

Moodey on Shils, Polanyi and Tradition

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ABSTRACT

This is a brief response to Richard Moodey's analysis of views of tradition found in the thought of Edward Shils and Michael Polanyi.

I have just been asked by the publisher to give him 200 words for the dust-jacket. Usually he does that himself, but he finds it too difficult in this case. Unfortunately, I find it very difficult myself, too, for I do not know how to approach the public best in such brief terms on such a large matter. On the other hand, I am sure you could write down the most suitable 200 words in little over 200 seconds. Might I ask you to do this?¹

This request came from Michael Polanyi in a letter of August 28, 1957 to Edward Shils (B4, MPF, ESP). The book in question, of course, for which a succinct statement was required was *Personal Knowledge* which came out June 20, 1958. Polanyi's request reflects the depth of his confidence in Edward Shils and that included his sense that Shils was an intellectual whose convictions aligned closely with Polanyi's own postcritical philosophical stance. Dick Moodey's reflections on Polanyi, Shils and the development of each figure's thinking about tradition has brought into the foreground a number of matters concerned with the relationship and cooperation of these figures. I am delighted that he has explored this topic because I think it is an important one. With the possible exception of Marjorie Grene, I suspect that Edward Shils was Polanyi's closest intellectual companion. Certainly, I am a novice when it comes to the extensive body of Shils' writing, but I long have been interested in the link between Shils and Polanyi and in the comments (many in TAD) about this link made by a number of knowledgeable figures including Stephen Turner, Steven Grosby, Louis Swartz, Richard Schmitt, as well as Shils himself. A few years ago my interest was further stimulated by reading much of the extensive correspondence between Shils and Polanyi that is part of the Papers of Edward Shils, material that was not available to Scott and Moleski, but which certainly would have interested them. What follows here are brief comments that amplify a few of the points that Dick Moodey elaborates.

Some Contours of the Friendship

Moodey provides an outline of the long friendship between Polanyi and Shils, stretching for thirty years from 1946 until Polanyi's death; he notes that Swartz, Grosby, Turner and Shils himself have pointed to the importance of this friendship. Their correspondence suggests Polanyi and Shils went out of their way to spend time together in the US, UK and in other settings over the course of thirty years.² Polanyi and Shils enjoyed each other's company and clearly they found conversation stimulating. What Polanyi remarked in an October 26, 1959 letter (B4, MPF,ESP) seems aptly to summarize the sense of things of both men: "I wish you were here to talk about all kinds of things. I still find the world very interesting, particularly in your company." This was an unusually close friendship, but, like any other long friendship, one that had ups and downs. One Polanyi letter in the fifties expresses great relief that what seems to have been a misunderstanding that led to a period of silence (i.e., letters unanswered) had now been overcome.³ Each figure often seems to have tried

diligently to involve the other in current projects he was working on and sometimes—but not always—succeeded.⁴ It was a friendship that seemed to have extended to Magda Polanyi who also corresponded with Shils and very clearly trusted and at times confided in Shils. Magda Polanyi's letters in the early fifties when her spouse had resigned from Manchester and planned to take up an appointment at the University of Chicago but was then denied a visa made clear to Shils that Michael Polanyi was deeply depressed and extraordinarily fragile.⁵ It was a friendship in which Shils often seems to have been a figure relied upon to get important things done and Shils was a gifted organizer. The correspondence makes clear, as Moodey has suggested, that it was Shils who set up Polanyi's first 1950 visit to the University of Chicago and he had a hand in organizing many later short terms appointments through the Committee on Social Thought.⁶ Shils was involved in the project to get Polanyi a permanent appointment at Chicago in 1951 and when all that went awry because Polanyi was unable to get a visa, Shils worked on Polanyi's behalf with the University of Chicago and in trying to apply pressures that would produce a visa for Polanyi.⁷ Shils put together the October 1952 *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* (vol. VIII, no. 7 [October, 1952]) that featured Polanyi as one of many European scientists unjustly excluded from the U.S. by current policies.⁸ Even much later in Polanyi's life in the mid-sixties, when Polanyi was very vexed by continuing problems that emerged when he came to the U.S., Shils tried to help Polanyi correct the errors in old government files on Polanyi which Polanyi believed to be source of his later travel problems.⁹

On Mentoring and Reading and Referencing Each Other's Work

Shils acknowledges Polanyi as one “three elders who have left an imprint on me”¹⁰ but Polanyi also acknowledges Shils as something of a mentor for him in the literature of the social sciences. Dick Moodey's account of Polanyi's interest in the Parsons-Shils action frame of reference illustrates this role. A Polanyi letter of August 4, 1949 indicates appreciation for a copy of a Weber text that Shils had sent which Polanyi said he plunged into immediately: “I was happy to hear from you and very grateful for the copy of Weber's book which you sent me. I got immersed in it straight away and derived some of the instruction which I am sure you thought I was in need of when I ventured into this field without properly exploring its background”(B1, Misc 47-49F, ESP). Polanyi seems early in this friendship to have concluded that he wished to work with Shils: a February 18, 1949 letter to Shils (B4, MPF, ESP) notes, “The more often I meet you, the more I feel that we could probably do good work together, and at any rate I feel much tempted to induce you in this direction.” A decade later, in a December 3, 1960 letter to Shils (B4,MPF, ESP), Polanyi remarks, “I know that our minds move on parallel but not identical lines and that is good. It promises a bulky achievement, arrived at on independent grounds.”¹¹ At times, Polanyi seems to have regarded Shils' writing as a catalyst for his own writing projects. In a July 15, 1957 letter to Shils (B4, MPF, ESS) which notes that the revision of the final chapter of PK has been completed, Polanyi comments that he must now turn to the Lindsay Lectures which “I have given the absurd title ‘The Study of Man’ which includes everything I know nothing about. It would help me to focus on some samples of your recent writing. Our thoughts have a way of supplementing each other which could be made more effective by closer co-operation.”

It is something of a surprise, as Moodey notes, that Shils does not often quote Polanyi's writing and when he does he seems to prefer SFS.¹² As Louis Swartz suggests, Shils is a parsimonious footnoter, as one might note also is Polanyi.¹³ Nevertheless, the Polanyi-Shils letters make clear that both Shils and Polanyi read and commented on drafts and published versions of many things written by the other. Shils apparently read at least Series I of Polanyi's Gifford Lectures and prepared written comments.¹⁴ Polanyi's January 21, 1957 letter to Shils (B4 MPF, ESP) thanks him for recent feedback provided (when they were together in the

U.S.) on the draft of the PK chapter titled “Conviviality.” Shils makes very clear in his letters that PK is a very important book for him. Writing Polanyi on June 4, 1957 (B5, F10, MPP) which was likely not long after he read the final draft (or a near final draft), Shils comments, “*Personal Knowledge* has become a sort of part of my mental furniture and it radiates and elaborates itself into every sphere of intellectual activity into which I enter.” Later in that fall in an October 23, 1957 letter (B5, F10, MPP), Shils agreed to write the 200 word summary for the PK dust jacket, and again commented on Polanyi and his book:

About your book, I can only repeat to you what I said without rhetorical intention to Magda: It is a grandiose achievement, breathtaking—literally so—in its profundity and daring, and one of the most enriching books I have ever read. . . It is a magnificent work, my dear Michael and I cannot sufficiently praise it or you for having done it.

Polanyi frequently read Shils’ writings also and he often found them helpful not only to stimulate his own writing but to deepen his understanding of common interests, including the interest in tradition that Moodey focuses attention on. In an August 13, 1955 letter to Shils (B4, MPF, ESP), Polanyi thanks Shils for his manuscript which he says he has read carefully:

Your continued study of tradition is of special interest to me. I welcome in particular technical use you make of the term ‘sacred’. Similarly, your use of the word ‘deference’ in your Encyclopedia article on ‘clan’, seems to designate an important feature of society in a straightforward manner which. . . is essentially novel. I congratulate you on this piece of work.

Shils’ Stories About Polanyi

Like Dick Moodey, I distrust some of Shils’ stories about Michael Polanyi because they don’t fit well with other historical details. Of course Shils’ anecdotes about Polanyi and other figures were written down many years after events and are primarily intended succinctly to portray character. Nevertheless, I find that what Shils’ stories imply sometimes misses the mark. In his *A Fragment of a Sociological Autobiography*, Shils suggests that Polanyi was not interested, as was Shils, in the problem of secrecy and that “he [Polanyi] did not want to hear anything about Karl Mannheim or Karl Popper” (*Fragment*, 79). Shils confirms that he met Polanyi in the autumn of 1946 (*Fragment*, 78). Mannheim dies very soon thereafter on January 9, 1947 and Shils in fact tells an odd story (see Moodey’s summary of this anecdote) about informing Polanyi of Mannheim’s death in a taxi ride the day after the death (*Fragment*, 36-37),¹⁵ a story that likely does not accurately represent Polanyi personal relationship with Mannheim. Mannheim is, as Moodey and others have noted, a figure the young Shils worked closely with but eventually sharply criticized and seemed eventually to find a somewhat unsavory character. In 1944 and 1945, Polanyi was working on a book to be published in Mannheim’s Routledge series and there is quite a bit of archival correspondence in the Papers of Michael Polanyi through the fall of 1945 as well as some records of the interaction of Polanyi and Mannheim in J. H. Oldham’s discussion group, the Moot.¹⁶ While it is clearly the case that Polanyi is critical of Mannheim’s emphasis upon planning and his historicism,¹⁷ it is also clear that Polanyi and Mannheim were friends and that they met socially to discuss ideas in 1944 and 1945 and they may also have met in 1946, although Polanyi was apparently too busy to finish up his work on his book for Routledge. If Polanyi did not wish to “hear” anything about Mannheim from Shils, it seems unlikely that this was due to any sort of rift with Mannheim. The case of Popper is similar: by the late forties, Polanyi had become critical of Popper’s views (see, for

example, the Preface to *LL*, which went to press in late 1949). But Polanyi and Popper seem to have been on good terms until after 1952 when Polanyi presented (to the London Philosophy of Science group chaired by Popper) and then published his paper “The Stability of Belief,” making public his sharp criticisms of views emphasizing the centrality of doubt. The Polanyi-Popper correspondence from the late forties shows these figures met from time to time, had some common interests and cooperated.¹⁸

Despite the reported limited interest of Polanyi in the problem of secrecy, Polanyi’s comments on Shils’ writing on the topic—and on Shils himself as a fellow freedom fighter—are certainly not faint praise:

I just finished reading your book on the torment of Secrecy. . . I can see that we have in you a resolute and eloquent leader who can transpose our theory of freedom into a passionate imperative. You have the range of knowledge, the courage and the originality of expression which command respect for your sentiments. I thank you for including me in your dedication. In a way I think it correctly expresses our partnership. You are younger and possess powers which I lack, but as fighters for freedom as something new, something of which we only begin to discern the outlines in the present world, we belong to a very small band. People are ignorant of freedom either because they take it for granted or because they have never known it. In either case they see little purpose in discussing the matter. You have the power to overcome this barrier. I hope we shall soon meet again for new tasks (B4, Feb. 15, 1956, MPF, ESP).

Polanyi’s Interest in Tradition

I agree with Dick Moodey that Shils to some degree misrepresents Polanyi when he suggests that Polanyi focused narrowly on tradition in science. Polanyi did indeed take tradition seriously as a component of science and, as Moodey and Nye have suggested, this likely is rooted in Polanyi’s years as a research scientist at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes. But by the late thirties and early forties, Polanyi’s opposition to the planned science movement led him to think more broadly about the character of social order. In “The Growth of Thought in Society”(1941), Polanyi seems already to be pointing to the importance of what he later terms tradition and professional opinion in a wide range of intellectual and cultural dynamic orders of society.¹⁹ The exception is perhaps the dynamic economic order which seems to rely not on tradition and professional opinion but on only competition which Polanyi suggests is possible because money works as a medium (for pricing) that adequately allows ongoing adjustment in the economic order.²⁰ I thus concur with Dick Moodey’s view (which he links to some of Walter Gulick’s suggestions) that Polanyi’s notions about how most dynamic or spontaneous orders operate through mutual adjustment already presupposes the existence and importance of what later is tagged “tradition.” I would add—and I suspect Moodey would agree—that even Polanyi’s early ideas about the way in which tradition underlies the operation of dynamic orders also points to the importance of authority or to those who play authoritative roles in intellectual dynamic orders.

By 1943, three years before he meets Shils, Polanyi was beginning to pull together his account of modern European intellectual history and his account focuses on religion and contrasts the way that ideas and cultural practices (especially political practices) develop in English and Continental history. “The English and the Continent” (1943)²¹ is the first of several articles in the forties that elaborate the contrast:

I believe that the principal differences in recent times between English and Continental politics—and what I shall say of England is, I think, largely true of America also—is connected with the fact that in England social progress was not on the whole associated with enlightenment and anticlericalism, but was, on the contrary, very often prompted by religious sentiment (372).

In Polanyi's account, English traditions and practices have proven sound and sensible, providing social stability and gradual reform, whereas the way in which ideas and practices developed on the Continent ultimately followed out the logical implications of the Enlightenment and have brought nihilism, violence and totalitarianism.²² By 1943 in "The English and the Continent," Polanyi is clearly identifying "tradition" as a central element in both English and Continental societies. In particular, he is interested in the operation of "the living moral tradition in England" (378) and how it was revived in World War II and how the societies of the Continent have an opportunity to revive elements of "their own moral tradition" (381) that is akin to England's tradition. Polanyi regards the liberal civilization (destroyed by World War I and the Russian Revolution and later, the rise of fascism) as a civilization that made gradual but significant reforms by relying on tradition. But all of this collapsed as scientific materialism and totalitarian governments which rely on planning emerged.²³ Shils, of course, may never have read Polanyi's writings (on intellectual history) that predate meeting him in 1946, but certainly some of this emphasizes tradition's importance in society.

Moodey suggests that in the deep background of Polanyi's appreciation for tradition is his early religious experience and possibly his sense of the importance of tradition in religion.²⁴ This is perhaps the case—certainly Polanyi re-applies, as Moodey points out, notions about "the Apostolic succession" and points to the importance of religious traditions in English history. I, nevertheless, think it is important to be very careful about overplaying the religion card. The prominent place that Scott and Moleski (194-195) give to the opening section of Polanyi's April 19, 1944 letter to Mannheim—a section which sets forth the early history of his religious experience (which Moodey picks up)—suggests that this section must have had a special resonance for Bill Scott, the Quaker physicist—perhaps too much resonance. This letter was in fact a lengthy one that was a follow-up to a dinner and conversation at Mannheim's home and it appears to be an effort to provide further clarification on both some questions that Mannheim had posed (some personal, including Polanyi's personal religious history) and topics Polanyi believed had been insufficiently discussed and he apparently wanted some closure on. The letter is the first of three linked letters (two from Polanyi and one from Mannheim, a total of approximately six single-spaced pages) that set forth serious philosophical differences (some identified above in note 17) between these thinkers and also discusses Polanyi's projected book.²⁵ Clearly, Polanyi was a sensitive soul who was deeply interested in and appreciated many dimensions of religion. His discussions of religious doubt, religious frameworks, mysticism, Tillich, the Protestant principle, the ways in which religious faith is akin to (and bound up with and operates like) other kinds of faith in life, his re-validation of religious inquiry, his post-critical anticipation of an era in which myth, symbol and religious ritual are newly respected—my list here does not pretend to be exhaustive—are fascinating and important aspects of Polanyi's thought. I would also be the first to argue that Polanyi's views were importantly shaped by his long involvement in Oldham's discussion groups in which matters concerned with the importance of religion in society were central. Nevertheless, Polanyi's participation in religious communities and his firsthand knowledge of tradition in religion seems quite limited. Long ago, Aaron Milavec illuminatingly contrasted Polanyi's engagement with the scientific tradition in a scientific community with his lack of engagement with religious communities and traditions, despite his interest in such traditions as an intellectual.²⁶ More recently, Tibor Frank has helpfully clarified the several ways Polanyi typified a *fin-de-siècle* Budapest Jew.²⁷

Paul Knepper has shown that Polanyi had a very limited understanding of Judaism and the Jewish tradition, although he was repelled by what he associated with ideas and practices of Eastern Jews.²⁸ Polanyi's negotiations in the mid forties with Mannheim were concerned with the unpublished book "The Autonomy of Science" which was slated to include the 1943 article "Jewish Problems."²⁹ Polanyi wrote to Mannheim that religious Judaism represented something like the opposing, limiting case of tradition quite different than the positive case he was making for tradition in other articles slated for the book: ". . . I think it is also desirable to show that the principles of tradition have their limitations or, let us say, their negative aspects as evident in the Jewish case."³⁰ Finally, perhaps it is important also to remember that Polanyi seems sometimes to associate Roman Catholicism and tradition in Roman Catholicism with what he calls "Specific Authority" rather than "General Authority" and practices of supervision that allow persons to re-appropriate and reform a living tradition.³¹ "General Authority," according to Polanyi, is "a more or less organized expression of the general opinion—scientific, legal, or religious—formed by the margin and interplay of all these individual contributions" but a "Specific Authority" is one that "makes all important reinterpretations and innovations by pronouncements from the centre" (SFS 59). In sum, there is a good bit of evidence that suggests Polanyi's associations for the role of tradition in religion are not all positive and, further, his knowledge of tradition in religion seems very circumscribed. Moodey, however, does not suggest that either Polanyi or Shils assumes an altogether positive role for tradition in their accounts of society.

Endnotes

¹This and other quotations that follow come from the Papers of Edward Shils (ESP), which, like the Papers of Michael Polanyi (MPP) which I also cite, are in the Department of Special Collections of the University of Chicago Library. Thanks go to Steven Grosby, literary executor, for arranging for me to review some of the materials in the Papers of Edward Shils which are still being processed by Special Collections. Citations in parenthesis will include the box (B), folder (F) number or name (MPF is "Michael Polanyi" folder in ESP) and collection (MPP or ESP) as well as the date of correspondence and writer if this is not provided in the discussion. All references to ESP are to boxes in Series III. Since the project of organizing the enormous collection of Shils materials is not yet complete, some of the ways material is presently filed (e.g., there was a large "Michael Polanyi" folder in Box 4 as well as several folders for each of several years) may, I suspect, eventually change.

²This paragraph hazards a few generalizations based on notes taken in my review of the many letters in ESP and the few in MPP.

³"Our meeting in England has gloriously healed the mysterious illness that had befallen our friendship. Glory be to the source of all grace" (Polanyi to Shils, June 15, 1955, B4, MPF, ESP).

⁴For example, when Polanyi was the editorial chair (or had important editorial responsibility) for the short-lived journal *Humanitas* (1946-48), he apparently invited Shils to write an article on liberalism; he refers to this article in a December 23, 1947 letter to Shils (B1, Misc. 47-49 folder, ESP). In a July 17, 1948 letter to Shils (B1, Correspondence 1948, ESP), Polanyi declines Shils' offer to write a response probably for an article in the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* in the period in which Shils was one of the editors. In a September 8, 1947 letter from Shils to Polanyi (B5, F4, MPP), Shils invited Polanyi to write "an article on security and freedom of science."

⁵See in particular Magda Polanyi's October 8, 1951 letter to Shils (B4, MPF, ESP) where she comments, "I don't mind telling you what he said to me before he left for Wales: This American business has robbed me of my home, of my job, of my professional position in England and I don't know how I can go on

living if it can't be straightened out.”

⁶Polanyi's invitation for his first term at Chicago in the spring of 1950 came in Shils' letter to Polanyi in September 7, 1949 (B4, MPF, ESP): “I have been authorized by Chancellor Hutchins of the University to invite you to accept the White professorship at this University for the winter or spring of 1950, if that is possible for you.” Other correspondence in this period from Shils, Polanyi and others at the University of Chicago works out details for this first visit. Later letters testify that Shils has a hand in later Chicago visits. For example, Shils' May 20, 1964 letter to Polanyi (B4, MPF, ESP) proposes a “recurrent presence in Chicago.” It should be noted that Shils also came to Manchester for short term appointments (letters suggest perhaps in 1949 and the summer of 1950 as well as in 1953) and that Polanyi arranged these visits.

⁷Some of the correspondence in the Papers of Edward Shils (letters from Polanyi, Shils and university officials) in 1950 and 1951 concerns the Chicago appointment and the ongoing problem of securing a visa which would allow Polanyi actually to come to Chicago and take the appointment. Scott and Moleski (217-219) also briefly comment on the Chicago appointment and the delay in receiving a visa (which came through only in 1953), which led first to rescheduling the move to Chicago and finally, in November, 1951, to a resignation from the permanent appointment. Much of the narrative in the biography seems to be based on Scott's interview of Shils.

⁸Shils was the special editor of this issue (and a member of the editorial board) which focused on the exclusion of scientists by the two McCarran Acts. Shils wrote an introductory editorial “American's Paper Curtain” (210-216) and Polanyi's case—which Polanyi laid out in detail (223-228) and which was followed by comments on Polanyi's case by John Baker and P. W. Bridgeman (229)—was the first of seven British cases.

⁹Polanyi's long letter of October 7, 1966 to Shils (B4, MPF, ESP) contended his travel problems in the sixties grew out of the fact that the U.S. State Department had only half-heartedly rectified the errors of 1951 by changing Polanyi's classification in his files from “communist” to “defector.” Shils' follow-up letter to Polanyi on October 17, 1966 (B4, MPF, ESP) advised Polanyi that he was taking steps to consult a former U. S. Attorney General, now working for the State Department, who was a former University of Chicago Law professor.

¹⁰Edward Shils, *A Fragment of a Sociological Autobiography: The History of My Pursuit of A Few Ideas*. Steven Grosby, ed. (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2006), 153. Additional references to this work are cited in the text as *Fragment*.

¹¹Shils seems to have shared Polanyi's view. After reading Polanyi's “The Scientific Revolution,” Shils' November 3, 1960 letter to Polanyi (B4, MPF, ESP) proclaims: “It was a breath-taking and exhilarating experience to read it and to think about it. I felt in reading it the strong kinship which binds us, not only personally, but intellectually.”

¹²In *Fragment*, Shils also mentions (80) the particular importance to him of SFS.

¹³Louis H. Swartz (“Reflection on Shils, Sacred and Civil Ties and Universities,” TAD 27:1 [2000-01]: 7-12) discusses documentation in Shils (8).

¹⁴Polanyi's July 23, 1951 letter to Shils (B4, MPF, ESP) asks him to return his Gifford Series I lectures since he needs to work on the Series II lectures. His July 25, 1951 letter to Shils (B4, MPF, ESP) says: “I thank you very much for your letter and look forward gratefully to receiving your detailed comments on my manuscript. Your criticism of the structure and formulation of my text will be as valuable as any material points you might make. I am thinking of publishing the First Series of lectures separately and should like to have your reaction to this project. It would somewhat facilitate the writing of the second part by making it rather more independent of the first.” In MPP (B25, F2) there are eight pages of detailed notes from Shils dated September 1951 that are titled “Comments on Gifford Lectures 1-5.”

¹⁵January 9, 1947, the day Mannheim died, was a Thursday and there was a short obituary note in the

London Times (p. 4) on January 10 and a five-paragraph, unsigned full obituary on January 11 (p. 7); a letter remembering Mannheim from T. S. Eliot was published January 25, 1947 (p. 7). Shils reports (*Fragment*, 36-37) that his cab ride with Polanyi was on Monday and that Mannheim died on the preceding Sunday and he discovered this by looking at the Monday *Times* which he had not read. The Moot had a meeting beginning January 10, 1947 which Mannheim was scheduled to attend and Polanyi almost certainly did attend, according to correspondence in MPP. It seems likely that Polanyi would have learned about Mannheim's death at the Moot meeting.

¹⁶See the discussion of this book and Polanyi's interaction with Mannheim in Phil Mullins and Struan Jacobs, "Michael Polanyi and Karl Mannheim," *Tradition and Discovery* 32:1 (2005-06): 20-43.

¹⁷In Polanyi's April 19, 1944 letter to Mannheim (B4, F11, MPP), which is a follow-up to conversation at a recent dinner, Polanyi comments,

as regards the social analysis of the development of ideas, suffice to say that I reject all social analysis of history which makes social conditions anything more than opportunities for a development of thought. You seem inclined to consider moral judgments on history as ludicrous, believing apparently that thought is not merely conditioned, but determined by a social or technical situation. I cannot tell you how strongly I reject such a view.

Essentially, Polanyi claims Mannheim's views explain away human achievement and the growth of thought and undermine the idea that moral judgments on history are possible. Much later, Polanyi considers in SM the problems of understanding history. Mannheim's views seem to be close to what Polanyi characterizes as an extreme "historicism" which represents the "relativist fallacy" (SM, 88).

¹⁸The history of Polanyi-Popper relations is discussed in Phil Mullins and Struan Jacob, "Michael Polanyi and Karl Popper: The Fraying of a Long-Standing Acquaintance," *Tradition and Discovery* 38:2 (2011-12): 61-93.

¹⁹Polanyi does not use "tradition" in quite the straightforward way in which he does in later writing but he does, in "The Growth of Thought in Society" (*Economica*, New Series 8:32 [November 1941]: 428-456) speak about the "public mental heritage" (438) and its reform and transmission to the next generation. He emphasizes "traditional methods of science" (437). In his more general discussion in the section titled "Machinery of Dynamic Orders," he points to the importance of "traditional standards" (441) as well as "traditional practice" (442) conducted under the guidance of ideals: "Without such traditional standards no creative work and no dynamic order is possible" (441). Nor does Polanyi speak of "professional opinion" in quite the way he later does but he does note that many dynamic orders are organized "in circles of special interest and professional bodies" (441). Polanyi also clearly sees the important role of the "influentials" (441) as gatekeepers of specialized traditions. In dynamic orders "each is governed by a permanent fundamental idea that cannot be expressed precisely, yet which comes into play every time the standards of the day are challenged" (441).

²⁰For Polanyi, money seems to be a medium that in fact allows the economic order to be primarily a competitive order. Money allows pricing to operate in the economic order and thus reduces many of the skillful and personal elements that Polanyi apparently saw as primary in more intellectual, artistic and craft orders. Polanyi's thinking about society emphasizes the complexity of modern societies. They have many dynamic orders; some are highly specialized (e.g., science with its many neighborhoods) and the scale of some orders is small, but others, such as the economic order, are very large; this sort of very broad polycentric order can achieve this scale only by relying upon a medium such as money which "impersonalizes" and promotes differentiation.

²¹*The Political Quarterly* 14 (October-December, 1943): 372-381. The basic argument here is developed and recycled at least twice in 1944 and 1945 before Polanyi met Shils, in “England and the Continent” (*Fortune* 39 [May 1944]: 155-157, 178, 180, 182, and 185) and in “Science and the Modern Crisis,” (*Memoirs and Proceeding of the Manchester Philosophical Society* 87: 6 [June 1945]: 106-117). Some of the things Polanyi says about disaffected intellectuals and literati as representing the logical outcome of the Enlightenment tradition make me distrust Shils’ recollection about a visit to Manchester in the winter of 1946-47 (*Fragments*, 109-110) in which he reports Polanyi simply could not understand or accept Shils’ account (in a public talk) of intellectuals’ rebellion as moral indignation. Shils reports that soon thereafter Polanyi came to agree with Shils’ view but much in these articles suggests Polanyi already shared Shils’ views before he met Shils.

²²Moodey notes that Polanyi’s youthful skepticism about politics is not as strong after his move to England and he comes to appreciate the British political tradition.

²³Particularly Polanyi’s “Science and the Modern Crisis” (*Memoirs and Proceedings of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society*, 87: 6 [June 1945]: 107-116) makes this case. But even some essays from this period that are not so broadly focused on the demise of the liberal tradition make similar points. In one section of “Science—Its Reality and Freedom” (*The Nineteenth Century and After*, 135 [February 1944]: 78-83), Polanyi argues that both Marxist and Fascist governments repudiate “all traditional guides to social action” (80); both Marxism and Fascism offer a “doctrine of social control” (82) which prevents ideas from growing and misjudges the importance of ideals in science and society.

²⁴Moodey comments that “residues” of religious experience serve as a background used to attend to tradition in science and other areas of culture.

²⁵The other letters are Mannheim to Polanyi, April 26, 1944 (B4, F11, MPP) and Polanyi to Mannheim, May 2, 1944 (B4, F11, MPP).

²⁶“Religious Pedagogy From Tender to Twilight Years: Parenting, Mentoring, and Pioneering Discoveries by Religious Masters as Viewed from within Polanyi’s Sociology and Epistemology of Science,” *Tradition and Discovery* 23:2 (1996-97): 15-36

²⁷“The Budapest Roots of Michael Polanyi’s Liberalism,” *Polanyiana* 19:1&2 (2010): 5-24.

²⁸“Polanyi, ‘Jewish Problems’ and Zionism,” *Tradition and Discovery* 32:1 (2005-06): 6-19.

²⁹*The Political Quarterly* 14 (January-March 1943): 33-45.

³⁰Polanyi to Mannheim, May 27, 1944 (B4, 11, MPP). It should be noted that Moodey does discuss Polanyi’s claims about the “baptized Jew.”

³¹Polanyi sometimes poses practices of supervision and comprehensive planning as “alternative methods of ordering human affairs” (see his *The Contempt of Freedom: The Russian Experiment and After* [London: Watts & Co, 1940; reprint, New York: Arno Press] 1975, 39). While supervision relies on and cultivates “guiding principles” (or transcendent values) and the liberty of individuals who re-appropriate and reform tradition, comprehensive planning does not rely upon guiding principles and the liberty of individuals relying on tradition. Polanyi’s discussions make quite clear that he believes “in a Liberal society there is a wide domain of activities in which ideas are cultivated under the supervision of organizations or public authorities” (*Contempt*, 37).