nature of things are *prima facie* plausible, then we should not expect to be able to cash, in the text of *Personal Knowledge*, such concepts as 'induction,' 'deduction,' 'logical anteriority' and the like at the familiar exchange-rate long since established by the philosophic tradition.

In speaking or writing about the world you and I—you, as you listen or read, I, as I speak or write — are inextricably embrangled in the intentional bonds of our mutual native language within the midst of which we meet each other and the world. This language has the sinews of our bodies which had them first. Its grammar, syntax, meaning, metaphorical and semantical intentionality are preformed in the "grammar," "syntax," "meaning," "metaphorical" and "semantical" intentionality of our prelingual mindbodily being in the world which are the grounds of their possibility.

Now notice straight away that *embodied in the words you have just read* is a picture of the way you and I and the world are at once separated and sinewed together. My way of being in the world in the act of writing is both expressed in and formed by the very words I am *just now* in the act of writing. The activity of composing what I come to write is a comprehensive feat of my existent ductile mindbody. What I am on the point of shaping into words — as much for myself as for you — is not arrayed before me in the way we imagine the visible world to be — as if, disembrangled and distanced from me, I have a perspective upon it, can command a view of the whole; as if I might exercise a sovereign gaze over a lucid transaction between the words by *means* of which I shape and the sense that their plaiting together *express*. Rather, it is only through the choreography of words I mindbodily *move into* and *dwell in* as I write that what I mean comes to stand in the world somewhat on its own, exactly as the movements and gestures to which I give myself over cease to be the latent energies and meanings of my mindbody at that fluent moment when they appear as the patent, worldly dance I dance. My lexicon, at once constrained and made potent by the connective tissues of its etymologies, tonic with plexuses of metaphorical tension, dwells in my mindbody as the performance dwells in that of the musician before he has performed it. For me to compose — whether as I speak or write — is *actively* to flow along the mindbodily lines of intention which *is* this living, incarnate, carnal lexicon. When this is accomplished, I begin to have somewhat before me — we begin to have somewhat "between us" — the figure toward which I have all the while been fingering.

On the other hand, you, there, move forth from your linguistically shaped and embrangled mindbodily being in the world in order to dwell in these my written words so as to understand them or to understand them more fully. And because *you* are entangled in *your own* linguistically shaped being, you are drawn *in a certain way, rather than in some other*, into the metaphorical shapings of my written words.

If you and I sculpted our motility in the world, each conforming himself

to the other as in a dance, with music that we sang together as we moved, we should both be in the world in the way we were by virtue of the rhythmic and sonic *picture* — our song — which, as we sang and danced, we would at once both *have and be in the midst of*. There can be nothing controversial about this. As little can there be in the claim that as we speak and hear, write and read our mutual way of being in the world is shaped by the picture we *both* have and are *in the midst of*, embodied in the metaphorical intentionalities of our language.

The picture itself, then, is made of words. The reflection upon the picture, too, is made with words. And the etymological radicals of these words are indissolubly plaited into the roots of our carnal being in the world, in fact, into our incarnation: in movement and flexion, taction and traction, in tension and torsion, in pulling away and pulling together, in conjugation and conjunction, in action and proprioception. This is why language works. Our similar mindbodies conjointly in the world give it the necessary traction.

The torque and valency bonds of the words, with their complex root-systems, used in the original picture above, then in the reflection upon that picture, once-removed, itself a picture, and finally in the paragraph immediately above, again, a picture, bind you and me and the world together in a very different way than any picture would whose language was mainly shaped by a fantasy of a discarnate experience of spectation. And it may well be wondered whether I have not seriously rigged the game against myself in having used the word 'picture' to name the phenomenon I am here describing.

There are many, many words in both what we may call ordinary language, as well as in philosophic discourse, and indeed in the special vocabularies of many intellectual disciplines, which are fundamental: they variously serve to state or allude to the ubiquitous, rudimentary and obvious fact and differing forms of the connectedness of things.

Some of these, to take a few as examples, are: 'form,' 'order,' 'whole,' 'integrity,' 'cause,' 'reason,' 'motive,' 'meaning,' 'gestalt.' Not quite on logical all fours with these, but clearly consanguine with them are 'logic,' 'logical,' 'necessary' and 'contingent.' Yet these latter and their uses will have to be considered alongside the former.

The suggestion that these words belong together in a single class is perhaps surprising. In the best of circumstances, since they are fundamental, and therefore the range of their logical efficacy must be conceded to be very extensive when we deal with them, as I shall, in a rather abstract, generalizing way, that is, without placing them in some actual logical matrices of their familiar uses, such a classification of these words, even if plausible, would seem to be so loose as to be capable of making no clear philosophical point. That, of course, remains to be seen. All I mean to be claiming at the outset is that all of these words — and many others as well — are usually used to express the connectedness of one thing with another, or the coherence of many things together.

If the deliberately vague expressions such as "the connectedness of things" and "hanging togetherness" be authorized, then we shall be able to consider 'form,' 'order,' 'whole,' 'integrity,' 'cause,' 'reason,' 'motive,'

'meaning,' 'gestalt,' as well as 'logical,' 'necessary,' and 'contingent,' in *relative* context-neutrality, thereby to explore the "logical" impact upon their uses as they are subject to the varying logical stresses implicit in the differing pictures operative in the archaeology of our imaginations. How, we will ask, do 'form,' 'order,' 'logical,' 'meaning,' function differently when we are given to hearing and reading their meaning (i.e., recognizing their uses) first in terms of a paradigm derived from an account of vision; and then in terms of one drawn from an account of audition. My assumption is that, if our uses of the aforementioned fundamental words were governed primarily by the logic of a picture abstracted into an *account* of seeing from the unreflected "phenomena" of seeing, the conception of the world that we should have would differ importantly from that we would have, if our uses were governed instead by the logic of a picture abstracted into an *account* of hearing from the unreflected "phenomena" of hearing. Furthermore, I conjecture that our imaginations in the West, increasingly in modernity, have superordinated the visual picture over the auditory one. Finally, I believe that these pictures, competing rather unevenly in our imaginations, have derived respectively primarily from Greek thought and Hebrew thought, and that much of the dissent in our tradition, though rarely wittingly so, has turned around the inclination somewhat to redress the imbalance and to arrest the hypertrophy in our imaginations of the visual picture.

Unpacking the import of these suggestions would, I think, provide us with potent heuristic devices for discerning the "argument" that is implicated with the rhetoric of *Personal Knowledge: Toward a Post-Critical Philosophy*.

## ENDNOTES

\*The following has been excised by a radical surgical procedure from a four hundred page manuscript, *Polanyian Meditations: In Search of a Post-Critical Logic*. It may not have survived the operation.

The motifs which form the armature of these more protracted reflections are my claim that rationality, that is, the "hanging togetherness" of things for us, and logic, that is, the explicit form of the "making sense" of things for us is more deeply and ubiquitously – though inexplicitly – embedded in our ordinary thinking and doing than we are likely to notice. We fail to remark this because when called upon to reflect on these facts we are likely to do so in the light of models – "a picture held us captive" (L. Wittgenstein) – formed by Critical philosophy, beginning with Descartes, which increasingly took mathematics and formal logic to be the preeminent paradigms of the form of the "hanging togetherness" of things and of the "making sense" of things. Against these implicit assumptions of these second-order accounts of rationality in our philosophic tradition I argue that mathematics and formal logic derive from and remain parasitical upon the "hanging togetherness" and "sense-making" that we archaically know within our integral mindbodily rootedness in the as yet unreflected world and in our unreflected thinkings and doings in that world. For it is my thesis that language – our first formal system – has the sinews of our bodies which has them first; that grammar, syntax, the ingenuous choreography of our rhetorical engagement with the world, the meaning, semantic and metaphorical intentionality of our language are preformed in that of our prelingual mindbodily being in the world, which is the condition of their possibility. And I contend that, while this is not the thesis of Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge*, it is the unavoidable implicate of the rhetoric – the language, images and conceptual repertoire – of that book.

As radical in relation to the tradition of Critical philosophy as is *Personal Knowledge*, taken on its face, I believe the "argument" that is implicated with its rhetoric – in the "logic" of its language, the vectors of the intentionalities of its metaphors – is even more archaic and therefore yet more potent. The only thing I find surprising about these claims is that they seem to me at once quite outrageous and self-evident.

I have used this vague word 'picture' quite deliberately but with some trepidation. I want, if possible, to induce you by means of this usage to attend reflectively from time to time, as you read, to the way you find yourself being mindbodily in the world with the words of this text and their meaning. Ask yourself: "What is the gestalt of which I perceive myself to be a part, how would I depict that gestalt, what is the picture in the midst of which I find myself?" For of course it will be part of my argument that one's way of being mindbodily present in the world with the written or printed words of a text, no less than with our second-order, reflected account of our activity of existing in the world, including our activity of knowing, is a function of

the "logic" of this picture. Since the picture has a "logic" it must then have "implications": it will include and exclude possible ways in which meaning might appear and be embodied. Furthermore, I have used 'picture' rather than 'image,' 'concept,' 'model,' 'metaphor,' 'analogy,' and, indeed, many other word signifying a gestalt of meaning, a "shape" of sense, each of which possesses a certain felicity, because I believe 'picture' can comprehend all these other notions while still inviting the most concrete kind of reflection on your part. There are indeed perils for me in this. The obvious affiliation of the word 'picture' with the word 'see' may be a seduction. Perhaps a tactile, proprioceptive or audial "picturing" would serve better, if such could be embodied in the medium of a printed text such as is just now before you. But since I am asking you to *reflect*, to "turn back upon" the way in which you and I are in the world, the use of a *form* – that is, a reflected shaping – of our experience of seeing, is inevitable, it being the sense by means of which we are able most fully to draw away from the primordial fact of our being pre-reflectively in the world. I would willingly, for reasons which will gradually appear, dis sever the word 'picture' from its familiar affiliation with the words 'see' and 'draw' in their everyday use: for example, by speaking of Mozart's G Minor Quintet, K 516, as audial picture; by speaking of my possession of a motor skill like the game of tennis or the art of glass-blowing, as my having and being in the midst of a proprioceptive or haptic picture; by speaking of my orientation to the environment of smells as possessing and dwelling in an olfactory picture – an "ordorscape," as W.H. Auden has wittily called it – or by identifying my "knowing how to go on" when given the series 1-3-5-7 . . . as my "having a picture" – as when we say: "Ah, I've got the picture." (See Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, paras. 151, 179). Clearly, there are important disanalogies among even the above cases. I invite the reader, even so, to remark, then to dwell in and, finally, as he reflects, to rely upon these analogies in order to begin to sense the "logic" of the picture of his own being in the world which he at once *has* and is *in the midst of*.

<sup>2</sup>Speaking in this way about a person's relation to his own being will appear odd to you only if you forget that the endorsement of our existence is not something that can be taken for granted. Various forms of psychopathology – the rejection of some aspect or other of our own sexuality, say – attest to the contingency of our relation to ourselves. Perhaps advanced schizophrenia attests to a refusal of one's own body and through this to a refusal of being in the world. Suicides of a more dramatic and eschatological sort surely suggest that we do *consent* to being, since it is always possible for us to *refuse* being absolutely. The burden of proof, therefore, would rather appear to be upon those who would wish to claim such data are without import for philosophical anthropology, epistemology and a theory of being. When therefore we *assume* – either in the passive sense of "taking for granted" or in the active sense of "taking up" – we are making an *affirmation*, either tacitly or explicitly, whether this be of a premise of thought, the "condition" of an act or the "act" itself of persisting in being from one moment to the next.