

# Polanyi's Influence on Poteat's Conceptualization of Modernity's "Insanity" and Its Cure

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**ABSTRACT** Key Words: William Poteat, Michael Polanyi, Soren Kierkegaard, critique of modernity, cultural crisis of modernity, post-critical, irony, self-abstraction, double-reflection, re-duplication, indirect communication, dialectical communication, contemporary gnosticism, contemporary nihilism, post-critical logic, post-critical reasoned inquiry.

*My intent is to paint in rather broad strokes Bill Poteat's intellectual agenda, as I came to understand it, and how Michael Polanyi fit into that agenda for Poteat alongside other major intellectual mentors. Bill's agenda was to expose critically and, so far as possible, to counter the fateful consequences of what he called the "prepossessions of the European Enlightenment" regarding human knowing, human doing, and human being. Although his work involved conceptual analysis, the nature of this conceptual-archaeology was far more profound than what usually goes by the name "conceptual analysis" or "cultural conceptual analysis." In effect it sought first to bring to light how the conceptual resources by which modern intellectuals reflectively consider anything, fatefully result in a state of self-abstractedness – indeed, a kind of culturally constituted insanity – that loses touch with the actual, concrete object of one's concern, with one's actual concrete self, and with the wellsprings of one's intellectual passion and creativity. Second, Bill sought to cure this cultural insanity, person by person, by ushering his students and readers into re-placement of themselves into themselves, in possession of themselves, within the concrete context of their embodied personhood. Poteat called attention to the way that our powers of reflection quite systematically forget their contextual rootedness in this (multi-leveled) cultural matrix and, beneath that, in our lived bodies – ultimately in our personhood. Polanyi served to assist Poteat (and his students) in this endeavor, I believe, as much as, or more than, did any other of Poteat's several intellectual mentors.*

My first direct encounter with Bill Poteat was in a graduate course he taught in Existential Philosophy in Fall Semester 1965. This was my first term at Duke as a graduate student in philosophy. The following Fall Semester (1966) along with one other student I did a tutorial in Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge* with Poteat in his home in Chapel Hill. I had not really begun seriously to read Polanyi for myself until that Fall. I finished my residency at Duke in June of 1967, receiving my PhD in June 1969, with a dissertation supervised by Poteat, entitled "Mastered Irony: The Point of Entry into a Post-Critical Epistemology." The title makes explicit reference to ideas of both Kierkegaard and Polanyi, though it did not involve a serious exposition of either thinker; it was not *about* either Kierkegaard or Polanyi, though it did employ several of their insights, conceptual innovations, and arguments. Rather, it centered on *identifying and overcoming the inherent self-abstracting tendencies of modern modes of intellectual reflection* (encapsulated in the phrase "the ironies of the modern mind"). As I think about it now, this focus very much coincides, in large part, with Bill Poteat's own agenda as I have come to understand it.

How different and apparently incompatible Polanyi and Kierkegaard seem, especially when read as authors or intellectual systems unto themselves – an approach Poteat definitely discouraged his students from taking! That Polanyi and Kierkegaard are not only compatible but in certain respects profoundly complementary and even convergent is characteristic of the sort of unprecedented creative contribution that Poteat brought to Polanyi studies: Both Polanyi and Kierkegaard in certain basic respects were getting at the same crucial issues.



The intellectual journey that led me to Poteat and Polanyi has some bearing on my account. Out of high school I began with an undergraduate career-oriented major in physics and mathematics. My focus shifted to philosophy by the middle of my second year of college. I came to recognize later that what motivated the shift was an increasing preoccupation with and philosophical puzzling over the consequences for our understanding of ourselves that were the result of the rise and coming to cultural dominance of what was supposed to be modern scientific understanding of the world. (These consequences I inchoately sensed then, and more clearly believe now, to be more on the order of deep confusions and disorientations – misunderstandings of ourselves – than they were displacements of older, ignorant, pre-scientific understandings by newer, enlightened, scientific understandings.)

I completed a double undergraduate major (physics and philosophy) via an extra year (including a year in Europe), which landed me an NDEA Title IV Fellowship in Philosophy and Philosophy of Science at Duke’s Graduate Philosophy Department. By the end of my first year at Duke (1965-66), I realized that no one in Duke’s Analytic-dominated Philosophy Department was interested in working with me on the larger questions that motivated me in philosophy. By then I had had two courses with Poteat and had come to realize that working with and under Poteat was exactly what would most permit me to follow and support me in following what I felt to be my intellectual calling. That led me to transfer to Duke’s Religion Department to work directly under Poteat with a special focus on Polanyi’s thought. Polanyi’s own pilgrimage from physical chemistry into philosophy, and specifically his breakthrough to post-critical philosophy, became a paradigm for my own intellectual pilgrimage – one that led me not away from my own personal and sub-cultural roots but to a recovery and re-appropriation of those roots.



Bill Poteat’s own intellectual agenda was set well before meeting Polanyi. It was largely set with his 1951 Duke Ph. D. dissertation (completed in 1950), entitled “Pascal’s Conception of Man and Modern Sensibility.” Though the dissertation was ostensibly about Pascal, it was really about what Pascal sought to be about – namely, identifying, combating, and overcoming the self-abstracting, self-alienating, person-occluding tendencies inherent in modern modes of reflection from the Renaissance forward but particularly of the sort epitomized in Descartes.



Poteat titled his last book, *Recovering the Ground: Critical Exercises in Recollection* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994). There he repeatedly calls attention to the fact that the exercises in recollection that he sets out for his reader are not *about* recovering the ground but are exercises specifically designed to *recover the ground*, to return his readers (and himself) from being lost in self-alienated abstraction, to return them to their concrete mindbodily selves. This was the dominant theme of Bill’s intellectual calling and career: to counter a fundamental bias built into and taken for granted in modern, critical modes of reflection – that is to say, third-person, non-reflexive “thinking about” things (including thinking about oneself). He deliberately seeks to identify and set out a different mode of reflective inquiry (I should say, different modes) and with different purposes than what is customary – because the customary modes of reflection in modernity (and most of post-modernity) all alienate us from ourselves and the world in common between us. That is to say, Bill sought to point the way to a mode of reflective inquiry which returns us again and again to our embodied selves (before God) and within the common world (participating therein in common-sense-making).

Bill Poteat was concerned to have his students and his readers learn what was involved in and engage in what Kierkegaard identified as *double-reflection* for the purpose of *re-duplication*. The point of double-reflection is not only to concentrate or focus on the content of reflection (“the what”) but to become aware of and track how it is with us personally in our actual lived, existential relationship to that content (“the how”), of which normally we are oblivious. Why? For the sake of bringing our reflective understanding into alignment with our lived relationship within whatever it is we are thinking about, and vice versa (re-duplication). Why? To overcome the manifold ironic contradictions, both comic and tragic, that pervade our lives as modern intellectuals just beneath the surface.

Thus Poteat sought to have us existentially *doubly-reflect* on the intellectual tools (“the how”) with which we think about and reflect upon the world and our concerns (“the what”), seeking to call attention to the cultural means/ language/ metaphors/ assumptions/ pictures we unthinkingly rely on to reflect on the world and discover how they are not neutral at all. They skew our take upon the world and abstract us from ourselves. This work at times looked like conventional conceptual analysis – and to a great extent it was – but it always had a deeper purpose and agenda. For example, we can suppose we hold explicitly to an anti-Cartesian metaphysical view but without realizing it we more often than not continue to rely on and reinforce Cartesian ways of construing the world. Poteat sought to call attention to the way that our powers of reflection quite systematically forget their contextual rootedness in this cultural matrix and, beneath that, in our lived bodies. Polanyi served to assist Poteat (and his students) in this endeavor of double-reflection for the sake of re-duplication, I believe, as much or more than did any other of his mentor-authors. At least Polanyi did so for me – in large part precisely because of Polanyi’s standing within the natural sciences and his showing how a scientist could reflect upon the work of scientific inquiry and reflection without becoming lost in self-abstraction and self-alienation.

Largely from Kierkegaard, I believe, Poteat early on learned that the human condition is (and fundamental concepts about it are accordingly) through and through “dialectical” – which is to say ambiguous: Nothing is simply what it seems to be on the surface, particularly not what it appears to be to detached, “objective” reflection (whose model of intelligibility remains the wholly explicit, immediately apprehensible, unambiguous, “clear and distinct idea”). What is needed is a sensitivity to the ironic possibilities in existence. All truth as truth, considered existentially, is inherently and essentially dialectical: what it discloses of itself is directly dependent on one’s own mode of relationship to it, on how fully one has for oneself come into rapport with it. When Kierkegaard referred to “existential” matters, he is referring primarily to this relationship that we have to the truth of things. It would not be wrong to say that existential matters are precisely matters of spirit or spirituality in the authentic sense of these words. To keep in touch with and monitor this existential relationship we have to the truth of things requires a different kind of reflection than usual: what Kierkegaard called a passionate, “subjective” reflection, a reflection that attends more to the “how” of truth (how it is to be realized in existence) than to the “what” of truth. An approach to, and communication of, truth that attends to the “what” as if the “how” can be blithely ignored presumes that truth is not dialectical but is evidently the same for all. Such an approach and communication Kierkegaard speaks of as *direct*. On the contrary, an *indirect* or dialectical approach (and communication of truth) that addresses this tacit relationship of ourselves to truth is always in order – indeed, is essential. Unless a person becomes aware of and sensitive to this, she or he is liable to misunderstand and mistake what Poteat was all about and what he found in Polanyi. Sometimes Polanyi was aware of and sensitive to this, at other times he was not. And that is, in large measure, where the difference between them lies.

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In any case, encountering Polanyi's thought heightened, deepened, and re-focused Poteat's agenda. He read some of Polanyi's early essays in 1952, and a manuscript of the Gifford Lectures in 1955 while in England studying ordinary language philosophy. His appreciation of the radicalness of Polanyi's criticism of (to use Poteat's words in *Polanyian Mediations: In Search of a Post-Critical Logic* [Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1985], 2) "the prepossessions of the European Enlightenment" ["concerning the nature of human knowing and doing, and, by implication, of the architectonics of learned inquiry erected upon this Enlightenment foundation"] grew with the years, particularly with a "breakthrough" Poteat experienced (into a personally deeper re-duplication) in 1968 with his travel to Greece and meeting with Greek sculptor Evangelos Moustakas. (For his own autobiographical account of this "breakthrough," see the Prologue to *Polanyian Mediations*.) In other words, Polanyi's thought complemented and refined Bill Poteat's agenda, which in turn provided a critical perspective on Polanyi's own work – as to how faithful Polanyi was to what Poteat had become convinced were Polanyi's deepest insights and profoundest criticisms of the legacy of the Enlightenment.

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Polanyi is only one of several intellectual mentors for Poteat, including (in addition to Blaise Pascal) Søren Kierkegaard, Ludwig Wittgenstein (in his later work), Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Hannah Arendt. These were the most important. Others too were important, however: W. H. Auden, Elizabeth Sewell, William Faulkner, Gabriel Marcel, Denis DeRougemont, John MacMurray, Paul Ricoeur, Walter Ong, Hans Jonas, Erwin Straus, George Steiner, John Austin, H. Richard Niebuhr, Joseph Church, Chaim Perelman, Thorlief Boman, Johannes Pederson, Walker Percy, Evangelos Moustakas, Paul Cezanne, and *many* others. All were critics of modernity (at least in the respects wherein Poteat was drawn to them): all were diagnosticians of the cultural crisis/malaise of modernity and the "prepossessions of the European Enlightenment," all sought to find pointers to a saner, more wholesome, truer understanding of ourselves and the world about us. Poteat excelled in putting these thinkers in their writings into creative dialogue with each other (especially in the classroom), using each to counterbalance, correct, and fill out what was missing in the others; each throwing new light on matters of common concern. Without the others (without the "triangulation" afforded by holding each in creative tension with the others) the central crisis of modernity and its issues would be less clear, less well understood. Thus for Poteat and Poteat's students, Polanyi was rarely, if ever, read and appreciated as a thinker by himself, as a thought-world unto itself, or as a solution to the crisis of modernity on his own. *No one thinker, in Poteat's estimation, could or should be!* Polanyi was always only one entrée among others into sorting out the muddle of modernity (though to be sure some were more important in certain respects than were others). And that is how Poteat, I think, would counsel us to be reading Polanyi today.

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Family resemblances among these writers included their different accounts of a large range of problematic consequences and manifold overwhelming temptations issuing from "the prepossessions of the European Enlightenment concerning the nature of human knowing and doing" plus deep resonances in their critique of these consequences and temptations with a Biblical/Hebraic sensibility: varying expressions of gnosticism (or "angelism/bestialism" to use the evocative phrase of Walker Percy); varying forms of nihilism; romantic irony as an existential standpoint; unbounded eroticism ("sensual erotic genius" to use Kierkegaard's phrase); a loss of any substantial sense of reality (a sense of unreality, and a corresponding indistinction between reality and so-called virtual reality); a loss of commonsense; a loss of reflexive self-reference (at least in any concrete sense); a loss of concreteness and of concrete orientedness within our bodies; a loss of the sense of

our embodied incarnate condition; a loss of the sense of being present with and to other persons; a loss of the *otherness* of things (loss of co-presence and mutuality); a loss of worth and goodness of things and the corresponding sense that we are in some fundamental sense answerable to them and for them; an uprootedness from the wellsprings of our passions; a superordination of the visual sensorium and of the visual field from which the seer/knower is as if it were absent; the exteriorization of our sensibility; an inability to give credence to any standpoint other than what the later Husserl called ‘the natural standpoint’ – namely, third-person, detached, impersonal spectation; the dominance of a mechanized conception of the world ripe for unhindered exploitation; a lack of appreciation for paradox, metaphor, indirection (indirect communication), ambiguity, irony, and humor (and that there are some truths that simply cannot be said clearly and distinctly), or contrariwise an unrestrained reveling in them (as in post-modern romantic irony); a prejudice on behalf of formalized, context independent, univocal, tenseless language (paradigmatically mathematics); a prejudicial disposition to treat things under the aspect of abstract homogeneous space and time; a radical discontent with being domiciled in a particular time and place and culture and an irrepressible hankering for being elsewhere (what Max Picard called “infinite flight”); a loss of any happy coming together in a synthesis of infinitude and finitude, of the infinite in the finite, of ideality in the everyday; etc.

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Poteat found counters to these manifold temptations of modernity in large measure (though not exclusively) in terms of a biblical or Hebraic sensibility (Jewish and Christian). He often spoke of biblical themes, concepts, images, metaphors, etc. as “Yahwist” motifs of thought. Here, it seems, for Poteat, was the locus of our sanest prepossessions of knowing and being. Key to these, of course, is the I-Thou, personal encounter, first- and second-person interaction and exchange, between the individual person and God, and between person and person. In prayer conceived as personal encounter (indeed, conceived above all as personalizing encounter) we find the most profound expression of language, *kairos* time vs. homogeneous time, place vs. space, the Augustinian motif of faith seeking understanding in love vs. the Hellenic motif of the priority of intellect to will and passion, calling vs. social role and status. Important in making sense of this is the fact that for Poteat, as for Kierkegaard, and perhaps for Pascal too, being a person of Christian faith was not a matter of assenting to a body of theological beliefs or even of indwelling a particular symbol system and set of stories (one among others) – though subsidiarily, these oriented him to what did matter). It was first of all a matter of returning to and owning up to the particular concrete self one is called to be before God, above all vis-à-vis the decisively personalizing historical incarnation of God in Christ. Christianity for Poteat was not a content for thought, not a *what* to contemplate intellectually, but a radical address that concerns *our* very “existence,” i.e., *how* we are in the world and *how* we relate to everything *qua* responsible person.

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Rooted in these concerns and these prepossessions, Poteat found much to be satisfied with in Polanyi’s thought *and* much to be dissatisfied with. Remarkably, Poteat did not find in Polanyi’s explicit reflections on religion much with which he agreed. Where he found himself most profoundly in agreement with Polanyi was in Polanyi’s understanding of the person of the knower, the knower as called and responsibly obeying that calling, pursuing hidden discoveries, and the knower as experiencing self-transformation in her/his deepening grasp and indwelling of reality both transcendent and immanent, a reality that evocatively manifests itself, yes, but inexhaustibly (see *Polanyian Meditations*, pp. 133, 136 *et passim*.) According to Poteat, Polanyi often said incredibly profound things and said them more profoundly than he realized, but often Polanyi failed to realize that profundity and later unfortunately came to qualify, compromise, or discount some of the most profound things that he had said. Overall, as with all the great philosophical writers by whom Poteat was mentored, each

had failings and shortcomings; each failed fully to appreciate and remain faithful to their profoundest insights into the predicament of modernity and how to extract ourselves from it. (Toward the end of his life, Poteat discovered a book which profoundly confirmed and deepened his intuitions into what he took to be the culture-wide insanity of modern life, *Madness and Modernism: Insanity in the Light of Modern Art, Literature, and Thought* by Louis A. Sass [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992]. Among the sources with which Poteat had earlier become well acquainted that contributed to his diagnosis of the insanity of modern culture, special mention needs to be made of the novels and essays of Walker Percy.)

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Poteat spoke repeatedly of the crisis of modern culture as an *[intellectual] culture-wide insanity*, and meant that charge quite literally, though he was keenly aware of the ironies created in so doing. And he understood his own task (and the larger task of his intellectual mentors) as that of curing this insanity and returning us to our selves, to who we are as concrete, embodied persons, persons before God – yet not supposing that it could be done straightforwardly or easily – least of all as a social program to be advocated for the masses.

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A couple of times (not often though – in fact, rather rarely), I recall Poteat having referred to himself as doing propadeutical (preparatory) philosophical work for more-or-less orthodox Christian theology, in a kind of servant role for Christian theology (or perhaps more broadly for Christian intellectuals generally). The problem was that few of the theologians around him came close, in his judgment, to filling the bill for what he had in mind, or fully grasping and appreciating what he was doing. To his thinking, most contemporary theologians (especially those of a more liberal persuasion, but so also those of a fundamentalist cast) fell victim to the self-abstracting intellectual matrix (habits) of modernity that he was committed to challenging and overcoming.

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Some key “borrowings” or “minings” of Poteat from Polanyi: *mindbody*, *mindbodily* (though he coined these two terms himself, they emerged directly from meditating on Polanyi’s writings), the impossibility of exhaustive (complete) reflection and articulation of any subject, our powers of reflection being grounded in pre-reflective acts of being in the world (which derived as much from Merleau-Ponty as from Polanyi), *bodily presuppositions* of our thought and powers of reflection, the incarnate roots of our concepts (our assumptions and presuppositions) in our bodies, tacit intimations of meaning, alternative pictures of what it is to reflect and inquire than those of the Cartesian and Enlightenment inheritance, knowing and being as being mutually implicated in each other, unspecifiable *presuppositions*, subsidiary clues, the pregnancy with meaning of the pre-articulate; the from-to stretch of attention (temporally no less than spatially) – indeed, the entire tacit dimension of things that constitute the subsidiary particulars from which we attend in attending to the foci of our interests; and certainly a defining characteristic of reality as that which manifests itself inexhaustibly.

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Bill Poteat’s publication that most explicitly takes Polanyi’s thought into discussion is his *Polanyian Meditations: In Search of a Post-Critical Logic*. I would like briefly to characterize what Poteat meant by “a post-critical logic.” I was in fairly close contact with him when he was initially undertaking this project. I may be wrong, but I believe I may have been the one who suggested to him this particular phrase as what it was he was getting at in his initial writing efforts that led to this book. Regardless, in no way do I want to take credit for the conception that lay behind it.

What Poteat meant by it says a lot about what he took Polanyi to mean by “post-critical,” and as well what he took to be the radical import of Polanyi’s thought for newly understanding and re-conceiving “logic,” “reason,” “rationality,” and related concepts from what they have long been taken to mean by Enlightenment thought and mainstream modern philosophy. For us here at this conference, what Poteat was getting at by the phrase can provide for us a paradigm of the relationship between Poteat’s thought and that of Polanyi.

Poteat read Polanyi as directing us to the *re-place-ment* all of the deracinate (= uprooted) products of enlightened critical thought back within the tacit concrete pre-lingual context of their emergence and their appropriate use (compare Wittgenstein here: both “Look not for meaning but for use” and “a picture held us captive”), replacing them back within the stretch of attention between the inarticulate, inchoate intimations of meaning, connection, and order we sense within our mindbody and the actual articulations of appropriate/normative/ correct meaning, connection, and order which we express and seek to have confirmed between us. Formal logic, as such, is not only an abstract, decontextualized, highly refined and sophisticated articulate skeleton [actually a system of signs of such a skeleton] of *some* of these normative relationships (precisely the ones that remain univocally the same from one context to another, ignoring all that are not context-invariant). We cannot as such learn rationally to inquire and reason directly through employing formal logic and following its explicit rules [despite the suasions of formal logic enthusiasts to have formal logic be a core subject of the general university curriculum], no more than we can learn to ride a bicycle through being handed the engineering formula for keeping a bicycle upright via shifts of weight and appropriately orienting the front wheel for any given velocity. We cannot, because understanding and applying formal logic depends upon informal, tacit skills of interpretation and application of the formally explicit terms, concepts, principles and rules, but, even more fundamentally, upon our prior but still present, more primitive tacit, pre-lingual, groping mindbodily efforts to discern meaning, make sense, and find connections between things.

Thus a “post-critical logic” would be logic (both formal and informal) re-placed, re-appropriated, and, as a result, reconceived as a mindbodily extension of ourselves toward what we accredit to be normatively interconnected thoughts – that is to say, logic as employed responsibly by a reasoning person. Indeed, formal logic is nothing, is meaningless, without that tacit appropriation and grounding – even when it forgets its root and ground in our mindbody’s hold upon the world.

Now is this a matter of giving exposition and extension to Polanyi’s ideas? Yes and no. While at times it is Polanyi exposition, in important respects it is doing a Polanyian kind of post-critical analysis of logical, rational thinking – following up that toward which Polanyi pointed, following up intimations of further aspects of the realities which Polanyi’s own writings disclosed. Was it/is it always consistent with what Polanyi wrote? Well, both yes and no. Which is precisely what, I believe, Polanyi would affirm and expect.

## Some Questions for Further Consideration

- What is Poteat’s intellectual home base/foundation/tradition? I think we all have some notion of it, but it is not something that surfaces prominently as such in what Poteat wrote or taught. What place and role does it grant to Christian revelation? Where, if anywhere, might we place Poteat theologically and hermeneutically? Does it matter? We need to recall and take into account here Poteat’s deliberate adoption of irony (which he sought to keep mastered) at times in his teaching and in interpersonal relations.
- In some sense, Poteat sought to establish a new intellectual tradition, as it were, among his students and the principal writers/thinkers that were the meat of the reading program in which he directed his graduate students. How does this appear in light of the work of Alasdair MacIntyre and Jaroslav Pelican (in addition

- to Polanyi) about the crucial role of tradition for thought?
- Regarding Poteat's critique(s) of Polanyi: What are its key points? What should we make of Poteat's critique in *PM* of Polanyi as being inconsistently Yahwist?
  - Poteat's project in relation to Polanyi's project? Neither is pre-modernist. Neither is modernist. Neither is post-modernist in most senses of the phrase. Both are post-critical in some sense (both claim this phrase). In the same sense? Is Poteat's "return to the ground" identical to Polanyi's shift (from a modernist/Enlightenment/critical perspective) to what he understands as post-critical? If not identical, then how do they differ?
  - What difficulties stand in the way of understanding and fully embracing Poteat's perspective? For many, Poteat was and remains a mystery as to what his views really were, where he stood on important matters, and where his own perspective fit into (if at all) his hearer's frame of reference. (No doubt this depends on who is under consideration.) Is it more difficult than understanding and embracing Polanyi's perspective? Is it vulnerable to the charge of being in some sense elitist? Too 'far out'? Too radical? Too intellectually sophisticated?
  - Polanyi scholars have spent not a little time wondering and exploring why Polanyi has not been better received among professional philosophers and intellectuals generally. Might we ask and explore similar questions about Poteat? Are the two cases instances of the same problem and the same causes, or do they differ in significant respects?
  - To what extent is Poteat's perspective uniquely Poteatian? How 'common' (widely shared, even among his students) is it? How common could it be/become? How sharable is it? How common *should* it become? How important and irreplaceable is it?
  - The difficulties and obstacles one meets in Poteat's hyper-reflexive writing/rhetorical style: How essential/necessary are they to what it seeks to communicate? Can Poteat's views be simplified (communicated more clearly) without loss? Or does that communication always require the dialectical sophistication Poteat embodied in himself and demanded of his students?
  - Similarly, to what extent is it possible for someone wishing to do for others, and for students in particular, what Poteat sought to do by way of enabling a recovery of themselves from reflective self-abstraction and replacing themselves in possession of themselves within the concrete context of their embodied personhood? Have any of Poteat's own students been able to accomplish this feat? How effectively and with how many of their students? What conditions facilitate its accomplishment and what obstacles frustrate it? Is it possible for others who have not been Poteat's direct students/disciples in this endeavor to take on and pursue it? Further, what can we learn from their collective experience about transitioning readers of Polanyi from a critical to a post-critical perspective?