

Tradition & Discovery

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In This Issue

Preface	2
News and Notes	3
The Michael Polanyi Liberal Philosophical Association Centennial Commemorative Conference, August 24-26, 1991, Budapest, Hungary: A Review.....	3
Richard Gelwick	
MPLPA Conference Program Excerpts.....	4
Major Articles	
"The Tacit Victory and the Unfinished Agenda"	5
David Rutledge, Walter Gulick, John Apczynski, Doug Adams, James Stines	
"The Problem of Objectivity in Post-Critical Philosophy"	18
Philip Lewin	
"The 'Other' Postmodern Theorist: Owen Barfield's Concept of the Evolution of Consciousness"	27
Richard A Hocks	
Book in Review	39
David Holbrook (ed.), <i>What Is It To Be Human? New Perspectives in Philosophy</i> . Reviewed by R. T. Allen	
Contributors	41
Submissions to TAD	41
Membership Information	42
Notice of Upcoming Meetings	43

The Polanyi Society

Preface

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This issue of *TAD* includes two major articles as well as several short articles and a review. Some of the material generated by the centennial conferences appears this time; expect other things from the conferences to appear in future issues. Not everything of interest, unfortunately, can be squeezed in. If you have not acknowledged your recently received subscription renewal notice, please do so. Annual renewals are due in September; membership information is at the end of this issue. It is regrettably necessary to harp upon the pedestrian matter of dollars and cents because the continued existence of *TAD* in this format depends upon it. Please also pay particular attention to the announcement on page 43 of three upcoming Polanyi Society meetings held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Kansas City. Normally, there is but one meeting of The Polanyi Society at the AAR but in this centennial year three have been put together. The first (the afternoon of November 22) is a joint effort with The North American Tillich Society; it is a symposium focusing on the Polanyi-Tillich dialogue in 1962. Following in the evening is The Polanyi Society Centennial Banquet; the program will feature a three person panel discussing the "tacit victory and the unfinished agenda." This was the same topic treated by a panel (of different Society members) at the Kent State Conference in April 1991. It was that Kent State session which was the germ of the article beginning on page 5. The banquet fee should be 20 to 25 dollars. The Polanyi Society had to guarantee a minimum of 20 participants so hopefully folk will register for this event. Finally, on Saturday morning, November 23, 1990, there is the regular meeting of The Polanyi Society which has for several years been a part of the preliminary meetings of affiliated societies at the AAR. As the notice indicates, the two papers for this session can be ordered anytime before November 15, 1991.

Phil Mullins

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NEWS AND NOTES

JAMES HALL, M.D. of Dallas, Texas, a long time member of The Polanyi Society and active in the Polanyi meetings of the American Academy of Religion suffered a severe stroke on his way to the Polanyi centennial meeting at Kent State University. Due to his condition, we were unable to visit him at that time. For awhile, he was paralyzed and unable to communicate. Raymond Wilken, director of the Kent meeting arranged for Hall's paper to be read at the meeting. James Hall has requested tapes of the meeting for listening. Presently, he is still unable to talk, but he can listen and communicate by motion of his head. Send notes and letters to: James Hall, M.D., P.O. Box 7894, Inwood Station, Dallas, Texas 75209.

Raymond Wilken is working with The Polanyi Society to arrange for publishing the major addresses at the Kent State Centennial meeting. Plans are also being made for publishing of other papers as proceedings of the meeting. Some papers are still missing and needed. In the meantime, the waves of connections and of learning stimulated by the conference continue.

The Convivium Group in Great Britain and Europe are having a select centennial conference this November at Windsor Castle. William T. Scott has been invited to address the group. Because of the site, this conference had to limit its participants. There are three invited lectures, and we will be looking forward to reading them in future *Tradition and Discovery* editions.

The Convivium Group is also organizing an open and residential conference on 'A FRESH LOOK AT THE FREE SOCIETY: THE NEW EUROPE AND POST-CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY' to be held at Florence Boot Hall, The University of Nottingham, Nottingham, England, September 4-6, 1992. Fee inclusive of accommodation and all meals is 85 pounds.

Please send a non-returnable deposit of 15 pounds before February 28th, 1992, and the balance of 70 pounds by July 31st, 1992. Places may be available after February 28th, but they cannot be guaranteed. Checks in pounds sterling payable to

Convivium Conference Account should be sent to: Dr. R. T. Allen, 20 Ulverscroft Rd., Loughborough, Leics. LE11 3PU, England. The topic of this conference is not only timely but also central to Polanyi's philosophy. We hope there will be wide participation.

Allen Dyer and **Richard Gelwick** have been trying to arrange a Polanyi commemorative event in their region this Fall. They are now postponing this event until the last weekend in February or the first weekend in March depending upon available sites and participant schedules. If you have any interest, contact Richard Gelwick at his University of New England address.

The Michael Polanyi Liberal Philosophical Association Centennial Commemorative Conference, Budapest, Hungary

This meeting August 24-26, 1991 was a stellar event. After the richness of the Kent State Conference with so many major figures who had known Polanyi for many years and the variety of Polanyi interest displayed, it was hard to imagine that there could be another experience of similar intellectual and emotional quality. THE MICHAEL POLANYI LIBERAL PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION headquartered in Budapest (address: 1111 Muegyetemi rkp.3.) did an outstanding job of hosting and of organizing this conference, and the conference showed another major achievement in the growth of appreciation and application of Polanyi's ideas.

About eighty persons participated. The MPLPA has about 50 members, and there were participants from England, Poland, Israel, Germany, Turkey, the United States as well. The zeal of the MPLPA is impressive. Within less than two years, they have managed to obtain copies of the Chicago Polanyi archives. They had a large exhibit at the center of the library of The Technical University of Budapest which showed pictures of Polanyi and his family, a chronology of his life and works, samples of his diverse papers, and copies of articles, books, and journals about

Polanyi. The conference opened with this exhibit which was covered by television.

The conference also had a tour of the Budapest of Polanyi. We visited the Polanyi home on a busy but major corner of the business district of Budapest, just a few blocks from the Opera House and within a stone's throw of St. Stephen's Cathedral. At this site, the MPLPA has placed a large marble plaque commemorating Michael Polanyi and his family. We also met with the head of the gymnasium, the "minta" or model school, that Polanyi attended and has had 5 Nobel Laureates among its graduates. We also saw nearly next door the medical school and its laboratories where Polanyi studied.

Repeatedly throughout this conference, the awareness of the fecundity of Polanyi's thought became more real. His thought has been brought out into the main stream of Hungarian society as the new state arises from its over forty years of communist domination. Polanyi's words are eagerly being translated into his native language. Speakers around the table plumbed Polanyi's relevance to philosophy of law, to science, to the sociology of knowledge, to ethics, to pragmatism, to psychology, to medicine and to many other significant areas of contemporary thought.

The MPLPA has quickly established itself as a major leader in the exploration and development of Polanyi's post-critical thought. We anticipate their future with great admiration for the quality of what they have already done. Budapest is truly a magnificent city, and it is a place I hope many of us can go to for study.

Richard Gelwick

[EDITOR'S NOTE: *Below are selections from the program for the August 24-26, 1991 Michael Polanyi Liberal Philosophical Association Centennial Conference in Budapest; the official language for the conference was English.*]

Objectives: The Conference highlights the role of the Central European liberal tradition in the thought of Michael Polanyi and his relationship with other Central European thinkers.

Friday, August 23, 1991: Exhibition of works of Michael Polanyi in the hall of the Central Library of the Technical University of

Budapest. The exhibition was inaugurated by Erzsebet Vezer, historian of literature.

Saturday, August 24, 1991:

Opening Session Welcome from Dr. Imre Hronszky, President of the Conference and Dr. Eva Gabor, President of MPLPA.

Evening Session: Morality and Theology in Michael Polanyi's Thought

Richard Gelwick, USA: "Michael Polanyi and the Philosophy of Medicine"

Terence Kennedy, Italy/USA: "The Impact of Post Critical Philosophy on Science and Theology"

Ahmet Inam, Turkey: "Some Ethical Implications of M. Polanyi's Conception of Science"

Sunday, August 25, 1991

Morning Session Epistemology and Language in Michael Polanyi's Thought

Klaus Allerbeck, Germany: "On the Logic of Personal Knowledge"

Marcel Niquet, Germany: "Wittgensteinian Language Games and Michael Polanyi's Conception of Linguistic Knowledge"

Endre Kiss, Hungary: "Sociology of Knowledge in Michael Polanyi's Thought"

Afternoon Session: History and Law in Polanyi's Thought

Richard Allen, England: "The Limits of Contract"

Lee Congdon, USA: "The Origins of Polanyi's Neo Liberalism"

Endre Nagy, Hungary: "Polanyi and the Law"

Monday August 26, 1991:

Morning Session: History and Law in Polanyi's Thought

Alexander Barzel, Israel: "Neo Liberalism and Socialism"

G. M. Tamas, Hungary: "Austrian Conservatives and Hungarian Liberals"

Eva Gabor, Hungary: "Polanyi in The Moot"

Afternoon Session: Epistemology and Philosophy of Science in Polanyi's Thought

Josef Misiek, Poland: "Polanyi and Kuhn"

Gabriella Ujlaki, Hungary: "The Tacit and the Personal"

Marek Suwara, Poland: "A Polanyian Approach to the Problem of Discovery"

Imre Orthmayr, Hungary: "In Defence of Rationalism"

Closing Session: Meeting of representatives of the British, American and Hungarian Polanyi societies.

The Tacit Victory and the Unfinished Agenda

EDITOR'S NOTE: *On April 11, 1991, at the Kent State University conference celebrating the Polanyi centennial, there was a panel discussion which bore the title listed above. The panel included nine persons whose interest in Polanyi's thought is long-standing; panelists were asked to comment on the relevance of Polanyi's thought to issues and discussions current in their areas of interest. Five of these comments are included below. A similar panel discussion with different panelists will occur at the November 22, 1991 Polanyi centennial banquet held in conjunction with The Polanyi Society meeting at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion (for details, see the announcement on page 43). Additional comment summaries will be included in a future issue of TAD]*

Feminist and Ecological Issues

David W. Rutledge

I believe that the most profitable reading of Michael Polanyi does not consider him a philosopher of science or epistemologist in a traditional, technical sense, though his place in those debates can be approximated, to a reasonable degree, by triangulating from his peers -- the Kuhns, Hempels, Feyerabend, and Lakatoses.

I find it much more interesting to read him as a visionary who, despite *not* fitting neatly into the academic discipline of philosophy, nevertheless presents insights about basic problems that illuminate wide areas of intellectual life. We might say that he was, unbeknownst to him, a kind of seer or prophet, a cultural critic whose fresh reflections on his own area of natural science opened up new ways of thinking about a whole range of issues.

In this vein, I want to speak for a moment about how Polanyi's work relates to one of the popular topics of the day, that is, the post-modernist critique of traditional western values and intellectual standards that has been widely discussed this past year (v. *The New York Times Magazine* on Richard Rorty, December 2, 1990; the *Atlantic Monthly* on "Illiberal Education" among the politically correct, March 1991; John Searle in *The New York Review of Books*, Oct. 1990). I think that there are important ways in which Michael Polanyi can help us see both the value of these critiques, and also their limitations. Intellectuals -- some of them, anyway -- are fascinated today by the end of the "modern age." I like the anecdote told by William Christian, remembering his predecessor at Yale, Robert Calhoun:

At one time nearly forty years ago he had been in Chicago as a visiting professor. I asked him what he thought of it. He said, with an air of surprise and puzzlement, "Those people don't know the Enlightenment is over" (Wm. Placher, *Unapologetic Theology*).

The Enlightenment is over. This has been acknowledged with dismay by those who are worried about the specter of relativism, which always seems to haunt periods of social or intellectual unrest; it has been greeted with shouts of joy by others who have chafed under the rigid certainties and avid conclusions of the “age of Reason” (think of the range from Alan Bloom to camp followers of Derrida). I do not presume to make judgments here about this debate over the end of the Enlightenment, but want to suggest to you one way in which this discussion relates to our Polanyian interests.

Feminist critiques of science are one form of the much broader suggestion that science is a social enterprise, strongly shaped by the context -- personal, social, economic, political -- in which it occurs. (S. Harding, M. Hesse, B. Barnes, historians of science, etc.) The feminist critic argues that the claims that truth must be objective, disincarnate, abstract, clear and distinct, and fully specifiable -- claims that the Enlightenment enshrined after the example of science -- are *not* simply readings off of reality, but social constructions of a particular experience of reality, one shot through with biases of social class, of politics, and especially, of gender. These charges have been elaborated in historical studies which correlate the rise of science in the 17th and 18th centuries with the political role of scientific academies, and with the economic interests of the mercantile class which supported science (see Lindberg and Numbers, *God and Nature*). Can we say, it is asked, that the insistence of science on “free inquiry” was unrelated to the insistence of these groups that they be freed from the oppressive authority of church and crown? The answer to this question is perhaps not as important as the question itself, which opens up the possibility that *thinking* cannot be isolated from our social living and acting in a variety of contexts. This is often called a “Marxist” approach, of course, seeing social forces at the bottom of ideological convictions.

How do we deal with these troubling charges?

Evelyn Fox Keller notes the comment of George Simmel, “the equation objective = masculine is a valid one,” and then describes how the objectivity of science has a gender bias which greatly weakens its authority, particularly for women. Polanyi argued that “science” does not equal “objectivity,” in Simmel’s sense (what Polanyi would term “objectivism”), and thereby provides a way of undercutting the masculinity of scientism, without diminishing the power of science itself. His chastening of science connects in a significant way with the feminist program. It connects constructively because as a practicing scientist, Polanyi seems to have been aware “in his bones,” so to speak, of the social nature of the enterprise. He is never so abstracted from the actual *doing* of science, as many philosophers of science often seem to be, that he makes the mistake of thinking of science simply as a system of ideas. In *Science, Faith, and Society* he gives a convincing portrait of this social rootedness in disciplines of scientific education, professional conferences, refereed journals, team research, and the master-apprentice relationship. And yet he avoids suggesting that scientific knowledge is *determined* by its social character, that it can be reduced to political or economic formulae.

A key to his helpfulness here is his awareness, as a scientist, that reality cannot be restricted to my thinking about it, however powerful that thinking may be in *shaping* our understanding. A typical formulation:

... a scientific truth, when it conforms to reality, gets hold of a truth that is far deeper than its author’s understanding of it (PK,43).

Reality surprises us, it confounds our complacent assumptions, both by refuting our certainties and by confirming our hesitant intuitions in unpredictable ways. The passing of the Enlightenment and the prospect of a post-modern world

hold no terrors for Polanyian thought, for his vision of science and knowledge has already moved to post-critical grounds. I see no reason that his work cannot be illuminating and *corrective* in many areas of the post-modernist debate today, though Polanyi would certainly be ill at ease with much of its public discourse. To me the work of William Poteat, Walter Ong and Wendell Berry illustrates much of the potential here.

The social context of science, represented by feminist criticism, links up appropriately with a related realm within which the implications of Polanyi's work are far reaching, that is, the current revision of scientific orthodoxies as a result of the ecological crisis. I submit that he may help us greatly in correcting our attitudes to nature, attitudes which have contributed to what Bill McKibben predicts is the "End of Nature." Historians and philosophers have begun to uncover the images that have guided our relations with the physical world -- an *anthropocentrism* that reduces nature to a mere stage for humans; *mechanism* that depicts natural process in fully explicit, manipulable images of a quiescent machine; *pragmatism* that argues our only moral imperative is to use nature wisely for the progress of the *human* species. The very notions of objectified nature -- mechanical in form, passive in its essence -- which Polanyi argues against have undergirded the destruction of nature in the contemporary period.

Here is a representative quotation of Polanyi's *alternative* vision of nature, from *PK*:

I have suggested before that in a generalized sense commitment may be acknowledged even at the vegetative level In this sense our knowledge of the normal growth, functioning and being of the organism is an appraisal of its primordial commitments The aphorism that biology is life reflecting on itself now acquires a fuller meaning (363).

Here the focus is on the living, organismic character of nature, and on its actively interconnecting, through its functional commitments, with a wide range of other phenomena. It is a far more dynamic, holistic view of nature than we are accustomed to see.

If we are to re-vision our relation to nature, we surely must discard the picture of science as a technique of control, and move toward an understanding of the connectedness of the human world and the natural. Ecologists now often tackle the environmental dilemma with technology -- which preserves the attitudes which got us into the problem -- or give up western science for superficial postures drawn from eastern religions [the "Deep Ecology" movement, various parts of the Earth First! movement, etc.]. Polanyi's purging of scientism from science has ecological implications, which invite our tracing out.

Reformed Epistemology

Walter B. Gulick

According to Charles Taylor, "Epistemology, once the pride of modern philosophy, seems in a bad way these days. Fifty years ago, during the heyday of logical empiricism, which was not only a powerful movement in philosophy but also immensely influential in social science, it seemed as though the very center of philosophy was its theory of knowledge. It seemed evident that that had to be philosophy's main contribution to a scientific culture" ("Overcoming Epistemology," in Baynes, et. al., *After Philosophy*, p. 464). The power of philosophy resided in its claim to be the adjudicator between knowledge claims which were valid and those which were invalid or otherwise could not support

the advance of science. Philosophers claimed objective validity for their determinations.

Today there are not many who even think of themselves as epistemologists, for many of the traditional philosophical boundaries have been blurred. There are fewer still who believe in a priori knowledge, deducible transcendental foundations for knowledge, or self-evident givens against which philosophical claims may be judged. Now even standards of rationality are often judged to be embedded in cultural and historical contexts which affect the course of inquiry. Most philosophers acknowledge the fallibility of their thought and the finite limits of any philosophical system. What has happened to epistemology over this past half century, the period during which Polanyi published the results of his philosophical labors, to bring it so far from its earlier objectivistic predilections?

By and large, the sorts of changes which have occurred are consistent with the reforms of epistemology advocated by Michael Polanyi. In saying that epistemology is in a bad way now, Taylor is really celebrating the loss of its arrogance and pretentiousness. So do I. Epistemology's claims to objective validity were ill founded and blocked philosophical progress, as Taylor himself has well shown. It would be nice to claim that Polanyi's thought has been widely influential in breaking the hegemony of objectivist forms of epistemology. Unfortunately, there is no strong evidence to support this claim. Rather, the evidence of citations in the literature suggests a more diffuse and indirect sort of influence. One sees fairly frequent reference to the significance of such of Polanyi's insights as the importance of tacit knowing and the personal factor in knowledge, especially scientific knowledge. But typically the references are of a general and vague sort. It is quite rare to find extended engagements with Polanyi's thought on the part of those who do not consider themselves Polanyians. One such appreciative analysis is Drew Leder's recently published study of embodiment, *The Absent Body*. Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge* seems generally respected as a work of substantial insight, yet its imposing bulk, its position outside the mainstream philosophical conversation, and its challenging and even formidable style of exposition have seemingly relegated it for many to that fateful pile of books: "works which I mean to read when I get the time."

Clearly Polanyi's work has not had the broad and popular impact that Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* has enjoyed, even though the latter book is in many respects a derivative work. But the narrower focus of Kuhn's work and the greater accessibility of his writing have made his thought the paradigmatic touchstone for those examining the cultural and historical components involved in scientific change and development. Certainly Polanyi's thought no longer evokes the sort of outrage or rejection it earlier suffered at the hands of some within the Anglo-American philosophical establishment. Paul Feyerabend has for some time assumed the mantle of the *enfant terrible* among historians and philosophers of science. His denial that there is any fundamental distinction between scientific inquiry and voodoo is reminiscent of Polanyi's earlier examination of the coherence of Azande witchcraft, yet Feyerabend ends up with nihilistic conclusions which Polanyi successfully avoids. By now Polanyi seems to be treated as one of the respected elders among contemporary philosophers of science and epistemologists --respected, but not as well known or as fully understood as those of us in The Polanyi Society believe he should be. In order to see how well important themes from Polanyi's thought are faring today, I will conduct an all too brief and impressionistic survey. Let us examine what has happened to four dimensions of his thought which derive from or bear upon his epistemology: embodiment, the tacit dimension, the practices of a community of explorers, and the theory of emergence.

First, theories of embodiment have increasingly assumed a central significance in contemporary philosophy (one is almost tempted to ask: is a new explanatory mechanism, *embodiment*, *emerging* out of previously *tacit* particulars through the cooperative work of a *community of explorers*?). The body was implicated within Polanyi's

thought through his analysis of tacit knowing. In our engagement with the world we rely upon subsidiary skills and processes which are embodied. Moreover, our very engagement with the world entails that we *incorporate* its objects and ideas in line with a literal understanding of “incorporation,” implying an assimilation in the body (*corps*). So embodiment is essential to Polanyi’s thought, even though he does not elaborate greatly on the details of embodiment. Developments in theories of embodiment have been most pronounced in feminist thought and among phenomenologists influenced by Merleau-Ponty. Elaine Scarry’s *The Body in Pain* and Nel Noddings’ *Caring* are examples of feminist works which utilize notions of the body in important, although rather different, ways. Richard Zaner’s *The Context of Self*, David Michael Levin’s *The Body’s Recollection of Being* and Quentin Smith’s *The Felt Meanings of the World* are examples of three works in the phenomenological tradition which advance our understanding of embodiment. But of course it is William Poteat’s *Polanyian Meditations* which in its exposition of mindbodily being most thoroughly works out some of the implications of Polanyi’s notion of embodiment. Two works on embodiment which I think connect to and extend Polanyi’s thought in exciting ways are Mark Johnson’s *The Body in the Mind* and Drew Leder’s *The Absent Body*.

Second, I would wager that in the long run it is Polanyi’s subsidiary-focal distinction and all his work on the tacit dimension which will be recognized as his most creative and enduring legacy to subsequent generations. One finds in the literature many indications of appreciation for Polanyi’s work on this topic. John Searle is one who works from within the analytic tradition toward a conception of a tacit dimension in his book, *Intentionality*, now eight years old. He postulates that humans apply a Network of intentional states to symbols and seek thereby meaningful mental satisfaction. The conditions of satisfaction are specified by the Network of intentions and understood in relation to what he terms the relevant Background of tacit practices, capacities, and skills which define the context of meaning seeking. The one time Searle refers in *Intentionality* to Polanyi, he shows that he does not quite understand what Polanyi means by “subsidiary,” which he treats as if it were synonymous with “unconscious” (see p. 150). Because of his misunderstanding of the subsidiary/focal distinction, he engages in an unnecessarily convoluted way of explaining how we learn the skill of skiing. “As the skier gets better he does not internalize the rules better, but rather the rules become progressively irrelevant. The rules do not become ‘wired in’ as unconscious Intentional contents, but the repeated experiences create physical capacities, presumably realized as neural pathways, that make the rules simply irrelevant. ‘Practice makes perfect’ not because practice results in a perfect memorization of the rules, but because repeated practice enables the body to take over and the rules to recede into the Background” (p. 150). Searle is right in his intuition that we dwell in a skill differently than we focus on explicit rules, but his distinction between Intentionality and the Background does not have the elegance or clarity of Polanyi’s subsidiary/focal distinction. On the other hand, Searle’s work with intentionality has some advantages over Polanyi’s somewhat unsystematic references to purposes, functions, and heuristic powers. For Polanyi, intentionality is implicit within the very conceptuality of the from-to direction of consciousness, but he does not elaborate on how that vectorial aspect is aimed or changed.

Third, an interest in communal practices and the transmission of social lore has been manifest in ways reminiscent of Polanyi in much recent philosophical thought both inside and outside the domain of epistemology. At one extreme, there is the nihilistic thought of Michel Foucault, who sees many communal standards as but the exercise of political control. Even the language of truth is seen as merely a rhetorical exercise in establishing power and maintaining it. Much closer to Polanyi in spirit, although not apparently dependent upon his thought, is Alasdair MacIntyre. In *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* and especially *After Virtue*, MacIntyre sets forth an ethical vision which demonstrates the importance of practices, narratives, and common goods to the establishment of moral communities, communities which do not lay the whole burden of moral decision making upon the overburdened

individual will. MacIntyre is fighting Nietzschean moral solipsism, the bureaucratic individualisms of procedural justice, and liberal autonomy. He borrows from Aristotle in returning to a language of virtues and practices. MacIntyre is as wary as Polanyi is of Marxist ways of imposing rules upon individuals, but perhaps because his primary concern is with refurbishing ethics rather than safeguarding scientific inquiry, he lacks the passion for an individualistic logic of liberty which Polanyi displays. Nevertheless, a good Polanyian will discover that much of MacIntyre's language has pleasant resonances. Listen to MacIntyre's discourse on a practice, for instance: "A practice involves standards of excellence and obedience to rules as well as the achievement of goods. To enter into a practice is to accept the authority of those standards . . . Practices of course, as I have just noticed, have a history: games, sciences and arts all have histories. Thus the standards are not themselves immune from criticism, but nonetheless we cannot be initiated into a practice without accepting the authority of the best standards realized so far" (*After Virtue*, 2nd ed., p. 190).

Finally, it seems to me that the subject of emergence has entered quite extensively into contemporary philosophical discussion, although rarely do I see it discussed in full awareness of Polanyi's analysis of the role of free boundary conditions in the development of new levels. If they understood Polanyi's analysis, I don't think Charles Birch and John Cobb in *The Liberation of Life* or Heinz Pagels in *The Dreams of Reason* would be so quick to discount emergence theories. Rather than utilizing the language of emergence, many discussions contrast "top down" with "bottom up" types of analysis. This presupposes some type of hierarchical view which may well be compatible with Polanyi's approach. Actually, I think there is still a great deal of work to be done in teasing out Polanyi's distinction between conceptual and ontological levels; I see this as an intriguing area for extending Polanyian studies. In his latest writings, Polanyi ceased to refer to the ontological dimension of from-to consciousness, and I think he had good reason to be wary of over-commitment to a stratified universe paralleling our stratified knowing.

In sum, if he were writing today Polanyi would not need to attack an objectivist epistemology. That battle has largely been won; indeed, his thought contributed to the victory. However, the complete vision of Polanyi has yet to be fully explored or assimilated. The Polanyi Society continues to have a significant role today.

Richard Rorty and Michael Polanyi: Is There Truth After Foundationalism?

John V. Apczynski

Michael Polanyi's analysis of the ills of our age is more radical than he is often given credit for. It not only challenges the ideal of impersonal objectivity in knowledge by uncovering its logical incoherence and its impossibility of being achieved in practice. Even more importantly, in my estimation, his insights provide a way of escaping the seductive spell of this impersonal ideal by means of a program of acknowledging our commitments as the fragile grounds for upholding responsibly our limited but adequate approach to transcendent values, including the quest for truth. As a student of Polanyi's thought, I find it gratifying that culturally dominant intellectual fashions of today may rightly be said to have finally accepted the sorts of critique Polanyi was advocating some fifty years ago. Unfortunately, it cannot always be said that they have proved radical enough to have escaped the consequences of the ideal of impersonal objectivity. I believe one of the abiding strengths of Polanyi's thought is that it fosters among his students the ability to make such important discriminations, particularly insofar as these have profound cultural implications.

As an example of the continuing power of Polanyi's position for enlightening our own reflections, I would like to consider the view of our current cultural situation advocated for the past decade or so by Richard Rorty. To begin with I can do nothing but heap unqualified praise for his magnificent exposure of the failure of the enterprise of epistemological foundationalism in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979). In this respect he develops the case against the recent philosophical tradition of the West as a member of the guild, i.e., with the technical mastery that an outsider like Polanyi could not match. The conclusion that Western thought had failed to establish an impersonal, objective vantage point with an uninterpreted access to reality was brilliantly argued in a fresh and philosophically erudite way, even if as students of Polanyi we already would have appreciated this from another vantage point.

In spite of this my suspicions about Rorty's project arose almost immediately when he seemed to find the only alternative to the role of the philosopher as the cultural overseer to be the "informed dilettante" (317). Similarly I was puzzled by the severely limited view of "edification," consisting in nothing more momentous than finding new ways of speaking, which he advocated in its place (360). Were such proposals genuinely radically new alternatives to the ideal of classical epistemology? Or were they simply its dying gasp? In Rorty's more recent clarifications of these initial probings I believe that it can be shown, from a Polanyian perspective, that the latter is the case.

In *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Rorty defines himself as a liberal ironist. By "liberal" he means someone opposed to human cruelty and suffering. By "ironist" he means someone who recognizes the contingency of all fundamental (or what he calls final) beliefs, including one's own, so that the only worthwhile human endeavor is self-creation. No criterion of assessment of any sort is possible, whether for action or for our understanding of nature or for society. Moreover these private and public concerns have nothing to do with each other: the demands of irony and liberalism are both equally valid, but can contribute nothing to each other so must remain "forever incommensurable."

For Rorty, the point of human existence is to "seek consolation, at the moment of death, . . . in being that peculiar sort of dying animal who, by describing himself in his own terms, had created himself" (27). Notice, Rorty does not say who had created himself well, but simply who had the resources to be creative in no more profound sense than

being novel (29). If this adequately describes personal goals, we might suspect that we know why Rorty wants to privatize this: some attempts at creative novelty may be morally perverse. But this is not, in fact it cannot be, Rorty's reason for privatizing. If it were, he would have to admit, he feels, something like a transcendent moral norm accessible independently of any community of discourse. Precisely this sort of claim would be perverse for Rorty. Consequently the only social goal he will countenance is that of avoiding cruelty (65). He accepts the implication that there can be no understanding of "progress" in political life in the sense of a society's becoming more "rational" (48).

In essence Rorty holds that human life is pointless, if this is taken in some transcendent sense, just as social progress is a chimera if it taken be based on some objective conception of justice or the like. Since there is no neutral, uninterpreted stance for anything like a "pure reason" to have a direct access to reality, then all that is left to us is to work out our life's projects within the limited space offered by our historical contingencies. The best we can hope for, in short, is to create ourselves without causing others too much pain.

Now while this portrait of Rorty's recent efforts to edify us lacks his richly detailed and highly persuasive descriptions, nonetheless in its general thrust this does capture what he proposes. Here is where I believe Polanyi's theory of personal knowledge becomes extraordinarily valuable as a discriminating tool. For in light of Polanyi, Rorty appears, paradoxically enough, still to be trapped in the ideal of critical reason. By this I mean that he seems to hold that either we have a neutral, direct, uninterpreted access to reality in order to make *any* claims about the world or, by implication, that we simply give up entirely any claims to know reality because the way defined by critical reason is the *only* way to know it. Those of us who understand Polanyi realize that there is a more radical alternative to this: precisely within our contingent assumptions to which we are committed we have a partial but adequate knowledge of the world.

There is an additional import to this value of Polanyi's theory: because of its wide acceptance, Rorty's position is culturally significant. It is likely that many Western intellectuals will follow his lead in recognizing the exhaustion of the ideals of critical rationality, but since his edifying discourse discerns no alternative they will likewise follow his lead in retreating into the realm of creative subjectivity and limited expectations in the social sphere.

Twenty-five years ago Polanyi pointed to the dangers for culture that an inadequate theory of knowledge could have in "The Message of the Hungarian Revolution" (*Knowing and Being*, 24-39). At the end of the twentieth century he is being vindicated again by events in Eastern Europe. Just as in the middle of this century, Western intellectuals had difficulty in understanding the import of aspirations for freedom in Eastern Europe, so today they need to be reminded again. Consider, for example, Vaclav Havel's recent declaration that our personal self is grounded in tradition and "in that pre-reflective meaningfulness from which culture is born." He goes on to explain:

In this world, categories like justice, honor, treason, friendship, infidelity, courage, or empathy have a wholly tangible content, relating to actual persons and important for actual life. At the basis of this world are values which are simply there, perennially, before we ever speak of them, before we reflect upon them and inquire about them. It owes its internal coherence to something like a "pre-speculative" assumption that the world functions and is generally possible at all only because there is something beyond its horizon, something beyond or above it that might escape our understanding and our grasp but, for just that reason, firmly grounds this world, bestows upon it its order and measure, and is the hidden source of all the rules, customs, commandments,

prohibitions, and norms that hold within it. The natural world, in virtue of its very being, bears within it the presupposition of the absolute which grounds, delimits, animates, and directs it, without which it would be unthinkable, absurd, and superfluous, and which we can only quietly respect (*Vaclav Havel or Living in Truth*. Ed. Jan Vladislav. London: Faber and Faber, 1987: 137).

Here we see full blown an alternative to the collapse of classical epistemological foundationalism, an alternative that Polanyi's epistemology can help us appreciate, understand, and defend, even if we disagree with the particular metaphysical and theological underpinnings of Havel's claims. Being able to identify the differences between stances such as Rorty's and Havel's is one of the continuing contributions that Polanyi's theory makes; supporting those, like Havel's, who uphold the sort of commitment to the transcendent value of truth which can shape history is something that still needs to be done.

Personal Knowledge In Arts

Doug Adams

My first report as fine arts' coordinator for The Polanyi Society ("Implications of Polanyi's Thought Within the Arts: A Bibliographic Essay," *The Polanyi Society Newsletter* (Spring 1975), pp. 3-5) contained references to a few of Polanyi's brief comments on the arts and a few passages in the secondary literature. As the poet of Michael Polanyi, Elizabeth Sewell had produced *The Orphic Voice* (1960) which expressed (through the poems at the back and the text throughout) a Polyanian perspective; and she extended her inquiries through a Polyanian perspective in *The Human Metaphor* (1964).

In subsequent reports in the *Polanyi Society Newsletter* I could point to whole dissertations and theses exploring implications of Polanyi's epistemology for aesthetics or hermeneutics: most notably Carl Phillips Mullins' "Hermeneutical and Aesthetic Applications of the Thought of Michael Polanyi" (Ph.d. dissertation, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, 1976) and John S. Nuveen's M.A. thesis (Pacific School of Religion) which is written in poetry:

A Para-propositional Approach to My Belief
(Offered for Your Perusal and Enjoyment, My Relief)

Michael Polanyi, Poet, in Two Books of His
Provides for Me, I've Found, the Best Resource There Is.

Barbara Bennett Baumgarten continues such significant inquiries in her current dissertation work entitled "Visual Art as Theology: the Development of a Post-Critical Aesthetic for Theology Based on the Epistemology of Michael Polanyi" (Ph.d. dissertation in progress, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley).

Some of these inquiries are aided by Polanyi's own writings about art (e.g., "A Theory of Poetry" from a letter dated 19 May 1953, Gelwick Microfilm Collection of the Non-Scientific Writing of Michael Polanyi, Pacific School of Religion; "What is a Painting?" *American Scholar* 39, Autumn, 1970, 665-669; or *Meaning*, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1975) which they then use in exploring the arts and developing an aesthetics: e.g., Adams and Mullins, "Meaning with the Arts: The Implications of Polanyi's Epistemology for the Arts," *Studia Mystica*, I, 2, Summer 1978, 28-48. What is a more recent development is the use of Polanyian epistemology by artists and art historians in their doing of art or art history. Here the focal attention is not on Polanyi's thought but rather a subsidiary reliance on it in attending to the making or exploring of art. Artist Robert Irwin (introduced to Polanyi's thought by psychotherapist Edward Wortz) has created art revealing Polanyian insights much as Elizabeth Sewell's poetry has done. Irwin quotes Polanyi often as in his book *Being and Circumstance* (New York; Lapis Press, 1985).

My own art historical and art critical work employs Polanyian epistemology to see Polanyian parallels in works of major artists such as Jasper Johns: cf. Doug Adams, *Transcendence with the Human Body in Art: Segal, De Staebler, Johns, and Christo* (New York: Crossroad, 1991). William H. Poteat in *Polanyian Meditations: in Search of Post-Critical Logic* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1985) provides significant grounding for those discerning Polanyian developments in the arts. Both postmodern visual art and postmodern art history show significant developments which Polanyi anticipated. There was a time (during the reign of modernism in art and art criticism) when it was inappropriate to observe the person of the artist as well as the person of the viewer (much less the communities in which they stood) in doing or discussing art. But now the human body and explicit historical subject matter (often explicitly religious subject matter) has returned in abundance in visual art, and art history has become more historical. Such developments reveal our tacit dimensions as artist and viewer in the triadic community structure of knowing and doing which Polanyi revealed.

A summary of my own recent investigations drawn from my book noted above shows how far visual artists are moving in directions indicated by Polanyi's achievement:

Human bodies and biblical subject matter appear increasingly in contemporary American art. This book explores perceptions of transcendence through the human body in the art and interviews of four major contemporary artists. With George Segal's sculptures, one moves beyond the sense of loss still evident in post-modern a/theology and toward a sense of place connected to biblical subject matter and a center beyond oneself. In Stephen De Staebler's art, there is a recovery of relation with religious forms and times of graceful aging, dying, and rising as well as a recovery of the commitment to the dinner table conversation rather than the cocktail party chatter. Through Jasper Johns' art, one perceives post-critical philosophies beyond subject/object and mind/body dichotomies. The reaffirmations of one's own body in art, philosophy, and theology extend to an appreciation of one's relationships with wider communities and the earth as evidenced by Christo's process art which invites pilgrimage to see the world as gift. Human bodies generate a sense of relation. Such art not only exhibits whole bodies (in contrast to modern art's fragmented parts) but also generates family groupings reminding us of relations with others beyond self.

Let me briefly amplify this comment upon the new and Polanyian sense of the body which is evident in the recent work of these contemporary artists. Each of De Staebler's earlier postmodern works featured a fragmented or

emerging body communicating an affirmation of the incomplete individual and his or her relation with the earth. In contrast, the works of modern artists such as Baskin or Golub exhibited fragmented bodies symbolic of the disintegration of person and world. De Staebler's recent *Pieta* (1989) introduces relationship between two figures who merge in ways establishing a sense of place and time missing in much modern thought. Each of many early Segal works featured isolated individuals in lonely surroundings; but his recent works including Abraham's *Farewell to Ishmael* (1987) provide perceptions of family relations which transcend brokenness and affirm the earth. Jasper Johns' art has similarly developed from earlier body fragments and isolated individuals into the full human figure and its progeny as in his most recent drawings of *Seasons* (1989).

Such perceptions of transcendent relations move beyond the connections which Charles Jencks cited as characteristic of early post-modern art: "For the Modernist predicament, often epitomized in Yeats' words--Things fall apart; the center cannot hold--we have the dialectical answer--Things fall together and there is no center but connections" (*Post-Modernism: The New Classicism in Art and Architecture* p. 350).

De Staebler, Segal, and Johns help us perceive not only connections but also relations which lead us to center beyond self and to sense our place and time.

Chaos Theory, William Poteat's Polanyian Explorations and Indwelling

J. Stines

I would like to point to three areas in which it might be claimed in Polanyian fashion that Polanyi said more than he knew and in connection with which his thinking might continue to bear fruit eminently worth harvesting.

The first area relates to the emergence of chaos theory. It seems to me that the relatively new attention to so-called chaotic phenomena or the non-systematic systems generated by non-linear determinism--richly present all around us but until recently ignored and/or masked by abstraction--offers both confirmation and a rich new field of exploration in tandem with Polanyi's thinking. That extremely simple initial conditions in nature can give rise unpredictably to extreme complexity, to novel comprehensions or organizations which are themselves not closed but fraught with, in effect, infinite possibility, is a discovery, if it may be called that, of chaos science which should come as no surprise at all to students of Polanyi. His work had already disclosed or was prescient of much that is now coming to the attention of the theoreticians of chaos, but which was forced upon their attention on other grounds than those which originally engendered Polanyi's reflections. Polanyi's sense that, both ontologically and epistemologically, particulars become comprehended in boundary conditions which are irreducible and inexplicable in terms of their subsidiaries and the laws which govern them was already a plea for attention to non-linearity, but one which the scientific and philosophical community largely tended to ignore just as they ignored turbulence and non-linear equations except when occasionally forced to pay attention, but even then, only to attempt to reduce these phenomena to linearity, or, in short, to ignore them at a new level. So it is perhaps not so much new observation *per se* as it is new attention to perennial phenomena, which we can no longer mask, which underlies a rich new area of investigation and reflection. Chaos science can, I believe, provide an extremely fruitful hermeneutical source for unpacking Polanyi. In turn, chaos

theory desperately *needs* Polanyi since, in spite of the apparent compatibility of the objective pole of its observations with Polanyi's ontological claims, many of its practitioners are still immured epistemologically, however subtly, with the bewitchment of the intelligence by the subject-object dichotomy. Tacitly, mind, in Cartesian fashion, is left out of the non-linear loops that make for resonance between knowing and being and emergence. The resultant mental cramps beg for massage with Polanyian balm.

Another area of agenda for the future: I believe that the work of W.H. Poteat strongly suggests that, far from nearing the end of Polanyi, we have scarcely begun. Clearly, Poteat's work in the post-critical tradition has a life of its own, standing in more than linear relation to Polanyi. Since his *Polanyian Meditations: In search of a Post Critical Logic*, Poteat has published *Philosophical Daybook*; and two more volumes of his essays are in the wings soon, I believe, to be published. The mutually enlightening relationship between his work and Polanyi's deserves and, I expect, will receive much attention in the future.

I take as one example an essay by Poteat entitled "For Whom Is the Existence of Values a Problem: Or, An Attempt to Show that the Obvious Is Plausible." It is an essay which thrusts upon the reader's attention, in a rich and ingenious manner, the ways by which value everywhere and inescapably clings to us as the very vectoring of our being, sinewed and pre-tended in our mindbodily integrity which is the tacit coefficient of all of our sense for the hanging-togetherness of things. For Poteat, by virtue of a kind of recapitulation of the original sin (manifest in our Gnostic hatred of our incarnate existence), we despise our own mindbodily tensedness and orientedness and regard it as a bondage from which we must be free so that we can pronounce freedom itself, and meaning, and value, illusions.

In the correlated theatre of the imagination the thinker is a solitudinous, i.e., disconnected, spectator, observing in the mode of a detached and invulnerable god. From this theatre of solitude we do not even envision an audience to whom we are speaking; and we are oblivious to that power which *enables* us to *claim*, insofar as we make claims, which power itself is descended from the primal, inalienable being-in-the-world which each of us in our mindbodily existence *is*. Poteat makes a novel and powerful case for the affirmation that we live and know from our whole nature which itself prefigures, and is not divorced from, the nature of world. One way Polanyi would put this would be to say that the logic of commitment to standards that arise within us (i.e., which are "self-set") is such that "action and submission are totally blended in a heuristic communion with reality" (*PK*, 386). In this essay on value by Poteat, I receive a new experience of the meaning and force of that passage in *Meaning* (though it is not mentioned by Poteat) in which Polanyi and Prosch claim that "we are addressed by nature to the attainment of meaning, and what genuinely seems to us to open doors to greater meaning is what we can only verbally refuse to believe" (p. 18). I believe that, both in the directions suggested by Poteat's work and in other but cognate directions, there is much more to be done in the field of Polanyi's import for value theory, ethics and culture critique.

That leads me to another but closely related point of departure for future exploration. It seems to me that one concept quite crucial to ethics, the concept of violence, is peculiarly parasitic on the phenomenon of indwelling. If we think of "soul" in an Augustinian way, as orientation, violence will seem to be a negative corollary of ensoulment. Violence seems to have no phenomenological toehold in relation to disensouled bodies or inanimate matter.

That is, the concept that violence is occurring is parasitic upon our sense that the violent phenomena are a violation of something which is being achieved in the victim of violence, something which is irreducible to radically contingent material processes or, that is, to potential energy. Hence, particulars are violated, or are the objects of

violence, only insofar as we take them to be an abode or dwelling place of a reality or a meaning which they are achieving which is irreducible to material processes which are taken to be disensouled. Our post-animistic reductionist mentality has made the very notion, for example, of “violence to the earth” seem, both popularly and to the hard-nosed materialist-technologist- industrialist, the crassest silly superstition. Polanyi’s concept of indwelling gives us an important way beyond that mentality--a way which is much more and other than a mere return to Aristotle, however much it seems to echo him at certain points. To recall Heidegger and Holderlin it seems, both from Polanyi and chaos theory, that it is not only man who “dwells poetically, upon the earth, beneath the sky” but *all* of the actual, which is to say, the *human* world. The concept of indwelling particulars in response to our sense of their promise for, or bearing upon, the future can give new power and comprehension for sensibilities which eco-catastrophe, especially, is forcing into our awareness. We need to exploit Polanyi’s concept of indwelling in that direction. Further, as this comment has already implied, I find Heidegger’s way of thinking about dwelling in relation to building and thinking highly resonant as both promising and fulfilling in relation to Polanyi’s notion of indwelling. For Heidegger our time of need, our sense of homelessness, is descended from a memory of dwelling; and remembering would call us forward into our past and if you will, a re-membering of dwelling. In *this* primal context we build for the sake of future dwelling. Heidegger seems to be saying that if we are going to deal with the real housing shortage we must search anew for the meaning of dwelling. Polanyi and Poteat greatly enrich our efforts to fill-in the portent of Heidegger’s poetry here.<F129M>q<F255D>

The Problem of Objectivity in Post-critical Philosophy

Philip Lewin

In this essay, I wish to suggest a series of parallels between Michael Polanyi's post-critical philosophy and the work of other thinkers. I will use the problem of objectivity to illuminate these parallels, and will try to suggest a way of approaching Polanyi's notion of personal knowledge through treating objectivity through the dual themes of appropriation and passion. This account will reveal what I think is a possible limit of post-critical philosophy, which I will frame in terms of the problem of hegemony. Briefly exploring this limit will allow me to conclude by situating Polanyi's position, as I understand it, with respect to certain currents of postmodern thought.

I focus on objectivity in this essay, since elucidating in what ways it is possible is fundamental for how we understand scientific practice. The question of objectivity, in turn, impinges on how we understand a number of related issues concerning the role and status of science in our culture. Let me mention some of these issues by means of several alternative dichotomies. First, is science to be thought of as providing universal, trans-cultural knowledge, applicable to all humans in all times and places; or is it specific to a particular technological and social infra-structure, culture-specific, and even gender-specific? Second, does science, in some way, "mirror" nature, revealing the "real," that is, essential ontological structures of the world; or is science primarily a sophisticated instrumentality for achieving limited human ends? Third, does the accumulation of scientific knowledge within disciplines indicate "progress," in the sense of both deepening our understanding and also bettering the quality of human life; or is this accumulation simply domain- or research community-specific, reflecting an overall increase of information but, precisely because it is community-specific, offering no further purchase on more general human concerns? Has our increased knowledge of information-management and the computer sciences made us wiser? our increased understanding of medicine less disease-ridden? our advances in cognitive science and neuropsychology any more sane?

These questions over the degrees of science's universality, realism, and progress are not new, but our continuing inability to resolve them indicates that they may reflect fundamental tensions in how we, in the West, have conceived the relation between our theories and the world. That is, these questions may not be simply the consequence of conceptual confusion, but may be *aporia* at the core of our thinking. That, at least, is how I think of them; they implicate our historical condition as knowers. In part, they reflect a lingering fascination with empiricist epistemology and the ideological supremacy of Western thought, both the positive ideal of certain knowledge and the reluctance to subject our praxis to critical scrutiny. In turn, this willed effort *not* to see ourselves clearly has supported the myth of objectivism, which emerged during the hegemony of logical empiricism, by assuming the epistemological status of the observation to be unproblematic. While the critiques provided by Polanyi and others -- I believe Brown (1987) provides the best recent account -- may help us definitively undermine objectivism and concomitantly foster a richer and more tenable

notion of objectivity, it is not clear that such critiques enable us to overcome these *aporia*. Indeed, I will try to elucidate a fourth *aporia* that emerges from Polanyi's thought, between the individual's personal knowing and the community of knowers through whom such knowing is made possible.

I. Polanyi and Postempiricism

The presupposition with which objectivism rises and falls is that observation is transparent, that it is possible to perceive without also apperceiving. The tenacity of this position is all the more remarkable given its repeated refutation by the actual practice of scientists. A number of postempiricist philosophers of science, of whom Kuhn is the best known, have begun to consider the social practice of science. We have become more conscious of how scientists are educated within particular paradigms or research traditions, consisting of theory, method, and research strategy centered around a few key exemplars which embody the central assumptions and promise of the tradition. Budding scientists learn particular ways of seeing, usually by studying textbooks written by the skilled practitioners of the paradigm, and are taught by professors who themselves subscribe to it. Postempiricist philosophers of science, such as Hesse (1979), have shown how images, models, and habits of language -- in addition to exemplars -- lead members of a disciplinary community to apperceive the novel as in some way familiar, as another instance of a well-understood range of phenomena to which already known understandings can be applied or easily adapted. For the logical empiricists, discovery remained an uninvestigatable phenomenon, unclearly related to protocol statements. For postempiricists, discovery is the process of analogizing the strategies that were successful in the case of exemplars to new phenomena, new "puzzles." Observations are tightly wed to theory, for it is the ability to see a hitherto unexplained problem as a puzzle, as one more instance of the same kind of phenomenon that has been successfully explicated in other instances, that allows normal science to proceed. In this view, observation without theory, even if possible, could only generate pre-paradigmatic science, science bereft of a fruitful research program.

Polanyi not only anticipated many of these arguments (Kuhn, Hanson, and Toulmin are all cited by Polanyi (1946, p. 12) as having done work "whose conclusions overlap[ped]" his own), but provided accounts which continue to surpass the understandings of many postempiricists. Postempiricism in general has remained enthralled to the allure of a Cartesian tradition that both privileges cognition over the affect and that continues to subscribe to the possibility that epistemic processes may be made fully explicit (the Cartesian "clear and distinct"). So impoverished does the understanding of affect continue to be among postempiricists that the most persistent strains within contemporary philosophy of science have been concerned with questions of paradigm allegiance, paradigm change, and paradigm incommensurability, as though insofar as such commitments were not exclusively cognitive they must be irrational. This denigration of the affect also informs the practice of science in the reigning traditions of experimental psychology. Cognitive psychology has been dominated by information-processing models of the mind, which treat mental processes as though they had the clarity of algorithms; and cognitive science has largely endorsed models that postulate modular organization of mental capacities, as though epistemic functions were ontically distinct.

Polanyi's emphasis on personal knowledge completely challenges these understandings. In the particular case of scientific discovery cited above, where Polanyi's description of a "heuristic field" suggests discovery is far more than a tactic of analogizing, as well as in the general case of how the affect stands with respect to the cognitive, Polanyi describes a far more deeply embedded relationship between knower and reality than postempiricism offers. He notes that at the heart of our ability to acquire knowledge about the world "is an indwelling: that is, a utilization of a framework for unfolding our understanding in accordance with the indications and standards imposed by the

framework” (Polanyi, 1969, p. 134). Our living is not only within a paradigm community that legitimates a particular way of seeing and doing, as postempiricists would have it. It is also an indwelling within a life-world that sustains a deeply personal sense of how things are, a metaphysic which guides our empirical inquiry. Personal knowledge encapsulates this indwelling, prizing our commitment as individuals to the fiduciary mode, “to realize that we can voice our ultimate convictions only from within our convictions -- from within the whole system of acceptances that are logically prior to any particular assertion of our own, prior to the holding of any particular piece of knowledge” (Polanyi, 1962, p. 267). At the same time, it is this “act of commitment in its full structure that saves personal knowledge from being merely subjective. Intellectual commitment is a responsible decision, in submission to the compelling claims of what in good conscience I conceive to be true” (Polanyi, 1962, p. 65).

In unpacking the fiduciary mode of personal knowing, Polanyi anticipated much of Habermas’ concern with universal pragmatics, specifically Habermas’ identification of the human interests of truth, appropriateness, and truthfulness. Habermas writes,

A participant in communication acts with an orientation to reaching understanding only under the condition that, in employing comprehensible sentences in his speech acts, he raises three validity claims in an acceptable way. He claims truth for a stated propositional content or for the existential presuppositions of a mentioned propositional content. He claims rightness (or appropriateness) for norms (or values), which, in a given context, justify an interpersonal relation that is to be performatively established. Finally, he claims truthfulness for the intentions expressed (Habermas, 1979, pp. 65-66).

As Habermas suggests, my intending of truth is equally an intending of truth addressed to others as well as to self and world. And thus within science, the ground is laid for what Polanyi called “conviviality” (cf. Polanyi, 1962, pp. 203-245).

A critique which further supplements Polanyi’s is made by the phenomenology of Schutz and Heidegger. I will not explore their contributions in any detail here, except to point out that the articulation of the structure of intentionality by Schutz (1967) provides a cogent account of the intersubjective conditions of the constitution of knowing, while Heidegger extended Husserl’s transcendental analysis to the existential problematic of *Dasein* in-the-world. Both, with Husserl (1970), pointed out that that which objectivism would unproblematically take as “given” is only transparent because the presuppositions through which the “given” is apperceived mutually co-define the possibilities of perception within a life-world. The life-world, like the research community which shares a paradigm, is intersubjectively maintained. It is a *Mit-welt*, a living-with-others, resulting from a unique historical determination, developing its own ethnography. The intentionality of the knower is embedded within it. Intentionality cannot be reduced to reified cognitive functions, as postempiricism would have it. Rather, it is a synthetic moment in which *noesis* and *noema* are one, in which a disciplined and circumspect inquiry anticipates the elucidation of as yet unknown ontological profiles. As anticipatory, it embodies Heidegger’s insight in *Being and Time* (1962) that the primordial *ec-stasis* of *Dasein*’s temporality is openness to the future.

Heidegger specified three forms of pre-understanding which make possible focal knowing. *Vorhabe* (or fore-having) is the totality of our skills and ways of seeing resulting from our education into a tradition; *Vorsicht* (or fore-sight) are our theoretical understandings; *Vorgriff* is our hypothesis. In a particular instance, *Vorhabe* and

Vorsicht function peripherally (i.e., tacitly) to define a horizon for our intuitions. The act of knowing brings into conscious reflection that which has already been anticipated by the life-world.

Heidegger called this moment of understanding one of *ereignis*, “appropriation” or “enownment.” It is a moment in which truth unveils itself, makes itself accessible to the knower. Objectivity, far from being decontextualized, is the act of appropriating through the horizons of one’s world. It is to anticipate *that* one will fulfill an ontological horizon prior to knowing *what* one will find; anticipation is not determinate, but it is heuristic. Heidegger’s hermeneutic is analogous to Polanyi’s concept of the heuristic field. “We assume that the gradient of a discovery, measured by the nearness of discovery prompts the mind towards it” (Polanyi, 1962, p. 403).

The lines of force in a heuristic field should stand for an access to an opportunity, and for the obligation and the resolve to make good this opportunity, in spite of its inherent uncertainties (Polanyi, 1962, p. 403, Polanyi’s italics).

For Heidegger as for Polanyi, acquiring knowledge about the world is not an act of detachment, but of collaboration between a circumspectful approach by the knower to the phenomenon, guided by an allowed accessibility of the phenomenon to be known. The dangerous fiction of objectivism, that it is both possible and desirable to avoid such guidance, destroys the very conditions for objectivity.

While postempiricist philosophy of science now generally acknowledges that background knowledge does play a legitimate role in objective inquiry, it has a much more difficult task clarifying the role that affect plays. As I have indicated above, treatment of the affect for the most part has not advanced beyond the position of the logical positivists, who held that value inquiries are meaningless by definition and the intrusion of them into scientific discourse can only contaminate it. Postempiricists in their turn effectively disregard the affect altogether, thereby rendering scientific practice arational while alienating us from the deepest currents of our existence.

However, even in formulating the problem of the affect, we pre-judge it through a set of cultural presuppositions that indiscriminately lumps together all value categories. The positivists made this prejudice a virtue by seeking the complete separation between fact and value, and though this demarcation has proved to be untenable, the denigration of all value categories continues to haunt our thinking about science. Just as the lingering fiction of objectivism that observer and object are epistemologically separate must be replaced by the reality of their joint complicity in appropriation, so the lingering fiction that all value categories are anathema to science must be replaced by a revised and differentiated understanding of them.

To a limited extent, this has been attempted. Both Polanyi (1946) and Jacob Bronowski (1958), for instance, pointed out the dependence of science on the democratic values of respect for truth, open inquiry, and free communication and criticism among members of the scientific community, and more recently, Israel Scheffler (1982) has argued for recognition of what he calls “cognitive emotions,” such as curiosity and a readiness for surprise. I might also note Piaget’s lifelong concern with the affective experience of “felt necessity” (1986), which provides the legitimating moment in cognitive advance. And of course, Polanyi made intellectual passions central to personal knowledge. Sadly, though, these have been relatively isolated currents in a much larger stream which continues to conceive scientific inquiry in terms of disembodied reason. If the ideal of decontextualized reason, reason independent of its life-world, has been only reluctantly abandoned within philosophy of science, the ideal of disembodied reason, reason independent of affect, has continued to dominate how scientific inquiry is understood. We need a way to

re-incorporate the affect with the cognitive while at the same time preserving a legitimate suspicion toward it. Let me try to provide an initial demarcation that I believe to be both necessary and useful of two areas encompassed by the affect, that of “passion” and that of “emotion.”

Speaking roughly, we can say that emotion is that which moves us. The impetus for it comes from without, but it activates a powerful unconscious force within. When we are caught up in the throes of emotion, our experience is frequently that we have been seized by a power stronger than we intend, that both the stimulus and the response whirl in a frenzy that the *cogito* at best can witness but not control. In some cases, the *cogito* may be lost entirely to what we refer to as a “state of abandon.” It is affect-as-emotion that corrupts objectivity, that we need to guard against.

But passion is significantly different. The phenomena about which I am passionate invite the manner of approach to them. Passion is simultaneously that to which I am committed, and with respect to which I am passive, patient. My passions are directed toward those areas of experience which, as I appropriate them, guide me in turn. Passion is akin to the erotic of Plato; it is the love for truth that motivates. Rather than being swept away, we are impelled onward by passion. This does not mean that we may not also be observant, cautious, expectant. More to the point, it means that we need not be so enraptured with the conviction of our insight as to be blinded by emotion, as to lose our critical sensibility. To be passionate in inquiry is to prize the truth; it is to manifest a circumspection and care that, in its turn, is rewarded by that which is unveiled.

I would argue that culturally we have covered over, to our loss, this distinction between passion and emotion by leaving them largely undifferentiated within a global model of affectivity, and relegating the affect to a secondary status below the primacy of cognition. This covering over is not accidental, but reflects the general thrust of Western thought to celebrate the mind and reason at the expense of the body and affect. It was a danger of which Polanyi was well aware (e.g., Polanyi, 1962, p. 182).

Polanyi’s solution was to try to consciously re-incorporate what he called the “intellectual passions” back into our conception of science. Interestingly, much of his insight was shared by Charles Sanders Peirce. Polanyi pointed out that we know more than we can say; likewise, Peirce saw that “however man may have acquired his faculty of divining the ways of nature, it has certainly not been by a self-controlled and critical logic. Even now he cannot give any exact reason for his best guesses” (Peirce, CP, 5.173). To elucidate this feat, Peirce described what he called “abduction,” that is, the human power to make fruitful guesses, which bears strong affinities to Polanyi’s sense of the intellectual passions that underlie the fiduciary mode. The success of abduction is based on the premise that “the human mind is akin to the truth in the sense that in a finite number of guesses it will light upon the correct hypothesis” (Peirce, CP, 7.220). Similarly, Polanyi pointed out that,

Our vision of reality, to which our sense of scientific beauty responds, must suggest to us the kind of questions that it should be reasonable and interesting to explore....Intellectual passions do not merely affirm the existence of harmonies which foreshadow an indeterminate range of future discoveries, but can also evoke intimations of specific discoveries and sustain their persistent pursuit through years of labour. The appreciation of scientific value merges here into the capacity for discovering it (Polanyi, 1962, pp. 135, 143).

To summarize my remarks to this point, I would offer a model of objectivity that stresses the dual aspect of

passion and appropriation. Passionate appropriation results from a careful submission to the phenomenon that clarifies what it anticipates. Knowledge is personal, in Polanyi's sense, precisely because it results from lived-experience, experience fore-shadowed by the guidance of one's interpretive horizon, and unveiled through one's circumspectful approach.

II. Polanyi and Postmodern Thought

If the preceding section has presented a defensible model for objectivity grounded in personal knowledge, we must still consider how the objectivity of the single individual stands with respect to that of other individuals. One common solution, understanding objectivity in terms of intersubjective corroboration as Popper proposed and postempiricism has generally endorsed, is simply to beg the question. Unless the claims of each subjectivity are warranted, those claims taken collectively have no necessary purchase on truth. That is, intersubjective corroboration may legitimate intersubjective delusion as readily as objectivity. We must, then, ground the truth-claims of a collective in the individual personal knowledge of its membership.

The ontological orientation of personal knowing, while realized and enacted within a community, was seen by Polanyi to have precedence over the community: "The discipline required to regulate the activities of scientists cannot be maintained by mere conformity to the actual demands of scientific opinion, but requires the support of moral conviction, stemming from devotion to science and prepared to operate independently of scientific opinion" (Polanyi, 1946, p. 54). It is the common dedication to truth shared by scientists that bonds their community, rather than any prior link to each other. Thus, even though tacit knowledge is initially constituted by means of an apprenticeship within the scientific community, such mediacy is eventually abandoned with mastery. "The authority to which the student of science submits tends to eliminate its own functions by establishing direct contact between the student and the reality of nature. As he approaches maturity the student will rely for his beliefs less and less on authority and more and more on his own judgment" (Polanyi, 1956, p. 45).

The question raised by Polanyi's position is whether it is in fact possible for knowers to function as virtually independent epistemic agents, or whether the tacit dimensions of knowing absorbed through a knower's education not only enable but also constrain the epistemic act. That is, might the very passion that roots us in fiduciary commitments also condition what and how we see, on the one hand, while preventing us from seeing phenomena of equal or greater significance, on the other? I can frame this issue by asking whether such commitment is properly understood as personal (in a Polanyian sense) or as hegemonic (in a Gramscian sense). I believe that this is another limit question, a further *aporia* revealed at the point where an individual emerges from his formative traditions. I feel that Polanyi's thought takes us to this point but not beyond it. However, other streams within contemporary thought can help us explore it further. The intent of such exploration is not to discredit or undermine Polanyi's contribution, nor is it to resolve this *aporia*. Rather, it is to elucidate a region into which Polanyi's thought did not extend.

The way in which discursive practices such as science exercise hegemonic control over regimes of knowledge, especially within the human sciences, has been a central concern for both Marxist and poststructuralist thought. For instance, Foucault's (1977) work has been important in indicating that knowledge and power are fundamentally intertwined, not only in the explicit Baconian sense that knowledge allows us instrumental control over nature, but in the more subtle ways in which our constitution of a world leads us to demean and derogate any who would challenge that constitution (knowledge as the power of exclusion, of repression, of labeling), while ignoring the consequences

of knowledge for social regulation. On the one hand, we have a stake in legitimating our own submission to the forces of discursive regimes prevailing during our own periods of apprenticeship. On the other, our necessary participation in discursive practices as mature practitioners involve us in the modern forms of power, which for Foucault no longer take the shape of repression by force (which was the form of repression of most concern to Polanyi), but of the use of knowledge for discipline by normalization and the internalized imperatives for efficiency and production -- of goods and services, of regulated behaviors, of health, of more information and knowledge.

I interestingly Polanyi conceded much of this though without the cautionary overtones of poststructuralism. His distinction between General and Specific Authority (1946, pp. 59 ff) or between free and totalitarian societies (1962) is precisely Foucault's distinction between forms of oppression through force emanating from centralized authorities and the diffuse forms of control through self-restraint characteristic of discursive practices. Polanyi argued that the gamble of an "emotional and moral surrender to science" during apprenticeship was redeemed by the access to reality which this gamble made possible with maturity. He believed that the hegemony within science was benign: "The government of science...exercises no specific direction on the activities under its control. Its function is not to initiate but to grant or to withhold opportunity for research, publication, and teaching, to endorse or discredit contributions put forward by individuals. Yet this government is indispensable to the continued existence of science." Otherwise "the journals would be flooded with rubbish," with the "nonsense" of "cranks," with "immature, confused, fantastic, or else plodding, pedestrian, irrelevant material," with the publicity of "swindlers and bunglers" (Polanyi, 1946, pp. 49-50).

One may grant Polanyi's point that a great deal of shoddy work is done under the name of science while still asking if we may be so sanguine about its powers of exclusion. Since the early fifties, there has been a continuing series of critiques which indicate hegemonic consent and ideological bias shaping not merely the sociology of science (e.g., the small numbers of women and minority scientists) or the styles of scientific research, but the actual content of scientific findings. These studies have been conducted in a range of areas including, but not limited to, molecular biology, primatology, anthropology, and cognitive and moral development. To cite only one example, Keller (1983) has shown how Barbara McClintock's "lifetime of cultivated attentiveness" to the genetics of corn revealed the hitherto unsuspected activity of cytoplasmic DNA. This finding was marginalized for many years by molecular biologists who refused to consider that such a phenomenon was possible, whose personal knowledge privileged only the activity of nuclear DNA.

Again, Polanyi anticipated in a general way the points made in these specific studies. "I accept it moreover as inevitable that each of us must start his intellectual development by accepting uncritically a large number of traditional premisses of a particular kind; and that, however far we may advance thence by our own efforts, our progress will always remain restricted to a limited set of conclusions which is accessible from our original premisses" (Polanyi, 1946, p. 83). The question raised by postmodern concerns, then, lies in understanding the degree of constraint entailed in those premisses, both in terms of conclusions drawn and the use of those conclusions to delegitimize various groups and perspectives, and in terms of the complicity to participate in the regimes of democratic inquiry through which the production of knowledge for social regulation is encouraged. Under this reading, objectivity, even as passionate appropriation in the context of personal knowledge, is severely compromised by a social embeddedness which it can afford neither to discount nor acknowledge, and so to which it must remain systematically blind. Whether we ultimately rest easy with Polanyi's account of personal knowledge or come to historicize it within the peculiar coerciveness of modernity I leave as an open question.

I believe there are several morals to be drawn from seeing Polanyi's post-critical thought from the perspective of other traditions. First, I have argued for a model of objectivity as passionate appropriation, grounded primarily in phenomenological considerations, which I believe complements Polanyi's model of personal knowledge. Second, I believe that raising the issue of hegemony in the discursive practices of science lets us see one way in which objectivity may be fallible. The gap between our embeddedness in tradition (a central issue for poststructuralism) and the fiduciary component of affirming our beliefs out of our deepest commitments (a central issue for post-critical philosophy) points toward an *aporia* in the structure of human knowing deserving of further exploration, even as it eludes resolution. Further, if the creation of consensus among scientists indicates the play of hegemony within scientific communities, then the poststructuralist critique of science as a discursive practice may be seen as having extended Polanyi's critique of logical empiricism into the social realm. Third, the epistemic models emerging from postmodern thought, particularly from feminism, are informed by insights into knowing that are compatible with Polanyi's. For instance, McClintock's "cultivated attentiveness" can be elucidated in the context of personal knowledge. Finally, the concerns raised here may provide a ground to link Polanyi's prescience with contemporary traditions of inquiry, and thereby engage his thought as an active voice in current debates.

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The “Other” Postmodern Theorist: Owen Barfield’s Concept of the Evolution of Consciousness

Richard A. Hocks

[EDITOR’S NOTE: *Richard Hocks was a colleague of Owen Barfield in the English Department at the University of Missouri, Columbia, when Barfield was a visiting professor there in the sixties. Barfield and Hocks soon got into the habit of attending philosophy lectures together, and Hocks first heard of Polanyi when Barfield invited him to attend a lecture on Kant by a visiting philosopher, Marjorie Grene. Barfield’s conversation about Grene immediately stressed her connection with Michael Polanyi, and Barfield himself spoke admiringly of Polanyi’s work. Hocks’ essay has evolved from an earlier brief article in TAD’s predecessor, “The Polanyi Society Newsletter” (X, 2, Winter, 1983) in which he commented upon the complementarity of Polanyi and Barfield and included a short annotated Barfield bibliography.]*

Preface

A number of years ago in the publication which has evolved into this one, I examined Owen Barfield and Michael Polanyi as “Complementary Theorists.” The following essay attempts to give a more comprehensive overview of Barfield’s conceptual framework than was possible in the earlier brief format. I shall again be concerned, though not equally, with Polanyi and Barfield, whose similarities and compatibility in thought remain tantalizing. Like Polanyi, Barfield’s thought is at once intricate and far-reaching, incorporating a theoretical perspective that crosses and enriches many disciplines. Readers of *Tradition and Discovery* may, like the present writer, find it useful periodically to evaluate Barfield’s doctrine by placing it alongside Polanyi’s major tenets, exploring certain basic parallels as well as appreciating the discriminations between two major thinkers of our era whose mutual admiration was frequently expressed. I am calling Owen Barfield above “the ‘other’ postmodernist” not only to insinuate this similarity with Michael Polanyi but to propose that both of them comprise an alternative line of thought with sufficient intellectual heft to dialogue fruitfully with some of the reigning postmodern critical theory in the academy, especially French and German deconstruction which, for all its preoccupation with language and various encoding mechanisms, for example, does not regard language as the vehicle of a meaning higher than itself: hence Jacques Derrida’s well known term “logocentrism,” or the erroneous belief that language does mean more than itself. Contrastingly, Barfield and Polanyi might well be thought of as two postmodern figures interested in what Barfield calls “the rediscovery of meaning” through the translucent power of language. Finally, in order to introduce as much concision as possible into the complexity of Owen Barfield’s theory, I shall organize my exposition around four key “Barfieldian” concepts all of which are deeply interconnected and, hopefully, will mutually constitute the core of his thought.

I: The Appearances

Owen Barfield's book *Saving the Appearances, A Study in Idolatry* is still the best overall exposition of his theory of the evolution of consciousness. Yet no one, I believe, has pointed to a certain almost humorous "twist" embedded in his title, which is that it really means saving the phenomena, inasmuch as our word "phenomena" comes to us from the Greek word for appearance, although we now habitually use the word "phenomena" to denote precisely the reverse of what merely "appears" to us.¹ For Barfield the philologist, however, the history of language is the gateway into understanding the history of consciousness, so the fact that the word "phenomena" comes from the word for appearance is a matter of far-reaching implications. Barfield believes we must "save" or rescue the phenomena if we are to rescue ourselves. Rescue from what? From the separateness we attribute to them as part and parcel of our subjectivity in our dualism between subject and object, between what Emerson once called the "me" and the "not me." This belief in dualism frequently goes by the name of Cartesianism, named of course for the philosopher Rene Descartes, who first proposed it in a systematic way. But the issue for Owen Barfield is not really a philosophical armchair debate with Descartes; there are numerous modern thinkers, some, for example, descending from the late work of William James, who dispute Cartesian dualism. Barfield's concern is not just with the idea of dualism and separateness but with the actual condition and experience of it. To save the phenomena, therefore, it is important both to understand and to experience them as something other than, so to speak, a collective lump of otherness. It is necessary that we come to an awareness of the extra-sensory link between ourselves as subjects and the phenomena with which we are surrounded. This link--a missing link, if you will, so long as it remains unacknowledged--is called by Barfield "participation," partly to borrow from the well known anthropological school of Durkheim and Levy-Bruhl, but primarily because it conveys better than another word (such as "construct" or "link") the relationship Barfield wishes to establish. Participation is crucial to saving the phenomena, for an understanding and experience of them can teach us that phenomena are in point of fact appearances--not in any sense of artificiality or illusion, of course, but as that which is made manifest. And what is made manifest, further contends Barfield, is spirit. The phenomena are thus spirit-made-manifest-as-matter (Barfield does not hold to a neo-oriental view that matter is mere illusion). For us to arrive at this realization is potentially to rediscover humanity as spiritual also, both in its nature and in its origin, for it opens the door to the possibility that our relationship with the natural world is and always has been fundamentally "sacramental," despite our predisposition to lapse, so to speak, from the marriage. Otherwise, as Barfield puts it, "the more able man becomes to manipulate the world to his advantage, the less he can perceive any meaning in it."² Participation thus includes the discovery that the nature and origin of phenomena, on the one hand, and the nature and origin of mankind, on the other, are profoundly and inextricably bound together. This viewpoint relates to what we usually call "ecology," but at a deeper level than that issue is routinely addressed.

In the case of Barfieldian participation, there is at least one major aid and one major obstacle to its persuasion and acceptance. The major aid is the science of physics and its implications. Those various assumptions voiced by Werner Heisenberg, Niels Bohr, or David Bohm, that the activity of the observer implicates what is observed; or the more familiar assumption that all matter is ultimately a dynamic field of sub-atomic particles; even the routine practice of constructing models--these assumptions begin to press home the implication that, if nothing else, participation already resides in each and every act of human perception, for no one yet claims to actually "see" the sub-atomic particles which physics informs us are the ultimate constituent of reality. What occurs in human perception, Barfield argues, is what he calls "figuration"; and what is perceived by us all is a "collective representation" (unless, of course, the reader *can* see the particles and/or waves!). Let me note, however, that participation in human perception can only take

us so far, for it remains largely unconscious and does not yet reveal the phenomena in a vastly different light. But it is at least a beginning, an important one.

If the implication of physics is a major aid, then the major obstacle to the persuasion and acceptance of participation is the “idolatry” of Owen Barfield’s subtitle--i.e. positivism. For Barfield, positivism as an obstacle lies not so much in its “ism” as in its habitual way of experiencing the world. Yet even ideologically, positivism, to be sure, can mean many things; for Barfield’s purposes it usually means materialism, the view that matter is all there “really is,” or rather that there is no immaterial agency at work in the very face and appearance of matter, including ourselves. And if a mighty fleet can be said to have a flagship, then positivism--idolatry--has been dominated above all by the doctrines of Darwinian and neo-Darwinian evolution. What is very important to mention at this juncture is that, for Barfield, Darwinism--not evolution per se but Darwinism--is the view which enforces the specious belief in phenomena as separate, as “other,” and, of course, as matter through and through. Darwinism is in that respect the forefront of positivism; and to Barfield, the historian of consciousness, the fact that those two views had their formal birth at the same time--in the middle of the last century--is certainly no accident. Positivism in general and Darwinism in particular are thus the principal obstacles to a renewed sense of the world based on participation and therefore to saving the phenomena by understanding them in their true appearances. Whether it be a special moment of epiphany, as in an art form such as poetry or music which recreates the world anew, or else the more familiar world in response to our perception, the appearances, contends Barfield, are the activity of an immaterial agency made manifest as phenomena.

For Polanyi, I suspect the Barfieldian “appearances” are often comparable to what the chemist/philosopher calls “a physiognomy,” whether in nature or human nature. While many readers might object, however, that Polanyi’s obvious (and important) debt to Gestalt psychology is not the same as Barfield’s “appearances” conceived of as spirit-made-manifest-as-matter, I do think Polanyi frequently overlaps Barfield on this issue, primarily because his distinctive exposition of the Gestalt experience, if you will, is so deeply tethered to his profound concept of “indwelling”--the term itself evocative of Spirit in Augustinian theology. This description from *Personal Knowledge* is an example of music’s “physiognomy”: “By dwelling in a harmonious sequence of sounds, we acknowledge their joint meaning as a tune: a meaning they have in themselves, existentially.”³³

What is hardly disputable is that Polanyi and Barfield share the same critique of Barfield’s “idolatry”--i.e. positivism in general, Darwinian epistemology in particular--and that both see this “inversion” (to use Polanyian terminology) as a hindrance to rediscovering meaning and thus diagnosing our condition of alienation borne of excessive scientism or observationalism. The alternative epistemology to such Barfieldian “idolatry” is, of course, “participation,” the concept most remarkably consanguine with Polanyi’s theory of indwelling and of tacit knowledge, a parallel I shall return to presently.

II: Participation

I have proposed above that, for Owen Barfield, human participation is crucial in any endeavor to save the phenomena, but in Barfield’s spectrum of thought there are levels and degrees of participation, and there are also categories of it that correspond to epochs of time or periods of history. First, with regard to its levels or degrees: participation as the activity present in human perception, as “figuration,” turns out to be the same power named by Coleridge in his poetics as “primary imagination,” the “repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the

infinite I AM.”⁴ Coleridge’s formulation claims a spiritual source for the human imagination present in perception; indeed the vast network that comprises those relationships in Coleridge is the subject of Barfield’s monumental study, *What Coleridge Thought* (1971). That study epitomizes Barfield’s lifelong interest in the ontology of the poetic imagination proper, what Coleridge went on to define as “secondary imagination.” This, Coleridge tells us, is “an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary [imagination] in the *kind* of its agency, and differing only in *degree*, and in the *mode* of its operation.”⁵ For our purposes “secondary imagination” is in Barfieldian or Coleridgean terms a higher level of participation than ordinary human perception, inasmuch as the poet or artist consciously expresses the phenomena through language. To put this another way, poetic utterance really “speaks” the participation that human perception fails to reveal easily to us until and unless we are forced to think seriously and deeply about it with the aid, say, of physics and its implication of the presence of human “figuration.” The poetic imagination thereby rescues or “saves” the phenomena from that lump of otherness referred to earlier. It is largely due to Coleridge in particular and the Romantic Movement in general that Barfield believes there were at least some healthy “symptoms of iconoclasm” to positivistic thinking even as it began to settle into idolatry so solidly by the 19th century.

Now despite many shimmering discussions of the vital nature of poetry and language, such as, for example, Emerson’s famous essay “The Poet,” Owen Barfield is anything but naive when it comes to expecting most readers or hearers to agree with him that language has the same kind of extra-sensory link with the represented phenomena that human perception has with the *un*represented particle life within phenomena; and that what poetry accomplishes in the one case is similar to what careful consideration of advanced physics does in the other case. Even so, “the relation,” he writes, “between collective representations and language is of the most intimate nature Those who insist that words and things are in two mutually exclusive categories of reality are confusing the phenomena with the particles. They are trying to think about the former [the phenomena] as if they were the latter [the particles]. Whereas by definition, it is only the unrepresented which is independent of collective human consciousness and therefore of human language.”⁶ In other words, if consciousness is correlative to phenomena in participation, it is even more likely that language is likewise correlative to our collective representations. Poetry and the artistic imagination that utters and mediates the world through language and other forms of artistic expression point to a level of participation “identical in the *kind* of its agency,” as Coleridge put it, to primary imagination or normal human perception.

There is, however, still a third level of participation over and beyond that of poetic or artistic utterance, and that is the systematic or trained use of imagination on behalf of the perception of qualities in nature. This level, called by Barfield “final participation,” involves enhancing our figuration to the point of rendering the unrepresented as phenomenal or apparitional--saving the appearances in the fullest, most self-conscious sense. Such “final participation” takes Barfield beyond Coleridge proper and is one of the most difficult doctrines in his entire thought, one that cannot be much elaborated here and, indeed, lies primarily in the future, for it is virtually unfound as yet in western culture except in certain rare instances. Even so, it is a capability Goethe apparently exhibited in his scientific investigations of the morphology of plant life. More importantly, it is the capacity that Rudolph Steiner, Barfield’s principal philosophical mentor, incorporated into his spiritual science.⁷ What may be most helpful to consider at this stage, I believe, are the stratification and levels of participation we have considered thus far: that of normal human perception rightly understood but not generally experienced, that of poetic or artistic utterance, and, albeit briefly and preliminarily, that of final participation--the systematic imagination, the trained observation of and indwelling in, so to speak, nature’s “inside.” Now these same three levels of participation correspond in an important way to Barfield’s three principal stages in the evolution of consciousness, which is, when you think about it, the consideration of participation under the

framework of linear time and history. First, “original participation,” like human perception now, was largely unselfconscious, although the experience of it would necessarily be different from our present experience of perception (we live now, not then, in the wake of the “Cartesian experience”). Second, participation through poetic utterance corresponds to Barfield’s second stage, for it involves the individual’s self-conscious attempt to “reattach” to nature and to phenomena those extra-sensory qualities no longer intrinsically experienced; and it should not surprise anyone to discover that the growth of modern science in the 17th century would be the twin, or more properly the alter ego, to this second stage in the evolution of consciousness eventually brought to fruition and epitomized by the early 19th-century Romantic Movement in literature, a movement that produced Coleridge, among others. Lastly, final participation has not yet been achieved, although it may be foreshadowed in certain exceptional individuals. If the reader can think of these three levels of participation and the three stages of the evolution of consciousness as homologous, one might try momentarily borrowing from 19th-century biology the terms “ontogenetic” and “phylogenetic” development: hence the three levels of participation in an individual (the ontogenetic) could be said to “recapitulate” the three major stages in the evolution of human consciousness (the phylogenetic). At which point the same reader might well retort: “Wait a minute! That ontogenetic/phylogenetic recapitulating thesis is old, quasi-outmoded evolutionary jargon; this Barfield is supposed to be anti-Darwinian?” Indeed, he is. But he is *not* anti-evolution.

When addressing the issue of scientific discovery through tacit inference, Michael Polanyi makes the Coleridgean/Barfieldian point that we “*must turn to the example of perception*” wherein “the capacity of scientists to perceive in nature the presence of lasting shapes differs from ordinary perception only by the fact that it can integrate shapes that ordinary perception cannot readily handle.”⁸ This analogy with Coleridge’s theory stressing the “difference in degree” of perception between primary and secondary imagination results from both thinkers’ similar emphasis on the integration of particulars to meaningful wholes--what Coleridge denominated the imagination’s “esemplastic power” (i.e. molding into oneness), or its “unity in multitude.” Such conceptual apposition between Polanyi and Coleridge/Barfield, whereby the transition from perception to discovery--scientific or creative--is continuous, depends profoundly on their shared view of participation. Polanyi’s recurrent theme that our “seeing” “indwells” the object and changes its nature; or that when we attend *from* a word or object *to* its meaning we interiorize as opposed to our looking *at* a word or thing so as to exteriorize or alienate it--this perspective is the analogue to Barfield’s whole ontology of participation and (differing only in degree) poetics. Polanyi’s analysis of the “from . . . to” act of knowing even parallels Barfield’s distinction between our accessing a “history of consciousness” rather than merely looking *at* a “history of ideas.” The keynote for both thinkers, then, is the mind’s participatory activity. Although Barfield begins with poetry and Polanyi with scientific discovery, their epistemology and language theory overlap. “*A set of sounds,*” writes Polanyi, “is converted into the *name* of the object by an act of tacit knowing which integrates the sounds to the object to which we are attending. . . . When converted into a word they no longer sound as before; they have become as it were transparent: we attend *from* them (or through them) to the object to which they are integrated.”⁹ To which Barfield, following Coleridge, might add that the vital ray of relation between the ordinary word and its object is then recapitulated at a higher level through poetic utterance, not unlike a valid scientific theorem in Polanyi’s scheme.

III: Evolution, the False and the True

The fierce debate between evolution and creationism often seems a conflict between science and academia, on one side, and fundamentalist religion, on the other. For by evolution is generally meant Darwinism, or rather a neo-Darwinism buttressed by the science of genetics. Although Owen Barfield’s thought, strictly speaking, is no part

of this debate, his work sheds considerable light on it. His evolutionary perspective may suggest to casual readers a figure like, say, Teilhard de Chardin or perhaps Karl Jung, but one reason such comparisons would be in error is that Barfield, unlike either, challenges directly and forcefully the neo-Darwinian analysis of prehistory. His contention is rather that of the evolution and history of consciousness, an approach he generally contrasts to our more conventional history of ideas, especially when treating human thought, say, from the Graeco-Roman age to the present. And indeed his richest analyses of texts and culture fall within that time frame. Furthermore, any reader of Barfield soon discovers that his deep engagement with philology, the history of language, is the nourishing root of the method by which he engages the past at the level of the history of consciousness. How, then, does this necessarily relate to the broader question of Darwinian evolution? After all, it is not common for someone to be engaged with a history of the Western mind and then impinge on the different topic and vastly different time frame of biological evolution; indeed, should a philologist even want to enter such turbulent waters?

The answer is that Barfield's precoccupation with the history of consciousness is different from even the most saturated analyses of the past, such as Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis*. Barfield maintains that, in any thoughtful consideration of evolution, it is both more reasonable and more illuminating to hold that mind, or consciousness, precedes matter rather than the reverse--though not *individualized* mind or *self*-consciousness. Not only does the origin of language point toward this supposition but also the content of the great myths, indeed even the very archetypes that a thinker like Jung explores so deeply yet without ever considering that they might inhabit the world "outside" the human head--or a vast collection of human heads. In other words, evolution for Barfield begins with mind as anterior to matter, as a given "field" out of which, as it were, matter compresses. Barfield's thesis herein does not merely challenge the Darwinian argument; in a sense it turns that argument on its head: for not only does mind precede and bring matter into being, and a form of intentionality replace chance-ridden natural selection, but the very same physical evidence used in support of the received position is never directly challenged or discredited, but interpreted differently.

Furthermore, in Barfield's view human self-consciousness evolves in turn from world consciousness by the same *kind* of compression or focusing modality that characterizes the coming into being of matter itself. As he puts it in a wonderful image, mankind "has had to wrestle his subjectivity out of the world of his experience by polarizing that world gradually into a duality."¹⁰ The word "gradually" is most important here in reminding us that Barfield really does mean evolution, but it also suggests why he always illuminates so well the older texts that he interprets: for that gradual "wrestling" process reveals itself especially in the thought, art, and literature of the West from the Graeco-Roman world to the close of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the scientific revolution in the 17th century. His contention that self-consciousness has emerged from a broader world consciousness has, to quote a favorite expression by one of my colleagues, "all the force of unnoticed significance newly made obvious,"¹¹ especially when placed alongside some of the convoluted theories about the origin of language--such as "animism" or "the metaphorical period." The authority of Barfield's discussion about the period from the Graeco-Roman world to our own--his illumination of Aristotle, Aquinas, Galileo, the Romantics, and many others--derives from his premise about the centripetal evolution of self-consciousness from world consciousness. To put this another way, his history-of-consciousness approach draws not merely on the ideas of a given period or author from that period, but is really a history of a given period's "figuration." In fact, one of the truly seismic implications of Barfield's view is that the phenomena--i.e., the appearances--undergo change in response to the evolution of consciousness itself. And what this means is that participation evolves as well.

A listener can of course reject Barfield's evolutionary argument out of hand, assume it "unscientific," and the like; it is not a view which, stated by itself, is likely to compel immediate assent. Nevertheless it does (at the very least) make his discussions of specific historical, philosophical, and literary topics downright luminous. From *Poetic Diction*, 1928, through *Saving the Appearances*, 1957, to *What Coleridge Thought*, 1971, numerous readers have experienced an illumination comparable to that expressed by C.S. Lewis when he dedicated *The Allegory of Love* to Barfield as the "wisest and best of my unofficial teachers."

Two additional points should be made. First, if Owen Barfield's view of evolution seems not to be modern but peculiarly "traditional," theological, or, say, "mystical" (as opposed to scientific), one might well reconsider the implications of quantum mechanics and the like that were raised earlier. Second, if Barfield's *own* view of evolution is carefully thought out, one of our most important discoveries--I mean about the question of its validity--is that *The Origin of Species*, published in 1859, occurred at a period in recent history when self-consciousness had so fully achieved its ascendancy, its hegemony, that it could no longer even feel any extra-sensory link with phenomena in participation: hence one could not even conceive of a concept of prehistory wherein matter *wasn't* assumed to be totally separate from mind; matter, according to Darwin and Lydell and other Victorians, simply must have preceded mind, since it obviously did (and does!) precede *self*-consciousness. Whenever we think the other person is wrong about such important matters, it is particularly crucial to cast light, not just on that person's error, or even why the person is wrong; it is especially important to explain how that person inevitably came to the wrong conclusion in the first place. Perhaps more than any other thinker, Barfield enables his reader to go "inside" the thinking of his opponents and get us to understand, on the grounds of his argument, just how the other person came to think the other way around. Evolution, in any case, is not merely about phylogenetic history; evolution also has its own history.

It is probably accurate to describe Polanyi, like Barfield, as both an evolutionist and an opponent of Neo-Darwinism, although the grounds of his explicit critique of Darwin are admittedly very different from Barfield's.¹² Yet for all the difference in their respective philosophical agendas, including their views of evolution, Barfield and Polanyi really do end up together in opposition to Darwin on similar epistemological and ontological grounds. If Barfield, as we have seen, insists that mind precedes matter, Polanyi's view of reality as structured by hierarchical boundary conditions offers a comparable generic challenge to the Darwinian mind set, when he concludes that "the operations of a higher level cannot be accounted for by the laws governing its particulars forming the next lower level. You cannot derive a vocabulary from phonetics; you cannot derive grammar from a vocabulary; a correct use of grammar does not account for good style; and a good style does not provide the content of a piece of prose."¹³

IV: Polarity

A true understanding of the principle of polarity in Owen Barfield is perhaps the ultimate prerequisite to a genuine understanding of all the major facets of his thought, including the evolution of consciousness. It is generally not known that Coleridge was the first person to use the word "polarity" to mean something other than magnetism, and Barfield's 1971 study of Coleridge is essentially the study of polarity and its ramifications throughout Coleridge's thought: for example, the well known conception by Coleridge of the literary imagination as "the reconciliation of opposites" really derives from his non-literary work in natural philosophy and his contention there of polarity as the exponential law governing individuation, a conception found later in Karl Jung as well as among Coleridge's own contemporaries in Germany. But Barfield himself has greatly extended Coleridgean polarity in his own thought. One

of the better places to encounter it is in this passage from his book *Speaker's Meaning*. "A polarity of contraries," he writes, "is not quite the same as the *coincidentia oppositorum*, which has been stressed by some philosophers, or as the 'paradox' which (whether for the purposes of irony or for other reasons) is beloved by some contemporary writers and critics. A paradox is the violent union of two opposites that simply contradict each other, so that reason assures us we can have one *or* the other but not both at the same time. Whereas polar contraries (as is illustrated by the use of the term in electricity) exist by virtue of each other *as well as* at each other's expense. For that very reason the concept of polarity cannot be subsumed under the logical principle of identity; in fact, it is not really a logical concept at all, but one which requires an act of imagination to grasp it. . . . Unlike the logical principles of identity and contradiction, it is not only a form of thought, but also the form of life. It could perhaps be called the principle of seminal identity. It is also the formal principle which underlies meaning itself and the expansion of meaning."¹⁴

Obviously, Barfield's conception here is altogether different from what we usually mean by polarity, as when we speak of society's becoming polarized, for instance; but less obviously it is just as different from Cartesian dualism, which is perhaps more appropriately called dichotomy, certainly not unity or "seminal identity" through opposition. In *Speaker's Meaning*, Barfield is concerned with the polar transformation that recurs between the expressive and communicative meaning in language. Such transformation is revealed through Barfield's attentive study of philology, especially the history of language. A "speaker's meaning," that is to say, reveals polarity with "lexical meaning" when language is studied over a long period of time. Such polarity in language is in fact one of the keys to the evolution of consciousness, for the semantic approach Barfield invokes enables one to look into the past, not just at it. A word like "furniture," for example, which the *OED* tells us once meant, or included, "faculty & furniture of mind" has contracted its meaning centripetally over the course of time; whereas, on the other hand, words like "gravity" or "focus" have expanded their meanings centrifugally over time. Such continual polarity occurs, according to Barfield, because "when we use a word, we re-enact, or adopt, or reanimate . . . the thought of previous users of the same word or some part at least of that thought. It may be a very small part indeed. But we must be doing just that thing to some extent; for otherwise we should not be uttering a word at all, but simply making a noise! Of course the same thing is true of the previous speakers themselves, and of other speakers before them."¹⁵ Barfield has pointed out again and again in a dozen books and numerous essays that, when we look back into the history of any so-called abstract or immaterial word, we come to a period when it also had a concrete or outer meaning as well, like "gravity" or "focus"--meaning "heavy" or "weighty" and "fire-burning hearth," respectively. There are even words still in the process of completing that polar transformation, such as "noble" or "gentle," which obviously no longer connote only "class" or "blood"--in fact almost do not mean them! But this is also the case with outer or material language, like "furniture"; the process by which these have *lost* their inner meaning, writes Barfield, "is clearly the obverse, or correlative, of the very process by which so many [more] other words have lost their outer meaning."¹⁶ One notes that he does not say "reverse" but "obverse," or "correlative"--that is because he is thinking polarity, not just dichotomy. Barfield is especially fond of illustrating both processes, the centrifugal and the centripetal, by the Greek word *pneuma*, which in St. John's Gospel is repeated several times within a very few verses and correctly translated, first, as "spirit," then "wind," and then again "spirit." What we have in that example is a sort of captured moment just before the splitting apart of a word into what eventually would be its outer and inner meanings, a process which in time would be expressed by two different words altogether, "wind" and "spirit." Barfield sometimes cites a contemporary example of this same process in our own use of the word "heart" to refer at once to the physical organ and to the seat of affections. Should "heart" evolve like *pneuma*, there could eventually come a time when, say, a word like "cardium" might refer exclusively to the physical organ, and "heart" to the inner meaning. But for us now to say that wind was once "a metaphor" for spirit would be quite as inappropriate as for future generations to look back and assume that "heart" was in our day "merely a metaphor" for the cardium.

This entire issue is what makes a poem like, for example, Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" so instructive, for in that poem Shelley consciously *reconnects* through poetic utterance the meaning of spirit and wind which were originally one. The poet in such instances re-utters imaginatively what was once an utterance outside the confines of any individual creative mind like that of a single poet. It is not accidental, then, that whereas the ancient world thinks of the poet as "inspired," the modern world thinks of the same poet as "imaginative"; the first is to be "possessed by" a genius or daemon without; the second (as Coleridgean poetics would propose) is rather to be "in possession of" the daemon within. Hence the relation, historically speaking, between "inspiration" and "imagination" is that of a true polarity or "seminal identity."

This is but some of the philological or semantic context of polarity in Barfield's analysis. The fact is, polarity properly understood and grasped by the imagination is really a conception that ramifies throughout all of his thought. The main issues about polarity are that it always involves interpenetration as well as juxtaposition, that it requires an act of imagination to grasp it (precisely since it cannot be subsumed under the logical principle of identity and contradiction), and that it is, in Barfield's words, "not only a form of thought but also the form of life."¹⁷ We have seen already Polanyi's views about language sufficient to indicate their affinity with the tenor of Barfield's argument in *Speaker's Meaning*. Barfieldian polarity, inasmuch as he proposes it as a living immaterial agency, may not be quite the same as Polanyi's concept of "complementarity," yet they do have more than a little in common. "We can see," writes Polanyi, "two complementary efforts aiming at the elucidation of a comprehensive unity. One proceeds from a recognition of a whole towards an identification of its particulars; the other, from the recognition of a group of presumed particulars towards the grasping of their relation in the whole."¹⁸ This conceptual model overlaps Barfield in part because it evokes, once again, Coleridge's concept of "unity in multitude" which he derives from the principle of polarity. "I have called these two efforts complementary," Polanyi continues, "since they contribute jointly to the same final achievement, yet it is also true that each counteracts the other to some extent at every consecutive step." In short, "an alternation of analysis and integration leads progressively to an even deeper understanding of a comprehensive unity."¹⁹ Polanyi's exposition in these and similar passages sufficiently parallels, I believe, Barfield's analysis of polarity earlier in regard to the lexical/expressive as well as expanding/contracting relationship within the living history of language.

To restate more generally, then, the Barfield-Polanyi consanguinity: Polanyi's complex epistemology, including conceptions like "self-giving integration" (as distinct from "self-centered integration"), although primarily a discrimination between cognition in art as opposed to science, is in effect one of many analogues to Barfield's major and ruling argument about participation and polarity, whether as human perception, poetic imagination, or even the shifting of consciousness in its evolution over the length of Western history. In the distant past of "original participation," the human mind was far more "subsidiary" than "focal." Historically speaking, the beginning of modern science in the 17th century corresponds to a shifting emphasis through the development of self-consciousness and a corresponding de-emphasis in participation illustrated, for instance, in the earlier Medieval theory of the humors or the cosmological assumptions dramatized, say, by C.S. Lewis in *The Discarded Image*--what Thomas Kuhn might call a preceding "paradigm." Poetry and imaginative art afterwards would come to articulate in a self-conscious way the participational relationship no longer experienced as part of normal human perception. To put much of this in another way, poetry is to the epistemological act in Barfield what science, if properly understood, is to the epistemological act in Polanyi.

As with knowing, so too, though less obviously, with being. Barfield's metaphysical views, radiating outward from his arguments regarding poetry and language history are favorable, I believe, to Polanyi's explication of reality as

stratified structures or “boundary conditions.” Part of their shared view herein no doubt stems from each man’s profound sense of hierarchy traceable to a common source in Augustine, although also in Barfield’s case to such loved texts as the poetry of Milton, Dante, and the Romantics, the philosophy of Plato, the scientific thought in Coleridge, and especially the spiritual science of Rudolph Steiner. The two especially meet, moreover, in their energetic *opposition* to what Barfield calls “idolatry,” i.e. positivism, which holds that one can account for the higher level within a stratified system of reality by the lower. Barfield in particular critiques Darwinism in this context, and both he and Polanyi espouse a non-Darwinian concept of evolution. The fact that Polanyi does not as a philosopher of science propose something like Barfield’s neo-Coleridgean theory of Logos does not alter the “Barfieldian implication” otherwise of Polanyi’s analysis of being. Apart from the parallels in their respective views on imagination and art, then, Polanyi and Barfield complement each other in their fundamental epistemological and ontological perspectives, and in their mutual preoccupation with and commitment to what Barfield calls “the rediscovery of meaning” without resorting to the uneasy “two-truth” solution of science and humanities, a “solution” which seems mainly to have deepened the malaise and made people hunger for something else.²⁰

Let me now end this essay where I began, but with what I hope is a heightened sense of where we have been in these pages. The appearances, as in Barfield’s *Saving The Appearances*, are ultimately united through polarity with phenomena--recapitulating the very history of that word--so that to rescue the one is to rescue the other by making luminous once more their face and thereby our relationship to them (analogously, Richard Gelwick, commenting on the Gestalt-like nature of factual statements in Polanyi’s thought asserts that when “this tacit structure is ignored and values are regarded as inferior to facts, we also lessen our humanity”²¹). Furthermore, a participating relationship between subject and object, between percipient and phenomena, is ultimately for Barfield a polar one; and there is no time in the evolution of Western consciousness when human perception has not been *in fact* a participating, polar agency. But there certainly have been periods when the ordinary person’s awareness of this participation has been less, or even minimal. In the middle of the 19th century, for example, such sense of participation was so minimal that out of that experience came the twin doctrines of Darwinism and positivism. Even in our own time, our experience of participation is often minimal; however, we now have the capacity to reconsider it in the light of post-Cartesian philosophy, post-Newtonian physics, as well as post-critical thinking. To really understand polarity at all is to understand polar-predominance, for equilibrium is by definition hardly ever the case. In Barfieldian original participation, the predominating pole was outside the human subject in the world itself. The evolution of consciousness in the West away from original participation has meant also the gradual reversal in predominance from the pole without to the pole within, toward self-consciousness. That centripetal polar-predominance probably reached its peak in the middle of the last century, and *The Origin of Species* along with the beginnings of positivism are in a sense its appropriate touchstones or markers. Admittedly it remains to be seen whether ecology, the new physics, Polanyi’s post-critical epistemology, or a truly comprehensive theorist like Barfield himself are rather early symptoms of a gradual re-reversal in polar-predominance from a somewhat imprisoning subjectivity outward toward the world and thus in the direction of something like “final participation.” Short of that, it is surely a perspective and a body of thought which, without its exhibiting a scintilla of trendiness, deserves a more frequent hearing in this era of postmodern deconstruction with its denial of the sacramental “transparency” of language affirmed by Polanyi and expostulated so extensively in Barfield.

NOTES

1. The notable exception to this usage is, of course, the school of phenomenology in philosophy--an important exception that bears on Barfield's thought, suggesting certain overlapping strands between him and phenomenology.
2. Owen Barfield, *The Rediscovery of Meaning and other Essays* (Middletown: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1977), p.11.
3. Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 344.
4. See Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, Chapter 13.
5. Ibid
6. *Saving The Appearances: A Study in Idolatry* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965), p. 82.
7. An excellent analysis of Barfield's relation to Rudolph Steiner can be found in Robert J. Reilly, *Romantic Religion* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia, 1971), pp. 13-97.
8. Michael Polanyi, *Knowing and Being* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 138.
9. Ibid, p.145.
10. *The Rediscovery of Meaning*, p. 16-17.
11. See William Holtz, "Thermodynamics and the Comic and Tragic Modes," *Western Humanities Review*, 25 (Summer, 1971), p.203.
12. For Polanyi's views on Darwin and evolution see *Personal Knowledge*, pp. 382-390; for an excellent analysis of Polanyian thought in this domain see Marjorie Grene, *The Knower and the Known* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974), pp.185-201, and passim.
13. *Knowing and Being*, pp. 154-55.
14. Owen Barfield, *Speaker's Meaning* (Middletown: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 38-39.
15. Ibid, pp.23-24.
16. Ibid, p. 56.
17. Ibid, p.39.
18. *Knowing and Being*, p. 125.

19. Ibid.

20. These two “restatement” paragraphs are extracted almost verbatim from my earlier short article on Polanyi and Barfield (see “Editor’s Note”). I believe the explosion of postmodernist theory is itself a part of that wider “hunger for something else” other than the “two truths” of science and humanities.

21. Richard Gelwick, *The Way of Discovery: An Introduction to the Thought of Michael Polanyi* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), p. 146.

PRINCIPAL WORKS BY OWEN BARFIELD

History in English Words (Michigan: Eerdsmans, 1967; first published 1926 by Faber and Faber).

Poetic Diction: A Study in Meaning (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964; first published 1928 by Faber and Faber).

Romanticism Comes of Age (Middletown: Wesleyan, 1967; first published 1944 by Rudolph Steiner Press).

Saving the Appearances: A Study in Idolatry (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1965; first published 1957 by Faber and Faber).

Worlds Apart (Middletown: Wesleyan, 1963).

Unancestral Voice (Middletown: Wesleyan, 1965).

Speaker’s Meaning (Middletown, Wesleyan, 1967).

The Case for Anthroposophy (London: Rudolph Steiner Press, 1970).

What Coleridge Thought (Middletown: Wesleyan, 1971).

The Rediscovery of Meaning and Other Essays (Middletown: Wesleyan, 1977).

This Ever Diverse Pair (Edinburgh: Floris Books, 1985).

Owen Barfield on C.S. Lewis, ed G.B. Tennyson (Middletown: Wesleyan, 1989).

Book Reviews

David Holbrook (ed.), *What Is It To Be Human? New Perspectives in Philosophy*. Avebury Series in Philosophy. Aldershot, Hants, England: Avebury, 1990. L27.50. Brookfield, VT: Gower Publishing Co. \$49.95 (est.). Pp. 158. ISBN 1-85628-055-1.

This book includes the proceedings of a conference held at Downing College, Cambridge, in September 1987, conducted by Mr. Holbrook, Dr. David Lamb and Dr. Wolfe Mays. Most of the contents have already been published elsewhere. Mr. Holbrook, Emeritus Fellow of Downing College, has been a member of *Convivium* since it began; Dr. Mays was likewise a member for many years; and Dr. Lamb, also at the University of Manchester and the Editor of the *Avebury Series in Philosophy*, has recently joined us. Several other members attended the conference, which was a part of Mr. Holbrook's campaign against reductionist and mechanistic views of man. (See his *Education, Nihilism and Survival*, 1977; *Education and Philosophical Anthropology*, 1987; *Evolution and the Humanities*, 1987; *Further Studies in Philosophical Anthropology*, 1988.) Mr. Holbrook's contributions are the opening report on the conference, at the end of which are printed comments by some of the other participants; a reprint of a paper from *The British Medical Journal*, 1985, on "Medical Ethics and the Potentialities of the Living Being;" and the two concluding surveys, "A Hundred Years of Philosophical Anthropology" (reprinted from *The Sources of Hope*, R. Fitzgerald, ed., 1979) and "Changing Attitudes to the Nature of Man: A Working Bibliography." Dr. Lamb has contributed "The Meaning of Death," a detailed paper on the medical and moral problems of defining death, deciding that someone has died, allowing someone to die, ending attempts at resuscitation, and the removal of organs, and "Further Considerations of Ethical Problems in Medicine" (reprinted from his *Down the Slippery Slope*, 1987), on the legal and moral problems of the right to refuse treatment, passive euthanasia, and living wills and Natural Death Acts. And Dr.

Mays has contributed "Linguistic Analysis and Phenomenology," a reduced version of his introduction to *Linguistic Philosophy and Phenomenology* (W. Mays and S.C. Brown, eds., 1972), with a new appendix on "The Concept of a Person and its Ethical Bearing," and "Michael Polanyi: Recollections and Comparisons," a paper from a conference on Polanyi and Phenomenology in 1977 (organized by *Convivium*) and published in the *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 1978.

At first sight the contents appear to have little connection with one another and with some of the discussions at the conference, as reported in the opening chapter. Yet there is at least the following scheme. Mr. Holbrook's opening and closing papers set out the challenge of reductionist and mechanistic theories of man with their moral and educational implications, the need for an alternative, and sources where that may be found, especially Polanyi, Marjorie Grene, phenomenological biology and psychology, and psychoanalysis. Dr. Mays then gives a more specific account of some of the alternative sources--Polanyi and phenomenology--while Dr. Lamb, with a thorough grounding in medical and legal practice, and Mr. Holbrook in his companion paper, reveal how scientific, medical, and technological issues and procedures regarding illness, death, transplants, and so forth, necessarily raise legal and moral questions which limited views of persons inevitably ignore or distort. Those are serious questions, the answers to which have grave consequences for the life and death of patients and those yet to be born.

For readers with a general knowledge of philosophy and the general themes addressed, the most rewarding papers will be those by Dr. Lamb with their detailed references to medical and legal practice and opinion. Such readers, like the reviewer, may feel that Mr. Holbrook's swift surveys sometimes superficially assimilate one thinker or idea to another and miss the distinctiveness of each. He

also glosses over conflicts among his alternative sources yet expresses caution regarding criticism of some aspects of Freud and the gloominess, nihilism and amoralism of Sartre. Some would regard Freud as almost equally reductionist and mechanistic as, say, behaviorism. Again, while “philosophical anthropology” as an inquiry pursued under that name does apply to many of the persons and movements mentioned (e.g. Scheler, Plessner, Buytendijk), all of whom have presented genuine alternatives to reductionist and mechanistic views of man, yet the very views to which Mr. Holbrook is rightly opposed are themselves examples of “philosophical anthropology,” although their authors may, in positivist fashion, explicitly repudiate that notion and fail really to articulate their notions of man. The conflict is one *within* the field, though positivist philosophies, allied to the reductionist versions, repudiate the idea of philosophical anthropology just as they repudiate metaphysics and ultimately philosophy itself. And the exigencies of compression make the surveys read like students’ essays: “As Maslow says . . . ,” “As Biswanger says”

Yet the book, like the conference, is, I presume, addressed to the general reader concerned with some of the real problems of our time. Unfortunately, the economics of publishing and the consequent price militate against that aim, and perhaps a paperback version would have been more appropriate. All the same, the three contributors have tackled a very important task, and their efforts to spread awareness of the dangers of limited and distorted images of humans along with alternative and superior views deserve support and success.

R. T. Allen

Notes On Contributors

Doug Adams teaches in the Theology and the Arts program at Pacific School of Religion and the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley. His most recent book is *Transcendence with the Human Body in Art: Segal, De Staebler, Johns and Christo* (1991).

R.T. Allen is a teacher and author as well as editor and coordinator for the UK Polanyi studies group; he recently published a volume titled *Michael Polanyi in the Thinkers of Our Time* series.

John Apczynski is on the faculty at Saint Bonaventure University; he is author of *Doers of the Word* (1977).

Walter Gulick teaches in the interdisciplinary humanities program at Eastern Montana College. Gulick has been active as a paper writer or respondent for many years in the Polanyi study group which meets annually in conjunction with the meeting of the American Academy of Religion.

Richard A. Hocks is a member of the English Department at the University of Missouri, Columbia. Much of his scholarship has focused upon Henry James including *Henry James and Pragmatic Thought* (1974) and *Henry James: A Study of the Short Fiction* (1990). Hocks also has long-standing interests in both the thought of Owen Barfield and Michael Polanyi.

Philip Lewin teaches in the humanities program at Clarkson University in Potsdam, NY. His special interests are epistemology and narrative and philosophy of science.

David Rutledge is a professor of religion at Furman University; last year he gave the Rockwell Lectures at Rice University on "Humans and Planet Earth: Networks of Mutuality."

James Stines is on the faculty at Appalachian State University; his recent interest in chaos theory is explored in his short article here but also in a longer paper ("Polanyi, Chaos Theory and Time") which he delivered at the Spring 1991 Kent State University Polanyi Centennial Conference.

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. All materials from U.K. contributors should first be sent to John Puddefoot. Manuscripts should be double-spaced type with notes at the end; writers are encouraged to employ simple citations within the text when possible. Use MLA or APA style. 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.

Manuscripts should include the author's name on a separate page since submissions normally will be sent out for blind review. In addition to the typescript of a manuscript to be reviewed, authors are expected to provide an electronic copy (on either a 5.25" or 3.5" disk) of accepted articles; it is helpful if original submissions are accompanied by a disk. ASCII text as well as most popular IBM word processors are acceptable; MAC text can usually be translated to ASCII. Be sure that disks include all relevant information which may help converting files to Word Perfect or ASCII. Persons with questions or problems associated with producing an electronic copy of manuscripts should phone or write Phil Mullins (816-271-4386).

Insofar as possible, *TAD* is willing to work with authors who have special problems producing electronic materials.

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The Polanyi Society and Allied Meetings

November 22 and 23, 1991

Kansas City, Missouri

Registration for the AAR meetings not required for participation

Joint Meeting of The Polanyi Society and The North American Paul Tillich Society

Time: November 22, 1991 2:00-4:00 p.m. Place: Room Young B (3rd Floor)
Allis Plaza Hotel, 200 West Twelfth, Kansas City, MO 64104

Symposium: "Post-Critical Interdisciplinarity: the Polanyi-Tillich Dialogue of 1962"
A. Arnold Wettstein, Rollins College. Presiding

Richard Gelwick, University of New England.
"Polanyi's Search for a Post-critical Logic in Science and Theology"

Charles McCoy, Pacific School of Religion/GTU
"The Post Critical and Fiduciary Dimension in Polanyi and Tillich"

Durwood Foster, Pacific School of Religion/GTU
""Faith and Knowing in Polanyi and Tillich"

The Polanyi Society Centennial Banquet

Time: November 22, 1991 7:30 -9:30 p.m. Place: Room Turner B (3rd Floor)
Allis Plaza Hotel, 200 West Twelfth, Kansas City, MO 64104

Richard Gelwick, University of New England. Presiding

Panel Presentation: The Tacit Victory and the Unfinished Agenda:

Panelists: Martha Crunkleton, Bates College

Joe Kroger, St. Michael's College

Daniel Hardy, Center for Theological Inquiry/Princeton

The banquet can accommodate 25-40 persons. The Polanyi Society guaranteed reservations for 20. Menus and final pricing for the banquet meal are not presently available but will be in the \$20-25 range. Please make reservations for the banquet as soon as possible but no later than November 8, 1991. To reserve send a check for \$20 to Phil Mullins, MWSC, St. Joseph, MO 64507.

Regular Meeting of The Polanyi Society at the AAR

Time: November 23, 1991 9:00 to 12 noon, November 23, 1991 Place: Room McShann A (third floor)
Allis Plaza Hotel, 200 West Twelfth, Kansas City, MO 64104

Phil Mullins, Missouri Western State College. Presiding

Ronald L. Hall, Francis Marion College "Critical and Post-Critical Objectivity"

Martin Moleski, Canisius College. Respondent

Phil Rolnick, Greensboro College "Immanent Principle and Personal Transcendence: Polanyi's Teleology of Progress"

Diane Yeager, Georgetown University. Respondent

Participants are expected to have read the papers. Papers can be ordered for \$5.00 from Phil Mullins, MWSC, St. Joseph, MO 64507