

Tradition & Discovery

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Preface

This issue of TAD has three major articles which should be of special interest to those working in philosophy and religious studies. Taylor Scott's essay is a very straightforward introduction to the thought of William H. Poteat, a thinker who has made good use of Polanyi's writing for many years as a philosopher and teacher. Many members of The Polanyi Society, including Scott, are former Poteat students. Poteat will be the invited guest of The Polanyi Society at the upcoming meeting in Washington D. C. See David Rutledge's invitation to this meeting (p. 5) for details. Elizabeth Newman's essay is an interesting piece of constructive theology which examines questions about what constitutes "post-critical" thought. Her essay was originally a paper presented to the 1992 Polanyi Society meeting held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature. John Apczynski's essay, originally a paper for the 1991 Kent State Polanyi centennial conference, treats a topic which needed careful examination: he explores in some detail the congruence between Polanyi's and Augustine's theory of knowledge. He locates Polanyi's thought within the Augustinian stream in order to offer Polyanian suggestions about the nature of the reality of God.

Please notice that there is information on page 42 about the electronic Polanyi discussion list available through INTERNET and BITNET. John Apczynski recently publicized the existence of this discussion forum in the INTERNET listing of new groups. There are now over 40 persons from across the world who are subscribers. Interestingly, a great many of these folk are not members of The Polanyi Society. Many, but not all, are academics; they come from a wide range of disciplines and have quite an array of different interests in Polanyi's thought.

This issue of TAD is the first of the 1993-94 academic year. If you have not already renewed your membership in The Polanyi Society, please use the red page inserted in this issue to do so.

Phil Mullins

Tradition and Discovery is indexed selectively in *The Philosopher's Index* and *Religion One: Periodicals*. Book reviews are indexed in *Index to Book Reviews in Religion*.

NEWS AND NOTES

R. MELVIN KEISER of Guilford College has edited with Tony Stoneburner a book *Stanley Romaine Hopper, The Way of Transfiguration: Religious Imagination as Theopoeisis* (Louisville: Westminster Press, 1992) and also published *Inward Light and the New Creation: A Theological Meditation on the Center and Circumference of Quakerism* (Wallingford: Pendle Hill, 1991).

DENNIS CATO adds to the education list from ERIC online files one of his articles missed: "The Philosophic Pretense of Linguistic Analysis: A Polanyian Perspective on Joe Green's Drawing Out Paul Hirst's Concept of Reason," *The Journal of Educational Thought*, 20, no. 3, December, 1986.

We regret to inform The Polanyi Society that WALTER JAMES NEIDHARDT, M.E., M.S., Ph.D., Associate Professor of Physics at the New Jersey Institute of Technology died suddenly this summer. Jim was a strong and generous supporter of our work. Besides his work in physics, he was very active in science and theological writing and discussion. One of his last works was coauthored with James E. Loder, *The Knight's Move - The Relational Logic of Spirit in Theology and Science* (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1992).

It is no news about the special opportunity for dialogue with WILLIAM H. POTEAT at this year's American Academy of Religion meetings, but it is important to get your plans made. The AAR is expecting the largest meeting that it has so far held. One session with Poteat will be presided over by RON HALL of Francis Marion College who was a student of Poteat and the other by CHARLES MCCOY of the

Graduate Theological Union and Pacific School of Religion who also has guided many doctoral students into the thought of Michael Polanyi.

JOHN PUDDFOOT returned from his meetings in New Zealand with promising thoughts about the interface of science and theology and also the alternatives of post-modernist and post-critical thought. He has plans for sharing some of his insights at a later time in *TAD*.

JOHN PUDDFOOT also reports that *CONVIVIAM* will sponsor a one day conference at Cambridge University on March 5, 1994. Speakers and details will be announced later.

WILLIAM T. SCOTT is progressing on his monumental biography of Michael Polanyi which contains a wealth of information that will aid the work of scholars in many fields from physical chemistry to theology. At this point, Bill has one more chapter to complete and then the introduction and other details.

PHILIP A. ROLNICK'S *Analogical Possibilities: How Words Refer to God* was recently published by Scholars Press. RON HALL'S *Word and Spirit: A Kierkegaardian Critique of the Modern Age* also is a new publication from Indiana University Press. Both of these books will be reviewed in an upcoming issue of *TAD*.

WALTER GULICK returned in July from a Spring semester as a Fulbright Scholar in Budapest, Hungary teaching at the Technical University of Budapest. While in Hungary, Gulick met and worked with some members of the Michael Polanyi Liberal

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Philosophical Association. He helped with the project of putting out another issue of *Polanyiana*, the journal produced by the MPLPA. A future issue of *TAD* will carry an article by Gulick on his semester in Hungary.

RICHARD ALLEN is working on a collection of Polanyi's published papers on politics, economics and philosophy; he hopes eventually to publish a selection of these papers not included in other collections. He also is doing some bibliographic work on Polanyi and has encountered difficulties locating some materials. The following difficulties regarding Polanyi materials have surfaced: (1) Polanyi apparently gave a talk on the Russian Revolution (the basis for some later publications) to the historical association in Manchester in 1936; was this ever published? (2) Two speeches on modern revolution are reported to have been published in *The Spectator* (London) in 1945-46 but are not published there. (3) A speech to the Congress Lyceum is reported to have been published in *Quest* (Bombay) in December 1960 but is not in any issue of *Quest* in 1960-61. Allen (20 Ulverscroft Road, Loughborough, Leic. LE 11 3PU) would much appreciate hearing from any scholar working on Polanyi who can shed light on these problems.

JOHN APCZYNSKI'S "Belief in God, Proper Basicity, and Rationality" *JAAR*, LX,2 was briefly mentioned in the News and Notes of *TAD* 19:1; below is an update on ensuing discussion of this 1992 article: The essay attempts to defend the position outlined by Alvin Plantinga that belief in God is "properly basic" by arguing that understanding Plantinga's claims from within a historical tradition (the Augustinian-Reformed) can respond to challenges that have been posed to his claim. While no explicit references to Polanyi's position were indicated, the notion of "indwelling" clearly informs this defense of Plantinga's argument. In his "rejoinder" to J. Wesley Robbins' criticism of his

argument, Apczynski characterizes Robbins' position as "Rortian" and states that a reading of indwelling along Polanyian lines does not lead to the consequences Robbins fears. This is to appear in the *JAAR*, LXI,601-4.

JOHN APCZYNSKI'S essay entitled "John Hick's Theocentrism: Revolutionary or Implicitly Exclusionist?" was included in a recent issue of *Modern Theology* (8:1, 1992). Apczynski provided the following brief statement about his article: "John Hick has attempted to articulate a generalized theory of religion as a basis for inter-religious dialogue. Using a particularist approach dependent on a Polanyian perspective and employing insights from Alasdair MacIntyre, this essay argues that Hick's proposal fails because implicitly he is intruding an "Enlightenment" model of religion into the process, an intrusion which is provincial and distortive of genuine dialogue."

Richard Gelwick
General Coordinator

To: Members of The Polanyi Society

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RE: Polanyi Society Meeting with William H. Poteat

The Polanyi Society has invited William H. Poteat, Professor Emeritus of Christianity and Culture at Duke University, to be present and discuss his work at both sessions of this year's Polanyi Society function held at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature. In the spirit of Poteat's thought, we are not planning our usual formal papers and responses; we thus hope to encourage a genuinely open conversation with Bill himself about *Polanyian Meditations: In Search of a Post-Critical Logic* (1985), *A Philosophical Daybook*, *Post-Critical Investigations* (1990) and the collection of essays that is due out this fall.

Members of The Polanyi Society are cordially invited to participate in these sessions in Washington. Times and location are listed below:

Friday evening, November 19, 1993, 7:30-10:00 p.m. in the Calvert Room of the Omni Shoreham Hotel.

Saturday morning, November 20, 1993, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon in the Calvert Room of the Omni Shoreham Hotel (located across the street from the Sheraton Washington).

AAR/SBL members are reminded that this schedule is printed in the annual meeting program in the "Additional Meetings" section.

I am excited about the prospect of another stimulating gathering, and look forward to seeing many folk in November.

William H. Poteat: A Laudatio

R. Taylor Scott

Key Words: mindbody, speech, acquisition of language, Descartes, Heidegger, ground, meaning

William H. Poteat's thought, while indebted to Michael Polanyi, originates in Poteat's own project of remembering all articulate significances to their pre-articulate grounding in the mindbody. He invented the term mindbody both to overstep the traditional distinction between mind and body and to name the living arche of all meaning and meaning-discernment. In focusing on the recovery of the mindbody as the bedrock ontological matrix for the acquisition of speech, the act of explicit reference par excellence, Poteat radicalizes and advances Polanyi's efforts to reclaim the tacit roots of all explicit knowledge.

I

Let me offer an apology. There are many former and present students of Bill Poteat who could and should be writing this piece, and write it better than I. It is Jim Stines who must bear the brunt of being the initiator of all this, since it was he who asked me to write a short essay on "The Thought of William H. Poteat." I have always had the highest regard for Jim, thinking him to be both mensch and sage. Now I see he is merely mensch. Being incapable of saying no to anyone, especially to the likes of Jim, I agreed to the folly and cursed my fate, as well as Jim. What follows, though, cannot satisfy Jim's request. There is no one better to write on the thought of William Poteat than Poteat himself, and his writings are available.¹

What I have set for myself is a less pretentious task; namely, to speak of what the man and his thinking has opened up for me. It is told that in the 17th century, a Caroline divine wrote a book in which he named the day and hour of the impending end of the world. The day came and went. Life went on. The divine then wrote a second book in which he announced that the world has indeed come to an end, but no one had noticed.

There is surrounding the work of Poteat, at times penetrating into the actual arguments themselves, the knowledge that we live in dark times, times in which the ligaments which hold us, and the world we inhabit, have come apart, leaving each of us alone, suffering our disintegration as idiots. Indeed the spiritual condition of contemporary society is one of unrelieved idiocy, both in the sense of lives lived in terrible isolation and in the sense of a sophisticated and willed stupidity. The stupidity has to do with the oppressive dominance over our imaginations of ways of conceiving ourselves which make it impossible for us in those conceptions to think from the fact that we are in the world with others. These conceptions are connected to the problematic to which Polanyi addressed himself; and which, generally, can be said to be the systematic exclusion from reflection's landscape of any tacit grounding of explicit attention. Thinking under these conditions inevitably produces a view of ourselves in which we are absent from any indwelt surround.

Poteat's intellectual passion is directed toward reconceiving ourselves in the world in ways which describe our actual performances of knowing and doing which resist the turn away from our prearticulate reliance upon the tacit for all articulate and explicit notifications we make. His sense is that without attention to the prearticulate forming powers of our living bodies in an environ which holds us through the root of our living depths, sooner or later our explicit powers will lose their traction in the world, and we will float in the abstractions of a disembodied intellect, hovering over the "world" each at best could only construct for her knowing. Even here,

though, the ability to construct such a mental landscape out of (what is assumed to be) the chaos of sensations is taken to be itself lucid to the constructor, and hence no intrinsic participation of the knower in the world is possible. There is nothing outside the constructing intellect in which a knower could participate. Moreover, since the construction is private to the “transcendental unity of apperception” and lucid thereto, the constructor is not, nor can be, a participant in any public community of knowers. All knowledge is construction, private and idiotic.

All this is familiar ground to Polanyians. What does Poteat offer which is not so familiar, indeed is radically unfamiliar, to those of us who know Polanyi?

Poteat takes the tacit/explicit, from/to, subsidiary/focal polarity which is the core of Polanyi’s thinking and radicalizes it so as to ground the polarity in a depth of living intelligence which Poteat calls “The Mindbody.” This radix of all feats of knowing and doing Poteat takes to be implicit in Polanyi’s work but never directly (or as directly as can be) explored. In fact, Poteat’s investigations of a post-critical logic is only occasioned by Polanyi. Poteat supplies Polanyi’s work with its radical ontological source. “Polanyian Meditations” may be a misnomer. Poteat’s imagination found its ally in Polanyi, but not its originator. The subtitle of the book, “In Search of a Post-Critical Logic” seems more appropriate to its contents. Polanyi seems a distant background to Poteat’s rummaging into the living and ordering ground in which we are thoroughly concreted, in which we are, the non-existence of which is impossible to conceive.

So, in order to encounter Poteat one must put aside the expectation that he is yet another commentator upon and apologist for Michael Polanyi. Indebted as he is to the man, Poteat’s work is uniquely his own. The question becomes, what is it that Poteat does in his metanoia backwards and downwards within our intelligent feats, trying to glimpse the chiasmus where intelligence is born? He expends strenuous effort in trying to remain faithful to the chiasmus, to remain within its mysterious movements so that as he writes he will not abstract his words from their flesh. His writing is therefore convoluted, looped back upon itself as he digs his way backwards even as he moves forward. To read him is exhausting. His writing must have drained him terribly. His repetitions, relentless stalking, etymological digs, and (for me) words as unfamiliar as the far side of the moon (once was)-words, by the way, when looked up in a dictionary, seem absolutely appropriate once understood!--requires of the reader that s/he follows in herself the same labyrinth he leads into, a labyrinth wondrous and graceful as well as difficult and slippery.

Before going further into what Poteat does in his return to the source, I think it is important to separate him from two other thinkers who are (at least in modernity) the two who stand out in a similar quest--one at the beginning and the other (it is said) at the end--Descartes and Heidegger.

Descartes’ source (the cogito) is of course the very opposite of Poteat’s goal. A disembodied mind in a dispirited object is hardly what Poteat’s legacy from Polanyi would call forth. In fact such angelistic mechanism lies at the source of our modern post-apocalypse and contemporary faithlessness. Poteat’s thinking is not such a thorough going rebellion against what is on hand as is Descartes’!

As for Heidegger, Poteat is to be distinguished from him in two ways. One, Poteat does not think of himself as the prophet of Being, presiding over the appearance of Being as its custodian in terms of Being’s be-ing of itself, first from out of the production metaphysics of Greek thought, throughout Being’s enslavement to that metaphysic until the crisis of 20th Century nihilism, occasioning the birth of the “letting-be” of Being and the clearing, spread before us of the “letting-be,” in which we recover our thinking in opened thanking.(!) Poteat is no mystagogue. Two, Heidegger’s vista is always “out there” in the Being which beings itself. His disclaimers concerning humanism, i.e., that he is not one nor is his thinking thinking about the human condition, is both quite obvious to all who read him and is also his modernity. Modernity is a project against the human, a project

to escape the conditions of sensuous perception, of temporally constituted conception, of morally upheld conventions of discourse and action, in order to “think Being” from a transhuman perspective.

Poteat is, to say the least, a human thinker. His source lies close to us, is everywhere present to and in us. His radicalizing of Polanyi does not erase the personal, it searches for our roots.

So, if Descartes’ source requires inward withdrawal from the world, Poteat’s requires downward recovery of our presence in the world; and if Heidegger’s source requires the dissolving of the human into the Be-ing of Being, Poteat’s requires the establishment of the human in our lively mindbodily rootedness in what is.

II

What is Poteat’s source, and how do we follow his lead in grasping it? It is necessary to say two things at once here. One is that the ground Poteat is recovering is not one which is somewhere other than where we are always. Our grasp of it is possible because of its grasp of us, its being the reflexive force of enabling us to grasp. It cannot be lost. But despite that, it can be (is) eclipsed, covered over, by an attitude and an imagination that wills itself to be dependent upon nothing other than its own lucid markings and which dreams of a freedom of expression in which that expression is boundless. In such case, the ground is lost; lost, that is to say, to awareness, to reflection. The irony is such a loss is possible only because the ground forever thrusts us into expression (and hence, away from its being an item in our expression) and we become captured in the narcissistic fetishism of our expressions, forgetting and being faithless to that which gives us to ourselves.

Having said that, the theme in Poteat’s work² which I wish to remark is expression, and more specifically, that expression which is speech.³ Even more specifically that speech which is bodied forth as well as sounded forth.

By being bodied forth, consider the following example which, I think, says much about what Poteat wishes to grasp about speech which is not sounded, and about certain implications which such silent saying has.

I had the occasion, some years ago, to watch my daughter-in-law feed my infant grandson. As she moved the spoon to him and as he opened his mouth to receive the food, she also opened hers. This seemed odd to me, so without remarking it, I observed further movements. Every time she moved the spoon to him, she opened her mouth in synch with him. What was going on here?

There is one thing I know was not going on there, although it is in fact what I am usually told by my students whose imaginations are so thoroughly captured by the force of lucidity and its attendant domination-ideology in which each of us is in control of every conceivable happening, in control that is, if we are educated into lucid techne; namely, that my daughter-in-law was teaching my grandson to eat! That is the only way my students can make sense of what was happening. (I resist the temptation to analyze further that misreading of the situation, because it expresses a horrible, but accurate, declaration of our present idiotic desperation and macrocephalic terror.) One has to be taught to eat? To breathe? To grasp? To dance? To walk? To speak?

It is probably true that one learns to do all of these things. But does one ever have a teacher in that learning? And what is it to learn but to have no teacher?

It can only mean that our lives are such that accompanying the acquisition of our skills and our understandings transactions are going on in which forms are being engendered in mute reflexivity where we are in deepest intercourse with the world; an intercourse as ordinary as our own bodies, and as mysterious as the lively silence from which we come, which surrounds and penetrates our speaking, and in which our speech finds its birth.

My daughter-in-law is in the same world as my grandson. Her deepest lively place therein is tentacled to my grandson’s deepest lively place therein. When he moves, even if only in her natural anticipation, so does she. They move together, woven into a pre-verbal (but not pre-linguistic) warp in which movements have their

semantic weight and somatic spark. Truth be known, something of the same kind of danced discourse was happening to me as I observed(!) the scene. My stomach muscles tightened in anticipation, my saliva came forth, my jaw seemed to want to open. But, then, this kind of intercourse occurs for us all, and continuously, in all our transactions. We cringe when we see two cars about to collide. We turn away when someone moves to scratch her fingernails down the blackboard. We put the fork into our mouth, not into our cheek. We follow an argument. We understand a person. And all of these things (and quite literally everything else) emerge from the same danced discourse in which my daughter-in-law was engaged with her son.

There is an additional fact in all this that is telling. When I asked my daughter-in-law why she was opening her mouth while feeding her son, she denied doing it, thinking me to be kidding her. Only with the corroborating evidence of my son did she, in puzzling recognition where I thought I saw the dear look of Mother Eve after she ate of the tree of knowledge and thus was moved by the wonder of dawning wisdom, (never mind the Biblical story), say “Did I really do that?” And then we all laughed, nodding in joyful wisdom (What in fact the Biblical story should have declared. Yahweh was too uptight, or have I overlooked the dark side of the acquisition of wisdom?).

III

Potat’s mind is concentrated, rivetted one might say, at this intersection of the living body’s conceiving of the mind, an intersection he calls, “mindbody,” thereby bringing together at the radix the forms of knowing and doing of explicit markings with the intelligence of our bodies. He wants to focus us upon that place where we live and where our consciousness is prefigured. This place and this focus becomes the radix from which all else in his recent thinking moves, always seeking to recover itself from its temptation to forget its grounding while it pursues its reconfigurations of traditional philosophical problems from that ground’s authorizing lead.

He shows how captured we are by notions of sense and truth which are static, visual, and “explained” (flat), so deeply are we caught in the triple-squeeze of Platonism/Cartesianism/Literacy in our cultural heritage. Being so, we pass over motility, tone, tension, dynamic form (to mention only the most obvious) as these rely upon their parentage in the mindbody, seeking to reduce all that is deep and living in us to that which is visually surfaced, sui generis, and emptied of life. When we have succeeded (which is impossible) in doing that, (so the fantasy runs) then we imagine we can think and be rational. This theme is close to Potat’s intellectual center of gravity. The elimination of forming powers from the living body which is the ground of each and all of us is the theme running through his work, going all the way back to his Ph.D. dissertation on Pascal subtitled, “The Exteriorization of Sensibility.” He is after the pre-articulate language of the body. His word is Mindbody. His is an exploration of the “assumptions our muscles make”, the logic of ligaments, the language of the pre-articulate.

IV

I think it is important at this point to quote Potat himself and what Potat quotes, at some length, concerning this matter of pre-articulate logic and the lively conversation the mindbody has with its surround.

He writes, concerning the acquisition of language by infants and what this acquisition means:

...if there were not in the very shape and rhythm of our preverbal mindbodily existence this primitive and tacit sense of form, whole, and meaning, there could never be for us in our verbalized, mindbodily existence a reality upon which the concepts ‘form,’ ‘whole,’ or ‘meaning’ might come to bear. Joseph Church has said all of this with such straightforward ingenuousness that its profound import may easily be overlooked. He says:

We assume, that words are not simple abstract forms that impinge upon [the

language-acquiring child] from without, but that they reverberate in him and arouse him to at least partial mobilization.... We cannot understand how language gets from outside the child to inside unless it is in some way inside from the beginning; we cannot understand how passive language becomes active language unless it is always to some extent active.

It is of some considerable interest that recent empirical studies of language learning among human infants support these conclusions--though, let it be remembered, these investigators could have generated the hypothesis that the form of the patterned sound of human speech and the form of the motility of preverbal human infants are connatural with one another only by relying upon a more primitive intuition from within their mindbodies of the consanguinity of their own motility and sentience, their own speaking/hearing, and their own sense of meaning.

Roger Lewin, editor of Child Alive, says in his introduction:

The development of social interaction--through touching, breast-feeding, and eye-to-eye contact--begins at birth. The newborn baby displays inbuilt rhythms--in dreaming and sucking behavior for instance--and these soon expand into direct social contact through visual and vocal signaling. The inbuilt rhythms are prelude to intentional and deliberate signaling by the baby.

In "Early Attempts at Speech," from which I shall quote extensively, Colwyn Trevarthen says:

A discovery of major importance is that the basic pacemakers of attending and intending movements in infants operate at frequencies in time that are the same as adults.... As the person approaches the infant... then all the emanations from this approach have rhythmical properties that are comparable with those inside the movement-generating mechanism of the infant's brain. From this correspondence I believe the infant builds a bridge to persons.

Trevarthen, with Penelope Hubble and Lynn Murray, has made films at Edinburgh that reveal that

the acts of two-month-olds responding to attentions of elder persons outline many psychological processes of talking between adults. We have found activity which is best called "prespeech" because both the context in which it occurs and its form indicate that it is a rudimentary form of speaking by movements of lips and tongue... We note a specific pattern of breathing with prespeech even when sounds are not made.... Also associated with prespeech are distinctive 'hand-waving' movements that are developmentally related to the gestures or gesticulations of adults in "eager" and "graphic" conversation.

Most striking of all, perhaps, Trevarthen suggests that

changes that all unaffected mothers make to slower, more emphatic but gentle movements and to “baby talk” may come from a return of the mother to more elementary or basic components in her innate repertoire of social arts.

Of course! We are able to talk to babies because our own babyhood (pace, Descartes) is always contemporaneously with us! Again, it is embarrassing to have to make much of this point in philosophical argument, since we all know it quite well.

Finally, in an essay, “Speech Makes Babies Move,” William Condon concludes:

that the neonate moves synchronously with adult speech as early as the first day after birth.

Having worked out a device for relating units of body motion to units of speech in experiments with film, Condon was able to observe that

microanalysis led me to the startling observation...that a listener moves synchronously with a speaker during interaction. This is usually a completely “unconscious” reaction. It seems to be a form of precise and almost simultaneous entrainment on the part of the listener in relation to the emergent articulatory patterning of the speaker’s speech.

Later he says:

There is an ongoing isomorphism or entrainment between the listener’s process units and the speakers speech. It is like an intricate and subtle dance which is always occurring during interactions.⁴

V

This phenomenon of the lively exchange and mutual rhythm of speech and its acquisition is, of course, carried forward throughout our lives and is the context of all speech in all of its different modes and deployments. Moving in, through, under, around, and above speakers is this lively web of action and meaning.

When one is attentive to the primacy of speaking words for the writing of them in the enactment of language and in its acquisition, the thickness of this lively web connecting us to the world of significances and to the world of signifiers becomes so apparent that one wonders how anyone could be blind to it. But being blind to it is exactly what an imagination in servitude to literacy effects. Here the lively web of interchange is exchanged for a flat and static plane of unraveled signifiers, loose significances, and dubious referentiality which supplants the conversation and substitutes a lifeless silence filled with visual markings, markings which lack traction anywhere.

Poteat's claim is that our intellectual powers are (and have been for sometime) enthralled by the visual to the extent that when we put conceptual issues to ourselves we put them into a map, a visual field of referential signifiers in search of a referent, and lose the lively intercourse in which literacy itself is set and due to which meanings are generated. To recover this lively web of the dance of speech as the orational source of reason would turn the tables on the totalitarianism of the literate imagination. The doing of that would intellectually return us to ourselves, a place we have never left anyway, although some of us have less of a solid foothold there than others. Solid or not, though, it is our only ground. Without this ground, the Caroline divine was correct: the world has come to an end and no one has noticed!

Endnotes

¹ *Polanyian Meditations: In Search of a Post-Critical Logic* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1985); *A Philosophical Daybook: Post-Critical Investigations* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990); Thomas A. Langford and William H. Poteat (eds.), *Intellect and Hope: Essays in The Thought of Michael Polanyi* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1968); as well as a forthcoming collection (University of Missouri Press), edited by James Nichol and James Stines, of Poteat's earlier and more critical essays, for which he is justly famous, including inter alia, "I Will Die; An Analysis" and "God and The Private I." In the Nichol and Stines' collection is a complete bibliography of Poteat's writings.

² His work, while concentrated, deals with many themes. I am taking only one to represent the general force and substance of his thinking.

³ Poteat deals with speech in many ways and terms; eg, orality and literacy, la parole and la langue, music, silence, and a host of other expressive acts such as how one's body incarnates meaning in posture, in movement, in deflated or inflated chest cavity, etc. The richness of expression and of speech and language in Poteat's work should not be confused with my pedestrian remarks following.

⁴ *Polanyian Meditations*, 194-196.

An Alternative Form of Theological Knowing

Elizabeth Newman

ABSTRACT Key Words: liturgy, theology, post-critical, deconstruction, Polanyi, personal, knowing, epistemology.

This essay seeks to incorporate Polanyi's post-critical conception of knowing more fully into theology by emphasizing that all knowing is a personal activity rooted in a particular place. While deconstruction describes itself as post-critical, its assumption that all knowledge is a social "construct" and/or an instrument of social coercion fails to account for the involvement of the person in all acts of knowing. A more genuine post-critical approach takes seriously the cohesion between the knower and

Mind and matter, meaning and its incarnation, are at bottom inseparable, for they are consanguine creatures of the figuring powers of our mindbodies.

William H. Poteat

A Philosophical Daybook, 95

How did human beings come to feel that some of the movements they make with their bodies could comment upon others, forgetting that the movements 'commented upon' ('meant,' 'referred to,' 'represented,' 'stood for,' 'designated,' and so on) are just that, movements themselves?

David Sudnow

Talk's Body, 56

Polanyi's conception of knowledge as personal — that the knower participates in all acts of knowing, and that the knower passionately contributes to what is being known — has radical implications both for the content of knowledge (what is known) and, more importantly, for the forms of knowledge (how the knower is dwelling in the world). What and how we know are deeply intertwined. One's personal dwelling place, where one is in the world, such as an apprentice in the presence of a master, shapes and forms what one comes explicitly to know.

My essay relates Polanyi's approach directly to theology. An alternative form of theological knowing implies that the primary forms of knowing often weighted in theology have failed to absorb Polanyi's post-critical philosophy. While Polanyi's philosophy has apparently been absorbed, its implications are only superficially acknowledged. Few theologians today would want to defend objectivism. Certainly the recent emphasis on knowledge as "social construction" — whether the focus is race, gender, or culture — assumes that objectivism is no longer viable. And yet, the current rush toward social, racial, gender, etc. analysis indicates a disturbing academic desperation. I mean by this that theology (and religious studies) is losing, if not already has lost, a sense of place. While objectivism as a form of theological knowing is decried, an alternative that accounts for how we come to know, how we personally participate in theological knowing, has yet to be offered. If anything,

the current shifts in “postmodernist”/ deconstructionist theology, which assume religion is social coercion, erase the personal because such accounts do not take seriously the fiduciary nature of knowing. This inability to offer an alternative account of the theological knowing results from failing to come to terms with Polanyi’s central thesis: that knowledge is personal.

Yet how is theological knowledge personal? By using “personal” to describe knowledge, Polanyi describes not only the content of knowledge, but also our way of knowing, or as I am calling it in this essay, our form of knowing. And our form of knowing invariably assumes that we are some place. A truly coherent theology requires an account of this fact. This is the purpose of my essay.

What is “form”?

I want first to elaborate on what I mean by “form,” an elaboration I believe to be consonant with Polanyi’s approach. Generally speaking, I mean by “form,” the place from which we are oriented. “Form” refers to how we shape, extend our own person, and thus participate in what we seek to know. To use Polanyi’s language, “form” refers to that on which we rely subsidiarily rather than what we attend to focally. From this standpoint, we could say the form of a builder is his reliance on a hammer, on his skill as a builder, and on his bodily memories of having hammered before, so that he may achieve the focal goal of getting the nail into the wall.

Since we necessarily rely on our way or form of knowing, it is impossible strictly to separate the knowing “form” from the known content. Such an effort would be like trying to sculpt a figure with no material. Form and content rely upon and inform each other. A friend of mine, for example, was overwhelmed by the difference between listening to an opera over the radio and attending an opera performed on stage. The richness and depth of the opera performed at the Lyric Operahouse — with the entire drama of romance and tragedy acted and sung before your eyes, with the colorful costumes and the energetic bodily movements — is a different form of knowing than listening to the opera on the radio. The interpretive framework relied upon when attending to the stage opera provides a certain depth to the operatic reality which is not apparent when listening to the opera by radio.¹ If the only way we knew about opera were by radio, our conception of what “opera” is would be entirely different.

The Nixon/Kennedy Presidential debates are an example of the inseparable relation between form and content in the political sphere. Those who saw the debates on TV had a different impression of who “won” the debate than those who had listened to it over the radio. Those who watched it on TV — and relied upon the gestures of the candidates, the look in their eyes, their posture, their perspiration, etc. to shape their knowing — thought Kennedy won, whereas those who heard only the candidates’ voices assumed Nixon had won. Such differences in interpretations of content suggest that how we place ourselves vis-a-vis the focus of our knowing shapes the content of that focus.

Polanyi addresses this interrelation of form and content when he discusses the co-extension of knowing and being. He offers as an example our reliance on a probe in our search for something, we may not know exactly what. Yet we nonetheless trust that the how of our knowing, our form, which is our reliance on the probe among other things, will yield results. And our form of knowing will, of course, shape what we come to know. Polanyi goes so far as to claim that we make the probe or stick “parts of ourselves for reaching beyond them.”² Knowing and being are so intimately related that “if an act of knowing affects our choice between alternative frameworks, or modifies the framework in which we dwell, it involves a change in our way of being.”³

Thus “form” is the grip we have on the world, our imaginative reach as we seek to know, “the extension of our fingers that grasp [the probe].” Philologists, in fact, trace the root of “form” back to one of two options: ferire, which means “to strike,” or dharmar, which means “to hold.” These roots capture a deep and basic

meaning: our form of knowing is our hold on the world, how we strike out towards that which we seek to know.

Like Polanyi, Kant, also attempting to limit the thoroughgoing objectivism of his day, redescribes our form of knowing. In contrast to Polanyi, however, Kant holds that our form of knowing is due to the mind. Though our forms of knowing reside primarily in the structure of the mind, Kant holds that we can only know these forms in experience. “The pure concepts of the understanding must, to be sure, have their source in the nature of the mind, but this does not mean that they are brought about by the object or that they produce the objects.”⁴ Kant thus limits objectivism by asserting that human beings do not have access to things as they are in themselves. Like Polanyi, Kant seeks to limit an absolute objectivism (and subjectivism) by speaking of the “condition of the possibility of knowing,” but for Kant these conditions (which are “both present in all experience and conditions of the validity of all experience”⁵) are ultimately mental, located in the structure of the mind. In contrast, Polanyi does not locate our reliance, our form of knowing, in the structure of the “mind,” abstractly conceived. Polanyi would agree with Wittgenstein who claimed that to imagine that knowing is primarily “mental” causes us to stand on dangerous ground. As Ludwig Wittgenstein has suggested, “One of the most dangerous of ideas for a philosopher is, oddly enough, that we think with our heads or in our heads. The idea of thinking as a process in the head, in a completely enclosed space, gives [the philosopher] something occult.”⁶ Knowing, for Polanyi, is contingent not on the thinking subject as it confronts the thought object, but on personal participation.

Thus for Polanyi, the emphasis on “personal,” “participation,” “indwelling,” etc. indicates the scientist is not primarily a “subject” observing detached “objects.” Rather a process of tacit absorption and incorporation is always going on. Polanyi would have certainly found congenial the comments of Noble Prize recipient Joshua Lederberg, whose discoveries established the genetics of microorganisms. Lederberg rather bizarrely describes his own scientific endeavors:

One needs the ability to strip to the essential attributes of some actor in a process, the ability to imagine oneself inside a biological situation; I literally had to be able to think, for example, ‘What would it be like if I were one of the chemical pieces in a bacterial chromosome?’ - and try to understand what my environment was, try to know where I was, try to know when I was supposed to function in a certain way, and so forth.⁷

The form of Lederberg’s knowing, the how of his knowing, is his ability to dwell inside the world of the bacterial chromosome. As Polanyi points out so thoroughly, the “objectivist” picture of knowing causes us to overlook how we ourselves are rooted in our knowing. Our commitments, passions and judgments not only “contribute” to the content of our knowing, but are themselves the source of knowing. Such commitments and judgments do not reside “in the head” but rather are that on which as embodied knowers we rely.

A Malformed Theology

As I suggested in the introduction, most “postmodernist” theology today fails to fully absorb Polanyi’s post-critical philosophy. Certainly such theology has shifted away from objectivism (and subjectivism) and sought to acknowledge its own social and historical context. Some have suggested, in fact, that there is too much emphasis on place or perspective, i.e., theology is too self-consciously feminist, political, or minority cultural. Yet this understanding of historical/social place to overcome objectivism is not post-critical in Polanyi’s sense. This failure is most evident in the postmodernist/ deconstructionist assumption that truth claims are assertions of power. I want to claim that this theology is not radically different from the conception of knowing that supports objectivism: both approaches fail to come to terms with Polanyi’s notion that knowledge is personal.

While some might regard deconstruction as an intellectual movement that is passing, its continued pervasive influence, even among those who do not explicitly endorse deconstruction, suggests it has not been entirely rejected. Theology as deconstruction operates out of two premises: (1) a “hermeneutics of suspicion”⁸ towards all previous theological “constructs,” and (2) the tendency to regard religion/theology as an instrument of social coercion. Since from this perspective, knowledge equals power, theology is often regarded as a partisan weapon used by the powerful to control the powerless. Thus, theology’s task is to deconstruct and unmask various oppressive ideologies. Since we are all “socially constructed,” there is no universal truth, and claims to such are oppressive and imperialistic.⁹ Paul Mankowski describes the various manifestations of this approach at the 1992 American Academy of Religion:

The notion of religion as an instrument of social coercion was hardly restricted to this group (“Violence, Victimization, and Social Control”); indeed, it served as one of the leitmotifs of the meeting: in its overt realizations, as in the paper titled “Exorcism as a Means of Christian Social Control,” and in its covert forms, as discussed in “HIV-Antibody Testing as an Exercise of Socio-political Power.”¹⁰

This interpretive framework devours all theological truth claims and its seductive powers are far-reaching. For example, the appendix of ethicist Stanley Hauerwas’s latest book, *After Christendom?* includes a letter from a graduate student who endorses this framework. While agreeing with Hauerwas’ pacifist stance, the student asks, “Is there not already a violence implicit in the conviction that one possesses the truth . . . ?”¹¹ The student argues that any claim to truth oppresses because it necessarily excludes. While rightly rejecting objectivism, the student assumes that truth claims are then subjective assertions of power. Thus he can quote and agree with Nietzsche, “‘The truthful man ends up realizing that he has never stopped lying.’ This seems right to me.”¹² Of course, such a view logically leads to muteness, which is precisely what the student suggests: “As I understand the Mennonite witness, silence may indeed play a role . . . perhaps Christians should learn to shut up.”¹³ Hauerwas apparently accepts the student’s thesis and responds by saying “the way of nonviolence is never easy and+ our language can embody that violence in ways that we hardly knew.”¹⁴

The problem with this framework, however, is that both the student and Hauerwas give away whatever ground they are standing on. If indeed there is “a violence implicit in the conviction that one possesses the truth,” isn’t the graduate student’s letter “violent”? If silence is the appropriate response in the face of inherent violence, why did he write the letter? In his writings, Hauerwas insightfully argues for the “truthfulness” of Christianity. Yet if one accepts the premise that claims to truth are essentially oppressive since such claims are assertions of power, then how can one hold any claim as true? This deconstructionist line of argument points to an infinite regress which means that the deconstructionist herself could not claim deconstruction to be true. It remains a logically incoherent position. Marjorie Grene’s criticism of Darwinian naturalism applies to deconstruction as well: “there is surely something wrong in a theory which, at its very root, invalidates itself.”¹⁵

Thus, while this postmodernist position turns from objectivism and seeks to recover a social/historical place, this position, like objectivism, ultimately fails as a critical theory because it remains caught in dilemmas inherited from objectivism, albeit in a different guise. And what are these dilemmas? In short form, they include the following, which are interrelated: 1) a failure to account for the knower’s own commitments and judgments, 2) an appeal to a scientific social analysis to validate moral passions which go undeclared, 3) a failure to acknowledge the necessarily committal nature of all knowing and 4) a denial of what the universal intent or reach of knowing (which Polanyi distinguishes from established universality).

I will expand on these in turn with an eye to showing how deconstruction retains a conception of knowledge as impersonal. Those referred to earlier who are “hermeneutically suspicious” fail fully to address how they

know and judge where to insert the knife blade of suspicion. For example, while the author of the letter to Hauerwas is certainly in part right about his charges of the abuse of power and “social coercion,” at the same time he fails to come to terms with how he knows that he himself is not being coerced. In claiming that knowing is determined by social position, or political interest, he fails to account for his own personal participatory nature of knowing.

It is precisely because of this failure to come to terms with the personal participatory nature of all knowing, that there is likewise a failure to acknowledge one’s moral passions and their sources. The graduate student in the letter ultimately cannot say why he or anyone should care about violence done to others; quite literally, in his own terms, he cannot say since, as mentioned earlier, he recommends silence. At this point, Polanyi’s description of Marxism as a form of moral inversion rings true for this deconstructionist theology as well. In his analysis, Polanyi notes that Marxism interprets truth and morality within a utilitarian framework. Such an interpretation “accuses all moral sentiments of hypocrisy, while the moral indignation which the writer thus expresses is safely disguised as a scientific statement.”¹⁶ Morality is denied any intrinsic force of its own (“the truthful man ends up realizing he has never stopped lying”) while at the same time an appeal is made to moral passions.¹⁷ Since such passions remain obscure, however, they are safe against “unmasking.”¹⁸ Similar to Marxism, the deconstructionist position implicitly appeals to the moral passions inspired by such concepts as equality and justice, but these goods are cut off from the history and traditions which make sense of them, since these traditions are seen as oppressive. What gets explicitly declared is a scientific social analysis which interprets all morality and truth as mere rationalizations for power. Such a position “enables the modern mind, tortured by moral (or religious) self-doubt, to indulge its moral passions in terms which also satisfy its passion for ruthless objectivity+”¹⁹ The modern mind is so tortured precisely because, abstracted from its knowing ground, it is unable to account for its moral passions.

The above two dilemmas lead us to the third interrelated reason that deconstruction fails as a critical theory; namely, such a position ignores the necessarily committal or fiduciary nature of all knowing. By equating knowledge with power, such a position ignores that knowing is a “fiduciary act which cannot be analysed in non-committal terms.”²⁰ As Polanyi readers well know, to ignore the fact that we hold some beliefs acritically is to imagine that we are disembodied: that we have “virgin minds,” which bear “the imprint of no authority must be taught no language, for speech can be acquired only a- critically,” and which results finally in a state of imbecility.²¹ Ultimately, then, to imagine that all knowledge or language, shaped by tradition, is oppressive or violent is tacitly to assume that we are disembodied or purely spiritual beings.

At this point we are led to the forth dilemma that deconstruction fails to come to terms with: namely, that our acts of knowing have a universal intent or reach. As Polanyi noted, the distal term is present, not as a static entity (as in a correspondence view of meaning, which deconstruction rightly attacks) nor as a mere “construct” in which the subject arbitrarily asserts something to be the case; rather, within a Polanyian framework, the real is evolving, dynamic, and heuristic. “A new theory that claims to be real anticipates by this claim an indefinite range of future, as yet unknown, manifestations.”²² For Polanyi, our knowing has a universal reach or intent because it has the possibility to open up a range of heretofore unknown dimensions of reality. Yet this is not an established universality, true once and for all, since the nature of the real always involves personal participation and commitment.

Thus, Polanyi’s alternative move out of subjectivism and objectivism applies not only to the objectivism of science but also to what I have called the objectivism of deconstruction. In his use of “personal” and “commitment” Polanyi abandons the classic dichotomies such as subject and object, and “in their places have been put alternative logical structures such as subsidiary- focal, attending-from — attending-to+”²³ This tacit

dimension of knowing, which is embodied in all knowing, is not an option that can be chosen or unchosen at will. As I described earlier, no one rides this “postmodernist train” to the end or else there would be no logical space for one’s own judgments and beliefs. Wittgenstein makes a similar claim when he states: “If the true is what is grounded, then the ground is not true, nor yet false.”²⁴ In other words, in focusing on the truthfulness or falsity of something, we rely upon judgments and beliefs which we can not at the same time call into question. Casting our light on a particular problem and its truth or falsity means we are not casting our light on the one who is holding the light, namely ourselves. Since we necessarily rely in our judging and believing on what is “out of view,” there is a “ground” which is inaccessible and upon which we necessarily rely. Such “necessary reliance upon” (which Polanyi calls tacit knowing) is an inevitable and an unimpeachable aspect of all human knowing.

To accept this human form of knowing, then, is to acknowledge that there are bounds within which we live that are not necessarily oppressive. A truly embodied and thus human form of knowing acknowledges this acritical given dimension at the heart of all forms of knowing. This givenness is prevented from being completely socially and culturally determined, however, for this would be to lapse once again into an impersonal and mechanistic view of the knower. Rather Polanyi’s conception of personal knowledge means not only that knowing is rooted in a given place or location,²⁵ socially and culturally shaped, but also that our acts of knowing are moral activities. This is by no means to deny that knowledge is used in immoral ways, but rather to point to the fact that in our acts of knowing we are acting as moral agents. Why is this? According to Polanyi, a knower’s acts “are personal judgments exercised responsibly with a view to a reality with which he is seeking to establish contact.” Any conclusion “represents a commitment of the person who arrives at it.”²⁶ Such an understanding of knowing, grounded in commitment with universal reach, radically undermines not only the often criticized picture of the purely objective neutral knower, but also the picture of the knower as completely socially determined or purely arbitrary. In other words, there would be no room for personal responsibility if knowing were entirely socially determined or the subjective assertion of power. More especially, the conception of calling would make no sense; as Polanyi states, our particular human place provides opportunities for “momentous acts of responsible commitment, made by accepting [our] own starting-point in space and time, as the condition of [our] own calling.”²⁷

Our knowing, then, is “social” and “cultural”; this does not make knowing arbitrary or oppressive, but human. Our personal participation, both tacit and explicit, is the condition of the possibility of any knowing whatsoever, even the condition for using the word “coercion” and knowing what it means. If one believes every claim to truth is oppressive, then the graduate student is right: one must be silent. But then his own claim could not be made and language itself would unravel. If this occurred, there would be no true words or deeds for which we are responsible, and we would entirely eliminate personal presence. Such a claim is then ultimately impersonal.

An Alternative Form of Theological Knowing

Before considering an alternative, I want to note briefly that Walter Ong, among others, writes about how the modern drive toward objectivism (and its flip side subjectivism) is itself shaped by the written word. While the subject of literacy and its influence on epistemology are beyond the scope of this essay, suffice it to say that the concept of objectivism is parasitic upon a visual paradigm,²⁸ (which has been culturally absorbed) especially as this is formed by writing.²⁹ Ong notes that Kant’s split between the noumenal and phenomenal is primarily informed by our visual sensibilities, themselves shaped by writing. Focused on the word as seen, on static sight alone, understanding is condemned to deal only with surfaces which have a “beyond” (a thing-

in-itself) that it can never attain. “As soon as one sets up the problem of intellectual knowing in terms of a visualist construct such as ‘phenomena,’ the question of ‘noumena’ thus automatically arises.”³⁰ The Kantian problem that our language cannot directly get at the “thing-in-itself” arises primarily from within a visual paradigm. The written word leads us to imagine knowing is external and located primarily outside of us; we stand to our knowing as the eye to the written word, as a subject to a seemingly static object. As noted in the previous section, this framework has shaped and continues to shape theology. H. Richard Niebuhr notes problems with a visual paradigm when he states that “the images of the observational method are so out of place in the life of participation that they must be abandoned - or surreptitiously modified when employed by moral agents”³¹

In contrast, an alternative form of theological knowing accounts for the fact that the knower in the process of knowing shapes the known. A genuine alternative form acknowledges that our beliefs, memory, imagination, and commitments — even though these might not be explicitly acknowledged, and may in fact be actively denied — nonetheless participate in shaping the content of what we know. Such an alternative is not objectivistic nor impersonal for it acknowledges that we are concretely rooted in a particular place rather than some impersonal universal. Yet neither is such a way of knowing merely that of an isolated subject. Believing, judging and knowing are acts of “embodied knowers knotted into the worldly appearance of others.”³²

A number of theologians have described this bondedness in various ways. Charles McCoy, for example, uses the language of covenant to capture the embodied and social nature of our knowing. By covenant, McCoy means that “humans are born into covenants already made and are called to commit themselves to the heritage of their parents’ community. Emergence into selfhood is a process of affirming or rejecting the loyalties by which a person will live.”³³ McCoy uses the language of covenant to grasp the necessarily committal and social nature of human knowing and action: “It is the covenants of human living, whether recognized or not, that give shape to human communities and action.”³⁴ This communal aspect of knowing and judging is captured as well by the language of trust. H. Richard Niebuhr observes that trust is a fundamental aspect of all knowing: “there is a close connection between much of our ‘holding for true’ and our trusting+ believing and knowing, being certain and uncertain, trusting and having vision of true relations, these are events that occur only in interpersonal society.”³⁵ Nicholas Lash as well notes the centrality of trust in all our knowing activity: “Whether in physics or in politics, in psychology or prayer, to grow in knowledge is to grow through trust: trust given, trust betrayed, trust risked, misplaced, sustained, received and suffered.”³⁶ “Covenant,” “trust,” our “knottedness” in the “worldly appearance of others” — in each case such language points, contra objectivism, to our personal participation and, contra subjectivism, to the social and fiduciary nature of knowing.

In this light, I want to consider the liturgy as an alternative form of theological knowing. For the liturgy as a form of knowing mediates a concrete and convivial place, which itself shapes the content of what one is seeking to know. In light of my thesis, it is important to reiterate that all ways of knowing mediate some place, even though this place may go unacknowledged. The liturgy, however, is an acknowledged public activity and place. Like a drama,³⁷ the liturgy is “an action by which a group of people become something corporately which they had not been as a mere collection of individuals - a whole greater than the sum of its parts.”³⁸ Etymologically “liturgy” means a deed or action (ergon) performed by the people (laitos). The liturgy by definition relies upon action and speech as a mode of being together, yet the language relied upon is not only that of a written text. Moral philosopher, Charles Taylor, notes that “a sense of the good finds expression not only in linguistic descriptions but also in other speech acts+ [in] liturgy, we see that expression goes beyond the bounds of language as normally and narrowly conceived. The gesture of ritual, its music, its display of visual symbols, all enact in their own fashion our relation to God.”³⁹ The liturgy offers a theological way of knowing that, like all knowing, occurs in “covenant” with others, and relies upon personal participation, though this participation

calls forth a different kind of indwelling than, say, silently reading a book.

Alexander Schmemmann, an Orthodox liturgical theologian who was dean of St. Vladimir's Seminary for 25 years, grasps the import of the liturgy as an alternative form of knowing when he acknowledges that its function is not simply to "communicate ideas about God." Rather, Schmemmann describes the Orthodox Divine Liturgy as a journey of moving and remembering — gathering in a central place; singing the hymns; approaching the feast-prepared table; partaking of the bread and wine. In this liturgical journey, the Orthodox icons are not mere ecclesial decorations but are essential ways of rooting the participants in the Orthodox tradition of worship. "To be sure," says Schmemmann,

liturgy has a didactic or educational function, one can even say that in a sense the whole of worship is teaching, is theology, is preaching, yet this teaching not only is not separated and distinguished from "beauty," but "beauty" is its very content and means of communication... Two-thirds of all liturgical texts in our tradition are hymns - i.e., poetry meant to be sung. And poetry is by definition untranslatable for its meaning lies in the organic blend of the order, the rhythm and the music of words.⁴⁰

For Schmemmann, the liturgical form shapes the content, and actualizes theological knowing that cannot be fully grasped outside the liturgical context. It makes no sense to attempt to separate the hymns — poetry meant to be sung — from their content, for the meaning rests in "the rhythm and the music of the words the organic blend of order." In fact, to separate form and content would be to change the form, and thus the content. To go one step further, there is no content apart from personal participation and for Schmemmann a particular kind of participation is necessary if one is to begin to understand the Eastern Orthodox tradition.

Although theologian James Cone comes from a tradition distinctly different from Orthodoxy, he nonetheless makes statements which are similar to Schmemmann's. In the black Church tradition, Cone describes how black theology and black worship are integrally related. In the worship of the black community, Cone writes,

God's word is a happening. . . Truth is disclosed in the movement of the language and the passion created when the song is sung in the right pitch and tonal quality. Truth is found in shout, hum, and moan as these expressions move the people closer to the source of their being.⁴¹

For all the differences between Cone and Schmemmann, they both acknowledge that "knowing about God" takes place in worship: standing, sitting, kneeling, singing the rhythmic and harmonious hymns, listening to the preaching and to the silent spaces between themselves and God when they gather. Both Schmemmann and Cone claim that in order to grasp the content of their respective traditions, one must be involved in a liturgical form of knowing. In other words, they both make the claim that knowing does not take place abstractly or from a posture of suspicion, but rather knowing "is internally related to doing, to knowing how to 'go on' and doing so."⁴² Their claims are a theological analogy of the often cited poem, "O body swayed to music, O brightening glance, How can we know the dancer from the dance?" I cite this quotation to point out that, like a dance, the known content of the liturgy is embedded in the activity itself, as is the case in all knowing. A cohesion exists between the knower and the known such that to sunder one from the other is to change the form of knowing and thus the content.

Wendell Berry, in his article "Standing By Words,"⁴³ recognizes this cohesion that exists between the knower and the known, though he relates this to agriculture instead of theology. Berry describes two agricultural

“experts” who claim that American agriculture has become transformed “from an art form into a science,” from practical trade to an “objective” theory. According to the experts, the art of agriculture is concerned only with the “how of farming” while science is interested in the “whys.” Yet in their description of industrialization, the experts fail to see that their approach is equally rooted in a “how” of farming; their “how” is industrialization rather than traditional dairy farm life. The affect of this shift in their form or “how” of knowing in turn shapes the content. Rather than a “family companion animal,” the cow becomes a “manufacturing unit of the twentieth century.” As Berry points out, the experts’ more abstract and impersonal form of knowing drastically changes their understanding of the agricultural way of life.

This description of agriculture is analogous to theology in that theologians, constantly tempted to intellectual abstraction, ignore that theology, like any discipline, is not so much a “hard” science as it is an artful skill. Theology as artful skill points again to the fact that how and what we know are internally related. This precedes the subject/object split because before we explicitly identify what the object is, it has already been shaped by our dependence on how we are rooted in the world. The cow as “family companion” or “manufacturing unit” is parasitic on the form of knowing, the place from which one is oriented.

By describing an alternative form of knowing, I am seeking to broaden our theological imagination for how in fact we come to know. On what criteria do we necessarily rely when we evaluate, judge and know? What intellectual and moral sources do we place ourselves in the midst of? Thus far, I am simply suggesting that the evaluative criteria for theology also need to be drawn from liturgical activity itself.

This precludes the often held assumption that theology or religious studies is only a reflective enterprise best done from a critical or detached perspective (or even that it can be done from an entirely detached perspective).⁴⁴ Following Polanyi, I am attempting to integrate a post-critical approach into theology. Thus, along with Polanyi, I am challenging the clear-cut distinction between reflection or reflective knowing (understood as what we do at the Polanyi Society meetings, for example) and “practice” (usually associated with a liturgy, or a ballgame). In pointing to an alternative form of knowing, I wish to claim that every way we inhabit the world — whether at a ballgame, an academic meeting, or a Baptist service — is an activity through which we know: a committed place we reside in which we actively rely upon ourselves extended into that environment and shaped by that place in order to know. When I am pointing to the liturgy as an alternative place, I am not pointing to “activity” or “practice,” in contrast to reflection, but to another activity, another practice in addition to the activity of sitting in front of a computer or writing a paper.

For a concrete example of how theology historically has overlooked its own knowing sources, I turn to the well-known sixteenth century eucharistic debate at Marburg concerning the reality or symbolism of the elements. On one side of this debate, Reformation theologian Ulrich Zwingli claimed that the bread and wine were only symbolic; if not, Christ would have to suffer pain again and again by the teeth of the communicants. After all, stated Zwingli, when Jesus claims “I am the vine!” we don’t really imagine him to be a “literal,” physical vine. In his theological reflection, Zwingli relied upon criteria to define the “real” which could be verified by any outside observer.

In contrast to Zwingli’s claim that the eucharist is only symbolic or figurative, Martin Luther, remaining closer to the Catholic tradition, held to the literal meaning of “is” in the statement “This is my body.” Luther believed that the church suffered a loss when the bread and wine were regarded as mere signs. While Luther and Zwingli were on opposite sides of the debate, they nonetheless both argued out of the same imaginative framework, one that placed the literal over against the figurative, the real over against the symbol. Luther remained more the “man of the Middle Ages”; even so, notes Erich Heller, “the Enlightenment thought of the Italian Renaissance,” overshadowed this sixteenth century debate, in which increasingly rationalism’s

objective and lucid criteria determined the real.⁴⁵

At the brink of the Enlightenment, we see reflected in the Luther/Zwingli debate a growing attachment to real knowledge as that which is objective, verifiable by physical measurement and not symbolic. These early reformers' imaginations increasingly were held captive by an understanding of the real that they imagined any detached observer could have. Their own place, participants in the Eucharist, was not regarded as a significant fact in their theological reflections. By attempting to argue from the standpoint of anyone (skeptical Zwingli moreso), and by failing fully to acknowledge their own liturgical place, their theological perceptions participated in a loss (especially for Protestants) that eventually stripped the Eucharist of the very thing that made it significant in the first place: the real presence of an ever-faithful God. Following this dispute, an age would slowly emerge "in which not only the sacraments but the holiness of all that is holy will cease to be 'literally true' body will become merely body and symbol merely symbol."⁴⁶

How would a post-critical perspective be different? First of all, if we release ourselves from the belief that the real is only that which we have from a critical perspective, and instead acknowledge that all knowing is rooted in a particular place, then we are able to define "real" in radically different terms. The real is that to which we responsibly commit ourselves, and that which opens up new realms of reality. As both Cone and Schmemmann declare, the liturgy, when faithfully entered into, has the potential to open up heretofore unknown dimensions of God's presence and activity in the world. Certainly, then, the Eucharist is real, but not in the critical terms used by either Zwingli or Luther.

In considering the liturgy as an alternative form of theological knowing, I am arguing that all forms of knowing are human activities, and thus that the liturgy is one knowing activity among others. I am also arguing, in light of Polanyi, that all knowing involves personal judgment, commitment and responsibility. To ignore this fact may be harmless; however, it may also significantly distort our perception of ourselves as knowers and persons. At best, it may cause us, as Stanley Cavell has said, to be chafed by our own skin: at worst, it may lead to an unrecognized denial of our humanity.

In contrast to the above, the acknowledgement that all forms of knowing are human activities enables us to expand our imagination of how in fact we come to know. Such imaginative stretching is needed in the discipline of theology, as well as other disciplines, where we easily forget what St. Augustine reminded us of and what Polanyi holds is true of all knowing: "unless you believe, you shall not understand."⁴⁷

Endnotes

1. Polanyi analyzes works of art in his "theory of the integration of incompatibles." The capacity of representational art to fuse intrinsic "incompatible features+into radically novel qualities" lends art its depth. In drama, for example, the incompatible features are 1) simulation of a story line and 2) the apparatus of stagecraft. The "artificial framework+ contradicts its representational aspect," but these subsidiary features provide a novel joint meaning which make "us live in it as its maker first lived in it+" See "What is a Painting?" in *British*

Journal of Aesthetics, 10 (July 1970), pp. 230-232.

2. Michael Polanyi, *Knowing and Being*, Marjorie Grene, ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1969), p. 136.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

4. Karl Jaspers, *Kant*, Hannah Arendt, ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1957), p. 15.

5. H.J. Paton, *The Categorical Imperative* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1948), p. 26.

6. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, G.E.M. Anscombe, trans. (Berkeley: University of California, 1967), p. 105e.

7. Horace Freeland Judson, *The Search for Solutions* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980), p. 6.

8. Though this is Ricoeur's phrase, he should not be blamed for all the ways the term has been misused.

9. Examples of this approach are commonplace. Mary Hunt, of the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER), for example, claims with satisfaction that "The myth of objectivity has been put to rest in science as well as theology." This settled, the primary task of theology (feminist/womanist/mujerista theology) becomes "a critique of power through a hermeneutics of suspicion" in Paul Mankowski, "What I Saw at the American Academy of Religion," *First Things*, no. 21 (March 1992), p. 41.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

11. Stanley Hauerwas, *After Christendom? How the Church Is to Behave If Freedom, Justice, and a Christian Nation Are Bad Ideas* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), p. 158.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

15. Marjorie Grene, *The Knower and the Known* (London: Faber & Faber, 1966), p. 200.

16. Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1962), p. 233.

17. The whole tone of the graduate student's letter is intensively moral, as for example in the ending: "MacIntyre and Fish and so many others can stop where they do because they don't mind the killing but you can't stop there, and I would like to think that I can't either," *After Christendom?*, p. 161.

18. Polanyi refers to this phenomena as a dynamo-objective coupling. Scientific assertions are accepted

(objective) because they satisfy moral passions (dynamo). Such dynamo-objective coupling offers a tight defense of its position: “Any criticism of its scientific part is rebutted by the moral passions behind it, while any moral objections to it are coldly brushed aside by invoking the inexorable verdict of its scientific findings,” in Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, p. 230.

19. Ibid., p. 228.

20. Ibid., p. 294.

21. Ibid., p. 295.

22. Michael Polanyi and Harry Prosch, *Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1975), p. 97.

23. Thomas A. Langford and William H. Poteat, eds., *Intellect and Hope, Essays in the Thought of Michael Polanyi* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1968), p. 10.

24. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, G.E.M. Anscombe & G.H. von Wright, eds. (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 28e.

25. Charles McCoy, a contemporary theologian and ethicist who has incorporated Polanyi’s thought, uses the term “location” to describe all knowing as human. “To speak with understanding of where we are requires recognition that our location is not in empty space defined by geometrical coordinates or geographical nomenclature. Humans live in community, in relationship, in time and history,” in *When Gods Change, Hope for Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), p. 86.

26. Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1983), p. 77, emphasis mine

27. *Personal Knowledge*, p. 323.

28. Hans Jonas, in his article “The Nobility of Sight,” links epistemological objectivity to sight: “Only the simultaneity of image allows the beholder to compare and interrelate: it not only offers many things at once, but offers them in their mutual proportion, and thus objectivity emerges preeminently from sight.” This contrasts radically with hearing where the sound discloses “not an object but a dynamical event,” in *The Phenomenon of Life, Toward a Philosophical Biology* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1966), p. 144, p. 137

29. See Eric Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1963), Eric Havelock, *The Muse Learns to Write* (New Haven: Yale University, 1986), and Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (London: Methuen, 1982).

30. Walter J. Ong, *The Presence of the Word, Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History* (New Haven: Yale University, 1967), p. 74.

31. Niebuhr, *The Meaning of Revelation* (New York: Macmillan, 1941), p. 70. Here it is also important to note that our modern seeing is itself a learned skill. For a discussion of this, see *Personal Knowledge*, pp. 96-99.

32. Rob Baird, "How Not to Read Polanyian Meditations," Paper delivered at AAR Southeast Regional Meeting, Atlanta, GA, 1988.
33. Charles McCoy, *op. cit.*, p. 176.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
35. H. Richard Niebuhr, *Faith on Earth, An Inquiry into the Structure of Human Faith* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 33.
36. Nicholas Lash, "Contemplation, Metaphor, and Real Knowledge," Paper delivered at "Knowing God, Christ and Nature in the Post-Positivist Era" Symposium, University of Notre Dame, April 14-17, 1993, p. 4.
37. Taylor Scott rightly notes the difference between liturgy and the theatre. "There is a seriousness — a direct seriousness — in liturgical action which is not in theatre. There appears to be, even in the most 'realistic' of theatre, the absolute necessity of maintaining aesthetic distance. In liturgy, however, there is an enactment of the Church's presence before God (and vice versa) which is for real," in "The Likelihood of Liturgy: Reflections Upon Prayer Book Revision and Its Liturgical Implications," *Anglican Theological Review*, 62, No. 2 (April, 1980), pp. 104-105.
38. Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World* (NY: National Student Christian Federation, 1963), p. 13.
39. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self. The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University), pp. 91-92.
40. Alexander Schmemmann, "Problems of Orthodoxy in America: The Liturgical Problem," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, 8 (Winter, 1964), pp. 167.
41. James Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury, 1975), p. 22.
42. Rowan Williams, "Review of Theology After Wittgenstein," *Philosophical Investigations* 10 (October, 1987), p. 344.
43. Wendell Berry, *Standing By Words* (San Francisco: Northpoint, 1983), pp. 42-47.
44. For an example of this assumption, see *A Report to the Profession. Liberal Learning and the Religion Major* (Syracuse, NY: American Academy of Religion, 1990), p. 13, which states that "securing conviction is not an objective of the academic study of religion—Conviction may actually interfere." What the authors of the report fail to realize is that their own convictions are already operative in the very writing of the report. There is no conviction-neutral place to stand to study religion.
45. Erich Heller, *The Disinherited Mind* (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1971), p. 266.

46. Ibid.

47. as quoted, Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, p. 61.

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The aim of this book is to give a reconstruction of the main elements in Polanyi's postmodern and naturalized epistemology. Chapters 1-4 are concerned with the characteristics of 'tacit knowing', and Polanyi's use of concepts like 'assertion', 'belief', 'truth' and 'reality'. Drawing on J.R. Searle's recent theory of intentionality, the 'tacit' component of assertive utterances is analysed in terms of intentional states. It is argued that Polanyi does not use a subjective notion of truth, and that his partial analysis of 'true' can be regarded as a special version of the non-descriptive theory of truth. His metaphysical realism is discussed, and his approach in the philosophy of science and that of Lakatos are compared. In the chapters 5-6, the Popperian critique that the theory of personal knowledge is subjectivist and psychologist, is deconstructed. It is argued that Polanyi leaves the objectivity of knowledge intact, and that his epistemology is preferable to the Popperian conception of knowledge 'without a knowing subject'. In chapter 7 the later extension of the theory of tacit knowing into the realm of the humanities, especially that of religion, is touched upon and some suggestions are offered for its relevance in the field of philosophy of religion.

Polanyi's Augustinianism:

A Mark of the Future?

John V. Apczynski

ABSTRACT Key words: Augustine, theory of knowledge, science, wisdom, tradition, Neoplatonism.

*The aim of this essay is to display a congruence between several important features of Augustine's theory of knowledge, including our knowledge of the world (**sapientia**) and our knowledge of the standards guiding our thought (**sapientia**), and Michael Polanyi's theory of personal knowledge. Its purpose is to commend an interpretation of Polanyi's thought which situates his major insights within an Augustinian intellectual tradition and which thereby offers fruitful possibilities for theological reflection, particularly on the reality of God.*

1. The Formulation of an Experiment

Those inspired by Michael Polanyi's epistemology frequently cite his contention that his theory of personal knowledge recovers a crucial Augustinian insight, namely that our thought unfolds out of our commitments to anterior frameworks.¹ In particular many theologically oriented interpreters of Polanyi's thought have found in this Augustinian emphasis on the priority of faith for understanding a powerful ally in their efforts to articulate the legitimacy or meaningfulness of Christian faith in the secular context of the contemporary world. Nevertheless the implications of this Augustinian feature of Polanyi's theory of knowledge are rarely explored in any explicit or detailed way.² This is an unfortunate gap in my estimation, since such unexamined connections to the Augustinian heritage might provide a potentially rich theological resource.

In an effort to illustrate what I mean and to convince other theologians of the value of developing the thought of Polanyi in terms of the Augustinian heritage, I propose to explore in this essay the possibility of there being additional epistemological similarities between Augustine and Polanyi. My intention perhaps can best be viewed as a thought experiment seeking responses to two interrelated questions. First, was Polanyi's rediscovery of the Augustinian insight into the importance of belief for understanding and his affirmation and incorporation of it into his theory of knowledge made possible by additional structural similarities in their respective epistemological positions? I believe that this can be convincingly demonstrated. Granted such an interrelated pattern of thought in their epistemologies, the second, related question is this: what is the value for theological reflection today of trying to understand Polanyi along the lines suggested by the Augustinian heritage?

Lest this proposal be misunderstood, I should like to clarify a bit what I mean by these questions. My comparison of Polanyi's and Augustine's theories of knowledge does not presume that Polanyi was dependent upon a formal, explicit study of Augustine for the development of his theory. As far as I have been able to discover, the earliest relevant reference to Augustine in Polanyi's published writings occurs in *Personal Knowledge*. Polanyi's work as a scientist, however, had convinced him of the need for the acceptance of authority in science long before this.³ Indeed when Polanyi was asked explicitly toward the end of his life about the relationship of his thought to Augustine, his response simply mentioned his studies long past and his more recent reading of Peter Brown's biography.⁴ Perhaps these studies occurred in the context of his relationship with J. H. Oldham and the Moot. In any event, all this experiment in comparing Polanyi and Augustine need presume then is that, once Polanyi discovered this particular affinity to Augustine's thought, he was able to identify his project with Augustine's on this point because, in their respective cultural contexts, they had developed independently epistemological positions with several points of congruence.⁵

The point behind the second question can be brought into focus by recalling again Polanyi's observation that we understand reality in light of our commitments. Obviously, then, the dominant intellectual tradition within which one stands to read Polanyi will affect profoundly what one takes him to mean. This stage of the thought experiment will attempt to seek out what Polanyi's position would appear to be saying if read in light of a generally formulated Augustinian approach to knowledge. This requires, obviously, that much of this essay be devoted to an exposition of Augustine's epistemological assumptions. Its theological aim would be to discover how our knowledge of God might be understood from such an explicitly acknowledged interpretation of Polanyi's theory of personal knowledge.

One additional observation is necessary. Augustine was not a philosopher in the modern sense of the term. A few of his works do display the character of a sustained treatise on philosophical themes, such as his effort to combat skepticism in *Against the Academics*. Most of his vast literary output, however, is composed by way of response to pressing personal or ecclesiastical circumstances, not out of the studied leisure that is the mark of theoretical preoccupations. His major orientation, in other words, is theological and practical, even in his earlier works. When he identifies at the beginning of his literary career the most important topics of reflection to be God and the soul (*sol.*, 1.17),⁶ we discover what is at the heart of all his intellectual inquiries—the return of the soul to its source and genuine fulfillment in God. Consequently, since he has no treatise on the question, the task of formulating the general contours of Augustine's doctrine on knowledge requires that it be extracted from the corpus of his works wherever he saw the need to insert elements of his teaching on knowledge while in the process of discussing what was for him some more urgent topic. This would be a daunting task were it not for the fact that several scholarly studies of Augustine's view of knowledge have recently been published. I gratefully acknowledge that this outline of Augustine's theory of knowing, including the interpretation of the textual material, will be guided by these studies.⁷

2. A Preliminary Overview

Augustine formulated his views of knowledge out of his conviction that all learning is made possible through the acceptance of the authority based on faith in Christ and through the subtle reasoning manifested by the Platonists (*c. Acad.*, 3.20.43). Before considering this twofold source of learning, it would be helpful to provide a preliminary glimpse into the intellectual world Augustine called "Platonist." What he meant by this term modern scholarship identifies as the tradition mediating Platonic doctrines to Augustine in their Middle

Platonic and Neoplatonic forms, particularly in the Latin versions of the works of Plotinus and Porphyry.

This was a hierarchical world, with the highest reality purely spiritual. It was the revolutionary otherworldliness of Ambrose's sermons that probably first stirred Augustine to begin to see the limits of his materialistic conceptions of the divine (*conf.*, 5.10.19-20) and the need to seek for something more.⁸ Once he had entered this world he saw that "the rational soul . . . has been placed in some kind of middle state, inasmuch as it has the bodily creation beneath it, but its own and the body's creator above it" (*ep.*, 140.3).

In this middle position, human reason or the mind correspondingly had two functions. "Higher reason" (*ratio superior*) understands eternal reasons (*rationes aeternae*) that are the principal forms of things and are contained in the divine Intelligence (*div.qu.*, 45.1-2). Reason in this sense leads to the contemplation of wisdom (*sapientia*). "Lower reason" (*ratio inferior*) has the function of knowing corporeal reality in light of these eternal reasons. When reason in this sense orders corporeal things according to some rationale or pattern, it leads to knowledge or science (*scientia*).

What allows the mind to function in these two ways, what is its underlying ground, so to speak, is memory. It is important to recognize immediately that Augustine means by "*memoria*" more than the ability to recollect past experiences. "The power of memory is great . . . It is awe-inspiring in its profound and incalculable complexity. Yet it is my mind; it is my very self" (*conf.*, 10.10.17). That which has gone to shape me, my experiences, my emotions, my habits, my insights actual and potential, are all there in my memory, according to Augustine, always operating in some fashion whenever we use our powers of reason.

3. The Role of Faith

Keeping these preliminary indications of Augustine's view of knowledge in mind, let us now consider his understanding of the role of faith in learning. Augustine's basic point, that with respect to our knowledge of the world faith functions as "a precondition for knowing,"⁹ is well known to students of Polanyi through his appropriation of the formula, "unless you believe, you shall not understand."¹⁰ Depending on its context the notion of faith can function in several distinct, but related, ways.

In its most ordinary sense, faith is necessary for the very continuity and stability of everyday life. Augustine asks us to consider, for example, how our self-identity is based on our trust in our parents and teachers, and how our further awareness of history is dependent on a reliance on testimony of others (*ep.*, 147.5; *conf.*, 6.5). In an ultimate sense, faith in the teachings of scripture and the Catholic church is necessary so that our reason may gradually be guided to the contemplation of the divine ideas through moments of mystical vision in this life or in the beatific vision in the next (*civ.*, 22.29; *div.qu.*, 48; *ep.*, 120.1.3).

With regard to knowledge (*scientia*), Augustine distinguished between "things seen and believed" (*ep.* 147.8). Those things that are seen are known directly in the sense of not relying on authorities. Knowledge of things that are not directly present to our awareness is believed on the basis of some form of authority. When we give our assent to such beliefs, Augustine is willing to call this knowledge (*scientia*). But even in the former case of directly experienced things, faith plays a role at least insofar as we rely on our sense perception (a matter to be discussed shortly).

Throughout his discussion of the role of faith, Augustine always recognizes the importance of reason. We need to be able to reason about and to understand, at least to some extent, what it is we are believing (*ser.*, 43.7). He carefully distinguishes faith from credulity, mere opinion, or wishful thinking (*ut.cred.*, 22 and 25; *trin.*, 8.4.6). Thus within "the citadel of authority" (*ep.* 118.5.32-33) Augustine upheld the use of reason and defended

it against critics who would suspect reason of elitism.¹¹ Likewise his faith in the authority of scripture did not warrant any sort of fundamentalism: what we clearly know about the universe from other sources cannot contradict the scriptures, and if we go on to expound them in such an erroneous way we subject Scriptures to scorn by those outside the faith (*Gn.litt.*, 1.19.39). Finally, Augustine considered it essential to test or check our faith in our ultimate commitments. He illustrates this requirement in his discussions regarding how his beliefs in and practice of the Catholic faith allow him to appeal to qualities of authority and coherence that he believes shows its superiority over the Manichaeian faith.¹²

In this brief exposition of a few features of Augustine's understanding of the role of faith in knowledge, we can clearly discern a characteristic feature of Polanyi's understanding of knowledge, specifically the need to rely on a range of beliefs to exercise our rational capacities which in turn can develop arguments to support, modify, or even overturn these beliefs.

4. *Scientia*: Knowledge of the World

Since this correspondence between Augustine's and Polanyi's appreciation of the important role of faith had already been affirmed by Polanyi, we need to move now to expose a few of the elements of Augustine's understanding of our knowledge of the world in order to begin our experiment in earnest. Here we shall focus on how our lower function of reason operates in our knowledge of things of the world, including our ability to use the scientific disciplines to expand and order our knowledge. We must not lose sight of the fact, however, that for Augustine it is the one mind that knows. Consequently it will be necessary to speak here of the mind's higher function of "remembering" the principal forms of things, although we shall not explore the significance of this further at this stage.

Augustine was a realist who sought out the truth to the best of his ability; he remained so even after his conversion. This meant that understanding our knowledge of the world required an accounting of sensory perception. The culturally dominant theoretical views of the Stoics and Epicureans generally held our senses to be passive receptors of external influences that produced modifications in the soul. For the recent convert to a Neoplatonic version of Christianity, such predominantly materialist views were abhorrent: only the higher reality, the soul, could play the active role in the formation of knowledge, including that form based on sensation.¹³

In following the lead of Plotinus on the issue of sensation, Augustine was aware of the physiological basis of sensation, including the notion of nerves sending stimuli to the brain (*Gn.lit.*, 7.13.20). But these internal stimuli, affected by external objects, function as servants to the mind, which attends¹⁴ to these impressions in order to form an image which it can store in memory or which it can judge according to the standards of the eternal forms present in the mind. Here is Augustine's expression of this point regarding the active role of the mind in the process of coming to know an external object:

Although we see some things with the body, others with the mind [i.e., the eternal forms], the distinction between these two sorts of sight is seen by the mind, not the body. The objects which are beheld by the mind have need of no senses of the body to let us know that they are true, but those perceived through the body cannot be included in our knowledge if there is no mind to which these incoming messages can be referred. And it is a fact that those incoming messages, which it is said, in some wise, to receive, are left outside, but it forms images of them, that is, incorporeal likenesses of physical things, which it commits incorporeally to the memory, so that from there, when it has the

will or power, it may give judgment on them, after bringing them out of custody and displaying them in the sight of its thought (*ep.* 147.38).

Notice Augustine's reference to memory in the process of knowing. The point is not simply that we store an image of something perceived. More importantly Augustine carefully observes how all sensory perceptions occur over time in the sense that this phenomenon involves not only divisible parts but also requires a durational continuum. Consider, for example, his discussion of hearing:

Unless the spirit immediately formed within itself and retained in memory an image of the word perceived by the ears, one could not tell whether the second syllable was actually the second one, since the first would no longer exist once it had impinged upon the ear and passed away. And so all habits of speech, all sweetness of song, all motion in the acts of our body would break down and come to nought, if the spirit did not retain a memory of past bodily motions with which to join further operations (*Gn.lit.*, 12.16.33).

Our perceptual knowledge of the world, therefore, is never merely a series of "impressions" made upon someone's mind as though it were a blank tablet. For Augustine, everything we perceive is formed by the active shaping of the mind ordering its sensory impressions through memory and judging them in terms of patterns of meaning also "derived" from memory.

A consequence of this account of the perceptual basis of *scientia*, our knowledge of the world, is that we can be in error insofar as we can confuse different objects because of their similarity and thereby judge incorrectly (*Gen.lit.*, 12.25.52). Augustine is quite fully aware that this is not due to our perception as such, for if we merely assert that something appears to me in some manner then we cannot possibly be deceived (*c. Acad.*, 3.10.26). Rather the risk of error derives from our desire to seek the truth present in our experiences with its implicit presupposition of a criterion for judging. We can minimize the possibilities for error by checking the comprehensiveness of our perception and the normal context for the working of our perceiving faculties.¹⁵ "On the whole, however, Augustine assumes, rather than demonstrating, that most, if not all, sense-perceptions convey genuine and reliable information about the external world."¹⁶

Among the reasons for Augustine's vigorous defense of the sort of knowledge derived through our experience of the world surely is his theological conviction that certain truths of the faith require trusting sensory perceptions. But his sharp departure from his Neoplatonic heritage in accepting so large a role for trusting our sensory perceptions is just as strongly grounded in Augustine's conviction of the reasonableness of accepting our knowledge of nature, history, and world events mediated through our own experiences or the testimonies of others' experiences (*trin.*, 15.12.21). Such wondrous advances in our knowledge are worth the risk; "for if one who trusts his senses is sometimes deceived, he is more wretchedly deceived who fancies he should never trust them" (*civ.*, 19.18).

To be sure, Augustine thus recognizes that strictly speaking *scientia* does not bear the marks of immutability and certitude, so that it is not properly knowledge; yet commonly speaking he is willing to accept both our grasp of eternal truth and our perceptions of the world as knowledge (*retr.*, 1.14.3). He is so convinced of the value of our knowledge of the world that he practically argues for the necessity of science in the face of the Neoplatonic metaphysicians who know eternal truths by challenging them to answer whether they can know the variety and development of animal life merely by grasping their eternal exemplars (*trin.*, 4.16.21).

What, then, can we conclude about our scientific knowledge of the world? As we have already seen, "knowledge is born from both, from the one who knows and the object that is known" (*trin.*, 9.12.17). The human knower, when encountering a range of phenomena, draws out from the recesses of memory under the stimulus of this encounter appropriate principles to order and comprehend the data. In this sense, scientific knowledge

(as underlying principle or order) is present to our minds in a latent state, needing to become actual and reflectively structured by our encounter with the data of the world.

From this we can conclude that learning these facts [of scientific principles], which do not reach our minds as images by means of the sense but are recognized by us in our minds, without images, as they actually are, is simply a process of thought by which we gather together things which, although they are muddled and confused, are already contained in the memory. When we give them our attention, we see to it that these facts, which have been lying scattered and unheeded, are placed ready to hand, so that they are easily forthcoming once we have grown used to them (*conf.*, 10.11).

Even though the principal ideas structuring our scientific knowledge are thus not derived from sensation but elicited out of the “muddled” recesses of our memory, it is precisely this sort of cumulative skill in scientific knowing that can mediate our awareness of these ideas. Indeed we grasp these unchanging, eternal principles only in transitory glimpses, so that they can be stored in an orderly way in our memories and used to organize further empirical data. In other words our growth in scientific knowledge requires recognition of increasingly more complex spheres of experience understood in light of the underlying principles; and this corresponding expansion in understanding of data allows us to grasp with greater facility and clarity additional principles to apply in further efforts at applying our scientific knowledge to the world.¹⁷

This must suffice for our presentation of the main contours of Augustine’s understanding of our knowledge of the world. While it definitely is incomplete¹⁸ and ignores more subtle nuances of his position,¹⁹ nonetheless I trust that this outline provides us with a sufficient glimpse into Augustine so that we now have a basis for conducting our experiment of relating his thought to Polanyi’s. Once my own attention had been directed toward this possibility, I was quite amazed by the structural relationships that emerged between their respective positions.

The underlying basis of this similarity, in my estimation, is their convergence on the insight that there is no knowledge without a meaningful relationship established by a knower to something known (*trin.*, 9.12.17). For Polanyi this is the personal coefficient in all knowing, and for Augustine it is the fact that only a rational soul or mind is capable of knowing. And for both of these thinkers, this personal coefficient was not limited to explicit, formal thought-processes. Polanyi’s recognition that we know more than we can tell was a way of pointing to the tacit dimension, just as Augustine’s reflections on the powers sustaining our reasoning led him to ponder their grounding in the vast recesses of “memory.”

From this fundamental structural similarity flow several additional specific points of convergence. For both, perception is the active integrating of or attending to bodily modifications produced by external realities in order to discern their focal meaning or their instantiation of formal principles. Even at the level of perception knowing is a process occurring through time which requires the participation of the knower’s tacit powers or memory to complete. Consequently in both positions knowing is always an achievement upheld by a changeable human being that is subject to error. But the risks are worth it since the achievement can lead to an ever more comprehensive understanding of our environment through the scientific disciplines.²⁰ And just as the development of science itself depends upon catching a glimpse of higher realms of meaning which are discovered in memory and used to order the phenomenon for Augustine, so, too, for Polanyi the creative imagination “racks our brain” until we catch a glimpse of the gradient of meaning that resolves the quest.²¹ For both thinkers the ordered pattern of meaning discerned in this way is a higher level of reality or more real than its instantiation in a particular object.

In closing this stage of the experiment, I should like to emphasize that the point behind engaging in this sort of comparison has been not to make an unnuanced sort of claim that would equate, say, the tacit dimension with memory. The claim of a structural similarity being advanced here means rather that the tacit dimension functions in many important and relevant respects in Polanyi's theory of knowledge similarly to the way that memory functions within Augustine's. It is this sort of connection that I have been attempting to portray and which must be appreciated, if this experiment is to be deemed successful.

5. *Sapientia*: Knowledge above the Mind

In the hope that this experiment is proving to be at least provisionally attractive, I now would like to move toward its completion. This requires indicating how Augustine's understanding of *sapientia*, the goal or object of the higher function of reason, might validly be used to guide an aspect of Polanyi's thought with theological implications. That is, I hope to be able to explain how Augustine's approach to our knowledge of eternal reasons might help us understand how we can uphold a knowledge of God in Polanyian terms.

At first glance this might not appear terribly promising, for what Augustine means by wisdom is illustrated by the kind of knowledge resulting from the acknowledgment, even if begun in doubt, required of ourselves as knowers.²² In this case Augustine believes we have a knowledge which is true, *a priori* (i.e., not derived from a perception of external objects), certain, and immutable.²³ One would be hard pressed to find any depiction of knowledge understood along these lines in the Polanyian corpus.²⁴ While this observation is correct, it poses no significant problem to this project if we keep in mind that the aim is to explore Augustine's effort to explain the intellectual process whereby he thought we came to know wisdom. Thus even if the particular Neoplatonic context of his characterization of wisdom may be too culturally bound to be of service to us (a claim I would find too unhistorically nuanced, but must put aside here), his account of our intellectual appreciation of them perhaps is not. Finally we also need to keep in mind that our purpose is served simply by understanding Augustine's general outline of the basic dynamics of this intellectual activity, without our needing to resolve any of the fine points of interpretation that has occupied much of subsequent Augustinian scholarship.

As we have already seen, the ideas are "above" the mind (*trin.*, 2.6.11) in the divine Intelligence. Nonetheless somehow our minds must be joined to them (*trin.* 12.2.2) if we are to use them as standards of judgment. At other times Augustine simply affirms that they are in the mind (*civ.*, 8.6) contained in the memory (*conf.*, 10.12). If we are to interpret Augustine fairly, all these claims must be understood to be describing the complex activity of our knowledge of truth, and so must somehow cohere with each other in Augustine's thought. Apparently he meant by these claims that the human mind is informed by a structure of rationality that is patterned on the divine Intelligence.²⁵ This rational pattern is in the mind potentially, that is, as something we do not always perceive to be there; yet it is present even if we are not aware of it at the moment (*imm.an.*, 6). Augustine, in other words, seems to hold that we have a virtual knowledge of the forms of things that is patterned on the divine Intelligence and that we become aware of these in the course of our lives through the concrete application of them in the sciences as we have seen earlier or in the introspective contemplation of concepts such a truth and goodness with their normative content and power.

When it comes to the matter of how we are able to know these truths, Augustine generally has recourse to the metaphors of recollection and illumination. Recollection and its correlate of memory serve Augustine particularly well in contexts where he speaks of all that is latent in consciousness. Because of his awareness of misconstruing recollection as a literal remembering, however, his preferred manner of speaking on this ability

of the mind to know is illumination.²⁶

In its most prominent usage in Augustine's writings, this light is divine and "is above minds and transcends all minds" (*Io.ev.tr.*, 3.4.3). Just as in the case of the eternal forms, though, there is a created light, which is the human mind's ability to understand both material and spiritual realities and which is clearly distinct from the divine light.²⁷ This created light of the intellect, nonetheless, ultimately derives its light from the constant, immanent presence of God.

But distinct from these objects is the Light by which the soul is illumined, in order that it may see and truly understand everything. . . . For the Light is God Himself, whereas the soul is a creature; yet since it is rational and intellectual, it is made in His image. And when it tries to understand the Light, it trembles in its weakness and finds itself unable to do so. Yet from this source comes all the understanding it is able to attain (*Gen. lit.*, 12.31.59).

While no human being, even the ungodly (*trin.*, 14.15.21), is ever entirely without this divine light, still a life of genuine piety allows this light to enlighten the soul to a greater degree (*div. qu.*, 46). Finally, it is necessary to realize that this divine light is present in all forms or levels of knowledge, including perception, imagining, belief, as well as the sciences and wisdom (*ep.*, 120.10). In short we can say that Augustine holds that the created light of the human intellect enjoys a continuous, direct relationship with the divine light which is the ultimate source of intelligibility and whose illuminating power is normally experienced in the normativeness of our judgments and moral choices (*trin.*, 14.15.21) but with the guidance of faith may on occasion be directly touched (*conf.*, 9.24).

Are there any clues in Augustine's writings that will help us understand further this direct presence of the divine to the human mind? Interestingly in his description of his own quest for God in the *Confessions*, Augustine affirms that he found God in his memory, once he learned of God (*conf.*, 10.24). But even before he learned of God, he was able to search for God above himself (*conf.*, 10.16). Why does he speak this way? I think his earlier description of his experience of the divine light after learning of the teachings of the "Platonists" may help us understand.

Under your guidance I entered into the depths of my soul. . . . I entered, and with the eye of my soul, such as it was, I saw the Light that never changes casting its rays over . . . my mind. It was not the common light of day that is seen by the eye of every living thing of flesh and blood. . . . What I saw was something quite, quite different from any light we know on earth. It shone above my mind, but not in the way that oil floats above water or the sky hangs over the earth. It was above me because it was itself the Light that made me, and I was below because I was made by it. All who know the truth know this Light (*conf.*, 7.10).

Here Augustine clearly affirms the utter transcendence of God, who simultaneously is present as the guiding light of the mind seeking truth. This light completely surpasses our intellect, hence it is above the mind; yet even in our unknowing, it functions in our efforts to discover the truth. Once we explicitly discover God's presence in our life, we find God is so intimately related to us that the divine is now a feature of our memory, that vast generally unknown dimension of my self.

Using these Augustinian reflections on the awareness of the reality of God sustaining our cognitive activity, I would now like to offer a suggestion on how we might interpret Polanyi's position along analogous lines. Presupposed in this is the recognition that the notion of "reality" in Polanyi's thought is multivalent and not univocal.²⁸

If this is granted, I believe that Polanyi's understanding of the tacit dimension requires the acknowledgment that every human knower implicitly relies on an openness to all of reality in every act of knowing.²⁹ What this tacit orientation to the totality of reality involves can only be expressed explicitly in light of the intellectual tradition in which an individual dwells. Such a form of indwelling set up its heuristic field through which the person discovers himself heading toward an ever more comprehensive discovery of reality.³⁰ In the case of the Christian community such a heuristic field allows Christians to discern their salvation in the coming of the Kingdom of God.

Several features of Polanyi's reflections on our knowledge of God and religious dynamics that are sometimes considered puzzling can be illumined when viewed in this perspective. In his discussion of the difference between verification and validation, Polanyi observed how, as our degree of participation in a heuristic vision grew more profound, we came to rely increasingly on internal criteria of mental satisfaction.³¹ But now the Christian's discernment of God in the world or in herself would have its appropriate ontological correlate in the infinitely open grounds of the tacit dimension. Just as was the case with Augustine, the presence of the divine reality within Polanyi's theory is tacitly known and functions normally as the ontological correlate grounding the intelligibility of our deepest convictions and sustaining our affirmations made with universal intent. But there can also be those rare moments where an individual "breaks out," as Polanyi puts it, toward the fullness of the reality toward which our tacit openness is directing us, namely God.³² If these fairly describe the dynamics of our awareness of God, Polanyi then was correct to emphasize that God was beyond our explicit conceptions and thus could never be apprehended as a "fact." God would be, as Augustine put it, "quite, quite different from any light we know on earth." The Christian religion is more appropriately understood to be functioning as a heuristic vision fostering an attempt at "breaking out" toward that wholly other reality who nevertheless is present in our tacit awareness. Even Polanyi's later reflections on religious myth and ritual as involving transnatural integrations whereby we are carried away so as to allow us to "participate in an ultimate meaning of things"³³ can be understood in this light. For here we have another instance wherein Polanyi's account helps us to understand how communal worship functions by allowing its participants to glimpse, however momentarily or fleetingly, that toward which their tacit awareness opens them, namely God.

In short, I believe that when read in light of Augustine's theory of knowledge, Polanyi can be legitimately understood to have grounded the ontological referent of Christian symbolism in the depths of our tacit knowing and that he did this in such a way that he explained how living faithfully within a Christian community can be understood to provide opportunities for Christians to experience the reality of God directly in worship and contemplation.

6. Concluding Reflections

The point of this experiment has been twofold. The first was to explore the possibility that there might be sufficient structural similarities between Augustine's view of knowledge and Polanyi's that would allow us to use it to point to a way of defending the reality of God for a Christian believer within a Polanyian perspective. I hope some success has been achieved in this.

The second, which is indicated more in the title of this essay than in its text, has been to raise the question, particularly for theologians, of how Polanyi's thought ought to be interpreted. Since Polanyi has shown us that there are no neutral vantage points for understanding reality, we must commit ourselves by standing somewhere. I do not think it is sufficient for a properly theological level of inquiry simply to identify itself as Christian. A further specification of some intellectual heritage for mediating the Christian faith is necessary. I am personally beginning to appreciate that perhaps those inspired by Polanyi ought to identify themselves as standing in the tradition of Augustine. Recently Jaroslav Pelikan has opined that Whitehead's remark about Western thought being a "series of footnotes to Plato" could just as well have been a "series of footnotes to Augustine," through whom Platonic ideals have been so long mediated to the West.³⁴ He has claimed further that "so long as our civilization maintains its identity, continuity with him will always be a characteristic of it."³⁵ One of the drawbacks frequently attributed to Polanyi's theory of knowledge is that it does not speak to the Western philosophical heritage. That may be true of the contemporary state of the traditions of philosophical inquiry. This may be more a sign of their own "forgetfulness," however, than it is of a limitation in Polanyi's theory. For if my thought experiment has been to any degree successful, then perhaps Polanyi's Augustinianism may be a sign of the future.

Notes

1. Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Harper Torchbooks, 1964), p. 266.

2. For exceptions to this observation, see Patrick Grant, "Michael Polanyi: The Augustinian Component," *New Scholasticism*, 48 (1974), 438-63 and R. Melvin Keiser, "Inaugurating Post-critical Philosophy: A Polanyian Meditation on Creation and Conversion in Augustine's *Confessions*," *Zygon*, 22 (1987), pp. 317-337. Both authors explore relationships to Augustine by uncovering structural similarities in the process of conversion, Grant placing these in the context of the learning process and the human pilgrimage, Keiser in the cosmic setting of creation. The epistemological focus of this essay is thus rather different, although a convergence toward a similar conclusion may be discerned where Grant speaks of illumination (448-49) and Keiser explores the possibility of including an awareness of the divine Light (334) in the profundity of our knowing (330).

3. See, for example, the essay, "Self-Governance in Science," (originally published in 1942) in *The Logic of Liberty* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 52-56, which already acknowledges the role of tradition in fostering scientific inquiry. Or see *Science, Faith and Society* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964; original edition, 1946), p. 45, where Polanyi relates the acceptance of scientific beliefs to the maxim, *fides quaerens intellectum*, but without any expression of a possible connection to Augustine.

4. See letters from Patrick Grant of February 19 and March 8, 1973 and Polanyi's responses of March 5 and 15, 1973 in the "Polanyi Papers" 12:2 and 4, Regenstien Library, University of Chicago.

5. In this respect my proposal is analogous to Gerald Holton's conclusion in "Michael Polanyi and the History of Science," *Tradition and Discovery*, XIX, no. 1 (1992-93), 16-30. Holton claims that Polanyi was able to discern accurately the actual course of Einstein's development of his theories without the requisite historical research because of his internalization of the practice of scientific discovery. My suggestion is that Polanyi's rediscovery of the post-critical stance carries with it further similarities to Augustine's position which explicit analysis might uncover.

6. References to Augustine's writings will be given parenthetically in the text of the essay. For a key to the abbreviations used, the Latin title of the texts, their location in Migne's *Patrologiae Latinae*, and the English translation used, see the bibliographic entries listed under "Works of Augustine Consulted" at the end of this essay.

7. Primarily I am relying on Ronald H. Nash, *The light of the Mind: St. Augustine's Theory of Knowledge* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1969) and Gerard O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987). Also helpful has been Bruce Bubacz, *St. Augustine's Theory of Knowledge: A Contemporary Analysis* (New York and Toronto: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1981), though his interpretative scheme must be viewed with caution.

8. See Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1969), pp. 84-7 for an assessment of this likely relationship.

9. Nash, p. 24.

10. This is the Septuagint version of Isaiah 7.9 to which Augustine refers (*lib. arb.*, 1.2.4).

11. *ep.*, 120.3: "Far be it from us to think that God would hate in us that which distinguishes us from the beasts."

12. For a fine exposition of Augustine's efforts of making rational appeals within socially conditioned realms of discourse, see William J. Collinge, "The Relation of Religious Community Life to Rationality in Augustine," *Faith and Philosophy*, 5 (1988), 242-253.

13. Nash (p. 43), O'Daly (p. 84), and Bubacz (p. 93) all emphasize the active character of sensation for Augustine.

14. Notice Augustine's language here: "Hence, when we see a body we have to consider and to distinguish the following three things . . . : first, the object which we see . . . , and this can naturally exist even before it was seen; secondly, the vision, which was not there before we perceived the object that was presented to the sense; thirdly, the power that fixes the sense of sight on the object that is seen as long as it is seen, namely the *attention*

[*intentio*] of the mind” [emphasis added] (*trin.*, 11.2.2).

15. “It is one thing to see; it is something else to grasp the whole of something by seeing, since, indeed, a thing is seen when it is perceived as present in any way whatsoever, but the whole is grasped by seeing, when it is seen, so that no part of it escapes the notice, or when its outlines can be included in the view, as nothing of your will at present escapes your notice . . .” (*ep.*, 147.21).

16. O’Daly, p. 95.

17. *Trin.*, 12.14.23: “Only a few succeed in arriving at these things [eternal reasons] with the eye of the mind, and when it does arrive insofar as it can, the one who arrives does not abide in them, but is repulsed by the rebounding, as it were, of the eye itself, and thus a transitory thought is formed of a thing that is not transitory.

“And yet this transitory thought is committed to the memory by means of the sciences in which it is instructed, so that there may be a place to which the thought that was forced to pass from thence may again return. . . . Yet what the gaze of the mind snatched from it, even though only in passing, and swallowing as it were into a belly, stored it in the memory, over this it will be able in a certain measure to ruminate again by recollection, and transfer what it has thus learned into the respective branch of knowledge.”

18. For example, his instrumental understanding of language as pointing to a “meaning” which only another person can grasp. See *mag.*, 38-46.

19. For example, sensory perception includes a stage of imaging constructed by the sub-rational level of the soul, as exists in animals, which is earlier analyzed as “internal sense” (*lib. arb.*, 2.8-13) and later as “spiritual sight” (*Gen. lit.*, 12.9.20).

20. Hence we must appreciate that, although Polanyi characterizes Augustine’s position as devaluing science, this would not have been due, if historically correct, to his theory of knowledge, but perhaps to his theological conception of the nature of or means towards salvation. See *Personal Knowledge*, p. 141.

21. “The Creative Imagination” in *Toward a Unity of Knowledge*, ed. by Marjorie Grene (New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1969), pp. 64-67.

22. For examples of Augustine’s discussion of this so-called *si fallor, sum* argument, see *civ.*, 11.26; *trin.* 10.10.14 and 15.12.21; and *lib. arb.*, 2.3.7.

23. Consider, for example, this claim made by Augustine: “The ideas are certain original and principal forms of things, i.e., reasons, fixed and unchangeable, which are not themselves formed and, being thus eternal and existing always in the same state, are contained in the Divine Intelligence” (*div. qu.*, 46.2).

24. A possible exception is that in *Science, Faith and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Books, 1964) Polanyi refers to transcendent value as “spiritual reality” (pp. 56-7). Subsequently in his new introduction, however, he explicitly rejects the need for such an interpretation (p. 17).

25. Nash, p. 109; and this, in turn, is due to the mind's "participation" in the divine light.

26. *retr.*, 1.4.4.: "Again, in a certain place, I said that 'without a doubt, those well versed in the liberal disciplines bring out, in learning the knowledge buried in oblivion within them and, in a certain sense, dig it out' [*sol.*, 2.20.35]. But I disapprove of this also. For it is more credible that even those who are ignorant of them, when properly questioned, reply truly concerning certain disciplines because, when they have the capacity to grasp it, the light of eternal reason by which they perceive those unchangeable truths is present to them."

27. *contra Faustum*, 20.7; PL 42.

28. This must be emphasized since it is possible to develop a reading of Polanyi which holds to a univocal understanding of his definition of reality with the attendant theological consequences. See Harry Prosch, *Michael Polanyi* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1986), p. 249.

29. See my *Doers of the Word* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977), pp. 131-45 for a more detailed defense of this claim with citations from Polanyi's work supporting it. At the time I was unaware of the Augustinian connection.

30. *Personal Knowledge*, p. 403.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 321.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 164. For a defense of the claim that "breaking out" has an ontological basis in Polanyi, see my *Doers of the Word*, pp. 197-8.

33. Michael Polanyi and Harry Prosch, *Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 153.

34. Pelikan, *The Mystery of Continuity: Time and History, Memory and Eternity in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1986), p. 140.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

WORKS OF AUGUSTINE CONSULTED

Abbreviations, Titles, Translations

c. Acad. *contra Academicos* PL 32; *Against the Academics*. trans. by John J. O'Meara. Ancient Christian Writers, No. 12. Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1950.

civ. *de civitate dei* PL 41; *The City of God*. Books 1-7. Trans. by Demetrius Zema and Gerald G. Walsh. Books 8-16. Trans. by Gerald G. Walsh and Grace Monahan. Books 17-22. Trans. by Gerald G. Walsh and Daniel J. Honan. The Fathers of the Church, vols. 8, 14, 24. New York: The Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1950, 1952, 1954.

conf. *confessiones* PL 32; *Confessions*. Trans. by R. S. Pine-Coffin. New York: Penguin Books, 1961.

div. qu. *de diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus* PL 40; *Eighty-three Different Questions*. Trans. by David L. Mosher. The Fathers of the Church, vol. 70. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1982.

ep. *epistulae* PL 33; *Letters*. [1-270] Trans. by Sister Wilfrid Parsons. The Fathers of the Church, vols. 12, 18, 20, 30, 32. New York: The Fathers of the Church, Inc. 1951-56.

Gn. litt. *de Genesi ad litteram* PL 34; *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*. Trans. by John Hammond Taylor. Ancient Christian Writers, Nos. 41 and 42. New York: Newman Press, 1982.

imm. an. *de immortalitate animae* PL 32; *The Immortality of the Soul*. Trans. by Ludwig Schopp. The Fathers of the Church, vol. 4. New York: Cima Publishing Co., Inc. 1947. Pp. 1-47.

Io.ev.tr. *in Iohannis evangelium tractatus* PL 35; *Tractates on the Gospel of John*. [tractates 1-27] Trans. by John W. Retting. The Fathers of the Church, vol. 78 and 79. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988.

lib.arb. *de libero arbitrio* PL 32; *The Free Choice of the Will*. Trans. by Robert P. Russell. The Fathers of the Church, vol. 59. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1968. Pp. 63-241.

mag. *de magistro* PL 32; *The Teacher*. Trans. by Robert P. Russell. The Fathers of the Church, vol. 59. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1968. Pp. 1-61.

retr. *retractationes* PL 32; *The Retractations*. Trans. by Sister Mary Inez Bogan. The Fathers of the Church, vol. 60. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1968.

sol. *soliloquia* PL 32; *The Soliloquies*. Trans. by Thomas F. Gilligan. The Fathers of the Church, vol. 5. New York: Cima Publishing Co., Inc., 1948. Pp. 333-426.

trin. *de trinitate* PL 42; *The Trinity*. Trans. by Stephen McKenna. The Fathers of the Church, vol. 45. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1962.

ut.cred. *de utilitate credendi* PL42; *The Advantage of Believing*. Trans. by Luanne Meagher. The Fathers of the Church, vol. 4. New York: Cima Publishing Co., Inc., 1947. Pp. 383-442.

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Submissions for Publication

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 doublespaced 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

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Electronic Discussion Group

The Polanyi Society supports an electronic discussion group exploring implications of the thought of Michael Polanyi. For those with access to the INTERNET, send a message to "owner-polanyi@sbu.edu" to join the list or to request further information. Communications about the electronic discussion group may also be directed to John V. Apczynski, Department of Theology, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778-0012 PHONE: (716) 375-2298 FAX: (716) 375-2389.

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