

WILLIAM H. POTEAT AND MICHAEL POLANYI: TOWARD A HISTORY OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP FROM 1952 THROUGH 1976



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Abstract

This essay provides a timeline charting contact between Michael Polanyi and William H. Poteat. We trace the contours of the intimate, multifaceted, and mutually influential friendship of Polanyi and Poteat which developed over more than twenty years.

This historical record of contacts between Michael Polanyi and William H. Poteat portrays their close, multifaceted, and mutually influential relationship. There were more contacts and a deeper relationship between Poteat and Polanyi than we had recognized prior to undertaking this study. Much more can be learned about their mutual influences. The new Poteat archival collection of letters, drafts, and unpublished manuscripts in the Yale Divinity School Library (YDS) will make further exploration possible.¹

Below we suggest that the nature of Polanyi's influence on Poteat began to change in 1968. Poteat's subsequent inquiry and quest take him in directions he believed moved far beyond and beneath the "grand program" of Polanyi with which he was closely associated earlier. We welcome reactions, corrections, and additions to the narrative which we have here pieced together.²

1952: Poteat discovers early philosophical writings of Polanyi

The discovery, in 1952, I think of early ‘philosophical’ writings of Michael Polanyi—the first I remember, was “The Stability of Beliefs” in the *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, later to be incorporated, as a section, into *Personal Knowledge*—accredited and greatly enriched the context within which initially to obey my own intimations (*PM*, 6).

Poteat’s incorporation of Polanyi’s discussion of an exchange between an Azande witch doctor and a scientific agronomist in the Duke Divinity School class “Christianity and Culture 16,” some 15 years after 1952, showed Polanyi’s influence on Poteat’s teaching. Breytspraak vividly recalls several class sessions spent unsuccessfully trying to convince Poteat, role playing the Azande, of the truth of the scientific approach contra his obviously erroneous Azande view of how the world works. Whether there were any references to Polanyi in this vigorous exchange is a detail now unclear, but the illumination of the stability of beliefs made a profound and lasting impression.

1954: Poteat publishes “The Open Society and Its Ambivalent Friends”

The first published evidence of Polanyi’s influence on Poteat appears in Poteat’s 1954 review article “The Open Society and Its Ambivalent Friends” in *The Christian Scholar* (included in *PP*). The essay sharply criticizes Popper’s ideas as presented in the new revised and expanded second edition of *The Open Society and Its Enemies*.

In a short reference to Polanyi without citation, Poteat approvingly notes Polanyi’s notion of “fiduciary foundations.” This phrase is not in “The Stability of Beliefs” but “fiduciary foundations” does appear twice in *LL*, once in a reference to the end of “the critical enterprise” and the new emerging intellectual period, “the post-critical age” (109). Popper’s critical rationalist ideas about an Open Society suggest he does not recognize the importance of fiduciary foundations.

Poteat’s reference to Polanyi without citation seems to assume his readers are familiar with Polanyi and suggests that he has already incorporated some Polanyian ideas into his own perspective. Other sections and themes in Poteat’s essay on Popper seem compatible with and may be influenced by Polanyi, but Poteat’s own critique of “Cartesian anthropology,” “deracinate, critical reason,” and absolute distinctions between facts and norms is also made from the standpoint of “Incarnation faith.”

1955: Poteat visits Polanyi and is given a typescript of the Gifford Lectures

After a 1955 visit with Polanyi in Manchester, full of excitement for us both, I took the train to Sheffield for an international conference, a typescript of the Gifford Lectures, later to become *Personal Knowledge*, under my arm. There were no seats to be had on board, so I stood in the aisle. There I propped the typescript on a stainless steel bar extending across the window at which I stood and read with mounting excitement the section on ‘connoisseurship,’ as the flooded English midlands rushed past, beyond the page from which I read. ‘Connoisseurship’ was rich nourishment for my post-critical instincts (*PM* 6-7).³

The Polanyi biography’s account, based on Scott’s 1978 interview with Poteat, has a little different flavor and a couple of inaccurate details:

During his years in Manchester, Polanyi had made many friends in the university; however, few took him seriously as a philosopher. In 1955, he made such a friend in Bill Poteat, a philosopher of religion who had come upon Polanyi’s essay on the Azande (“The Stability of Beliefs”) while writing his dissertation. Poteat had recently been appointed to an assistant professorship and was grateful for Polanyi’s interest in him. He felt very young and insignificant when he attended a soiree at Michael and Magda’s apartment. There he met a most impressive collection of people from all walks of life. To Poteat’s surprise, Polanyi’s friends and associates seemed unaware of his work in philosophy. In spite of his cordial relationships with them, Polanyi was something of an outsider among them (*M/S* 226).⁴

Scott’s longer, unpublished manuscript of the biography contains this passage:

As Poteat was leaving to catch the train back to Oxford Polanyi forced on him three or four chapters of what was later to become part of *Personal Knowledge* (*PK*). Poteat remembers being terrified of losing the manuscript since he hadn’t had the presence of mind to ask whether his were unique copies. However, he started reading while standing in the outside aisle on the train, his excitement rising all the

while (1978 Scott interview with Poteat). Poteat's delighted response must have been a great encouragement to Polanyi. The friendship thus begun was to continue for many years and give [sic] opportunity for serious exchange on Polanyi's philosophy (text provided by Marty Moleski, S.J.).

December 1958: Polanyi retires from Manchester and begins to travel extensively in the US and elsewhere, making a visit to Poteat in Austin, Texas

. . . and finally to Austin, Texas, where William Poteat was teaching at the Episcopal Seminary. Polanyi arrived unannounced. Dismissing his taxi at 6:30 A.M., he found Poteat's office still locked. Eventually he located a janitor, who let him in. At about 8:00 A.M., Poteat opened his office door to find Polanyi sound asleep, with his head propped on the handle of an umbrella braced between his knees (*M/S*, 235).

Polanyi's inclusion of this visit in his extensive travel—which included stops in Chicago to visit Hayek and perhaps Shils, Palo Alto to visit Stanford's Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Princeton to visit Hugh Taylor, and other significant contacts and family members—perhaps suggests something about the warm personal relationship that was developing. Or did Polanyi think that this bright and (relatively) young philosopher would be helpful in promoting his ideas? Poteat's institutional position at a small denominational seminary likely did not impress Polanyi.⁵ A lecture, "The Outlook of Science: Its Sickness and Cure," was delivered in Texas on this trip and may help explain the visit, in addition to the developing personal relationship that led Polanyi to feel comfortable napping in Poteat's office. The lecture was never published, but lecture notes that survive contain one of the relatively few discussions by Polanyi of his meaning of "post critical."⁶

1962: Poteat goes to Oxford from January to June as Visiting Research Fellow at Merton College

Polanyi was, in June 1959, elected Senior Research Fellow at Merton College, Oxford (*M/S*, 239); his fellowship continued until he was forced to retire because of his age in July 1961 (*M/S*, 247). He moved to Oxford and continued to live there in the sixties and seventies and had some continuing unofficial connections with Oxford colleges. Poteat came to Oxford from January to June of 1962 as a Visiting Research

Fellow at Merton College. References to their discussions at this time are found in the unpublished notes on Scott's 1978 interview with Poteat. But it is unclear how much Polanyi was around Oxford in this period, so the extent of contact between Polanyi and Poteat this term is unknown. Poteat was pursuing his interests in ordinary language philosophy along with whatever contact he had with Polanyi. In this term, Polanyi went to California for the McEnerney Lectures (February, 1962), met with Charles McCoy's graduate seminar at Pacific School of Religion, and there met Richard Gelwick (*M/S*, 247-248).

In the notes, which were taken by Monika Tobin (Scott's assistant) from tapes of Scott's interviews with Poteat, Poteat also gives some background on how he arranged the Duke Lectures when he returned from this term at Oxford. Moleski suggests there may be even more information on the Scott tapes, available in the Regenstein Library. Because it was right after this period that Poteat arranged to bring Polanyi to Duke, whatever contact they had was significant, even if of short duration.

1964: Polanyi spends the spring semester at Duke University as the James B. Duke Distinguished Professor

The Polanyi biography documents Poteat's extensive involvement with personal arrangements and professional relationships for Polanyi's Spring, 1964 Duke residency (*M/S*, 254-256). Polanyi's increasing "otherworldliness" required increased attention and care by Poteat as he filled in for Magda in helping with Polanyi's everyday needs. There were also wide-ranging contacts arranged for and by Polanyi during this period (e.g., Polanyi visited Sewell at Tougaloo College, Gelwick came to Durham, Polanyi went to the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, and MIT).

Karl Polanyi died in April and Michael went to Toronto for the funeral. He prepared for presentations in Jerusalem and at Bowdoin College. No wonder that, as Scott and Moleski write, "In many ways, Polanyi felt that this semester at Duke marked the high point of his career as a philosopher" (*M/S* 256).

We believe this residency at Duke was a crucial period for the mutual influence and deep friendship between Poteat and Polanyi. Polanyi's writing of "The Logic of Tacit Inference" and his efforts to make connections with the thought of other important thinkers would have been fertile ground for exchange about topics and thinkers Poteat knew well, as Polanyi worked on those topics and the "mind-body problem" (*M/S* 255).

Newspaper clippings and articles on Polanyi's lectures at Duke are in the Yale collection.⁷ In Monica Tobin's transcription of Scott's interview of Poteat, there are interesting exchanges not included in detail in the Polanyi biography:

Poteat: Have you read the whole series of those [Duke] lectures?

Scott: I probably did once.

Poteat: . . . I felt very strongly that this was very good stuff and in fact it's not so cryptic as the spin off—namely the TD. Do you know that whole story about how that happened? The format was that he'd give a lecture on a Monday night and then on the Tuesday afternoon there'd be a university-wide seminar, which is to say anyone could come ... Arts and Sciences and all the rest, from 4-6 and he would deal with whatever questions were raised by people in the light of the lecture given the previous night. After the first lecture, we distributed on a given Monday night the mimeographed typescript of the lecture of the preceding week. So . . . everybody had an accumulation of previous lectures. So there was this . . . kind of intellectual ethos around his thought which was unique in his experience. He had never had a kind of continuing conversation with a more or less intact group of people who had [notes] to look at from the lecture of the preceding week.

Scott: Audience?

Poteat: The audience would run from about 75 to 150...frequently there was standing room only in the hall which was perfect acoustically and for preserving the intimacy between the speaker and members of the audience but it began to overflow when you got up over 100. Michael always had the feeling that Duke was for him one of the most important experiences of his whole life as a philosopher because he felt he had gotten a hearing there such as he had not gotten anywhere else (transcript provided by Marty Moleski, S.J.).

The interview continues with comments about the attempt to get the Duke Lectures published. In his interview with Scott, this is a matter about which Poteat did not mince words.⁸ Poteat recalled a young editor at Doubleday who

snapped it up and said we want to do this and we thought it was all settled and he was going to take time to go over the lectures and fill them in and tidy them up and then the Yale University Press got on its high horse and their legal department got in touch with Doubleday's and they made the absurd claim that the Duke Lectures were in fact the Terry Lectures (transcript provided by Marty Moleski, S.J.).

August 1965 and 1966: Polanyi participates in Study Group on Foundations of Cultural Unity (SGFCU) at Bowdoin College and subsequent Study Group on the Unity of Knowledge (SGUK) beginning in 1967

The Polanyi biography provides information (*M/S* 258 ff.) on the SGFCU, which Polanyi chaired, with Marjorie Grene and Edward Pols serving as fellow members of the organizing committee.⁹ Poteat is listed as a participant in both the August 1965 and August 1966 Bowdoin conferences put together by SGFCU; he is an active discussant in Grene's monograph (Grene 1969) which includes portions of the 1965 conference discussion. Poteat's interactions with Polanyi and the other important intellectuals linked to SGFCU (Sigmund Koch who had recently moved from Duke to the Ford Foundation, Pols, Grene, Hans Jonas, Iris Murdoch, Charles Taylor, John Silber, Eugene Wigner, William T. Scott, Donald Weismann, Elizabeth Sewell, and many others) must have been important in Poteat's development. The Bowdoin conferences, which were covered appreciatively in the *New York Times* (*M/S* 260), are a fascinating episode in mid-twentieth century Western intellectual history and should be explored further for their general influence beyond that on Poteat and Polanyi.

But Poteat is not listed as a participant in any of the ten meetings of the SGUK (which succeeded the SGFCU) that occurred from October 1967 through March 1970 (Grene 1971, vii-xvi).¹⁰ An interview with George Gale (5/27/14), who served as executive secretary for the SGUK, confirmed that Poteat would have been invited to later sessions. Why does Poteat not participate in these later conferences that included many of the same figures as well as other leading thinkers such as Jacob Bronowski, Noam Chomsky, John Searle, Alasdair MacIntyre, Hubert Dreyfus, Jean Piaget, and others? We believe this is strong indication of the change in Poteat's priorities and direction, beginning in 1967-68. This contrasts with his intense collaboration with Polanyi, particularly from the time of the 1964 Duke lectures through Poteat's editing of *Intellect and Hope*.

Fall 1965: Polanyi stays with Poteat, who works on Terry Lectures

Polanyi, exhausted after ending his scheduled Wesleyan Lectures early, goes to Chapel Hill late in the fall to stay with Poteat and his wife Marian to recover. This is reported in Scott's longer, unpublished draft but not in the published biography.¹¹

Another significant involvement of Poteat in Polanyi's projects in this period is his participation in the controversy over the revision and publication of the Terry Lectures as *Tacit Dimension* in 1966. Polanyi finished preparing materials for publication in January 1966 (*M/S*, 261). Poteat's account, reported in the transcription of his

interview with Scott (made much later), claims both he and Grene urged Polanyi *not* to publish the Terry Lectures as delivered.¹²

1964 – 1968: Poteat works on *Intellect and Hope* and Polanyi's Grand Program

In these years, Poteat and Thomas Langford edit *Intellect and Hope (IH)*, a major collection of essays, including many by participants in the SGFCU as well European scholars, funded by the Lilly Endowment (after earlier proposals went to the Danforth Foundation and others).¹³ Poteat's editing and his work on his own contributions are major episodes in the history of the influence of Polanyi on Poteat's thought and Poteat's influence in the spread of Polanyi's ideas.¹⁴ Poteat's contributions to this volume appear to be his first major publications related to Polanyi.

Early work on the *IH* project apparently began in 1964 as a Spring 1964 Poteat letter refers to discussions of the project with Provost Cole.¹⁵ Work continued until the publication of the book in 1967, according to some correspondence, or 1968.¹⁶ The Danforth and Lilly proposals, the projected contributors, and correspondence with President Knight and others about the project are fascinating and show that there were discussions of potential conferences around the volume. In one note, President Knight mentions possibilities of appointing Polanyi to a new senior research position at Duke in 1967.

The letter from Poteat to Provost Cole quoted below mentions his heavy editorial involvement, including weekly correspondence with some authors. Indications from comments to former students reported to us, as well as Poteat's later comments in *PM*, are that Poteat did most of the editing of this volume, which was published as jointly edited by Poteat and Langford. The proposal to Lilly has the clear tone and style of Poteat and provides a striking view of his enthusiasm and commitment to Polanyi's philosophy as a fundamental critique of and alternative to modern thought, across a range of disciplines. Comments in Poteat's letters to President Knight and Provost Cole are examples of his self-described "delusions of grandeur" (12/12/66 letter to President Knight) about the project and its impact.

If I may be forgiven for saying so, it (*Intellect and Hope*) is the most comprehensive and integral assault upon behaviorism or reductionism of which I know—save only that of Polanyi's work itself; and it has the additional advantage of coming from prestigious hands in many different fields. Authors from the fields of religion, philosophy, political science, biology, physics, law, sociology, art, literary criticism, psychology and representing Northern Ireland, England,

Belgium, France, German[y,] Poland, and the United States are included (Poteat's letter to Provost Cole, 12/12/66).

Poteat's later letter to Scott in May 1967 also shows the depth of his involvement in Polanyi's thought in this period. Scott had apparently been somewhat critical of a draft of Poteat's introduction to *IH* and Poteat explained how his experiences in teaching Polanyi led him to write the unusual introduction. This letter also gives an inventory of Poteat's teaching of Polanyi as of this date:

I have gone through P.K. with three undergraduate seminars, two graduate seminars with participants from religion, philosophy, political science, and psychology; I directed the five open seminars which followed each of Michael's Duke Lectures; and into the bargain I re-read all reviews of P.K. before beginning the Introduction (Poteat to Scott, 5/3/67).

Poteat's letter to Knight (12/12/66) states "the name of Polanyi and his work is coming to be associated with Duke as Husserl with Louvain" and his letter to Cole (12/12/66) indicates that Polanyi's personal papers will be donated to the Duke Library.

All of this makes clear that Poteat was fully committed to what we are describing as Polanyi's "grand program" in these years. But almost immediately, we see changes in Poteat's orientation that parallel his apparent decision not to continue participating in the Study Group conferences that began in October 1967.

January 1968: Poteat writes Grene to back out of co-editing *Knowing and Being*

On January 8, 1968, Poteat wrote Marjorie Grene to tell her he would be unable to fulfill his previous commitment to her and Polanyi to serve as the co-editor of what became *KB*.¹⁷ The letter is classic Poteat in style, rhetorical flourishing, and commitment to his students.

But what does it say about his own sense of the alignment of his lifework with Polanyi's project? If he had seen his major contribution as the spreading of Polanyi's ideas, he surely would have found a way to stay involved in this publication. The letter seems to show he knows his calling is elsewhere and that he is willing to let others be the leaders in promoting Polanyi.

Did Poteat continue to influence *KB*, making further suggestions about selections or the introduction? Did he read the manuscript, and talk or correspond with Grene about it? The letter shows him responding to her plan and refers to other

correspondence. This letter also mentions earlier contact with Polanyi in Washington (“When Michael asked me in Washington to be your collaborator . . .”) a meeting of which we have found no other record.

Poteat’s letter to Scott (5/3/67) makes clear that Poteat sent drafts of sections of *Intellect and Hope* to Grene, so she may have reciprocated while continuing to work on *KB*.

June 1968 to Fall 1969: Poteat takes sabbatical in Greece and experiences his “Orphic Dismemberment”

We believe this experience, mentioned briefly in several of Poteat’s essays and discussed in greater detail in letters to students in the Yale Collection, marks a major turn in Poteat’s life. It also marks the change in his understanding of his calling in relation to Polanyi’s project. He already seems to be pulling back, that is, not participating in the follow-up SGUK conferences, pulling out of *KB*, and focusing his 1968 sabbatical plans on art history and Greek culture. On some levels, this was no radical break—see below our discussion of his continued personal support of Polanyi and recognition of Polanyi’s influence on him.

The Prologue to *PM* (7) recalls his “Orphic Dismemberment” (“the intellectual categories upon which I had relied no longer fit”) and outlines his new orientation. The book, written beginning in 1976, probes this orientation in deep phenomenological detail. It is “an attempt to think *out of myself*, under the influence of deeply interiorized Polanyian motifs, about matters nowhere dealt with as such in *Personal Knowledge*” (*PM* 8). He writes, “My debt to Polanyi is profound and conspicuous. But, for good or for ill, what follows is my attempt, subject to a long and exigent apprenticeship to him, to think some unthinkable thought of my own” (*PM* 8).

March-April 1971: Poteat teaches six-week “Seminar in Meaning,” at University of Texas, Austin

After the (80th) birthday celebration, Magda returned to England and Michael continued on to Austin. He felt very alone without her. It fell to Bill Poteat and his wife to care for him. For the first time in his years of friendship with Poteat, Polanyi talked intimately about his family, reminiscing about his brothers and sisters . . . At the same time, Polanyi was aware that his ability to marshal details in a coherent argument was fading. Poteat found conversations increasingly exhausting, since he was expected to supply what Polanyi was unable to remember (*M/S*, 278).

Poteat had leave from Duke and was at Texas this term, teaching a course on “Music, Eroticism, and Madness,” an arrangement that seems to have supported Polanyi after Magda returned to England. John Silber, known to Poteat and Polanyi from the SGFCU, may have arranged for Polanyi and Poteat to be in residence simultaneously before he was fired at UT Austin in 1970.

Breyspraak recalls Poteat’s comments after that period about the frustrating and exhausting experience of having to serve as Polanyi’s memory when he was still trying to function with increasingly deteriorating cognitive abilities. Poteat also commented about Texas university politics as something out of the old Wild West, with Silber being best understood as a Texas gunslinger.

1972: Poteat distances himself from the Consortium for Higher Education Religious Studies (CHERS) and other programs

As Polanyi’s influence led to other conferences and the creation of the organization that eventually becomes the Polanyi Society, Poteat kept his distance from such activity.¹⁸ Was Poteat involved in any of the planning for the Polanyi programs offered by CHERS, including the May 1972 Dayton conference, Polanyi’s “last public scholarly presentation” (*M/S* 280)? Was this another opportunity Poteat declined? Poteat’s sole involvement in activities sponsored by the Polanyi Society, we believe, was his appearance at the 1993 Washington meetings which focused on his work.

1972: Polanyi seeks Poteat’s help on the final *Meaning* project

Polanyi was by then very aware that his mind was failing. As he observed his own fading powers, he was haunted by the fear that he would not be able to complete his philosophical system. He knew that he would need help from his disciples to round out the work he had done in the preceding four years. In his frustration over delays, Polanyi asked Bill Poteat to help him outline the volume before Prosch’s arrival. Polanyi even suggested that he might spend six weeks at Duke, although he was happy with Poteat’s alternative proposal of coming to Oxford in late December. In the end, however, Poteat could not come. Feeling old and desperate, Polanyi was forced to wait until February 1973 for Prosch to join him (*M/S* 282).

From this account, the notes, and correspondence, it appears that Poteat saw some notes or an outline of one of the versions of the *Meaning* project.¹⁹ He seems to have had plans to participate, but, for whatever reasons, he did not.

1974: Poteat seeks a home for Polanyi Papers

Poteat's involvement in the placement of Polanyi's papers is referenced in a March, 7, 1974 letter from Geoffrey Payzant of the University of Toronto to Scott (copy provide by Marty Moleski, S.J.), which includes the following:

I can report that Michael Polanyi has written to say that he is willing that his books, papers, etc. should be deposited in the University of Toronto Library. Bill Poteat and I have been working together on this, and both of us will probably make a trip to Oxford in the summer to get the whole thing properly underway . . .

Next week I go to Boston for a meeting with some of the Explorers Poteat thinks I ought not yet to announce to them that Toronto will get the Polanyi papers, but that I could discuss it in confidence with Prosch. I think Poteat may be right about this, but will wait and see how it looks when I get there. Will keep you informed.

There are additional references to Poteat in other letters about the Polanyi's papers, including one in which Magda Polanyi expresses confidence that Poteat can best represent the Polanyis.²⁰

A May 18, 1974 letter to Gelwick from Magda Polanyi shows the depth of the relationship between Poteat and Polanyi from her perspective: "I find him [Michael] increasingly difficult to follow and rapidly deteriorating. He has written a letter to Bill Poteat to express his pleasure and appreciation, but the letter is such that it cannot be sent, not even to Bill. It is heartbreaking for me to talk about this, but [I] shall have to explain to Bill why M. has become silent."²¹

Conclusion

This outline confirms the close relationship between Poteat and Polanyi in the years between 1955 when they first met, through Polanyi's final illness. In the early sixties, Poteat became Polanyi's ally, promoter, agent, possibly his intended literary executor for a period. Particularly between 1964-67, Poteat was an eager supporter of what might be called Polanyi's "grand program." But it appears that Poteat developed a

different focus beginning about 1968, although he remained a close friend, supporter, and, in Polanyi's view, a potential major contributor to Polanyi's intellectual reforms. With his "Orphic dismemberment" in 1968, Poteat realized that he and Polanyi had been insufficiently radical in addressing the dead ends of the Enlightenment, and he increasingly focused on "recovering the ground" with phenomenological explorations of mindbodily being-in-the-world. Rather than building a grand program based on Polanyi's explicit philosophy, Poteat began to draw from Polanyi's deeper and often tacit "logic"—a cluster of breakthroughs that he regarded as even deeper than Polanyi's explicit thought and any movement based on it. (see *PM*, the prologue and *passim*).

Many sections of *Polanyian Meditations* explore this ground, and one wonders what Polanyi might have made of this book. By 1997, Poteat would write in a letter to Walter Mead:

As for Polanyi's analysis of ontological hierarchy, it performs no philosophical function for me at all. First, fundamentally, it is an exercise wrought with second order concepts almost entirely which, as you know, has no attraction for me . . . It could have been formulated by any philosopher working in the traditional idiom (Poteat to Mead, May, 1997, Yale Archives).

One must contrast this assessment with Poteat's enthusiastic endorsement of Polanyi's grand program ("the most comprehensive attack on behaviorism and reductionism of which I know") in his December 6, 1966 letters quoted above and his extensive involvements on many fronts in promoting Polanyi's ideas prior to 1968.

Poteat's close personal friendship with Polanyi continued until Polanyi's death. Poteat drew from Polanyi where it helped his inquiry, but in his view he needed to dig far beneath and beyond Polanyi's grand program.²² This began at least by 1967-68. It was perhaps not initiated by but was dramatically inspired by that October evening in Athens when he rounded the corner at dusk and saw Moustakas's equestrian statue when the light was turned on "providentially" inside the Diogenes International Gallery (*PM2*).

Endnotes

¹A full exposition of the mutual influences of these two revolutionary intellectuals of the last century would include many dimensions we have left largely unaddressed: (1) Poteat's influence on the spread of Polanyi's contributions through his doctoral students' dissertations and teaching; (2) Poteat's role in introducing Polanyi to other students (undergraduates, Divinity School students, graduate students from other departments, especially Political Science); (3) subsequent publications of Poteat's students in articles and books substantially influenced by Polanyi; (4) Poteat's use of and disagreements with Polanyi in his own writings, including his four books; (5) Poteat's dissent from Polanyi's perspective as discussed by Cannon, Mead, Rutledge, Yeager and others; (6) earlier

articles in *Tradition & Discovery* that discuss aspects of Poteat's thought, including essays by Poteat students and about Poteat that have also appeared in *Appraisal*; (7) correspondence between Poteat and Polanyi in the YDS Poteat archive and the Michael Polanyi Papers (MPP) in the University of Chicago Library; (8) discussion of Polanyi and Polanyian themes at the Washington, 1993, meeting of the Polanyi Society devoted to Poteat's work (a meeting which Poteat attended and participated in actively; a fuzzy tape of that conference is in the Yale collection, awaiting transcription); and (10) other papers presented at the Yale Conference in 2014 found at www.whpoteat.org.

²When possible, citations are in the text using the following abbreviations: *PP* = *The Primacy of Persons and the Language of Culture* (Poteat, 1993). *PM* = *Polanyian Mediations: In Search of a Post-Critical Logic* (Poteat, 1985). *M/S* = *Michael Polanyi: Scientist and Philosopher* (Scott and Moleski, 2005). Thanks go to Marty Moleski, S.J., the surviving Polanyi biographer, who provided many helpful things (e.g., relevant text from the unpublished Scott manuscript). Many cited documents are included with the longer version of this essay that can be found under "conference papers" at the Poteat website: www.whpoteat.org. Breyspraak or Mullins will be happy to help others access documents.

³The "section on 'connoisseurship'" is likely based on Polanyi's Series II, Lecture 6, "Skills and Connoisseurship" which is available at www.polanyisociety.org.

⁴If Poteat's recollection of his 1952 discovery is accurate, he would have completed his dissertation before reading any of Polanyi's writings. Poteat's dissertation on Pascal was defended and signed November 15, 1950. According to Dale Cannon's research, UNC hired Poteat as a full-time Instructor in Philosophy in 1947. Cannon reports that he had risen to the rank of Associate Professor by 1955, a year in which he won the university's outstanding teacher award (Biography on www.whpoteat.org).

⁵Poteat taught at the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest in Austin for three years beginning in 1957. As footnote 4 reports, Poteat had risen to the rank of Associate Professor at UNC by 1955, when he won the university's outstanding teacher award. Why he left UNC for Austin is unclear, but this may have been connected to the (unsuccessful) student movement at Chapel Hill to have Poteat named Chancellor in 1957 (described in personal correspondence from Ed Yoder [4/23/2014], who was student editor of the *Daily Tar Heel* at that time). In his unpublished note on "Religion and Culture as I See It" (written sometime after 1967 and provided by Dale Cannon) Poteat says the offer from Austin came "just as I was about to abandon my career."

⁶Where Polanyi gave the lecture is unknown. A 21-page typescript of the lecture (some of which may be notes rather than polished text) has written, in Polanyi's hand, at the top of the first page "Austin 30 Nov 1958." The lecture is available as part of the Gelwick microfilm collection (filename: Glwk84-Outlook-of-Sc-Sickness&Cure-Lecture-1958) of Polanyi materials available at www.polanyisociety.org.

⁷The Duke Lectures themselves are now available at www.polanyisociety.org.

⁸See also Mullins (2010, 64-65) for a review of archival letters outlining the copyright controversy that sidelined efforts to publish the Duke Lectures.

⁹The 1965 and 1966 conferences sponsored by SGFCU and the subsequent series of smaller conferences sponsored by SGUK were supported by the Ford Foundation. Documents we have

recently obtained from the Ford Foundation give additional insights into Polanyi's role in these exciting conferences as part of his "grand program" for reforming Western thought.

¹⁰There apparently was a least one and perhaps two SGUK meetings after the publication of Grene's collection (Grene, 1971), which included selected materials from papers in the first ten conferences.

¹¹The biography's discussion of this period is *M/S*, 261-264. See also the introduction to the Wesleyan Lectures posted with the lectures at www.polanyisociety.org.

¹²See Mullins, 2010, 63-64 for some excerpts from Grene letters over several years about the Terry Lectures and their revision. Polanyi's Introduction in *TD* (1966, x; 2009, xviii) suggests only the third chapter differs substantially from the Terry Lectures.

¹³Poteat mentions visiting 11 foundations in his 12/12/66 letter to Provost Cole.

¹⁴Poteat's own contributions include his essay, "Myths, Stories, History, Eschatology and Action: Some Polanyian Meditations," his introduction, "Upon First Sitting Down to Read *Personal Knowledge*," and the appendix. What may have been an earlier version of Poteat's essay titled "Myths, Stories, History and Action" was prepared for the 1966 Bowdoin conference.

¹⁵Documents referenced in this section come from Duke University Archives from files of President Knight and Provost Cole. We appreciate the assistance of the Duke archival staff in locating material. Most can be viewed in the longer version of this paper posted at www.whpoteat.org under conference papers.

¹⁶1968 is the date in *IH* copies the authors have seen, although May 1967 is the date on Acknowledgement (*IH*, vi) and perhaps 1967 was the anticipated date of publication when some correspondence was written.

¹⁷This letter (Box 16, Folder 2, MPP) was included in Mullins (2010, 40-42).

¹⁸See *M/S*, 280-281. Activities related to Polanyi's thought are also noted in early issues (1972-74) of *The Society for Explorers Quarterly Bulletin* and *The Polanyi Society Newsletter* available at www.polanyisociety.org.

¹⁹See Moleski and Mullins (2006) for discussion of Prosch's involvement in late Polanyi projects, including *Meaning*, both before and after this 1972 discussion with Poteat. They also discuss letters reflecting the increasingly fragile Polanyi's simultaneous work with Gelwick.

²⁰As part of his 1970 Duke dissertation directed by Poteat, Gerald L. Smith prepared a 1969 microfilm of the copy of Polanyi's Gifford Lectures which Majorie Grene gave to the Duke University Library at some point in the late sixties (Smith 1970, 298). Smith's Introduction to the microfilm (Michael Polanyi, #222-1-2) indicates Grene gave the typescript "to Duke University Library for inclusion in the Polanyi archives." Until at least the late sixties, apparently Duke was the intended recipient for the Polanyi papers and Poteat likely had much to do with this designation. Payzant's 1974 letter indicates the papers will go to Toronto but in the end they went to the University of Chicago. There are references to letters and notes about negotiations with libraries in the unpublished Scott draft of the biography.

²¹This letter, cited in Moleski and Mullins (2006, 14) is one Gelwick gave to Scott.

²²The pattern here, Poteat's early enthusiasm for Polanyi's ideas and his later criticism of Polanyi, as he found his own calling, complemented by a continuing close personal relationship all over a period of 24 years, is the same pattern found in Marjorie Grene's engagement with Polanyi over 26 years.

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