APPRAISAL

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EDITORIAL

This is the fourth and final issue of Volume 1. A glance at the Index on p.8 will show the number and variety of articles that we have published in these first four issues and the Supplementary Issue, which contains the papers from our successful conference at Nantwich in March (the participants had the papers in advance).

Offers of articles, including Working Papers, Discussion items and book reviews, are always welcome, especially ones that deal with current questions in a constructive manner, as also are suggestions for our series of Re-appraisals.

The rising cost of paper, and other expenses, have necessitated a review of finances and subscriptions (see the accompanying renewal form), yet we hope that *Appraisal* still offers good value for money. In addition, we are now offering a Polanyi Library service to individual subscribers: see the enclosed list.

The Re-appraisal of John Macmurray in No. 2 generated considerable interest, and in this issue we have a comparison by Philip Conford of Macmurray and the French founder of Personalism, Emmanuel Mounier; an application by Philip Mooney of Macmurray's notion of the person to the Trinity; and a note by Phil Mullins in answer to Harold Turner's question in No. 3 about Macmurray and Polanyi.

Phil Mullins also explores the friendship between Polanyi and J.H. Oldham and the role played by him in encouraging Polanyi to develop his philosophical ideas. Also on Polanyi, Fr Martin Moleski concludes his comparison of tacit knowing with Newman's illative sense, and Chris Goodman shows how Polanyi rejected the usual Liberal stance of neutrality.

Mention of Mounier raises an important question which readers of *Appraisal* may wish to take up, and certainly we would welcome articles and notes dealing with it: viz. the relation between a philosopher's philosophy and his politics. For Mounier and his disciples, as Philip Conford notes, rallied enthusiastically to Pétain and Vichy in the summer of 1940. It is perhaps a connexion that followers of Mounier today would not wish to emphasise, though, as one historian of Vichy has argued (R.O. Paxton, *Vichy France*, 1972), much of the policies and personnel of Vichy continued after 1945, which proved considerably less of a break in French political life than 1940. Was there some essential connection or only an accidental one between Personalism and the principles and policies of Vichy, or what were proclaimed to be such?

Other interesting examples come to mind. The closest work to Polanyi's philosophy of tacit integration is almost certainly Merleau-Ponty's *The Phenomenology of Perception*. Yet what connection is there between that book and its author's pro-Soviet Marxism? After all, Polanyi developed his philosophy in the context of underwriting an explicitly anti-Marxist politics and economics.

Then there is Heidegger's notorious enthusiasm for Nazism, never explicitly repudiated until a late and ambiguous interview with *Der Speigel*. The massive interest in Heidegger in recent decades suggests that most of those who comment upon or make use of his philosophy recent any inherent connection, for surely they are not crypto-Nazis. Yet one wonders if the connection was entirely extraneous.

In some cases one does not expect any connections. For example, it is hard to see how Russell's theory of descriptions might have any impact upon political questions and so one assumes it must have been totally irrelevant to, say, both his advocacy of use of the A-bomb against the USSR before the Soviets could develop their own, and his latter commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmanent But were other aspects of his general philosophy totally disconnected from his political works?

Even when a philosopher develops a political philosophy, as opposed to advocating specific policies and making particular judgments, there may not be any apparent or real connection between it and his general philosophy: for example, Locke's *Two Treatises on Civil Government* and his *Essay on Human Understanding*.

The analytic school, when I began to read philosophy in 1960, resolutely maintained that there could not be any such connection, and that any substantive political philosophy might be political but could not be philosophy. Yet history, in many cases though clearly not all, was against them, from Plato and Aristotle onwards.

On the other side, there is the appropriation of a philosopher or philosophy by a political movement. Heidegger endorsed Nazism, and the Nazis invoked Nietzsche. (Was Heidegger's interest in Nietzsche simply a coincidence?). Such appropriations can prove as embarrassing as the philosopher's own political utterances and commitments

Could we have more on this, please?

Another question, very important today and on which we would welcome further contributions, is that of the distinctions between and relations among pure science, technological science and technology. Robin Hodgkin refers to it in his book review on p. 203 and reminds us of Percy Hammond's article on Polanyi in relation to it in our first issue.

ILLIATIVE SENSE AND TACIT KNOWLEDGE

A Comparison of the Epistemologies of John Henry Newman and Michael Polanyi*

Part II

Martin X. Moleski, SJ

4 The illative dimension of tacit knowledge

Just as Newman took note of the tacit and personal dimension of knowledge while pursuing the theme of the illative sense, so Polanyi adverted to the power of illation while concentrating on tacit knowledge. Where the notion of the illative sense highlights the capacity of personal judgment, the notion of tacit knowledge emphasises the product of using our judgment in a responsible fashion. Newman's metaphor that the power of the mind to come to judgment is a 'sense' gives the impression of a singular reality, whereas Polanyi's remarks alternate between singular and plural expressions. The shifts from singular to plural images correspond to the elusive nature of subsidiary and focal awareness, in which many different intellectual inputs (memory, current awareness, hunches, partial proofs, conditional reasoning, testimony, suggestive analogies, etc.) are integrated. An illation often has the quality or an undivided whole even though many component parts subtend the integration.

In order to explore how Polanyi's map of the mind intersects with Newman's on the issue of the nature and scope of personal judgment, I shall trace the same four themes discussed in the preceding section: knowledge of things, knowledge of thought, articulation, and the method of verisimilitude. This discussion is intended to show that tacit knowledge depends on the illative sense.

In assessing how people make contact with external reality, Polanyi implies that 'the intuition of rationality in nature [has] to he acknowledged as a justifiable and indeed essential part of scientific theory. [63] Such 'powers for recognising rationality in nature' [64] give birth to the language of science:

> I suggest that we should be more frank in facing our situation and acknowledge our own faculties for recognising real entities, the designation of which form a rational vocabulary. I believe that a classification made according to rational criteria should form groups of things which we may expect to have an indefinite number of properties in common, and that accordingly the terms designating such classes will have an intension referring to an indefinite range of uncovenanted common properties shared by the members of a class. The ampler the intensions of a key feature, the more rational should be as a rule the identification of things in its terms and the more truly should such a classification reveal the nature of the classified objects; while classifications made according to terms having no intension should be rejected as purely artificial, unreal, nonsensical; unless indeed they *are* designed purely for convenience, as e.g., an alphabetic register of words. [65]

After an intuitive formation of a vocabulary, there next comes the deployment of rules of operation, which are also managed by means of spontaneous judgment:

> Thus both the first active steps undertaken to solve a problem and the final garnering of the solution rely effectively on computations and other symbolic operations, while the more informal act by which the logical gap is crossed lies between these two formal procedures. However, the intuitive powers of the investigator are always dominant and decisive. [66]

Just as Newman saw formal reason 'hanging loose at both ends', needing to be grasped by the informal reasoning of the illative sense in order to play its proper role in the life of the mind, so Polanyi described the relationship between tacit and formal reason:

> Moreover, a symbolic formalism is itself but an embodiment of our antecedent unformalised powers—an instrument skilfully controlled by our inarticulate selves for the purpose of relying on it as our external guide. The interpretation of primitive terms and axioms is therefore predominantly inarticulate, and so is the process or their expansion and reinterpretation which underlies the progress of mathematics. The alternation between the intuitive and the formal depends on tacit affirmations, both at the beginning and at the end of each chain of formal reasoning. [67]

The intuitive regulation of 'antecedent unformalised powers' of reason is one or the central features of the illative sense.

Polanyi knew well that the notion 'intuition' is a philosophical can of worms: 'I have watched many a university audience listening to my account of intuitive discoveries silently, with sullen distaste'. [68] The language of 'intellectual passions' that he develops to describe the orientating powers of the mind avoids some of the distasteful connotations of 'intuition.' It may be easier to gain a hearing

among scientists by appealing to their sense of beauty rather than to confront them with a theory of intuition:

> Only a tiny fraction of all knowable facts are of interest to scientists, and scientific passion serves also as a guide in the assessment of what is higher and what of lesser interest; what is great in science, and what relatively slight. I want to show that his appreciation depends ultimately on a sense of intellectual beauty; that it is an emotional response which can never be dispassionately defined, any more than we can dispassionately define the beauty of a work of art or the excellence of a noble action. [69]

Polanyi, like Newman, examined other areas of life in which people are guided by taste. In these areas, it is the intellectual passions which enable us to 'feel our way to success': [70]

> The unspecifiability of the process by which we thus feel our way forward accounts for the possession by humanity of an immense mental domain, not only of knowledge but of manners, of laws, and of the many different arts which man knows how to use, comply with, enjoy or live by, without specifiably knowing their contents. Each single step in acquiring this domain was due to an effort which went beyond the hitherto assured capacity of some person making it, and by his subsequent realisation and maintenance of his success. It relied on an act of groping which originally passed the understanding of its agent and of which he has ever since remained only subsidiarily aware, as part of a complex achievement. [71]

All of Polanyi's reflections on science as a skilful performance were modelled on this kind of unfolding of the intellectual passions—what Newman might have called the education of the illative sense. Note the paradox that, in the last analysis, science cannot be conducted scientifically; because it depends on skilful performances based on tacit integrations, science is ultimately an art.

When Polanyi addressed the issue of how we know what we think, he again had no single, pithy term to concentrate attention on the illative dimension of the mind. In his view, knowledge depends on tacit acts of self-appraisal:

> If, as it would seem, the meaning of all our utterances is determined to an important extent by a skilful act of our own—the act of knowing—then the acceptance of any of our own utterances as true involves our appraisal of our own skill. To affirm anything implies, then, to this extent an appraisal of our own art of knowing, and the establishment of truth becomes decisively dependent on a set of personal criteria of our own which cannot be formally defined. [72]

In discussing articulation as one instance in which such self-appraisal is required, Polanyi recognised that we have to trust the power of the mind for recognising rationality in itself as well as in nature:

> I believe that we should accredit in ourselves the capacity for appraising our own articulation. Indeed, all our strivings towards precision imply our reliance on such a capacity. To deny or even doubt our possession of it would discredit any effort to express ourselves correctly, and the very conception of words as consistently used utterances would dissolve if we failed to accredit this capacity. This does not imply that this capacity is infallible, but merely that we are competent to exercise it and must ultimately rely on our exercise of it. This we must admit if we are to speak at all, which I believe to be incumbent on us to do. [73]

In Newman's terms, the capacity for self-appraisal is the illative sense. Polanyi observed that we must rely on this power for sound judgment whenever we want to sum up our intellectual position:

> The assent which shapes knowledge is fully determined in both cases by competent mental efforts overruling arbitrariness. The result may be erroneous, but it is the best that can be done in the circumstances. Since every factual assertion is conceivably mistaken, it is also conceivably corrigible, but a competent judgment cannot be improved by the person who is making it at the moment of making it, since he is already doing his best in making it. [74]

Assessing for ourselves when our mental efforts are sufficient to warrant assent is precisely the task of the illative sense.

For Newman, the illative sense depends on views informally adopted, but also is responsible for affirming or rejecting those fundamental presuppositions of thought. Polanyi used the same metaphor in only slightly different language when considering the fact that our intellectual passions are dependent on our 'vision of reality':

> Our vision of reality, to which our sense of scientific beauty responds, must suggest to us the kind of questions that it should be reasonable and interesting to explore. It should recommend the kind of conceptions and empirical relations that are intrinsically plausible and which should therefore be upheld, even when some evidence seems to contradict them, and tell us also, on the one hand, what empirical connections to reject as specious, even though there is evidence for them—evidence that we may as yet be unable to account for on any other assumptions. In fact, without a scale of interest and plausibility based on a vision of reality, nothing can be discovered that is of value to science, and only our grasp of scientific beauty, responding to the evidence of our senses, can evoke this vision. [75]

Both Newman and Polanyi agreed that the thought which takes a view cannot be adequately expressed in words, even though that thought underlies all of our speaking:

> I believe that by now three things have been established beyond reasonable doubt: the power of intellectual beauty to reveal truth about nature; the vital importance o[distinguishing this beauty from merely formal attractiveness; and the delicacy of the test between them, so difficult that it may baffle the most penetrating scientific minds. [76]

For Newman, one's view of things is what establishes the antecedent probability of what will be found to be true. In addition to the visual metaphor, Polanyi used the structural image of an interpretative framework as the source of the scale of plausibility:

> Just as the eye sees details that are not there if they fit in with the sense of the picture, or overlooks them if they make no sense, so also very little inherent certainty will suffice to secure the highest scientific value to an alleged fact, if only it fits in with a great scientific generalisation, while the most stubborn facts will be set aside if there is no place for them in the established framework of science. [77]

Just as Newman held that the presuppositions of thought are adopted informally by means of the illative sense, so Polanyi stressed the informal adoption of interpretative frameworks:

> The acceptance of such conceptual innovations is a self-modifying mental act in search of a truer intellectual life . . . . This can be true only because the acceptance of a new conception, even when it is specified by a definition, is ultimately an informal act: a transformation of the framework on which we rely in the process or formal reasoning. It is the crossing of a logical gap to another shore, where we shall never again see things as we did before. To the extent, therefore, to which mathematics is the accumulated product of past conceptual innovations, our affirmation of mathematics is likewise an irreversible, informal act. [78]

Our critical standards are built upon the foundation of 'a-critical choices,' that is, on the foundation of the operations of the illative sense:

> Objectivism has totally falsified our conception of truth, by exalting what we can know and prove, while covering up with ambiguous utterances all that we know and *cannot* prove, even though the latter knowledge underlies, and must ultimately set its seal to, all that we *can* prove. In trying to restrict our minds to the few things that are demonstrable, and therefore explicitly dubitable, it has overlooked the a-critical choices which determine the whole being of our minds and has rendered us incapable of acknowledging these vital choices. [79]

As Newman said,

> It is to the living mind that we must look for the means of using correctly principles or whatever kind, facts or doctrines, experiences or testimonies, true or probable, and of discerning what conclusion from these is necessary, suitable, or expedient, when they are taken for granted. [80]

Like Newman, Polanyi recognised that there is a specific emotional quality to the act of assent: 'It is by satisfying his intellectual passions that mathematics fascinates the mathematician and compels him to pursue it in his thoughts and give it his assent'. [81] This sense of assurance and finality is not infallible, but it is based upon the supposition that truth is intrinsically beautiful:

> A symphony is obviously something new achieved by the human mind; but in calling it a symphony its composer demands recognition for it as something inherently excellent. The natural scientist and the engineer are not so free to satisfy themselves; no scientific theory is beautiful if it is false and no invention is truly ingenious if it is impracticable. [82]

For Newman, the illative sense is that which upholds our personal standards of excellence. Polanyi attributed the same function to a 'tacit faculty':

> We may now begin to recognise the nature of *the tacit faculty* which accounts in the last resort for all the increase in knowledge achieved by articulation, and the nature of the urge to exercise it. We have seen this faculty revealed in somewhat different ways in all three characteristic relations between thought and speech. In the ineffable domain it made sense of the scanty clues conveyed by speech; in listening to a readily intelligible text and remembering its message, the conception grasped by it formed the focus or our attention; and lastly, it was seen to be the centre of operations for readjusting the tacit and the formal components or thought, which had fallen apart by a process of sophistication. The faculty on which we relied in all these situations was our power for comprehending a text and the things to which the text refers, within a conception which is the meaning of the text. [83]

If 'illative sense' is substituted for 'the tacit faculty' in this passage, it seems that no harm is done to the thought of either Newman or Polanyi.

Both Newman and Polanyi would agree that articulation comes from a wordless centre. The illative sense may be understood as the tacit coefficient of thought that allows us to pass from thought to speech:

> There is a corresponding variation in the tacit coefficient of speech. In order to describe experience more fully language must be less precise. But greater imprecision brings more effectively into play the powers of inarticulate judgment required to resolve the ensuing indeterminacy of speech. So it is our personal participation that governs the richness of concrete experience to which our speech can refer Only by the aid of this tacit coefficient could we ever say anything at all about experience —a conclusion I have reached already by showing that the process of denotation is itself unformalisable. [84]

Newman's notion of the illative sense implies the integration of all of the 'powers of inarticulate judgment' that are at our disposal. Polanyi calls the cumulation of these various intellectual inputs a 'sense of fitness':

> My own view admits this controlling principle by accrediting the speaker's sense of fitness for judging that his words express the reality he seeks to express. Without this, words having an open texture are totally meaningless, and any text wrltten in such words is meaningless. [85]

The reality that Polanyi wished to accredit is what Newman called the illative sense:

> To accept the indeterminacy of knowledge requires. on the contrary,

that we accredit a person entitled to shape his knowing according to his own judgment, unspecifiably. [86]

Just as Newman saw the illative sense as the source of sound judgment about how and when we may assent, so Polanyi placed 'personal judgment' [87] at the heart of his epistemology:

> While the logic of assent merely showed that assent is an a-critical act, 'commitment' was introduced from the start as a framework in which assent can be responsible, as distinct from merely egocentric or random. The centre of tacit assent was elevated to the seat of responsible judgment. It was granted thereby the faculty of exercising discretion, subject to the obligations accepted and fulfilled by itself with universal intent. A responsible decision is reached, then, in the knowledge that we have overruled by it conceivable alternatives, for reasons that are not fully specifiable. [88]

If the integration of these two positions is correct, one may say that 'the centre of tacit assent' is the illative sense.

In the following summary of Polanyi's reflections on the knowledge of thought and of things, his notion of 'a personal component' of thought seems to have the same character as Newman's notion of 'an illative sense':

> To this extent, then, whether thought operates indwellingly within a universe of its own creation, or interprets and controls nature as given to it from outside, the same paradoxical structure prevails through the articulate systems so far surveyed. There is present a personal component, inarticulate and passsionate, which declares our standards of values, drives us to fulfil them and judges our performance by these self-set standards. [89]

One need not do too much violence to Newman's texts to show that the illative sense shares all of the characteristics listed by Polanyi in the passage just quoted: see the table in the next column. The two conceptual maps, though not identical, do appear to cover much the same territory in similar fashion.

Personal Component	***Illative Sense***
inarticulate	*non-verbal (217)*
	supra-logical (251)
passionate	*an instinct or inspiration (280)*
declares standards of values	*chooses its own authority (279)*
drives us to fulfil them	*binds us to believe (251)*
judges by self-set standards	*a rule to itself (283)*

Newman's 'method of verisimilitude' may not appear very methodical in the modern world, since it proceeds by informal rather than formal reasoning. It is on the basis of the illative sense that one sums up all of the lines of thought at one's disposal and decides that the accumulated evidence is 'close enough' to the truth to be taken as true. In Polanyi's view, this act of integrating disparate subsidiaries is one of the most important skills required by science:

> The perturbations of the planetary motions that were observed during 60 years preceding the discovery of Neptune, and which could not be explained by the mutual interaction of the planets, were rightly set aside at the time as anomalies by most astronomers, in the hope that something might eventually turn up to account for them without impairing —or at least not essentially impairing—Newtonian gravitation. Speaking more generally, we may say that there are always some conceivable scruples which scientists customarily set aside in the process of verifying an exact theory. Such acts of personal judgment form an essential part of science. [90]

As Newman said, one may assent on grounds that are not demonstrative. The scientist exercises 'personal judgment' that it is wise to neglect certain strands of evidence in order to pull others together:

> It is the normal practice of scientists to ignore evidence which appears incompatible with the accepted system of scientific knowledge, in the hope that it will eventually prove false or irrelevant. The wise neglect of such evidence prevents scientific laboratories from being plunged forever into a turmoil of incoherent and futile efforts to verify false allegations. But there is, unfortunately, no rule by which to avoid the risk of occasionally disregarding thereby true evidence which conflicts (or seems to conflict) with the current teachings of science. [91]

Even mathematicians, unencumbered by the requirement that their speculations have any bearing on reality at all, must rely on the skill of deciding for themselves what evidence they will accept as persuasive:

> The inarticulate coefficient by which we understand and assent to mathematics is an active principle of this kind; it is a passion for intellectual beauty. It is on account of its intellectual beauty, which his own passion proclaims as revealing a universal truth, that the mathematician feels compelled to accept mathematics as true, even though he is today deprived of the belief in its logical necessity and doomed to admit forever the conceivable possibility that its whole fabric may suddenly collapse by revealing a decisive self-contradiction And it is the same urge to see sense and make sense that supports his tacit bridging of the logical gaps internal to every formal proof. [92]

The Cartesian model of strict proof descending from self-evident principles does not work for science in general or mathematics in particular: 'The alternative to this, which I am seeking to establish here is to restore to us once more the power for the deliberate holding of unproven beliefs.' [93] The illative sense is just such a power to believe what we cannot prove.

Conclusion

This essay aims to show the convergence of Newman's and Polanyi's fundamental insights into the tacit and personal dimension of human judgment rather than to

develop a complete harmonisation of their terminology. Some of the similarities between the two positions are less surprising than others, given that both men wrote in English in England; there is no evidence, however, that Polanyi was in any way influenced by Newman's writings. An exhaustive catalogue of all points or contact will not necessarily improve our grasp of the central issues of illative sense and tacit knowledge —the list would be more exhausting than illuminating. If the latter two sections of this essay have not persuaded the reader that the two positions share the same fundamental insights, then it is doubtful that inspection of subsidiary similarities will make the case. If the substantial convergence of the positions is recognised, then many other connections might be explored: the role of conscience in knowledge; the freedom and responsibility to choose one's fundamental vision of reality; the hermeneutic circle between interpretative frameworks and interpretations; the imagination as the vehicle of contact with reality; the passions and emotions which support and accompany the operations of the intellect; the tacit creation and interpretation of symbols; and the affirmation of a post-critical philosophy as an alternative to the objectivist, critical philosophies descended from the Enlightenment.

In keeping with Polanyi's recognition that we know more than we can tell, there are many more connections between Newman and Polanyi than this essay can make explicit. Notions seem to be very much like neurons: they send out connections in every direction and in three dimensions. This analysis of the interconnections between Newman's and Polanyi's notions follows only a few of the contact points, and attempts to take them one-by-one, whereas living ideas, like neurons, constantly sum and re-sum the effects of many impulses wandering through the neural network. For epistemologies based on the dream of clear and distinct ideas, the inability to make all connections explicit is counted a failure; for epistemologies based on illative sense and tacit knowledge, the myriad of inarticulable links is a token that one has made contact with a profoundly important reality.

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Notes:

* Previously published in *John Henry Newman: Theology and Reform*, ed. M. E. Allsop and R. R. Burke (New York, Garland Publishing Inc., 1992), and reprinted with the kind permission of the editors.

63.PK, pp. 15-16.
64.PK, p 13.
65.PK, pp. 114-15.
66.PK, p. 130.
67.PK, p. 131; cf. p258.
68.PK, p.149.
69.PK, p.135.
70.PK, p. 62.
71.PK, p. 62-3.
72.PK, pp. 70-1.
73.PK, p. 91.
74.PK, p. 314.
75.PK, p. 135.
76.PK, p, 149.
77.PK, p. 138.
78.PK, p. 189.
79.PK, p. 286.
80.Grammar, p. 282. The discussion of how the illative sense functions in the selection of first principles continues to the next page as well.
81.PK, p. 188.
82.PK, p.195.
83.PK, p.100. Emphasis added.
84.PK, pp. 86-7.
85.PK, p. 113.
86.PK, p. 264
87.This is an expression which occurs frequently in PK: pp. 18-9, 20, 31, 79-80, 105-6, 119, 259, 307, 312, 367. For the most part, one may substitute Newman's phrase, 'the illative sense' in these passages without altering Polanyi's meaning, e.g.: 'I have given evidence before of the emotional upheaval which accompanies the mental reorganisation necessary for crossing the logical gap that separates a problem from its solution. I have pointed out that the depth of this upheaval corresponds to the force of personal judgment [the illative sense] required to supplement the inadequate clues on which is a decision is being based' (PK , p. 367).
88.PK, p. 312. Polanyi's notion of a-critical assent in this passage strongly resembles Newman's understanding of 'simple assent,' while Polanyi's notion of commitment has the same qualities as Newman's reflections on 'complex assent'.
89.PK, p. 195.
90.PK, p. 20.
91.PK, p.138.
92.PK, p. 189.
93.PK, p. 268.

JOHN MACMURRAY'S NOTION OF PERSON FOR THE TRIUNE GOD

Philip Mooney

In my final conversation with John Macmurray on July 31st, 1975, I asked the eighty-five year old philosopher why he believed in God. He looked at me with his Celtic blue eyes sparkling star-clear and, without a moment's hesitancy, responded, 'Because of our pressure to communicate, there should always be Someone listening shouldn't there?' So typical of this ever-young professor, whose 1953 Gifford lectures remain a classic critique of Western philosophy, to cut through the theoretical clutter, come to the point and sum up a lifetime of reflection on humankind's critical question in a homespun phrase. Little wonder, since his gift for putting great truths simply resonates with that of his fellow townsman Robert Burns. For John Macmurray, too, was born and grew up where 'Maxwellton's braes are bonnie'. Long before, when, as Grote Professor of Mind and Logic in the University of London, he first touched the wider British Isle scene with his double BBC radio series, Reality and Freedom [1930] and The Modern Dilemma [1932], John Macmurray had furnished his apologia for the approach that would be his hallmark:

> There is no inherent impossibility in the effort to expound the central issues of philosophy in a fashion which will render them comprehensible to the uninitiated. Simplification there must be and a strenuous avoidance of abstractions and technicalities. But this is not a defect, since philosophy is the most concrete of all sciences, and its major effort is the simplification of complex issues... Where the effort to popularise philosophy is a sincere effort of self-expression the philosopher will find himself forced, not into superficiality, but into a deeper realisation of his own meaning.[1]

In preparing these radio talks for the ordinary public Macmurray acknowledged, '[This] proved to be the finest philosophic discipline to which I ever submitted.'[2] When, subsequently, he was invited to give the most prestigious lecture series in religion in the English-speaking world [the Deems Lectures at New York University, 1936; the Terry Lectures at Yale University, 1936; the Dunning Lectures at Queen's University, Kingston Ontario, 1949; the Gifford Lectures at the University of Glasgow, 1953 & 1954; the Forwood Lectures at the University of Liverpool, 1960], this former Oxford fellow [Balliol College] never lost his gift for clarity and concreteness in taking up the most profound philosophical issues.

This is most apparent in his Gifford Lectures which were to become his legacy in theo-centric personalism as published in the two volumes: *The Self as Agent* and *Persons in Relation*. After Macmurray's death on June 21, 1976, I visited the home of his nephew, Duncan Campbell in Edinburgh where John and his wife Betty lived in the last decade of their long life together [Betty Hyde Macmurray died in 1979]. Professor Campbell graciously showed me John Macmurray's handwritten manuscripts of the Gifford lectures. Noticing that there were no erasures in the text and only an occasional word substitution, I asked my host whether this were John's final draft—so neat and unmarked after a quarter century. Duncan Campbell smiled and replied, 'No, this is John's first and only draft: he was a very careful thinker'. I, of course, was astounded that Macmurray's definitive works in his philosophy of religion should have flowed from his pen with a lucidity and exactness of expression that suffered no faltering or backtracking. These Gifford lectures became his signature for having plumbed the philosophical depths of the human condition with all the comprehensive adequacy of an Alfred Ayers who succeeded him at the University of London or of a David Hume who had predated him at the University of Edinburgh. [Macmurray held the chair of moral philosophy there after World War II until his retirement in 1957.] Consequently, my dear friend's seemingly simple reply to my 'God' question deserves the most careful scrutiny, for enshrining his central notion of person that could provide a more profound paradigm for the Christian doctrine of the triune God—the central thrust of this inquiry.

1. The inadequacy of Aristotelian model for persons

John Macmurray's concise response that our characteristically human pressure to communicate points to God as the constant listener rests upon the two key tenets in his philosophy of religion. The first is that our defining characteristic as persons is our capacity to communicate—in the full sense of that term—of sharing an experience with another person. The other principle is that this capacity to communicate, as the essential trait of humans separating us from the animal world, implies that we are persons at all only in and through a constitutive relationship with Other persons and ultimately with God, who is our constant responsive Other.

This last becomes a stunning philosophical stroke, so accustomed

are we to consider ourselves first and foremost as distinct individuals. Properly understood, John Macmurray would agree—we are unique members in the personal relationship of 'You'-and-'I'. Yet, this runs counter to our cultural orientation that we are born as individual persons and remain so throughout our life, even though we do form relationships as individuals with our parents, brothers and sisters, friends and companions. Here Macmurray demurs. His position is that we are born into a defining relationship with a personal other as personal which he is ready to verify in a careful analysis of the mother-child relationship.

John Macmurray locates our cultural sticking point in the dominant viewpoint first propounded by Aristotle that the human being is *animal rationalis*—a rational animal. But for Macmurray, therein lies the key inadequacy! Persons are so far beyond animals in what is most characteristically human about ourselves that to use animal as the prototype for our definition of person is to bind us to an individualistic concept of the human that becomes extremely hard to transcend. In his tiny war-time book, *A Challenge to the Churches*, John Macmurray pinpoints the tangle the teaching Church wound up in, when the Scholastic philosophers adopted Greek thought forms for its dogma and moral code:

> Elements derived from Stoicism, from Neo-Platonism, from the Aristotelian philosophy were fused together during the long process which shaped the Mediaeval culture into a unity, to form a conception of the world, of man's place in the world, of norms of individual and social life. This vast system of belief was so intertwined with the more strictly religious aspects of Christian doctrine and theology that they formed a single whole. In this way Christianity came to be identified with a conception of the world and of life which is largely pagan in origin and almost wholly pagan in its intellectual structure, and in consequence became the bulwark of a traditional paganism which it had set out to supersede.[3]

The most troublesome fall-out from this appropriation of the classical Greek conceptual framework came in defining the human person as a rational animal or *substantia individualis naturae rationalis*: 'an individual substance of a rational nature'—which is Thomas Aquinas' [borrowed from Boethius] patent variation. It is quite paradoxical that the Church should embrace a cultural mind-set in which 'animal' becomes the primal image for defining the human person while at the same time endorsing a morality based on Stoic mistrust of the body!

The Aristotelian notion of person with its 'head-of-cattle-with-rationality-tacked-on' rendering becomes so nearly an arithmetical concept of the person as to make articulating the doctrine of three persons in the one God indescribably difficult. Macmurray, in exposing this scholastic pitfall and espousing the relational notion of the person, reverts to Jesus' loving description of the triune God given at the Last Supper and dismisses the 'mathematical' hypothesis that would take exception to it:

> The formula of the three persons in one God is sensible and significant when you put it side by side with the meaninglessness of the fundamental formula of scientific faith, that one and one makes two.[5]

He could make this assertion because he starts with the mother-child relationship as the basic analogy for understanding personal existence. Given the reality of our primordial 'filial' relationship, it is ever so much more in keeping with our first-hand experience to conceive of God as being a relationship of three persons than to canonise the binary system for measuring the material world when the decimal system also has its plus side. Just as the profound Christian mysteries of the Incarnation, grace, and Trinity all hark back to the profound meaning of the Christmas event, John Macmurray starts with the mother and child relationship to unpack the meaning of person—human and divine—and would have delighted in Thomas Butler Feeney's Noël line: 'God was a baby when God was born'. [6]

Again, the cultural resistance to this *point du depart* for considering the human person consistently veers back to the biological model. This intransigence comes not only from the Cartesian dichotomy that enlists only measurable 'substance' in the realm of reality. It arises equally from the impact of the Darwinian evolutionary account for human origins that implicitly reinforces Aristotle's notion of the human person as the premise of preference. Macmurray treats these cultural cataracts before proposing his mother-child paradigm. So penetrating is his cultural diagnosis that quartet of paragraphs from *Persons in Relation* become pivotal here:

> There is widespread belief, of which Aristotle is probably the original source, that the human infant is an animal organism which becomes rational, and acquires a human personality in the process of growing up . . . The Aristotelian theory interests us only because of the influence it has had, and still has, upon our customary ways of thinking. If the notion that children are little animals who acquire the characteristics of rational humanity through education, whose personalities are 'formed' by the pressures brought to bear upon them as they grow up—if this notion seems to us simple common sense, and matter of everyday observation—it is because we share the traditional outlook and attitude of a culture which has been moulded by Greek and in particular by Aristotelian ideas . . . Whatever its origin, this view is radically false; and our first task is to uncover the error upon which it rests and to replace it by a more adequate view.
>
> The root of the error is the attempt to understand the field of the personal on a biological analogy, and so through organic categories. The Greek mode of

thought was naturally biological, or zoomorphic. The Greek tradition has been strongly reinforced by the organic philosophies of the nineteenth century and the consequent development of evolutionary biology. This in turn led to the attempt to create evolutionary sciences in the human field, particularly in its social aspect. The general result of these convergent cultural activities—the Romantic movement, the organic philosophies, idealist or realist, and evolutionary science—was that contemporary thought about human behaviour, individual and social, became saturated with biological metaphors, and moulded itself to the requirements of an organic analogy. It became the common idiom to talk of ourselves as organisms and of our societies as organic structures; to refer to the history of society as an evolutionary process and to account for all human action as an adaptation to environment.

It was assumed and still is assumed in many quarters, that this way of conceiving human life is scientific and empirical, and therefore the truth about us. It is in fact not empirical; it is *a priori* and analogical. For this concept, and the categories of understanding which go with it, were not discovered by a patient unbiased examination of the facts of human activity. They were discovered, at best, through an empirical and scientific study of the facts of plant and animal life. They were applied by analogy to the human field on the *a priori* assumption that human life must exhibit the same structure.

To help towards the eradication of this fundamental and dangerous error, it may therefore be advisable, at this point to issue a flat denial, without qualifications. We are not organisms, but persons. The nexus of relations which unites us in a human society is not organic but personal. Human behaviour cannot be understood, but only caricatured, if it is represented as an adaptation to environment; and there is no such process as social evolution but, instead, a history which reveals a precarious development and possibilities both of progress and of retrogression. It is true that the personal necessarily includes an organic aspect . . . This organic aspect is continuously qualified by its inclusion so that it cannot even be properly abstracted except through a prior understanding of the personal structure in which it is an essential, though subordinate component. A descent from the personal is possible, in theory and indeed in practice; but there is no way for thought to ascend from the organic to the personal. The organic conception of man excludes by its very nature, all the characteristics in virtue of which we are human beings.[7]

Macmurray's rejection of the biological model for the person with its 'evolutionary' credo in inevitable progress for the human condition has been hauntingly verified. The recent massacres in Rwanda and Bosnia coupled with the Nazi atrocities of a half-century ago remind us that the quality of life in human society ultimately comes to rest in the choices people make. Respect for the dignity of each human as a person is what keeps us from the jungle mentality where survival of the fittest prevails.

No, the biological image of person does not serve in representing what is essentially true and best about our being human nor does its 'evolutionary' canon about inexorable betterment hold up. The recent bloody stream of world-wide violence gives the lie to that. In his final university lectures in Liverpool, John Macmurray detected the basic motivational factors that underlie all human history for better or worse: 'Where people are bound together in an unavoidable interdependence, they must either develop a sense of friendship or institute a struggle for power'.[8]

The biblical image of Cain courses through the ages down to our own time in a Hitler or a Tojo, a Stalin or a Pol Pot; but these dismal silhouettes are counterbalanced by the image of Charles de Gaulle and Konrad Adenauer putting aside the ancient enmity between their neighbouring peoples and celebrating reconciliation in 1963 at Mass in Rheims cathedral. The altruistic concerns of these towering leaders kneeling before God confirmed the insight Macmurray had also expressed in Liverpool just three years before:

> Religious problems cannot be solved by political means. The reason is simple: Religious problems are problems of free personal relations; they are problems of friendship, of fellowship, of reconciliation.[9]

The pursuit of power must needs be modulated by respect for each person which ultimately becomes a question of religion, not politics. No society can long find harmony within itself or its neighbouring nations unless there is sufficient altruism to sustain peace and co-operation in their reciprocal dependence upon one another. Human history flourishes or deteriorates not according to evolutionary processes but in terms of the pivotal choices of critically positioned persons acting for the weal or the woe of their fellow human beings. In 1932, in the very year Adolf Hitler would wrest the power of German chancellor from the ageing Hindenburg, John Macmurray's quiet voice implicitly alerted his audience over the BBC network to the misplaced faith the people of Germany were about to embrace:

> Science can be applied for good or for evil purposes, for destruction or for construction, to minister to human greed and selfishness or to human love and sympathy. I imagine that when you talk of putting your faith in science you mean that you trust that men will apply the knowledge that the scientists gain to valuable, constructive activities and refrain from using it for small, selfish, mean ends. But now notice that it is not science you are believing in, but the fundamental goodness of human nature, that love is stronger than hate, that unselfishness will conquer greed, that brotherliness will triumph over envy and antagonism. Is that a scientific belief? What has the science of history or sociology or psychology to say to it? It isn't a scientific belief, but a religious one![10]

In seven short years the British would suffer from the worst applications of advanced science for evil purposes that the world had known up till then. The photo seared into the memory of all freedom-loving peoples was that of St. Paul's Cathedral surrounded by the night-glowing flames of a burning London. The modern faith in human advancement based on an illogical leap from the biological sciences literally went up in smoke with the technological application of the physical sciences from blitzkrieg to Buchenwald. The image of the Madonna and Child at the side-altar in St. Paul's is where Macmurray located his faith for human improvement; for as the bombs were dropping over England in 1941, he was proclaiming that 'a Christianity which was true to its own essence would undoubtedly be adequate to the salvation of the world in our time.'[11] John Macmurray participated in this effort by proposing the mother and child relation as the philosophical prototype for the human person.

2. Macmurray's analysis of mother and child relationship

The first point in his premise is that, unlike offspring in the animal world, the human infant is born with no instincts for survival:

> The most obvious fact about the human infant is his [her] total helplessness. He has no power of locomotion, nor even of co-ordinated movement. The random movements of limbs and trunk and head of which he is capable do not even suggest an unconscious purposiveness. The essential physiological rhythms are established, and perhaps a few automatic reflexes. Apart from these, he has no power of behaviour; he cannot respond to any external stimulus by a reaction which would help to defend him from danger or to maintain his own existence. In this total helplessness, and equally in the prolonged period of time which must elapse before he can fend for himself at all, the baby differs from the young of all animals. Even the birds are not helpless in this sense. The chicks of those species which nest at a distance from their food supply must be fed by their parents till they are able to fly. But they peck their way out of the egg, and a lapwing chick engaged in breaking out of the shell will respond to its mother's danger call by stopping its activity and remaining quite still.[12]

Macmurray underscores two conclusions from this primary finding. The first is that 'all purposive human behaviour has to be learned' [13] since 'to begin with our responses to stimulus are without exception biologically random,' [14] i.e. the baby's response to external stimuli is not 'biologically effective' to sustain him in life. The other conclusion is that the baby's sole adaptation to his environment, given his utter dependency upon an adult person to attend to all his needs, is

> his capacity to express his feelings of comfort or discomfort; of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with his condition. Discomfort he expresses by crying; comfort by gurgling and chuckling, and very soon by smiling and crowing. [15]

John Macmurray has already come to the critical point: The baby's capacity to communicate is the only equipment he is endowed with to stay alive. But since this survival depends upon another adult human's listening and interpreting his cries as to what his needs are, whether it be removal of a pinching diaper-pin or still another go at breast-feeding, the necessary context for his communication is a home; the most idyllic lakeside glen in summer won't do unless a caring person is there listening. In this respect, I cannot help but turn for a moment to the madonna image of Christmas and cite Civil War poet John Bannister Tabb's quaint 'proof-verse' for the doctrine of the Assumption:

> Nor Bethlehem nor Nazareth
> Apart from Mary's care;
> Nor heav'n itself a home for Him,
> Were not his mother there! [16]

A baby needs a home if he or she is to maintain life. My own definition of home is 'Your welcoming shoulder' where I first came to know belonging—cradled by my mother just after birth. A baby's cry of distress and smile of contentment each presume the compassionate presence of a human 'mother' —whether the responding other be Mum or Dad or a New York City policeman who, having just rescued an abandoned infant, warms the little one with his embrace as his partner rushes them to St. Vincent's Hospital where a loving nurse will take over and attend to the infant's every need as only an adult human can. Macmurray describes the mature human intention and attention that are the essential response to the human infant's communication:

> He depends for his existence . . . upon intelligent understanding, upon rational foresight. He cannot think for himself, yet he cannot do without thinking; so someone else must think for him. He cannot foresee his own needs and provide for them; so he must be provided for by another's foresight . . . The infant's cry is a call for help to the mother, an intimation that he needs to be cared for. It is the mother's business to interpret the cry, to discover by taking thought whether he is hungry or cold, or being pricked by a pin, or ill; and having decided what is the matter with him, to do for him what he needs. If she cannot discover what is the matter, she will consult someone else, or send for the doctor.[17]

Macmurray is careful to emphasise that the baby's communication is not merely the expression of discomfort but of the need to be understood by someone listening who can do something about resolving his distress. Without instincts for survival and totally dependent upon the care of another to meet his essentials for sustenance and initial development, the baby needs to be understood by an intelligent and loving nurturer who

can look after these elemental requirements. Consequently, the infant's communication carries the profound implication that the other to whom he cries is called upon to share his distressful experience on the premise that this other is in a basic loving relationship with this baby. This is the heart of Macmurray's primary premise:

> He [the baby] is made to be cared for. He is born into a love-relationship which is inherently personal. Not merely his personal development, but his very survival depends upon the maintaining of this relation.[18]

3. Mother-child relationship as prototype for human persons

Based on this analysis of the mother-child relationship, Macmurray makes the twin claims that become the pillars of his theistic personalism: The first is that the human person is born not primarily an independent individual but a member of a personal relationship:

> He [the baby] cannot, even theoretically, live an isolated existence; . . . he is not an independent individual. He lives a common life as one term in a personal relation. Only in the process of development does he learn to achieve a relative independence, and that only by appropriating the techniques of a rational social tradition. All the infant's activities in maintaining his existence are shared and co-operative. He cannot even feed; he has to be fed. The sucking reflex is his sole contribution to his own nutrition, the rest is the mother's. [19]

The other is that this mother-child relationship is constitutive of all personal existence as personal and becomes the one adequate paradigm for the person:

> In the human infant—and this is the heart of the matter—the impulse to communication is his sole adaptation to the world into which he is born. Implicit and unconscious it may be, yet it is sufficient to constitute the mother-child relation as the basic form of human existence as a personal mutuality, as a 'You-and-I' with a common life. For this reason the infant is born a person and not an animal. All his subsequent experience, all the habits he forms and the skills he acquires fall within this framework, and are fitted to it. Thus human experience is, in principle, shared experience; human life, even in its most individual elements, is a common life; and human behaviour carries always, in its inherent structure, a reference to the personal Other. All this may be summed up by saying that the unity of personal existence is not the individual but two persons in personal relation; and that we are persons not by individual right but in virtue of our relation to one another. The personal is constituted by personal relatedness. The unit of the personal is not the 'I', but the 'You and I'. [20]

John Macmurray reinforces his position as definitive for the person by drawing attention to the importance of the relationship itself for the baby:

> There is from the beginning an element of symbolic activity involved which has no organic or utilitarian purpose, and which makes the relationship, as it were, an end in itself. The relationship is enjoyed, both by mother and child, for its own sake. The mother not only does what is needful for the child: she fondles him, caresses him, rocks him in her arms, and croons to him; and the baby responds with expressions of delight in his mother's care which have no biological significance. These gestures symbolise a mutual delight in the relation which unites them in a common life: they are expressions of affection through which each communicates to the other their delight in the relationship, and they represent, for its own sake, a consciousness of communicating. It is not long before the baby's cries convey, not some organic distress, but simply the need for the mother's presence to banish the sense of loneliness, and to reassure him of her care for him. As soon as she appears, as soon as the baby is in touch with her again, the crying ceases and is replaced by a smile of welcome.[21]

Humans are meant for belonging and from the beginning celebrate it. This relationship is constitutive of the person not only because our origin as persons depends upon it but also because it is only in the context of a personal relationship that we can come to know ourselves as the unique person each of us is. Only another person can let me know that I am a person, as Macmurray points out in his small gem of epistemology, *Interpreting the Universe*:

> Only in a fully personal relationship with another person do I find a response at my own level . . . My self-consciousness is my consciousness of myself as a person, and it is only possible in and through my consciousness of a person who is not myself. It is only in personal relationships that I can be conscious of personality. The basic fact about human beings in virtue of which they are human is that they know one another and live in that knowledge. On this everything else hinges. [22]

Macmurray reiterates this elemental insight into personal reality in the Gifford lectures:

> The 'I' and the 'You'. . . are constituted by their relation. Consequently, I know myself only as I reveal myself to you; and you know yourself only in revealing yourself to me. Thus, self-revelation is at the same-time self-discovery . . . . One can only really know one's friends and oneself through one's friends in a mutuality of self-revelation. [23]

So it is by grace of the mother that the child comes to know himself as a beloved member of their relationship; similarly the mother becomes keenly aware of herself not only as a deeply caring person but as the beloved of her baby which his smile of welcome tells her. Macmurray makes some solid but deft moves here that we should reiterate. His basic premise is that mother and child are in a primordial bonding constituting them as persons in an 'I'-and-'You' relationship. His data for this are four-fold: that the human infant cannot survive except by sharing

his experience of distress and delight with another person with whom he is thus bonded in a common personal existence. He follows this up that the baby's delight in the company of the mother and desolation at the absence of the mother indicates that this relationship is the focus of his rudimentary communication. He ties these together with the insight that we only become conscious of ourselves as persons in and through this constitutive relationship in a mutuality of self-revelation. Finally, and most significantly, the central bonding in this relationship is one of care, of shared love—the baby in soliciting the affection of his mother and the mother rejoicing in the loving response of the infant to her own giving.

Macmurray extends his premise even further in asserting that our very existence as persons resides in our awareness of the other person and of oneself in the 'I'-and-'You' relation—

> If self-consciousness is merely the inner aspect of our consciousness of other persons, it follows that personality is constituted by, and does not merely imply, personal relationship between persons. Personality is mutual in its very being.[24]

My self-awareness comes in and through my awareness of the personal other and, therefore, of the bedrock of this mutual revelation that is our necessary relationship. John Macmurray retraces over this elemental terrain of our personal mutuality to banish any ambiguity:

> My own existence as a person is constituted by my knowledge of other persons, by my objective consciousness of them as persons, not by the mere fact of my relation to them. The main fact that has to be represented is not that I am because you are, but that I am I because I know you, and that you are you because you know me. My consciousness is rational or objective because it is a consciousness of someone who is in personal relation to me and, therefore, knows me and knows that I am I. I have my being in that mutual self-knowledge.[25]

Again, we go to the Gifford lectures for John Macmurray's clinching summation:

> If we did not know that there are other persons we could know literally nothing, not even that we ourselves existed. To be a person is to be in communication with the Other. The knowledge of the Other is the absolute presupposition of all knowledge, and as such is necessarily indemonstrable.[26]

4. Implications of individuality as member of relationships

But what of our individuality as a unique member of an 'I'-and-'You'relationship that constitutes us persons? Macmurray replies:

> The personal involves the essential individuality of all persons as well as their differences. Two persons in personal relation are not complementary. They do not lose their individuality to become functional elements in an individuality which includes them both. In fact, in the personal field the only real individuals are individual persons. Groups of persons are not individuals. Nevertheless, the individuality of a person only exists in and through his relationship to other persons and the more objective his relations become with other persons, the more his individuality is enhanced. [28]

John Macmurray over the years expressed four basic implications contained in this early insight of his:

The first is that since we are persons at all only in terms of an original relationship, there is no such human as a consummate individual, since no person can dispense with a personal other. Macmurray does excoriate 'individualism' as inherently atheist for being egocentric [27]; but, in practice, even self-proclaimed atheists have loving relationships with personal others and, implicitly, are bonded with the 'infinite of the Personal' who is God.

The second implication is that we become especially conscious of ourselves as separate individuals when our relationship with another is threatened—forcing us to stop and think and take measures as to how to restore the relationship that is at the heart of our living. Macmurray describes the clash of wills between mother and child, presumably at the 'two-year-old' stage—the favourite mapping terrain of child psychologists. Since relationship with the mother is 'everything' to the child, the fear of losing it brought on by the infant's refusal of the mother's wishes makes the baby desperate for the return of love; else, he is 'out in the cold,' fully conscious of his separate individuality. The child is 'alone without love,' to use Eugene O'Neill's phrase from his too little known play, *Days Without End,* that deals with the problem of hatred against God.

This brings up the third implication: hatred, which, for Macmurray, is 'love frustrated by fear'. [29]

Since my realisation as a person lies in relationship with the other to whom I make full gift of myself in love, when this other portends to cut out of the relationship altogether, I am threatened absolutely and thrown back on myself. I need 'You' in order to be myself. Consequently, when you raise the prospect of abandoning me, I fear for myself and strike out against the removal of your love. This primordial fear of isolation prompts the hatred that is directed against the particular other in whom I have entrusted all my hopes and longings for belonging. My hatred, in which I am keenly conscious of my shorn individuality for being rejected by you, is actually a dire demand for the return of your love wherein I find personal realisation in belonging. Isolation from you frustrates me at the core of my being for depriving me of my fulfilling bond with You. Hatred is a derivative of the fear of isolation that is the converse of our essential 'love' to belong that has been our joy,

contentment, and personal peace since our first moments on the planet.

Macmurray explains:

> Since the 'You' and 'I' relation constitutes both the 'You' and the 'I' persons, the relation to the 'You' is necessary for my personal existence. If, through fear of the 'You', I reject this relation, I frustrate my own being. It follows that hatred cannot, as a motive of action, be universalised. It presupposes both love and fear, and if it could be total it would destroy the possibility of personal existence . . .This mutuality of hatred as the motive of a negative relation of persons is clearly an evil. Hatred itself, as an original and necessary motive in the constitution of the personal, is perhaps what is referred to by theology as original sin.[31]

Macmurray's final observation looks to personal growth:

> The development of the individual person is the development of his relation to the Other. Personal individuality is not an original given fact. It is achieved through the progressive differentiation of the original unity of the 'You' and 'I'. [30]

Each member of the relationship 'informs' the other as to his or her unique difference. We know ourselves through revelation by the other and in contrast from the other. As individual members of the relationship, we take our meaning from the relationship itself. It is the mother who 'informs' the child as to the child's meaning; and it is the child who 'informs' the mother as to her signficance as mother in a mutuality of self-revelation.

5. Consciousness of individuality as 'I' in affirmation of 'You'

Before applying this relational model of the person to the doctrine of the Trinity, we need to address some concerns that may have surfaced in setting out these implications of individuality within the constitutive relationship. If divine persons—as divine—experience no fear of losing their mutual relationship, as we humans do in a way prompting the reflection that makes us keenly conscious of our individuality as persons, how do the divine persons become aware of their unique identity within the relationship? [One is inclined borrow a page from the Jesuits of old in their debate with the Dominicans over free-will versus divine providence that the latter matter must ultimately be left to God in the mystery of divine doings. So too, we humans must in the end relegate to God the mystery of how the divine persons become aware of their uniqueness within their divine relationship.]

First of all, fear is a built-in human limitation since human communication is not perfect and our relationship with our friend is always in jeopardy because of the on-going possibility of wrenching misunderstanding or of desolating sin arising from our hatred or desperate fear of the other, or finally because of the unabating prospect of biological death that eventually deprives us of the company of the beloved. In his human dimension as Jesus, the divine Son also knew fear and was quite sensitive to threats to belonging. After his discourse on the 'Eucharist' in the Capernaum synagogue when, in the evangelist John's account, many disciples 'walked with him no more,' Jesus puts the question to his friend Peter: 'Will you too go away?' In the garden of his agony, Luke reports that Jesus literally sweat blood in his prayer to the Father that the bitter cup of death might be removed from him. That very hour, in encountering his betrayer, Jesus recalls for Judas their former bond in asking, 'Friend, why are you here?' Finally, in mid-afternoon of that same Jewish day when darkness covered the earth, Jesus in his utter desolation cried out the opening lines of the 22nd Psalm, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Though, in his divine personality, Jesus was still and always one with his Father, the imminent separation from his mother and close friends in his death at so early an age coupled with the abandonment and betrayal by former friends induced in him the same dread that humans feel. So we can say that in his human nature, the divine Son was quite aware of his individuality through fear of isolation in the same basic mode as the baby's in the mother-child prototype.

But though the infant first becomes aware of himself as a separate individual through fear for himself when his relationship with his mother is threatened, this is presuming that we are not conscious of ourselves as distinct members of a relationship except when it is in jeopardy. Macmurray, however, was invoking this early experience to explain why the notion of ourselves as independent individuals—separate—from the relationship becomes so dominant in the growing child and why we humans resort to the individualistic devices of control or escape as negative ways of dealing with others in our apprehensions about ever becoming their friends. From the very start, the baby, in his smile of welcome upon the return of the mother for whose presence he has bellowed, knows himself as that 'other' who is the beloved of the mother.

Missing someone does not imply fear of losing that someone, but rather confirms the vital meaning of that someone to our personal existence. Longing for the company of a friend who is absent does not imply fear but rather trust in the relationship and becomes an affirmation of the friend as essential to one's well-being as a person. It is in this affirmation of love that I am being most true to myself as a person in drawing upon what is most characteristic of myself—my reservoirs of interest and love unique to my person. It is in this focusing upon the other as Other to whom I make the gift of myself that I am most

conscious not only of the Other as my beloved in his or her uniqueness but of myself as lover in my own uniqueness. Macmurray hymns this positive way in which I become conscious of my uniqueness as a personal 'I' in the loving relationship with a personal 'You' in his Dunning lectures:

> Only another person can elicit a total response in action, of such a kind that the self-transcendence of every aspect and element of our nature is expressed and fulfilled. This is the implicit intention of all fellowship—the complete realisation of the self through a complete self-transcendence. If this intention could be realised in an actual instance, the self would 'care for' the other totally; in action and in both modes of reflection, intellectual and emotional. 'I' would think, feel and act for 'you', in terms of 'your' nature and being. In this way, and only in this way, could a personal being achieve and experience a complete objectivity, a complete rationality, a complete self-realisation. The ground of friendship is, therefore, the inevitable need we have to be ourselves. It is our nature, as persons, to live in the world and not in ourselves; to have the centre of intention and realisation outside ourselves, in that which is other than ourselves. The basic condition of this is that we should enter into fellowship, that we should love the other. So love may be defined as the complete affirmation of the other by the self.[32]

In this complete affirmation of the other, a person is never more completely conscious of himself or herself as a unique member of a loving relationship—which is why every marriage whether in St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York or a tiny chapel in rural France is 'the wedding of the century'. Yet, a retarded child evokes the same consciousness in a caring mother like Julie Newman or listening father like Charles de Gaulle. The actress in regard to her son exulted, 'It is such a fulfilling experience to be loved unconditionally'. For his part, the late great leader of France spoke of his daughter Anne—'ma petite fille sans èspoir'—as the source of his individual courage when he bore the burden of Free France during World War II: 'This child was also a blessing: She helped me overcome every setback and to go beyond other men, to set my sights higher'. The infant or retarded child's smile of response or delight in sharing a walk or an embrace with Mum or Dad is his or her own affirmation of the other in his or her own incipient gift of self in which, in being aware of bringing joy to others, becomes quite conscious of himself or herself as a member of a loving relationship.

6. The Divine Spirit of love as person

The relationship of love, significantly, is the evangelist John's designation for God: 'God is love'. [1John 4.16] Through the insights of John Macmurray, we can describe the triune God as the constitutive relationship in which the Father affirms the Son and the Son affirms the Father in the mutuality of the Divine Spirit of love whom Matthew names the Holy Spirit. But, is this Spirit, indeed, a person? Perhaps, the difficulty we have in conceiving the Spirit as a person is that we naturally revert to the anthropomorphic image for both Father and Son and, thereby, implicitly call up the age-old 'animal' prototype as prerequisite for our concept. At the personal level of existence, however, the personal spirit of love need not be hobbled with the 'animal rationalis' accoutrements. The spirit of love uniting a couple on their wedding day is the one spirit of shared love their sick child experiences when both parents hover over her bedside—as did my parents over my dying baby-sister Patricia. That same bonding spirit of love kept many a World War II wife literally inspirited as her soldier husband was an ocean away in Europe or the Philippines fifty years ago, risking his life in freeing the oppressed peoples. This mutual spirit of love is the most personal dimension of the human bond of relationship—so that there is profound personal truth in the song-line:

> In time the Rockies may tumble,
> Gibraltar will crumble—
> they're only made of clay,
> but our love is here to stay.

Yet, in spite of the sincere dedication extolled in these lyrics, human love—in being fettered with a concomitant dread of isolation—will falter, turn intermittent, or even sputter out entirely, should such fear come to characterise a person's outlook. The divine Spirit of love, however, is not so straitened: 'There is no fear in love: perfect love casts out fear'. [1 John 4.18] The Holy Spirit, for being unaffected by human fears either of individual survival or of personal isolation, is the shared life of the Father and of the Son, in whom and through whom as divine love, they are aware of one another, respectively, as the initiating Father and as the only-begotten Son. This eternal spirit of love that is the personal exultation of Father and Son is the 'heart' of the divine relationship that is the God of Jesus Christ. In God, the Spirit is a person because the Spirit is infinite love untrammelled by those self-protective concerns fostered by the fear that—as such—can neither create nor sustain a relationship of belonging but can, if dominant, make the dreaded isolation more likely. Only infinite love can be a person in being the creative and responsive Spirit that eternally enlivens the Father and the Son and in whom they rejoice forever.

This is the Holy Spirit that overshadowed Mary in response to her 'fiat' through which the grandeur of the mystery of the Incarnation transpired. It seems almost in keeping with this Nazareth girl's unassuming, down-to-earth character that the U.S. Catholic university named for her should garland John's proclamation of this greatest event in human history on the library wall facing its stadium

for all Notre Dame football fans to see—'God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten-Son'.[John 3.16] Mozart celebrated this event in setting Mary's Magnificat to glorious music; and Macmurray, too, in making the madonna and child relationship the prototype for personal existence, fulfilment and peace.

7. Macmurray's paradigm of person as appropriate for the triune God

Allowing for the exceptions in God we have already spoken to, we can now lay out the four key components in Macmurray's notion of the person as the appropriate paradigm for the triune God. First, a person exists only as a unique member of a constitutive relationship with a personal Other. This is the core meaning of Jesus' avowal to Philip at the Last Supper: 'Have I been so long with you, yet you do not know me? Philip, he who has seen me, has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father?' Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me?' [John 14.9-10]

Jesus was reiterating the claim he had made publicly in the temple on the previous Hanukkah—and for which the religious authorities had wanted to stone him— 'I and the Father are one'. [John 10.30] Since the Apostles were to be the witnesses to his identity as the divine Son and to his constitutive relationship with the Father, Jesus focuses upon these eleven and all those who would believe in him through their testimony in his prayer ending their Seder:

> Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee, since thou has given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou has given him. And this is eternal life, that they know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent . . . Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory I had with thee before the world was made . . . Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou has given me, that they may be one even as we are one.
>
> I do not pray for these only but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou has sent me . . . Father, I desire that they also, whom thou has given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which thou has given me in thy love for me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world has not known thee, but I have known thee; and these know that thou has sent me. I made known to them thy name, and I will make it known, that the love with which thou has loved me may be in them, and I in them. [John 17.1-3, 5, 20-21, 24-26.]

That each one of us who believe in Jesus' identity as the divine Son through the Apostolic word should be included in his final prayer for his own before his redemptive ordeal is our ultimate blessing. If Jeremiah had voiced God's promise of a new covenant that he would 'write upon their hearts' [Jeremiah 31.32], then this prayer of Jesus is the inscription. The incarnate Son who had become human as Jesus proclaims his identifying relationship with the Father in their mutual spirit of love, the Holy Spirit, whom Father and Son communicate to each one of us as grace—the Spirit that is the life and love of the Father and Son binding them in eternal union is shared with us and makes us one with the triune God forever, if we do not turn our back on this gesture of total affirmation towards us. The Son—as the eternal reflection of the Father, as the beloved of the Father, as the only-—begotten of the Father who was in and with the Father before the world was made and who, as the expression and respondent of the Father's love, is the co-principle of all that has come into being through that mutual Spirit of love—knows the Father totally even as the Father knows him as the Son.

This brings us to the second fundamental component in Macmurray's notion of the person: A person becomes conscious of his [her] own unique identity in and through the revelation of the personal Other with whom he exits in their constitutive relationship. It is through this mutual revelation that each member of the relationship is not only aware of his personal existence through his awareness of the personal Other, but of the relationship through which each 'live and move and have their being'. Jesus' valedictory prayer clearly corroborates Macmurray's axiom. Jesus had anticipated this crucial disclosure of his Last Supper discourse earlier in his public life with the declaration:

> I thank thee Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou has hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one know the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. [Matthew 11.25-27.]

This mutual divine awareness that Jesus asserts is validation for Macmurray's insight since the Father knows himself as Father and his constitutive relationship with the Son through the eternal expression of himself that is the Son. The Son, reciprocally, knows himself to be the Son and in essential relation with the Father through his knowledge of the Father. Jesus alone could make the Father's name known to the Apostles as he speaks his prayer in John because from all eternity he has known himself to be the only-begotten Son in and through his divine relationship with the Father.

To invoke the terminology of the Prologue of John's Gospel, the divine Son as the Word of God, in becoming flesh, therein reveals to us humans the inner life of the eternal relationship that is the triune

God. The Jesuit theologian, Karl Rahner, asserts that the Word as 'the immanent self-utterance of God in His eternal fullness is the condition of the self-utterance of God outside himself'.[33]

But since 'God is love' [1 John 4.16], the self-disclosure of the Father as loving initiator and of the Son as beloved expression of and self-response to the Father transpires in and through the Spirit of divine love eternally inspiring the relationship as the gift, joy and glory of God.

In reaching the heart of the triune relationship that is God, we come to the third component in Macmurray's notion of the person: The spirit of this personal relationship as personal is that of love—a love inspiring a complete self-transcendence in which each 'I' comes to know the 'You' totally as the beloved through affirming the 'You' totally even as the 'I' becomes totally aware of himself as lover. As Macmurray emphasises, 'My knowledge of another person is a function of my love for him' [34]

Consequently, to be a person is to be in communication with You, in which sharing each member of the relationship affirms, reveals, and responds [listens] to one another in the spirit of total love that constitutes the relationship.

What, for Macmurray, hampers complete human communication and reciprocal self-revelation is self-protective fear as the dominant disposition in a person that either has a person screen himself behind a façade or project his own dread upon the other in a biased perception of the other as threat:

> To know another person we must be in communication with him [her], and communication is a two-way process . . . All knowledge of persons is by revelation. My knowledge of you depends not merely on what I do, but upon what you do; and if you refuse to reveal yourself to me I cannot know you, however much I may wish to do so. If in your relations to me you consistently 'play a role,' you hide yourself from me. I can never know you as you really are . . . And in proportion as my knowledge [of another person] is a function of my fear of him, it is illusory or unreal. [35]

Since the characteristic disposition of self-protective fear is what blocks personal communication in smothering the mutual self-revelation that can only transpire in the love that is 'giving oneself away' to the other, Macmurray contends that the function of all religion is to overcome the dominance of fear as the characteristic disposition of a person and to replace it with the trust of the other that love alone can inspire: 'All religion is an effort to create a normal, a complete human life; to achieve an integration of personality within itself and with the world in which it lives. For this reason, it is concerned, primarily, with the conquest of fear'.[36]

Consequently, Jesus' primary intent in bringing the 'good news' to our world was, in Macmurray's interpretation, to overcome this fear in the hearts of humankind and replace it with other-centered openness and trust toward others: 'This was the mission of Jesus as he saw it. To conquer fear in the hearts of men and replace it by confidence and trust; to relieve us from life on the defensive and replace it with a life of freedom and spontaneity'. [37]

He would accomplish this with the grace of his love as his 'way' of transforming humankind into a universal community or, as he called it, 'the kingdom of my Father'. Therefore, his one mandate to any follower of his was 'Love one another as I have loved you'. [John 15.12] Divine love has come to the human world through the Incarnate Son as the sole 'salvation' for humanity: Macmurray recapitulates:

> Jesus linked the love which he manifested, and which was to bind his disciples in a society of mutual affection, with the hidden reality of the world, with the creative centre of all things. 'As the Father has loved me,' he told his disciples, 'so have I loved you'. The disciples are the small group of people who have been with him throughout the duration of his mission. By this personal relation to him, by the impact of his personality upon them, they have become convinced that his claim is valid; that his mission is a divine mission; that he is sent by God. Jesus has become for them the revelation of the Father. The love which he manifests, which bind them to him and to one another, is thus an expression of the power that created and that sustains the world. So they knew that in sharing his mission, they were not just following another religious leader, but entering into the final truth about themselves and about the human race and about the whole world. They were anchored in reality. [38]

Macmurray brings us back to the divine spirit of love in and through whom the Father affirms the Son and the Son affirms the Father in their totally responsive communication with one another as eternally creating and sustaining their relationship as God. It is this same Holy Spirit that the Father communicated to us humans as grace in sending his Son as one of us in the Incarnation. And, if Macmurray's earlier allusion to fear-fomented hatred as 'original sin' is a valid insight, then the love conquering fear and instilling trust, that he speaks of, is the divine spirit of love overcoming hatred and patterns of sin as the redemptive grace we humans radically experienced in the divine Son's becoming one with us.

7.Rahner's corroboration of Macmurray's paradigm of person

These last two 'Rahner-styled' statements prompt an observation about divine love from that fine theologian which can be summed up in saying that God fashions a being who can draw forth his love. God instilled the unique spirit in each human that identifies him or her as persons beyond their biological dimension as a communication of his own divine Spirit of love:

> God wishes to communicate himself, to pour forth the love which he

himself is . . . . Everything else exists so that this one thing might be: the eternal miracle of infinite Love. And so God makes a creature whom he can love—he creates man. He creates him in such a way that he can receive this Love which is God himself and that he can and must at the same time accept it for what it is: the ever astounding wonder, the unexpected. unexacted gift'.[39]

Further carefully-plotted tracking by Rahner leads to his profound insight that God could create humankind at all only because in the Incarnation humanity becomes the symbol of the Word—the one and only focus of his eternal love: 'God makes a creature whom he could love!' Rahner calls attention to the splendour of this doctrinal insight:

> We only radically understand ourselves for what we really are when we grasp the fact that we exist at all because God chose to be human and, thereby, chose that we should be those in whom he as human can only encounter his own self by loving us.[40]

Like all true theological pilgrimages, Rahner's not only brings new radiance to the meaning of Macmurray's axiom about the mutual relation constituting us persons being one of love in which each person affirms the other in total reciprocal communication; it also brilliantly enlightens each of us as being the beloved of God to whom he ever attends as to his only Son. The Someone, always listening in response to our pressure to communicate that is the God John Macmurray believes in, is, for him, the Father whose divine love creates and sustains the personal universe and, for Karl Rahner, the God who sent his only-begotten Son as one of us so that—to cite from a Preface in the Roman Catholic liturgy—he could 'see and love in each one of us humans what he sees and loves in Jesus'.

The fond delight of God in his only-begotten Son become incarnate is remarkably disclosed at Jesus' baptism as reported by all three Synoptic evangelists: 'And a voice came from heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased"'. [Mark 1.11] Scripture scholars agree that Jesus' divine identity associated with the text could only be fathomed after his resurrection. But the joy in the relationship with no ulterior motive, as reflected in this astonishing interlude 'with the Spirit descending upon him like a dove,' serves to verify the final component in Macmurray's notion of the person as a paradigm for the triune God: For human and divine persons alike, the focus, the joy, and the glory of this relationship is the spirit of love that is the very life of persons in belonging always. If in Macmurray's mother-child prototype for the person, 'the relationship is enjoyed by both mother and child for its own sake,'[41] the divine Father and Son rejoice in the relationship of their mutual love that is the Holy Spirit. In his Last Supper discourse, Jesus refers to this elation as the crowning point and focus of his mission on earth:

> As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. [John 15.9-12]

Jesus' commandment is not a mandate but an invitation for us to find personal joy and fulfilment in a loving relationship by making a total gift to my beloved as he has to each one of us. There is only one love in the personal universe, the love of the Son for the Father and the Father for the Son that is their Holy Spirit of love. We humans share in that spirit when we love one another, as John's First Epistle attests:

> In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No man has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his own Spirit. [1 John 4.10-13]

Consequently, when fiancés affirm their love for one another in their mutual communication of total love, it is the divine Spirit of love through whom we all are graced in the Incarnate Son that wells up within them. No one has captured the nuances of this glorious truth better than the late Père Duval, the French guitar-priest in his lyrics:

> Quand tu m'a dit, ma chère, des choses aimantes,
> Le Ciel n'était pas loin de nous;
> Quand tu m'a dit, ma chère, des choses aimantes,
> C'était déjá Sa tendresse qui chante!

This love is the final word in John Macmurray's prototypical mother-child relationship—the love that the mother imparts to her child is God's own. We have come full circle back to the crêche with the madonna and child as John Macmurray's paradigm for understanding the person, whether human or divine. For, on Christmas day, the Divine Son was born as Jesus into a loving relationship with his mother Mary through the divine Spirit of love through whom he is eternally bonded to his Father. The child in the crib would grow up and one day sit by Jacob's well and say to the Samaritan woman: 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water' [John 4.10]. That gift we now appreciate as the Spirit of divine love through whom we belong always to our constantly listening God and to the Son he sent as one of us that we might experience peace in our human relationships wherein we find our identity, fulfilment and ultimate joy in being person.

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MICHAEL POLANYI AND J. H. OLDHAM

IN PRAISE OF FRIENDSHIP

Phil Mullins

I. Introduction

These reflections explore a relationship between two British intellectuals, Michael Polanyi (1891-1974) and J. H. Oldham (1874-1969), whose twenty plus year friendship was close and significant in the sense that it seems to have shaped the ideas of each man. In the Papers of Michael Polanyi, housed in the Department of Special Collections at the Regenstein Library of the University of Chicago, there are seven folders of archival material, including over a hundred letters written by Oldham and Polanyi from 1940 until the mid sixties, a few years before Oldham's death; this material is a rich resource which I begin to examine here. At the outset, I should acknowledge this archival material is not only rich, but also confusing, since it is undoubtedly an incomplete literary record. My interest is chiefly in the bearing of this material on Polanyi's philosophical thought. But, through Polanyi, I have recently become interested in Oldham, aptly described by King as an 'English missionary statesman,'[1] who was undoubtedly an enormously influential Christian intellectual during the first half of the twentieth century. Polanyi was a scientist whose interests, by the time he met Oldham, had already begun to shift toward questions about economics, politics and culture as well as philosophy. Polanyi thus is a figure who moved from scientific research to broader philosophical reflection; although already moving on this course before he met Oldham, Oldham certainly had a role in shaping this transition. Here I outline some contours of the Polanyi-Oldham friendship which the correspondence suggests. My reflections are by no means an exhaustive study of this material; I hope, instead, that they will be regarded as an orientation to an interesting historical puzzle, an orientation which may encourage others to look at this and other archival material in the Polanyi Papers.

At the outset, it is clear that Polanyi openly acknowledged the significant role Oldham played in expanding his intellectual life. Polanyi's developing philosophical perspective, and perhaps especially his broader interests in religion and culture, were, by Polanyi's own account, importantly shaped by his contact with Oldham and Oldham's circle of friends. In 1962, in an interview with Richard Gelwick, the writer of the first dissertation on his non-scientific thought, Polanyi acknowledged that his participation in a discussion group convened by Oldham did more to influence his thought than anything other than his experience as a scientist.[2] In 1959, Polanyi dedicated his short book *The Study of Man* to J. H. Oldham. Polanyi's respect for Oldham is quite clear. As I show below, several comments in correspondence near the end of Oldham's life suggest the deep appreciation and affection Polanyi and Oldham have for one another.

Readers of *Appraisal* are likely quite familiar with Polanyi, but may not be acquainted with Oldham; I therefore offer in the next section some compressed orientational information. Following this section is a more general discussion of how Polanyi's and Oldham's lives and ideas intersected.

2. J. H. Oldham: Christian social activist

Joseph Houldsworthy Oldham's *New York Times* obituary reports that when he died in 1969 at the age of 94, he had been honorary president of the World Council of Churches since 1961.[3] Oldham was possibly the most important leader in British and international Christian missionary affairs from 1910 until after the middle of the century; he was organising secretary of the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference in 1910, an important early ecumenical endeavour. This lead eventually to duties as editor of the *International Review of Missions* (initiated in 1912) which he ably directed until 1927, making the journal an outstanding, broad-based organ supported also by Roman Catholics and open to writers of all sorts. Kathleen Bliss,who succeeded Oldham as editor of the *Christian News Letter* and worked very closely with him in the latter part of his life, makes a convincing case, in her article in the *Dictionary of National Biography: 1961-70*, that Oldham did much to contribute to an ecumenical climate in the first half of the century.[4]

Oldham was born in Bombay in 1874 and educated at Oxford. He early planned a career in the Indian Civil Service but, due to a religious conversion, ended up working in India, beginning in 1897, for three years for the Scottish YMCA. In 1901, he began his theological education in Edinburgh; although never ordained, he became an advocate for mission education in Scotland which led to his appointment as the organising chair of the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference in 1910. After the First

World War, Oldham was secretary of the newly formed International Missionary Council from 1921 until 1938. Flett suggests that Oldham was a visionary concerned with religious freedom and the direction of the missionary movement in the now different world; but he was also an effective political agent and, for example, succeeded in negotiating a clause at Versailles protecting German missionary properties from confiscation (Flett reports he became known as the 'wily saint'[5]) He was especially important in African affairs and did much to shape colonial policy in Africa after World War I. He was particularly interested in education, first in India and then in Africa. Oldham in fact visited Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes in the US South and effectively promoted, in various roles he played, the style of education represented by these institutions for education in Africa.[6] One of Oldham's influential books, *Christianity and the Race Problem* makes clear his opposition to racism; certainly many of Oldham's political activities lived out this stance. In 1937, Oldham chaired an important world ecumenical conference at Oxford which treated issues concerned with the totalitarian state, the church and the gospel. In 1939, he founded the *Christian News Letter* which he edited until 1945; this was a publication Flett describes as 'an expression of a group of men and women who tried to understand the deeper currents of contemporary history and to see light in the urgent tasks to be undertaken'.[7] In 1942, he founded an organisation for laity named the Christian Frontier Council. In 1952, Oldham retired, although he continued to convene groups, to read and write, and do many of the things he had done earlier.

Bliss argues that Oldham's major concern in all his affairs was practical Christian life in the changing world of the twentieth century.[8] Flett suggests, and the correspondence with Polanyi bears this out, that Oldham was not opposed to science, but was interested in understanding it, using it and harmonising it with Christian thought.[9] Oldham was himself a Christian thinker, although he will likely not be remembered as a particularly creative philosophical theologian. His books certainly show that he was a serious reader of the Christian theology of his day. Correspondence with Polanyi suggests that he had met and talked with quite a few major theologians of the period. Both Flett and Bliss suggest that Oldham espoused a relational theology, influenced by thinkers like Buber.[10] Books such as his *Life is Commitment* (1952), as well as letters and papers in the Polanyi materials lead me to regard this as an apt description. But Oldham, in sum, seems primarily to have been a skilful Christian agent of change, a religious leader who thought concretely in terms of the changing culture and politics of the first half of the twentieth century. He was, as Flett puts it, committed to working out the 'relationship of the Church to the contemporary lives of people in society and to the modern state'.[11]

4. Polanyi, Oldham and the Moot

How did the lives of Oldham and Polanyi come to intersect? Although Oldham was clearly a figure much of whose professional life put him in positions to organise and chair large, international bodies with broad commissions, he apparently was even more effective in smaller gatherings. The correspondence with Polanyi suggests that Oldham was extraordinarily skilled in interpersonal relations; he seems to have been an engaging, cordial and rather self-effacing figure with a miraculous ability to bring people together to talk about serious topics. Bliss gives a partial account of Oldham's gifts by pointing to his hearing problem:

> Oldham's success with groups owed something to the deafness which afflicted him in middle life. The cross-talk of large gatherings became impossible for him to cope with, but the smaller group was ideal. He took infinite care choosing and preparing such groups and planning the venue and subject. He controlled the meetings with well-regulated tolerance, circulating from member to member on his stool, with his vast hearing aid on his knee.[12]

Probably the most important group that Oldham convened was the Moot, an intellectual discussion group that met for several years; it was here that Polanyi first met Oldham in 1944.

A. Organisation and operation of the Moot and Polanyi's initial invitation

The Moot first convened in 1939 or 1940 about the time Oldham began to edit the *Christian News Letter.*[13] At least in the correspondence with Polanyi, there is no mention of an explicit objective for the Moot, although it clearly is a selected group Oldham gathered for serious discussions of topics he and others affiliated with his work saw as important. The topics of discussion meetings are various, but succeeding meeting topics usually seem to have evolved from preceding sessions. All the topics might in a generic sense be said to fall into Oldham's lifelong concern with Christianity and modernity.

Polanyi came to be invited to the Moot because his publications and his friends produced a contact with Oldham. Oldham wrote to Polanyi in late 1943, asking him for permission to publish a *Christian News Letter* 'Supplement' of about 2,000 words which focused upon an article by Polanyi published in *Political Quarterly* in 1943. The 'Supplement' was to 'summarise the main argument of the paper and illustrate it at some points by quotations from the article, expanding that with some comment of my own,' according to Oldham.[14] Several of Polanyi's

writings were reproduced (or intended to be reproduced) as 'Supplements' over the years of his friendship with Oldham. Oldham indicates in his first letter that he already intended to write Polanyi for permission to produce the 'Supplement' when he lunched with a common friend, Sir Walter Moberly, who gave him a copy of the *Political Quarterly* article to read; Moberly was pleased that Oldham already was interested in a 'Supplement.' Oldham also mentions that another common friend, Karl Mannheim, the social theorist who, like Polanyi, was a Hungarian émigré, had approved of Oldham's intention to produce a 'Supplement' on Polanyi's article. Polanyi's response to Oldham's request indicates he was already familiar with the *Christian News Letter* and was delighted to have his work included there.[15]

The publication of the *Christian News Letter* 'Supplement' set the stage for inviting Polanyi to the Moot. In early May of 1944, Oldham sent Polanyi an invitation to be a guest at a gathering, from June 23rd to 26th at St. Julian's, a rural setting near Horsham where most of the meetings were held.[16] Oldham indicates that Mannheim has told Polanyi about the Moot and that in the past the Moot has met three or four times a year for a weekend. Later materials, however, indicate that the Moot averaged no more than two meetings a year after 1944 and often not quite that frequently. In his original invitation, Oldham informs Polanyi that the Moot membership includes Moberly, Mannheim, T. S. Eliot, John Middleton Murry, H. A. Hodges, John Baillie, Sir Hector Hetherington and a few others unnamed; guests, like Polanyi, were frequently added to weekends attended by regular members and it was never possible to find a time convenient for all members.

In Oldham's correspondence with Polanyi, he sometimes but not always draws a distinction between the original Moot (likely a somewhat fixed group) and later groups he convened modeled after the original Moot. It is not clear that the original Moot officially disbanded; it seems more likely that it simply evolved into other meetings managed by Oldham. In a September, 1947 letter, Oldham speaks of a group meeting which 'is in part the successor to the Moot'[17] but he also sometimes uses the appellation 'moot', in connection with such gatherings. In a letter to Polanyi on 13th May 1948, Oldham comments on his intention to invite to a later meeting 'a nucleus of old "Moot" members.'[18] One meeting that Polanyi attended, May 2nd-5th 1947, included some original Moot members, but also other selected participants and was identified as a 'week-end meeting of the editorial Board of the Christian News-letter'.[19] The meeting on December 17th-20th, 1948 is identified in terms of the location for most meetings as 'St. Julian's Group'.[20] In sum, letters and meeting materials show that those attending Oldham's gatherings shifted over the years. The name 'moot,' although sometimes used loosely seems to apply chiefly to Oldham's early meetings. There was some continuity in participants between meetings, but former participants often had conflicts and could not attend and some seem simply to have drifted away. Oldham always was bringing in new people who he found doing interesting writing; he seems to have made careful decisions about priorities in his invitations and obviously always wanted to keep the group small. There seems not truly to have been much distinction between regular participants and guests in either the early or later Oldham-convened meetings. However, in one early letter, Polanyi is somewhat self-conscious about not actually being a Moot member; he seems to find obtuse a paper he has been sent on Christianity and science by the theologian Donald Mackinnon, a topic to which Polanyi apparently wanted to contribute.[21] But Oldham, in his characteristically diplomatic manner, soothes Polanyi's ruffled feathers; of Mackinnon's paper he says,

> It is the kind of thing that needs personal exposition and interpretation, and since Mackinnon is coming to the Moot, this will be available. When the issues have been tabled your experience and contribution will be of the first value.[22]

In the letter to Moot members just after the meeting on December 15th-18th, 1944, as Oldham begins to plan the next meeting, he mentions that some members have suggested that Polanyi and Mackinnon should be invited to attend forthcoming Moot meetings.[23] It thus appears as if Polanyi, although not an original Moot member, has after the second meeting become a Moot regular.

There is no question that Oldham managed his discussion meetings with great care. He often tried to frame the topic for discussion, but was not always successful in achieving a succinct focus. The material considered at particular meetings seems sometimes to grow a bit beyond his original intention. Often Oldham seems to negotiate with each person who is coming (or at least with Polanyi) about what his or her contribution will be. Succeeding meetings seem to flow out of predecessors. Often there seems to have been a primary paper or two which was agreed upon at the end of a meeting or in correspondence shortly after the meeting. Such material was drafted and then circulated well before the meeting if possible; Oldham kept after writers to produce on a fitting schedule. The first papers often elicited some letters of response or even additional papers which also were circulated; sometimes response was invited. Sometimes Oldham added things to the meeting material quite late (in some cases, things that Polanyi had written and offered for circulation). Oldham often produced explicit travel plans mentioning trains and times for those attending. Oldham

probably always produced an agenda which allocated time and responsibility for the program. For at least a few meetings, a set of notes listing comments by participants was produced and circulated after the meeting. Clearly, participants like Polanyi put a great deal of energy into Oldham's group (in preparing for meetings and writing papers and responses) ; in part because meetings were so carefully set up and managed, meetings apparently were extraordinarily rewarding events, at least for Polanyi.

b. Polanyi's first two Moot meetings

Of particular interest are the programmes of the first two Moot meetings Polanyi attended: these reflect how quickly Polanyi became immersed in the Moot's orbit of cultural and religious thought. Certainly Polanyi was already interested in some of the themes in these early Moot discussions, but it seems clear that he found the Moot a sympathetic and stimulating environment which helped him develop his own ideas.

The meeting in June 1944 considered two papers by the theologian H. A. Hodges treating what Oldham dubs 'the relation of Christians to a collective commonwealth'[24] as well as some material added just prior to the meeting, including a paper by A. R.Vidler and a letter from Middleton Murry.[25] Polanyi must have been an active discussant even at his first Moot meeting, for Oldham simply includes him in the follow up correspondence to members to select the date of the next Moot meeting.[26] A letter from Karl Mannheim to Polanyi just after the Moot meeting on June 23th-26th 1944, indicates that Polanyi provided at the meeting an apparently impressive 'historical exposé'.[27] Gábor suggests that Polanyi provided a lecture at this first Moot meeting.[28] There are two pages in archival material titled 'Notes for the Moot 25th June 1944' which look like lecture notes.[29] The final agenda for the session indicates there was a 'closing discussion and statement on the philosophical position of science by Michael Polanyi.'[30]

Oldham and Polanyi exchanged a few letters in the summer of 1944 and Polanyi sent Oldham an article reprint (probably 'Reflections on John Dalton,' *The Manchester Guardian*, July 22, 1944, pp. 4 and 6) reflecting his ideas about science. In September 1944, Oldham advises Polanyi that T. S. Eliot is to write a paper for the forthcoming meeting in December 1944 and Eliot has submitted preliminary notes and the request that Mannheim and Polanyi should be the respondents to the paper. Polanyi may have received a set of brief preliminary notes, but certainly he received Eliot's elaborated notes titled 'On the Place and Function of the Clerisy'.[31] In his long letter of 16th October 1944 to Oldham, Polanyi outlined his own position (which is sympathetic to Eliot's although focused on science) as a response.[32] This letter was then circulated to members of the Moot who were to attend.[33] Many of the ideas there about the cultivation and transmission of specialised skills and traditions are the same ones that are forcefully articulated in Polanyi's Riddell Lectures (*Science, Faith and Society* [1946], identifies science as specialised [skilful] perception nurtured in the scientific community) delivered in this period and in many later Polanyi publications. Polanyi seems to have been quite pleased with his response to Eliot. In a letter to Mannheim on October 23, 1944, Polanyi proclaims that his critique of Eliot's paper is 'the summary of the philosophy at which I am aiming by my studies of the scientific life'; he proposed to Mannheim, with whom he was negotiating about a book project, that this critique could serve as an outline of his introductory essay in a book titled 'The Autonomy of Science.' [34]

Why was Polanyi selected by Eliot, who did not attend the Moot meeting on June 23rd-26th 1944, to be a respondent to Eliot's Moot paper for the meeting December 15-18, 1944? Polanyi's correspondence does at least provide a likely answer to this query. Before Polanyi receivd Oldham's invitation in September 1944 to respond to Eliot's paper, Polanyi was negotiating with Eliot for a book. In June 1944, Polanyi and Eliot exchanged several letters. A friend of Polanyi's advised him that Eliot and Faber and Faber (the publisher Eliot worked for) might be interested in Polanyi's planned book 'Science and Human Ideals;' the friend gave Eliot a copy of Polanyi's article 'The Autonomy of Science' (*Memoirs and Proceeding of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society*, 85 [February 1943]: 19-38). Polanyi followed up on this lead by writing to Eliot and told Eliot in his letter that Oldham had invited him to the Moot meeting on June 23-26, 1944.[35] Eliot responded positively to Polanyi's inquiry: '. . . I was impressed both by this pamphlet and by other writing of yours which I have seen to which J. H. Oldham has referred, and I should be very sorry if you did not give us the opportunity of considering your book.'[36] Eliot, however, suggests he must have an outline and a sample chapter to take to his editorial board; he proposes that if Polanyi has no time to produce such material, they can have a discussion at the Moot meeting on June 23rd-26th. However, later correspondence indicates that Eliot was not able to attend this Moot session and that Polanyi had an offer from Routledge (through Mannheim who was connected with Routledge) to republish some earlier essays as a book; part of this offer was an option for the projected book discussed with Eliot.[37] In sum, it is clear that Eliot at least knew something about Polanyi and Polanyi's ideas and

this likely was the basis for selecting Polanyi as a respondent.

The agenda for Polanyi's second Moot session, that in December 1944, was quite full; it included: Mackinnon's paper on Christianity and science; Eliot's paper and a background chapter from a book by Eliot, the lengthy response of Mannheim, Polanyi's response (discussed above), and Eliot's response to Mannheim and Polanyi. At the last minute, Polanyi sent Oldham a paper (apparently germane to the issues treated by Mackinnon) titled 'Scientific Materialism and the Modern Crisis' which Oldham decided also to include.[38] Polanyi indicates in his letter of 16th November 1944, accompanying the paper, that the paper 'represents the kind of diagnosis which you asked me to contribute to the next meeting. . . . The paper gives in abbreviated form the contents of the chapter "The European Crisis" mentioned in my letter of 16th October 1944.'[39] Oldham advises Polanyi, regarding the paper, that 'it fits in with the other material and we have been counting on it.' [40] In sum, Polanyi contributes two papers to his second Moot session. It certainly appears that Oldham has encouraged Polanyi to contribute and Polanyi enthusiastically has done so since the topics and the ideas of other Moot writers are ones that Polanyi finds deeply interesting.

C. Moot meetings on God and history

In addition to the first two Moot meetings, those in December 1947, April 1948 and December 1948 seem to have been especially important for Polanyi. Although it is difficult succinctly to identify the common thread in these three, it is on the right track to say that they together probe issues concerned with the contemporary meaning of God and the meaning of history. The one in December 1947 Oldham generally described as on 'The Meaning of God in Human Experience, with special reference to contemporary problems.'[41] It included a paper by Daniel Jenkins titled 'Belief in God Today' as well as a number of 'Supplements' to the *Christian News Letter* which Oldham thought relevant to the topic. Polanyi doubted at first that he could attend (since he had recently been in Germany), but wrote to Oldham that the program 'is closely relevant to my work.' [42] Oldham encouraged Polanyi to come and distributed, for the meeting, copies of Polanyi's paper 'The Foundation of Academic Freedom' (*The Lancet*, May 3, 1947: 583-58 3 and republished as *Society for Freedom in Science Occasional Pamphlet* No. 6 [Oxford: September, 1947: pp. 3-18]); he also advised Polanyi that he wanted him to 'open one of the discussions on the major issues raised in your Riddell Lectures'.[43]

The meeting in April 1948, as Oldham described it in his letter of 2nd February 1948, was on 'the meaning and teaching of history including the theological issues which underlie the subject';[44] this meeting seems to have grown out of the preceding meeting. In his letter, Oldham advised Polanyi that this meeting would include mostly the same group from the previous meeting; he also indicates to Polanyi he wanted to do a *Christian News Letter* 'Supplement' on Polanyi's Riddell Lectures (this apparently did not occur, however). Polanyi initially encouraged Oldham to include as a guest, Miss (later Dame) C. V. Wedgwood, a historian who was one of the editors of *Time and Tide* (where he frequently published); Wedgwood had apparently given a recent lecture on 'the responsibilities involved in writing a history, that is, the measure of freedom which we have to accept in the interpretation of history'.[45] Materials for the meeting included papers by Marjorie Reeves, Donald Mackinnon and Michael Foster, including a second review by Foster of the abridged Toynbee multi-volume *A Study of History*.[46] Emil Brunner was a guest at this session. Polanyi took copious notes on the presentations, although he does not seem to have made any sort of presentation.

The next Moot meeting, December 17th-20th 1948, Oldham identified as a 'natural follow-up' which he said, in general terms, would be 'a continuation of our conversations about God, approached from the standpoint of modern atheisms'.[47] What Oldham seems to have in mind with this odd locution is a discussion of modernity's 'serious attempts to organise lives on the assumption that God does not exist'.[48] Polanyi apparently felt that this topic was an odd one that somehow left him out; in a letter, he commented to Oldham:

> I also feel a little at a loss as to how I could contribute to the subject which you suggest. Our meetings leave me increasingly with the feeling that I have no right to describe myself as a Christian. So perhaps I may feel the part of the outsider in the discussion. But my dominant sentiment is really this: Whatever meeting you may call and invite me to, I shall certainly attend. I don't think the subject will make very much difference to the benefit which I will derive from such a meeting.[49]

Oldham responded to Polanyi, advising him, first, that he was touched by Polanyi's letter and his willingness to come to the meeting and, second, that the meeting was not fixed but would likely be able somehow to accommodate Polanyi's interests.[50] In fact this happened in a somewhat interesting way. Polanyi wrote Oldham proposing a subject that was of personal interest largely as a result of contacts made in the Moot:

> You ask me to suggest a subject for discussion. I do not think I can go so far as that, but I would like to confess vaguely to certain reactions which have been growing in my mind. I am becoming restive about the combination of Marxism and Biblicism to which Hodges is leading us, and which seems to be becoming

> increasingly accepted among modern Christians. Within the last six weeks I have heard two broadcasts telling me that Marxism was the right preparation, and indeed the only preparation, for a true belief in the Christian revelation.[51]

Polanyi outlined his case, at length (3 pages) and in strong language, against a Christian- Marxist alliance. This elicited two requests from Oldham that Polanyi should formulate such ideas as a paper for the upcoming Moot session:

> I should like you to develop what you wrote in your letter of June 25th to me in the form of a paper. What you said in that letter seems to me of the first importance and I think that we should give one or more sessions at the meeting of the group to consideration of the issues you raise.[52]

What Polanyi ultimately produces is the paper 'Forms of Atheism' which Oldham is ecstatic about as a contribution to the December, 1948 Moot: 'I am profoundly grateful to you for your paper. You could not have written anything that goes more to the heart of the situation or more deserving of discussion by the group.'[53] There is quite an array of material circulated for the meeting in December 1948: a forthcoming *Christian News Letter* 'Supplement' titled 'The Misery of Man and the Fatherly Love of God' by Walter Dirks; a paper by H. Kraemer titled 'Modern Atheism'; and a host of responses (mostly to Kraemer) by Middleton Murry, George Every, A. R. Vidler, Michael Foster, and R. H. S. Crossman.[54] Nevertheless, it is Polanyi's paper that seems to have caught Oldham's eye; his agenda allocated the first evening's discussion and that the following morning (even allowing that some discussion on 'the fiduciary mode' may carry over to a still later session) of the meeting on December 17th-20th 1948 to 'Forms of Atheism.'[55]

The three meetings on God and history are not really out of phase with Moot meetings which preceded and followed them. Earlier meetings touched upon Christianity and contemporary culture and politics; later meetings return to similar religious concerns. Nevertheless these three meetings do seem to probe issues from a peculiar direction which it seems likely helped Polanyi fill out or enrich his reading of modernity. In some ways, they set the stage for later reflections such as the 'Religious Doubt' discussion in Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge* (279-286) and the third Lindsay Memorial Lecture in 1958 (published in 1959 as the third chapter 'Understanding History' of *The Study of Man*, a book dedicated to Oldham) which probes questions about how to interpret history. All of the Moot sessions are to some degree an incubator for Polanyi's developing thought, but these three sessions seem particularly to have engaged Polanyi.

D. Concluding comments on the Moot meetings and influences

Fifteen meetings convened by Oldham between 1944 and 1960 (see the chart in the Appendix) are mentioned in the Oldham-Polanyi correspondence (sixteen, if you count one that clearly was cancelled). It is not clear that all of the meetings mentioned (planned) in the correspondence actually occurred and it is not always clear that Polanyi attended every meeting that did occur. But it is very likely that Polanyi attended eleven and possibly as many as twelve meetings of the Moot or its successor groups over the period. The meetings from 1944 through to the early fifties seem to be ones that Polanyi was deeply involved in; they were probably more influential upon Polanyi's developing perspectives. Correspondence between Polanyi and Oldham has significant gaps in the fifties and thereafter, but Polanyi does continue the correspondence; he occasionally visits Oldham, values his opinions and clearly is quite close to Oldham. There is less information, however, about Oldham's later meetings. But what information there is suggests that Oldham was more and more interested that Polanyi's ideas and writing be a direct source for his gatherings. Some of the later meetings seem to have been put together primarily by Kathleen Bliss who worked closely with Oldham and was involved in the Moot from the time Polanyi began attending; Oldham still chaired these sessions and seems to have been the primary contact with Polanyi. By the time of the later meetings, Oldham would have been in his eighties!

It is clear that after the initial meeting in 1944, Polanyi and Oldham become friends (and eventually close friends) and that Oldham thinks that many of Polanyi's ideas are quite interesting and important. Remarks in the final section below convincingly show the affection of these friends and their readiness to credit each other as powerful influences. Oldham came to think that Polanyi's philosophical ideas ought to be basic to any effort to make Christianity relevant to the modern world; in some ways, Oldham does not much distinguish philosophical thought to which he is sympathetic —and this includes Polanyi—and theology. Oldham often solicited Polanyi's feedback on his own writing, and especially on topics concerned with science. Polanyi seems, for example, to have been especially useful in providing ideas and criticism to Oldham in the period in which Oldham chaired the British Council of Churches' Commission on the Era of Atomic Power which made a report in the mid forties. Oldham's writing does make some direct references to Polanyi's publications. But Oldham read very broadly and his writing often seems directed toward synthesising a great array of contemporary authors. In a book like *Life is Commitment* (1952), for example, there are several Polanyi citations, but Oldham draws upon many authors. In fact, Oldham's letters reflect that he was constantly recommending one or another philo-

sophical or theological thinker to Polanyi. The themes in *Life is Commitment* are generally akin to themes in Polanyi's writing; but Oldham's book is concerned largely with Christian religious commitment in the modern world. Polanyi, too, discusses commitment in his writing from the fifties, but from a more epistemological perspective . In, for example, his *Personal Knowledge* (1958), based upon his Gifford Lectures in 1951 and 1952, Polanyi has a chapter titled 'Commitment' which is central to the third part of the book which is concerned with 'The Justification of Personal Knowledge' (*Personal Knowledge*, vii). But certainly the last three sections of this chapter ('Existential Aspects of Commitment,' 'Varieties of Commitment,' and 'Acceptance of Calling') do go beyond a narrowly construed epistemological discussion. In truth, after studying the correspondence between Polanyi and Oldham and the Moot materials, such sections—and elements of many things that Polanyi writes after the mid forties—I see as reflecting his deep involvement in the Moot.

4. *Oldham and* Personal Knowledge

At least one additional topic, moving beyond the concerns with Polanyi's early participation in the Moot, is of interest and importance in Polanyi's correspondence with Oldham: Oldham was an important supporter and critic of Polanyi's effort to produce his *magnum opus*, *Personal Knowledge*. Although, as noted above, the correspondence record is sketchier in the fifties, some elements of Oldham's role are clear.

Polanyi gave the Gifford Lectures in 1951 and 1952. Already by the summer of 1951, Oldham was seeking from Polanyi a typescript of the first series of the lectures. [56] Polanyi apparently did finally forward the typescript in June of 1952.[57] Oldham reported soon thereafter that he has 'been reading your Gifford Lectures with great delight'.[58] By the winter of 1953, Oldham was clamoring for the written version of the second course of Gifford Lectures[59] which he received in early March of 1953.[60] Polanyi warned Oldham that the manuscript was untidy and contained 'bits and pieces which I have not actually delivered' and he invited Oldham to provide suggestions and criticisms; Polanyi indicated that he, in the spring of 1953, wanted to start on the revision and 'to finish the whole manuscript for publication by the end of this year'.[61]

Given that *Personal Knowledge* was published in 1958, Polanyi's estimate was wildly optimistic. But by the summer of 1953, Oldham had carefully studied the manuscript he had been sent and thought it very important: he told Polanyi in a letter that 'the whole line of your lectures is very much at the centre of things'.[62] Oldham wanted to set up a September 1953 discussion meeting focused around the Gifford Lectures and he proposed, a little naively, that Polanyi write him a letter in which he states

> (a) what you regard as the three or four most important central affirmations that you wish to make in your Gifford Lectures, and (b) What are the chief and most dangerous errors that you wish to expose, and (c) What (if any) are the two or three chief points at which you feel that your position is most open to attack and need to be examined more fully.[63]

Polanyi replied, 'I find it extremely difficult to meet your request for a brief statement which could form the basis of a discussion next September'.[64] He proposed, alternatively, that a syllabus for the lectures might be circulated to discussants and that perhaps his associate Marjorie Grene (an American philosopher helping Polanyi) could do a succinct summary. Oldham, however, replied that the syllabus would be too brief and misleading; he sent to Polanyi a lecture summary of his own (of which there is no archival copy), based on his notes, which he says he produced before he received Grene's 'ten points arising out of your lectures which might be regarded as controversial'.[65] Oldham said that he regarded Grene's points as 'exceedingly illuminating to me, enabling me to apprehend your ideas from a fresh angle', although he thought Grene's points, like the syllabus, were too succinct, to serve as discussion starters.[66]

One additional interesting note Oldham offered about the typescript of the Gifford Lectures was that he had not been able to provide a brief summary for one of the ten lectures in the second course titled 'Two Kinds of Awareness' He commented:

> I was therefore much amused when I read in the letter I received from Mrs. Grene that you have come to consider the subject of this lecture the most fruitful thesis which you have reached so far. My reason for leaving it out was that I found it very difficult, within the narrow limits of space at my disposal, to present it in a way that would make clear to others what was intended. I am relieved to find that this difficulty was recognised by Mrs. Grene also, who writes that 'It is hard to state it directly for the purpose of discussion'.[67]

Unfortunately, the correspondence between Polanyi and Oldham has a gap from the early autumn of 1953 until the summer of 1955. It is thus unclear how Oldham's project, to summarise the Gifford Lectures and have them discussed in a late September 1953 meeting, fared. Apparently, the meeting did occur, since Polanyi's secretary requested, in mid-September 1953, that Oldham circulate to discussants a copy of Polanyi's manuscript 'On the Introduction of Science into Moral Subjects'.[68]

Oldham's work with Polanyi in 1957, as Polanyi wound up his writing of *Personal Knowledge*, is another interesting topic reflected in the later correspondence. In Febru-

ary of 1957, Polanyi planned to visit Oldham and indicated that he hoped to bring him (or send in advance) a copy of most of his completed manuscript; he mentioned one nagging problem: 'Unfortunately, I still have not been able to make up my mind about the concluding section so there are about 10 or 20 pages missing at the end'.[68] In late March, Polanyi had still not provided Oldham with a copy of his manuscript, but he promised to do so by April 10th; he apparently thought that the manuscript was not in good shape and he asked Oldham, when he gets a copy, to make pencil editorial notes for Polanyi as well as 'any more detailed criticism, particularly on the passage concerning religion'.[70] Oldham apparently did receive the manuscript in mid-April and Polanyi invited Oldham to keep the manuscript in May in order 'to be sure that you have plenty of time to study it'. Polanyi indicated that he was himself revising his work and he was particularly unhappy with the book's conclusion: 'Its closing pages are limp and not definitively formulated'.[71]

In mid-May 1957, although he was in the midst of moving and was rather self-conscious about being an 82 years old respondent, Oldham wrote Polanyi a 6½ page letter about the manuscript which he had then read. Oldham's comments have both interesting praise and criticism for Polanyi. He begins with high praise, suggesting that *Personal Knowledge* is

> a great heuristic achievement. You open up in succession profound and vital ideas and relate them in such a way that each re-enforces, deepens and enriches the others. As I read, I had again and again the sense that what was said would go on disclosing fresh meanings in years to come.[72]

Oldham affirms that 'of all the books I have read in recent years none has taken so powerful a hold of me'; he proclaims:

> you have by the comprehensiveness of your thought brought to the birth in me a way of seeing things as a whole that up till now has existed only in a very embryonic and incomplete stage.

As a part of his general criticism, Oldham, the voice of diplomacy, admits that he finds the book unequal in quality:

> In some of the chapters the argument marches firmly and impressively and the exposition is as clear and forcible as one could wish. In others these qualities are not so apparent. In some passages, the writing seems to bear the marks of haste, and to be, to use your own adjective, rather 'limp.'[74]

Oldham allows that 'there would be some advantages if the book could be somewhat shortened, partly by greater crispness in the writing'.[75]

There are two specific criticisms that Oldham dwells on. He strongly objects to Polanyi's use of the term 'conviviality' in *Personal Knowledge*. This term, of course, represents a major philosophical theme for Polanyi and it is the title of the seventh chapter of *Personal Knowledge*, the important concluding chapter of the second division of the book. Polanyi did not take Oldham's advice and eliminate the term. Oldham says that he objected to this term in 1953 at the point Polanyi's lecture summaries served to focus a discussion meeting but, at that time, he did not voice his objections. Oldham argues that the meaning of 'conviviality,' despite its Latin roots, is today concerned with 'banqueting' which Oldham says is altogether misleading. He suggests to Polanyi several terms that might be substituted for 'conviviality':

> It looks as though one might have to choose between 'inter-communication', or 'inter-personal communication', or Marcel's 'inter-subjectivity' (for which I think there is a good deal to be said), or 'living-togetherness' (which does not appear in the dictionary, and involves the coining of a new word, but of one which does not have misleading associations), or a varying use of one or more of these or other terms.[76]

Oldham's second major criticism in this same lengthy letter is concerned with the concluding chapter of *Personal Knowledge* 'The Rise of Man' which is Polanyi's effort to shape a discussion of evolution which shifts into a broader vision of human achievement and responsibility. Oldham advises Polanyi that the draft of the chapter is unfinished and seems 'the weakest and least well written chapter in the book' and that it will likely leave readers at the end of the book with 'a feeling of disappointment'.[77] He asks Polanyi if he is really clear about his purposes in this final chapter and suggests several ways to recast material. He proposes that Polanyi needs a certain approach to his conclusion:

> Ought not the approach to the final chapter rather to be: 'We have declared our position. Let us now see how the theory and the facts of evolution look in the light of the fiduciary philosophy we have espoused'?[78]

He suggest that Polanyi's treatment of evolution and his critique of natural selection must become 'an integral part of a philosophical conclusion and not appear so much as a rather isolated addendum and after-thought'.[79]

Oldham offers only two further thoughts about Polanyi's *magnum opus*. He advises Polanyi against making any references to the ideas of de Chardin in his last chapter. He thinks brief references will only mislead. Obviously, Polanyi did not agree with this criticism, since he leaves in references to de Chardin's ideas. Interestingly, Oldham shies away from any comment on Polanyi's treatment of religion in *Personal Knowledge,* although he acknowledges that Polanyi expected comments. He points out that he is not a 'professional theologian' and may be 'too uncritical' but he approves of the way Polanyi 'acknowledges a debt to Tillich who has been my teacher also in these matters.'[80] On more than one occasion in letters before the period of the writing of *Personal Knowledge*, Oldham brought Tillich to Polanyi's attention. Oldham's encour-

agement no doubt contributed to Polanyi's interest in Tillich. Just a few years after the publication of *Personal Knowledge*, during a stay in the U.S.A, Polanyi was able to have a discussion with Tillich. Gelwick and McCoy have recently produced interesting reflections on this discussion in a special edition of *Tradition and Discovery* [22:1, 1995-1996] on Polanyi and Tillich.[80]

Oldham's critique of the draft of *Personal Knowledge* was apparently quite important. Polanyi immediately wrote Oldham a thank-you letter and advised that

> on receiving your letter I immediately rang up Irving Kristol, the editor of *Encounter*, and arranged that he will go through the whole manuscript for the purpose of tightening up its style and pruning away whatever is slowing down its flow.[82]

The *Acknowledgments* (xv) section in *Personal Knowledge* confirms that Kristol was one of the readers of the full pre-publication manuscript. In the same letter of 14th May 1957, Polanyi also promised Oldham that 'I shall rewrite the last chapter altogether in the sense that you suggest'.[83] In a letter of 15th July 1957, Polanyi advises Oldham that he has recently finished revising the manuscript and has sent this last bit to the press, but that 'the last chapter has been completely re-written, and I hope it is now more satisfactory'.[84]

In the *Acknowledgments* (xv) section of *Personal Knowledge*, Polanyi notes that he spent almost nine years in the preparation of his *magnum opus*. He reports that large parts of his original 1951-1952 Gifford Lectures were retained in *Personal Knowledge* since 'subsequent work has not essentially changed my views.' But he does allow that 'other parts have been reconsidered, some cut out and others amplified' (xv). To judge by the Polanyi-Oldham correspondence, J. H. Oldham played a significant role in the transition from public lectures to printed book.

5. In praise of friendship

Those who read the Oldham-Polanyi correspondence cannot doubt that these two British intellectuals developed a close friendship which was important to each. Especially their letters in the sixties, a time when Oldham was increasingly fragile, reflect their emotional connection and each man's genuine appreciation for ways in which his ideas, achievements and life has been touched by the other. Just after a stint in the United States, Polanyi summed up his sense of his own role in history, connecting this intimately with Oldham:

> The impressions I gleaned in America have encouraged my conviction that a cultural renewal, of the kind for which I have been preparing certain elements in a relatively isolated position—is at last visibly approaching. The rash and often disastrous attempts to establish millennia in our days, are leaving behind a more sober mood given to deeper reflections. The cry for things more real than the tangible substance of which they are formed, has perhaps been first raised in revolutions against Stalinism eight years ago, but it is becoming clear that the same desire is awakening among us in the west. Our scientific culture is getting under fire for falsifying the nature of things. The beliefs which we shall thus re-capture will eventually culminate in religious faith. Nothing short of that would make us at home in the universe again. I cannot hope for this in my time, but I can look forward to it beyond my horizon, and this I owe to you and the inspiration of your circle as it met under your guidance. God bless you dear Joe, ever Michael. [85]

Oldham's response, at 89, is equally generous: 'You have been among my chief educators and your friendship is one of my most precious possessions'.[86]

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Notes:

1. King, p. 659.
2. Gelwick, 1965, p. 11, note 8.
3. *NY Times*, May 19, 1969, 47:3.
4. *Dictionary of National Biography: 1961-70*, 806-808. I draw heavily on Bliss and Fleet (cited below) for details in this brief biographical comment on Oldham. Fleet's article, "J. H. Oldham" is a component of World Wide Web materials of The Network For Gospel And Culture and is located at http://www.voyager.co.nz/~dozer/oldham.html; he includesboth a selected bibliography of Oldham's writings and a short bibliography of other materials about Oldham.
5. Flett, p. 3.
6. King treats this topic in detail
7. Flett, p.5.
8. Bliss, p. 808.
9. Flett, p. 4.
10. Flett, p. 4. Bliss, p. 807.
11. Flett, p. 5.
12. Bliss, p. 808.
13. Oldham letter to Polanyi, 2nd May, 1944, Box 15, Folder 3 in The Papers of Michael Polanyi held by the Department of Special Collections of the University of Chicago Library. This and succeeding quotations from The Papers of Michael Polanyi are used with permission of the University of Chicago Library. Citations of this material will hereafter be shortened to the letter and date, box number and folder number.

14 Oldham letter to Polanyi, 12th November, 1943, Box 15, Folder 3.

15. Polanyi letter to Oldham, 13th November, 1943, Box 15, Folder 3.
16. Oldham letter to Polanyi, 2nd May, 1944, Box 15, Folder 3.
17. Oldham letter to Polanyi, September 8, 1947, Box 15, Number 3.
18. Oldham letter to Polanyi, 13 May, 1948, Box 15, Folder 4.
19. Oldham letter to Polanyi, 17th April, 1947, Box 15, Folder 3.
20. Oldham letter to Members of the Group, 13th October, 1948, Box 15, Folder 4.
21. Polanyi letter to Oldham, 24th October, 1944, Box 15, Folder 3.
22. Oldham letter to Polanyi, 26th October, 1944, Box 15, Folder 3.
23. Oldham letter to Members of the Moot, 21st December, 1944, Box 15, Folder 3.
24. Oldham letter to Polanyi, 2nd May, 1944, Box 15, Folder 3.
25. Oldham letter to Members of the Moot, 19th May, 1944, Box 15, Folder 3.
26. Oldham letter to Members of the Moot, 26th June, 1944, Box 15, Folder 3.
27. Mannheim letter to Polanyi, 29 June, 1944, Box 4, Folder 11.
28. Gábor, p.123.
29 Box 15, Folder 6.
30. Box 15, Folder 6.
31. Box 15, Folder 6.
32. Polanyi letter to Oldham, 16th October, 1944, Box 15, Folder 3.
33. Letter from Polanyi, 18-11-44, Box 15, Folder 6.
34. Polanyi letter to Mannheim, 23 October, 1944, Box 4, Folder 11.
35. Polanyi letter to Eliot, 3 June, 1944, Box 4, Folder 11.
36. Eliot letter to Polanyi, 7 June, 1944, Box 4, Folder 11.
37. Polanyi letter to Eliot, 27 June, 1944, Box 4 Folder 11.
38. Polanyi letter to Oldham, 16th November, 1944, Box 15, Folder 3.
39. Polanyi letter to Oldham, 16th November, 1944, Box 15, Folder 3.
40. Oldham postcard to Polanyi, Box 15, Folder 3.
41. Oldham letter to Polanyi, 4th December, 1947.
42. Polanyi letter to Oldham, 8th December, 1947, Box 15, Folder 3.
43. Oldham letter to Polanyi, 8th December, 1947, Box 15, Folder 3.
44. Oldham letter to Polanyi, 2nd February, 1948, Box 15, Folder 4.
45. Polanyi letter to Oldham, 6th February, 1948, Box 15, Folder 4.
46. Oldham letter to Polanyi, 22 March, 1948, Box 15, Folder 4 and Moot materials, Box 15, Folder 8.
47. Oldham letter to Polanyi, 13th May, 1948, Box 15, Folder 4.
48. Oldham letter to Polanyi, 13th May, 1948, Box 15, Folder 4.
49. Polanyi letter to Oldham, 31st May, 1948, Box 15, Folder 4.
50. Oldham letter to Polanyi, June 1st, 1948, Box 15, Folder 4.
50. Polanyi letter to Oldham, 25th June, 1948, Box 15, Folder 4.
52. Oldham letter to Polanyi, 17th August, 1948, Box 15, Folder 4. The first request is in Oldham letter to Polanyi, 6th July 1948, Box 15, Folder 4.
53. Oldham letter to Polanyi, 11th October, 1948, Box 15, Folder 4.
54. Moot materials in Box 15, Folders 8.
55. 'Note on Agenda', St. Julian's Group, December 17-20, 1948, Box 15, Folder 8.
56. Oldham letter to Polanyi, July 25, 1951, Box 15, Folder 4.
57. Professor's secretary to Oldham, 11 June, 1952, Box 15, Folder 4.
58. Oldham letter to Polanyi, June 27, 1952, Box 15, Folder 5.
59. Oldham to Polanyi, February 10, 1953, Box 15, Folder 5.
60. Professor's secretary to Oldham, 4th March 1953, Box 15, Folder 5.
61. Polanyi letter to Oldham, 5th March, 1953, Box 15, Folder 5.
62. Oldham letter to Polanyi, July 4,

1953, Box 15, Folder 5.
63. Oldham letter to Polanyi, July 4, 1953, Box 15, Folder 5.
64. Polanyi letter to Oldham, 13th July 1953, Box 15, Folder 5.
65. Oldham letter to Polanyi, August 3, 1953, Box 15, Folder 5.
66. Oldham letter to Polanyi, August 3, 1953, Box 15, Folder 5.
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68. 14th September 1953, Box 15, Folder 5. This article was published early in 1954: *The Cambridge Journal*, 7 (January, 1954): pp. 195-207.
69. Polanyi letter to Oldham, 8th February, 1957, Box 15, Folder 5.
70. Polanyi letter to Oldham, 29th March, 1957, Box 15, Folder 5.
71. Polanyi letter to Oldham, 8th May, 1957, Box 15, Folder 5.
72. Oldham letter to Polanyi, May 11, 1957, Box 15, Folder 5.
73. Oldham letter to Polanyi, May 11, 1957, Box 15, Folder 5.
74. Oldham letter to Polanyi, May 11, 1957, Box 15, Folder 5.
75. Oldham letter to Polanyi, May 11, 1957, Box 15, Folder 5.
76. Oldham letter to Polanyi, May 11, 1957, Box 15, Folder 5.
77. Oldham letter to Polanyi, May 11, 1957, Box 15, Folder 5.
78. Oldham letter to Polanyi, May 11, 1957, Box 15, Folder 5.
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80. Oldham letter to Polanyi, May 11, 1957, Box 15, Folder 5.
81. Gelwick, 1995, pp. 11-19. McCoy, pp. 5-10.
82. Polanyi letter to Oldham, 14th May, 1957, Box 15 Folder 5.
83. Polanyi letter to Oldham, 14th May, 1957, Box 15 Folder 5.
84. Polanyi letter to Oldham, 15 July, 1957,Box 15, Folder 5.
85. Polanyi letter to Oldham, 16 August, 1964, Box 15, Folder 5.
86. Oldham letter to Polanyi, August 19, 1964, Box 15, Folder 5.

APPENDIX: MOOT DATES, TOPICS FOR MEETINGS, POLANYI'S CONTRIBUTIONS

June 23-26, 1944 'The relation of Christians to a collective commonwealth' (Oldham letter to Polanyi, 2nd May, 1944, Box 15, Folder 3) Polanyi provides a 'closing discussion and statement on the philosophical position of science'(final agenda for the meeting, Box 15, Folder 6).

Dec. 15-18, 1944 Christianity, science, modern culture, the function of the clerisy. Polanyi provides response to Eliot's paper on clerisy. Just before the meeting, Polanyi's paper 'Scientific Materialism and the Modern Crisis,' a response to a paper by Mackinnon, is added to materials for the meeting (Polanyi letter to Oldham, 16th November, 1944, Box 15, Folder 3).

July 6-9, 1945 'Church and state or Christianity and the secular' (Oldham letter to Members of the Moot, 2nd May,1945, Box 15, Folder 3), and archetypes. Polanyi may not have attended.

May 3-6, 1946 Christian Archetypes, Report of the British Council of Churches Commission on the Era of Atomic Power (chaired by Oldham); Polanyi provided critique of Report and also provided critique of earlier written draft (Polanyi letter to Oldham, 19th March, 1946, Box 15, Folder 3) as well as 4 papers on science to Oldham when Oldham tapped as Commission Chair (Oldham letter to Polanyi, 23rd November, 1945, Box 15, Folder 3).

January 10-13, 1947 The survival of democracy. Polanyi's 'Old Tasks and New Hopes,' just published in *Time and Tide*, 28 (January 4, 1947):5-6 was added late to papers for the meeting.

May 2-5, 1947 Enemies of a free and just society. Paper solicited from Polanyi but may not have been written. Unclear if Polanyi attended.

Dec. 19-22, 1947 'The Meaning of God in Human Experience, with special reference to contemporary problems' (Oldham letter to Polanyi, 4th Dec. 1947, Box 15, Folder 3). Distributed papers included Polanyi's article 'The Foundations of Academic Freedom.' Polanyi asked to 'open one of the discussions on the major issues raised in your Riddell Lectures' (Oldham letter to Polanyi, 8th December 1947, Box 15, Folder 3).

April 2-5, 1948 'The meaning and teaching of history including the theological issues which underlie the subject' (Oldham letter to Polanyi, 2nd February 1948, Box 15, Folder 4).

Dec. 17-20, 1948 'A continuation of our conversations about God, approached from the standpoint of modern atheisms' (Oldham letter to Polanyi, 13th May 1948, Box 15, Folder 4). Polanyi prepared paper 'Forms of Atheism'

June 1951 The date and topic are unclear although Polanyi did attend (Oldham letter to Polanyi, July 25, 1951, Box 15, Folder 4).

Summer 1952 Topic apparently non-theist and Christian perspectives on pressing questions in contemporary culture; Oldham's invitation to Polanyi says 'we want to put one of the sessions at your disposal, which you would open in whatever way you like' (Oldham letter to Polanyi, June 5, 1952, Box 15, Folder 5). Polanyi may have attended and done a session or shared a session with Professor Baker whom Polanyi recommended.

September 1953 BBC broadcasts topics and speakers for new series put together by Kathryn Bliss; topic shifts to consider, as a starting point, according to Oldham, 'the central positions in your Gifford Lectures' (Oldham letter to Polanyi, August 3, 1953, Box 15, Folder 5). Polanyi's 'On Introduction of Science Into Moral Subjects' (later published in *The Cambridge Journal*, 7 [January, 1954]:195-207) was distributed (Secretary to Professor Polanyi letter to Oldham, 14 September, 1953, Box 15, Folder 5).

October 28-31, 1955 Projected BBC broadcast talks on 'the general theme of "Grounds of Belief"' Unclear if Polanyi attended.

September 1956 'Finding orientation in regard to the present situation in the world' (Oldham letter to Polanyi, May 2, 1956, Box 15, Folder 5). Polanyi is invited to help shape the discussion line. It is unclear that the meeting actually took place or, if so, that Polanyi attended.

March 25-28, 1960 On Polanyi's thought and Hengstenberg's anthropology.

JOHN MACMURRAY AND EMMANUEL MOUNIER

PERSONALIST PARALLELS

Philip Conford

1 Introduction: Macmurray and British Philosophy

Discussing Kant's relation to the German Romantics, early on in his Gifford Lectures, John Macmurray refers to the philosopher Hamann as 'an intellectual force of great influence . . . known as the Magus of the North' [1]. Macmurray's own move northwards, however, to become Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh University in 1944, virtually ensured that for the foreseeable future he would have no influence on British philosophy. To call him a marginal figure would be to exaggerate his impact; it would be more accurate to say that he became a non-philosopher. True, his successor as Grote Professor of Mind and Logic at University College, London, A. J. Ayer, refers to him in his autobiography, but only to present him as an incompetent head of department who 'abandoned' his post [2]. Mid-century British philosophy, concerned as it was with Wittgenstein, linguistic analysis, and positivist hostility to metaphysics, could allow no place for Macmurray's bold attempt to develop a new logical form adequate to conceive the unity of personal experience. There are books of mainstream academic philosophy which deal with topics discussed at length by Macmurray, yet contain no references to his work [3], and John Passmore's survey, *One Hundred Years of Philosophy,* includes Macmurray only in a footnote which implicitly dismisses him as an eccentric Scot [4].

To discover Macmurray's influence one has to go beyond the narrow confines of British philosophy, to works of psychology, political thought, and theology; he is referred to by, for example, R. D. Laing, Karl Popper and J. A. T. Robinson [5]. Does this then imply that Macmurray was some sort of dilettante, who should not really be seen as a 'proper' philosopher? It is my intention in this essay to demonstrate that Macmurray belongs to a philosophical movement which, while scarcely acknowledged in Britain, is more significant than the lofty subtleties that dominated its university departments of philosophy during the post-war decades. Ayer and Austin and their disciples would no doubt deny that Personalism is a philosophy in any real sense, but this objection smacks too much of persuasive definition to be taken seriously.

By comparing Macmurray's thought with that of Emmanuel Mounier the chief advocate of Personalism in Europe, I hope to show that it has strong affinities with several aspects of Mounier's work. Macmurray's writings, set in this European context, become part of an intellectual stream which includes thinkers such as Berdyaev, Marcel, Buber, Sartre and Scheler —all or them, along with Kierkegaard and Marx, influences on Mounier. Finally, I shall suggest that Macmurray's thought is in certain respects distinct from Mounier's approach, and makes its own unique contribution to Personalism.

2 Mounier and Personalism

Mounier's name is largely unknown in Britain and North America, but in his time—he lived from 1905 to 1950—his impact, through his journal *Esprit,* was widespread in and beyond France. According to Jacques Ellul,

> the *Esprit* effort was fundamental for the French intellectuals of 1930. An essential shift took place and all that generation . . . has been influenced by that movement' [6].

And apparently:

> Even Sartre himself told Denis de Rougemont . . . 'You Personalists have won . . . everybody in France calls himself Personalist'[7].

Mounier's influence has lived on, in the European Community. *Esprit* advocated a European federation, and Jacques Delors, formerly President of the European Commission, formed his political outlook very largely through his reading of Mounier.

Nicolas Berdyaev, who lived in France after being exiled from Bolshevik Russia, described Mounier as 'a man of great intellectual gifts and remarkable energy' [8]. *Esprit* 'owed its impetus to a group of young people' [9] and

> conducted studies in social, political and, to a certain extent, aesthetic problems. The aim was to work out a social programme on spiritual foundations [10].

It had a socialist bias, and 'the nucleus of the *Esprit* group was predominantly Roman Catholic' [11], though Mounier was often at odds with the official Catholic line, and was at times admonished for his political associations by the Thomist philosopher Jacques Maritain, a qualified supporter of *Esprit.*

In committing himself to the journal, Mounier was turning his back on an academic career, following the example of the poet and polemicist Charles Péguy, who had dedicated his life to the *Cahiers de la Quinzaine.* Mounier had come second to Raymond Aron in the *agrégation* in philosophy at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in 1928 (Sartre failed that year and had to re-sit), but disliked the anti-Catho-

lic atmosphere of the academic establishment. Through friendship with Maritain he developed an interest in Péguy, and in 1931 published a long essay on him, in collaboration with Péguy's son Marcel, and Georges Izard, one of the fellow-founders of *Esprit*. This essay displayed Mounier's 'new sensitivity to the social and political implications of the "spiritual"' [12], and his growing interest in political issues. Mounier had considered writing a thesis on mysticism, and now sought to relate inwardness to social action, just as Péguy, the Dreyfusard, had been concerned with the apparently incompatible spheres of *mystique* and *politique*.

A detailed history of *Esprit*, and of Mounier's writings, can be found in John Hellman's book, *Emmanuel Mounier and the New Catholic Left 1930-1950*; in this essay there is time only to draw attention to certain features of his work as they relate to Macmurray. But since, during the German occupation of France, both the Vichy régime and Resistance supporters claimed to be the true representatives of the Personalist outlook, it is clear that Mounier's faith in the journal had been amply rewarded. *Esprit* first appeared in October 1932, and by June 1940, when France fell, groups based around the journal existed throughout the country, as well as in Belgium and Holland. *Esprit* was 'the only new review of the 1930s to survive the war' [13], though, as Hellman demonstrates, Mounier's attitude towards Vichy was not without ambivalence, despite his period in prison. In the post-war years *Esprit* was again deeply involved in politics, with Mounier seeking to steer Personalism between the collectivist dangers of Communism and the individualist isolation of Existentialism. A Personalist Group was established in London, under the guidance of J. B. Coates, and Mounier addressed its members in 1949, the year before his death [14]. Mounier refers to the English group in his essay 'Informal Introduction to the Personalist Universe', mentioning Macmurray as one of their main sources of inspiration. He says of them: 'A context of religious subjectivism, of political liberalism and of Ruskinian anti-technicism (H. Read) has sometimes led them rather far from the line of French personalism; but the dialogue is proceeding' [15]. It seems odd that Macmurray should have been an inspiration for views of this nature, if this is indeed an accurate picture of the English Personalists' position, since his writings show him to have been opposed to the three strands of thought identified by Mounier. As we shall now see, Mounier and Macmurray shared a significant number of concerns, wrestling with the same problems from what were often very similar standpoints.

3 The rejection of Individualism

Although Macmurray was fourteen years older than Mounier, both began their careers as published writers at the beginning of the 1930s; in fact Macmurray's first book, *Freedom in the Modern World*, was published in 1932, the year that *Esprit* was launched. Both were responding to the sense of crisis with which the 1930s opened. 'We are a democracy faced with the gravest issues that history has ever produced', wrote Macmurray.

> We are incapable of acting greatly because it involves a resolute choice and a drastic choice. We want instead to be saved from the necessity of making it [15].

The words could equally have applied to France. Mounier said of the crisis of 1929 that it

> sounded the knell of Europe's happiness and directed attention to revolutions already under way . . . . A few young men thought that the disease was at the same time economic and moral [16].

The Personalists rejected the 'error of arbitrarily splitting "body and soul", *homo faber* and *homo sapiens*, thought and action ' [17]. As his friend J.-M. Domenach puts it, in his introduction to Mounier's life and work:

> Du conflit entre l'individualisme et le collectivisme, entre un particulier et un universel exaspérés l'un contre l'autre et Egalement dévoyés, surgit ce point focal, comme une absence, un besoin, une tâche et une tension continuellement créatrice: c'est la personne[18].

Macmurray's concern for the personal was fundamental to his work right from the beginning. *Freedom in the Modern World* contrasts 'two false moralities' [19] —mechanical obedience to law, and obedience to an organic social ideal—with the true morality, that of 'the expression of personal freedom' [20]. In *Interpreting the Universe*, published the following year, Macmurray identified the chief philosophical task of the century as developing a logical form, or unity-pattern, adequate to the nature of human personality. Such a unity-pattern

> must somehow succeed in combining the characteristics both of organic and of mathematical thought. It must express at once the independent reality of the individual and the fact that this individuality is constituted by the relationship in which he stands to other independent persons who are different individuals [21].

Macmurray's Gifford Lectures, his major philosophical achievement, were his attempt to develop this new logical form.

Macmurray's insistence that personal individuality is inseparable from relatedness to other individuals is an idea central also to European Personalism, particularly associated with Martin Buber's influential book, *I And Thou*. Mounier stressed that Personalism did not mean individualism. For example: 'the fundamental nature of the person . . . lies not in separation but in communication'. In his study of existentialist thought Mounier

devotes much attention to the isolated Self of Sartre's philosophy, where human relationships are 'une solidarité des damnes, où chacun est *étranger* et non pas autre' [23]. He rejects this pessimism, in favour of the view of thinkers such as Scheler, Buber and Marcel, for whom 'l'autre n'est pas une limite du moi, mais une source du moi'[24]. Anyone familiar with Macmurray's work might be forgiven for thinking that the following quotation is his:

> If the 'we' is anterior to the 'one', personal life is not a withdrawal upon the self, but a movement towards and with the other [25].

In fact it comes from Mounier's post-war essay *Qu'Est Ce Que Le Personalisme?* In the same essay is the following, full definition of Personalism's concept of the human person:

> If there is one affirmation that is common to all the Personalist philosophies to which we are related . . . it is that the basic impulse in a world of persons is not the isolated perception of self (*cogito*) nor the egocentric concern for self, but the communication of consciousness . . . Like the child, the adult only finds himself in his relationship to others and to things, in work and comradeship, in friendship and in love, in action and encounter, and not in his relationship to himself. [26]

This perspective

> is opposed to contemporary individualism; it prevents Personalism from acting as any form of extension to a contingent liberalism. Personal man is not desolate, he is a man surrounded, on the move, under summons [27].

Like Mounier, Macmurray rejected the isolated, disembodied, thinking mind—the Cartesian *cogito*—as the starting-point of philosophical reflection, and saw the importance of the child's dependence on others as a model for analysis of personal existence [28].

Macmurray and Mounier both, therefore, rejected the individualism of liberal political thought; both sympathised with Marxist criticisms of liberalism, and undertook a thorough analysis or Marxist ideas. In Macmurray's case the study of Marx originated in a private conference on the nature of Christianity, and led him to reject idealist forms of religion. We shall return to this later. Mounier's interest in Marxism was inevitable, given the influence of Communism and of Marxist thought in France during the 1930s and 1940s. Macmurray's concern with Marxism was at its greatest in the 1930s, during which decade he published *The Philosophy of Communism* and *Creative Society*, as well as contributing to a symposium for the Left Book Club, *Christianity and the Social Revolution*, and to a series of lectures on Marxism given under the auspices of *The Adelphi*, John Middleton Murry's periodical [29]. Mounier, on the other hand, seems to have been wary of Marxism during the 1930s but increasingly sympathetic in the post-war years, preferring Communist influence in France to the values of the U.S.A. Nevertheless, his position remained ambivalent, and he was attacked for this by the Communist Roger Garaudy [30]. After all, one of the main reasons for the founding of *Esprit* had been a desire to offer a perspective different from Marxist materialism; the name was 'analogous to a Communist review which called itself *Matter*' [31]. By the 1950s Macmurray, however valuable he might still have thought Marxism to be as a philosophical perspective, had come to regard Communism, in practice, as the

> apotheosis of the State and . . . an organised and efficient exploitation of its citizens. In communist practice the personal is subordinated to the functional a point at which the defence of the personal becomes itself a criminal activity [32].

In a wartime book, *Constructive Democracy*, he had outlined his ideal of a 'positive democracy', in contrast to the negative democracy, based on individualism, of liberal thought, and he was involved in practical politics through his role in the establishment, with J. B. Priestley and Sir Richard Acland, of the Common Wealth Party, an attempt to keep some spirit of democracy alive during the years of Coalition Government.

Mounier and *Esprit* were involved in politics from the very beginning, seeking a way which was neither capitalist, nor communist, nor fascist. Indeed, his ambition in the period before June 1940 was to transform France through Personalist values. As Hellman says:

> Personalists were bound together by friendship, and, often, a common faith; they had a philosophy, some plans to radically reorganize (*sic*) labour, a body of educational theory, and an outline for the transformation of Europe beyond the weaknesses of the liberal democracies [33].

4 The rejection of Idealism

The common faith referred to was Catholicism: for Mounier and Macmurray the significance of the human person was integrally bound up with the Christian faith, though Macmurray's own religious background was in the very different tradition of Scottish Calvinism. His autobiographical essay, *Search for Reality in Religion*, gives an account of the effect his experiences in the trenches during World War I had on his attitude to Christianity, and of his discovery of 'a Christianity which is non-idealist' [34]. Macmurray considered Marxism justified in its rejection of idealist religion, but argued that the Judaeo-Christian tradition is not, in essence, idealist, even though the Christian church has often been so in practice. He preferred the Hebrew idea of God, the worker, to the Greek idea of God, the detached aristocrat [35]. Religion is not about escape from this world, but is concerned with the realm of personal relationships: 'The conception of a deity is the conception of a personal ground of all that we

experience' [36].

Many of Macmurray's views find their equivalent in Mounier's writings.

> It was Romanticism and philosophical idealism, [Mounier] insisted, that had caused religion to develop that subjectivity which allowed Feuerbach and his followers to identify religion with alienation [37].
>
> Christianity . . . plants its God in the solid earth [38].
>
> The Fathers of the Church considered idleness, not trade, to be ignominious [39].

According to Mounier, Marxism expresses a healthy reaction against idealist alienation [40].

> The Christian who speaks of the body or of matter with contempt does so against his own most central tradition [41].

For Mounier, as for Macmurray, Christianity and the importance of the person are inseparable. Mounier writes of

> a God . . . who is himself personal, albeit in an eminent degree; a God who has "given himself" to take on and transfigure the condition of mankind, one who offers to each person a relation of unique intimacy, of participation in his divinity [42].

And Mounier saw significance for Personalists in certain theological doctrines, speaking of the Trinity as 'the astounding idea of a Supreme Being 'which is an intimate dialogue between persons' [43], and seeing in the idea of the Mystical Body of Christ a form of communitarian spirituality which stood in opposition to religious individualism.

Like Macmurray, Mounier was at times harsh in his analysis of where conventional Christianity had failed [44], but in both cases the aim was to discover the essentials of Christian faith, in order that it might be re-vitalised. For Macmurray, Christianity had been turned into a 'pious fraud', with the older Churches in particular becoming 'natural centres not merely of social conservatism but of social reaction' [46]. The revolutionary conception or community found in the teaching of Jesus had been referred to another world.

> If Christianity is to become again a creative religion and rebuild the community of Europe it must not merely free itself from the modes of thought and outlook which belong to the old order. It must disentangle itself from all those elements in society whose efforts and interest it is to preserve the old order [47].

Similarly, for Mounier,

> The Christian order seemed . . . something to be worked towards . . . The authentic Christian personality would emerge only 'beyond' bourgeois culture and beyond metaphysics . . . Mounier prophesied the birth of a new kind of Christian, who, instead of rejecting modern life and forming his spirituality on a timeless ahistorical model, would throw himself into the uncompromising battle against all that had corrupted Christianity, inspired by a burning faith in future possibilities[48].

Because both men rejected a detached, idealist Christian spirituality they saw the progress of history as being informed by a divine impulse towards world community. Macmurray's ambitious attempt to analyse European history in these terms can be found in *The Clue to History*, and a more abstract analysis of history's meaning can be found in *The Self As Agent*, where the world, seen in terms of personality, rather than as an organism, has therefore to be understood not as a process, but as an action. If history is interpreted as the co-operation of humanity with the will of God, this theistic faith 'issues in the hope of an ultimate unity of persons in fellowship' [49]. Domenach says of Mounier: 'Il replace le marxisme dans une histoire plus longue et dans une dialectique plus large' [50], and the dialectical method is precisely what Macmurray adopts in *The Clue to History*, placing Marxism in the perspective of the Christian Church's betrayal of the Hebrew consciousness. Mounier dedicated a lengthy essay to a study of Christianity's attitude to the idea of progress [51], in which he rejected pessimistic interpretations of history as anti-Christian, writing of Christ as 'the Gatherer of . . . dispersed humanity' [52], and of Christianity as 'a religion of salvation, but of collective, even cosmic salvation'. There is no space here to do any more than refer readers to the whole of this essay, which is an outstanding example of the parallels between the religious thought of Macmurray and Mounier.

5 Existentialism and psychology

As the opposite to the hope of a unity or persons in fellowship, Macmurray cites atheistic existentialism, which 'finds human relationship an insoluble problem' [54], and quotes Sartre's famous conclusion to *Huis clos*, 'L'enfer—c'est les autres'. Willingness to treat existentialism seriously is another feature of Macmurray's thought which distinguishes him from most of his British contemporaries. If the danger of communism is the absorption of the individual into the collective, the danger of existentialism is that the individual may remain isolated, unable to relate. Macmurray says:

> The problem of the form of the personal emerges as the problem of the form of communication. Contemporary existentialism, which concerns itself with the matter of personal experience in its personal character . . . exhibits the emergence of the new problem. But here the problem shows a religious face. In the tension between its theistic and atheistic exponents it revolves around a religious axis, and formulates the problem of the personal in the antithesis, 'God —or Nothing' [55].

Mounier wrote a study of existentialism in the period immediately following the end of the war, pointing out the dangers inherent in Sartre's analysis of human relationships. He drew attention to the

importance of religious thinkers in the establishment of existentialism, and expressed approval of the movement as a corrective to Marxism and a reassertion or personal values. 'Les pensées existentialistes . . . ont donné le signal du réveil personnaliste dans la réflexion contemporaine' [56]. Somehow, Personalism had to synthesise the insights of existentialism and Marxism: 'Le destin des années prochaines est sans doute de réconcilier Marx et Kierkegaard'[57]. For Macmurray, too, Kierkegaard, despite his extreme individualism, was a very significant thinker [58].

Concern with the nature ot the personal led both Macmurray and Mounier to write on matters connected with psychology. Macmurray's book *The Boundaries of Science* was subtitled 'A Study in the Philosophy of Psychology' [59]; it analysed the philosophical problems raised by questions of motivation, intentional behaviour and unconscious habit. The interest in psychology is demonstrated in a less abstract, more phenomenological manner, in the study of the interaction between mother and child, in the Gifford Lectures [60]. Mounier's interest in psychology revealed itself in a detailed analysis of human character, *Traité du caractère*, written during the Second World War [61]. It is systematic, influenced chiefly by Bergson, Freud, Jung, Heymans and Janet, and phenomenological in its approach. It has a strong claim to be considered Mounier's greatest intellectual achievement, combining clarity of thought with human understanding and wisdom. The titles of some of the chapters and sections in the English edition will immediately indicate the similarities between Mounier's concerns and Macmurray's: 'The Mastery of Action'; 'The Self Amongst Others'; 'The Self in Intention'; 'Intelligence in Action'. Mounier's analysis of the mechanism of unconscious habit [62] is strongly reminiscent of Macmurray's analysis, in *The Boundaries of Science*, though it is very unlikely that he knew the book.

However, it is not improbable that by the time Macmurray wrote his Gifford Lectures he was familiar with Mounier' s work. Whatever the truth of the matter, which is for researchers to determine, there is no doubt that Macmurray's attempt to develop a new logical form—the Form of the Personal—contains ideas which are closely akin to ideas found in Mounier's writings; I shall be outlining later the way in which, in my view, Macmurray's philosophy goes beyond Mounier's. The chief similarities are to be found in the two thinkers' analyses of the nature of action, in the idea of 'withdrawal and return', and in the importance they attach to the relationship between Self and Other.

6 The embodied self

We have already seen that both reject the Cartesian starting-point of the disembodied, isolated, thinking Self. Mounier challenges the emphasis on knowledge gained through visual perception:

> La connaissance claire conçue sur la type de la vision translucide ne décrit pas l'acte originel de la connaissance[63].

Macmurray agrees that visual knowledge should not be a paradigm, and proceeds to analyse the way in which knowledge is gained through the sense of touch [64]—in other words, through action. Like Mounier, he rejects the idea of any purely objective knowledge [65]. Knowledge is embodied. Thought cannot be verified by further thought—it has to be tested in action. Macmurray summed up the intention of his first series of Gifford Lectures as to show that 'All meaningful knowledge is for the sake of action' [66]. Some years earlier Mounier had stated uncompromisingly: 'A thought which does not lead to a decision is an incomplete thought' [67]. By 'decision' he meant an action, a risk, in which thought is put to the test [68]. As we have already seen, Mounier was concerned to defend the importance of the inward and spiritual in human life, but he regarded the search for intellectual certainty, the refusal to gain knowledge through action, commitment and possible failure, as a psychological sickness [69]. Thought is, however, essential to action:

> An action severed from reflection has no outcome but to degenerate into an instinctive or emotional explosion, or to give place to primary mechanisms [70].

Similarly, Macmurray contrasts *action*, which implies thought, with *activity*—mere movement, reaction to stimulus or habitual mechanisms [71].

The relation between thought and action is one in which the individual withdraws from action in order to reflect, then tests the results of that reflection in renewed action. Macmurray devotes a chapter of the Gifford Lectures to an analysis of this phenomenon [72], and the idea is found in several places in Mounier's work. It is defined as a fundamental feature of personal life, which

> begins with the ability to break contact with the environment, to recollect oneself, to reflect, in order to re-constitute and re-unite oneself on one's own centre . . . The person has . . . drawn backward the better to go forward [73].
>
> These two movements, towards expansion and internalisation, are the two indissociable rhythms of personal life [74].

Of interiority, Mounier says: 'It is the *renewal* of the agent and, through him, of the action' [75]. The words could be Macmurray's. And, even more significant in relation to Macmurray's thought:

> Man is not formed for pure subjectivity, nor for pure objectivity. The impersonal is indispensable to him, both to strengthen his relationship to the external and to reinforce his own substance when undermined by the subtleties of subjectivity [76].

The personal requires the impersonal: the idea is, in essence, the same as Macmurray's logical form for the unity of the Self—'a positive which necessarily contains its own negative' [77].

Macmurray and Mounier both take the view that the Self cannot be considered in isolation, but only in relation to others. We have already mentioned Macmurray's analysis of the relationship between mother and child; its importance for an understanding of the Form of the Personal is that it shows identity to depend on mutuality, with 'the second person as the necessary correlative of the first' [78]. The 'I' cannot exist alone; it is an abstraction from the matrix of 'You and I'. Macmurray concludes his assertion 'All meaningful knowledge is for the sake of action' with 'and all meaningful action is for the sake of friendship' [79]. Compare Mounier:

> One might almost say that I have no existence, save in so far as I exist for others, and that to be is, in the final analysis to love [80].

It is not possible here to do more than indicate some of the parallels between Macmurray and Mounier, but anyone familiar with the Gifford Lectures who reads *Personalism*, *Be Not Afraid* and *The Character of Man* will see many further examples.

7 Differences of emphasis

I suggested above that Macmurray's work goes beyond Mounier's. By this I mean that, as a philosophy, Macmurray's writings are more systematically developed than Mounier's, whose tone is generally more polemical. Mounier, as we nave seen, followed Péguy's example in turning his back on an academic career, whereas Macmurray held academic posts for nearly forty years, following the end of the First World War. The difference between the writings of the two men reflects this difference in career. With the possible exception of *The Character of Man*, which in any case is primarily a work of psychology, Mounier did not develop his ideas at length, in the way that Macmurray did.

In his *Introduction to Personalism* Mounier says:

> Personalism is a philosophy, it is not merely an attitude. It is a philosophy, but not a system. Not that it fears systematisation. For order is necessary in thinking: concepts, logic, schemes or unification are not only of use to fix and communicate a thought which would otherwise dissolve into obscure and isolated intuitions; they are instruments of discovery, as well as of exposition [81].

As early as 1933, in *Interpreting the Universe*, Macmurray had written of the need to find a 'unity pattern' adequate to the nature of personality, and the Gifford Lectures are the application of that new 'scheme of unification' (to use Mounier's phrase) to the various aspects of human experience and reflective activity. Whereas much of Mounier's writing consists of fertile suggestions and lucid summaries of general personalist positions, Macmurray offers a new logical form—'a positive which necessarily contains its own negative' [82]—and thoroughly analyses its implications.

The most important of those implications is the re-establishment of theism as a credible philosophical position. If the Form of the Personal gives a more adequate account of human experience than do the mechanistic and organic unity patterns (which are not denied by the Form of the Personal, but incorporated into it), then the atheism of those patterns can be challenged:

> For it is characteristic of religion that it behaves towards its object in ways that are suitable to personal intercourse; and the conception of a deity is the conception of a personal ground of all that we experience [83].

And at the conclusion of the Gifford Lectures Macmurray suggests that a personalist philosophy must 'become in a new and wider sense a Natural Theology' [84].

This emphasis would appear to distinguish Macmurray's Personalism from Mounier's. We have seen that both men were self-questioning Christians, and that the *Esprit* movement was strongly influenced by the Catholicism of several of its leading figures. Mounier felt that Christianity and Personalism should be in sympathy with each other, because of the Christian's trust in 'the supreme Person' [85] at the centre of the faith; but he nevertheless spoke of 'a plurality of personalisms' [86], holding the view that there could be an agnostic Personalism as well as the Christian form. Macmurray's position appears to rule out such a form of Personalism, in the more strictly philosophical sense. His Gifford Lectures are intended to establish that a personalist outlook implies a religious —more specifically, a theistic— interpretation of the world.

8 Conclusion: Macmurray's European context

It is now time to conclude by summing up what I have attempted to demonstrate in this essay. That there are strong similarities between the thought of Emmanuel Mounier and the thought of John Macmurray should by now be clear. My purpose in drawing attention to these has been to show that Macmurray's philosophy is not some isolated freak of intellect, but that in its concerns and outlook it should be recognised as part of an important European movement. Mounier's achievement was the gathering of various strands of Personalist thought and their coherent and forceful articulation. Macmurray's philosophy should not be regarded in its non-relation to Wittgenstein, Ayer, Austin, *et al.* It should be seen instead in its relation, not just to Mounier, but to those other thinkers who grappled with the nature of personal identity in the face of collectivism on the one

hand and existentialism on the other: Berdyaev, Scheler, Buber, Maritain, Marcel. It should be seen as a philosophy which addresses itself to the problems posed by Kierkegaard, Marx, Freud, Bergson and Sartre—a philosophy which recognises that ideas have an influence on the material world which may affect the lives of entire nations. Macmurray's experience of the Western Front was crucial in determining the concerns of his later thought, leading him to re-examine both his own religious faith and the foundations of nineteenth-century civilisation. It would be almost impossible, through reading the linguistic philosophy which dominated British universities from the 1950s to the 1970s, to realise that during the previous half-century Europe had been convulsed by war, revolution and totalitarianism, and that political and religious issues had been matters literally of life and death for millions of people. Macmurray did not, then, withdraw into a backwater when he travelled north, away from the centres of English intellectual life. On the contrary, he escaped from what was itself a backwater, when considered in the context of Europe, and thereby gave himself the intellectual freedom to make his own distinctive contribution to Personalism, combining systematic intellectual analysis with an awareness of the practical exigencies of belief.

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Notes:

1. Macmurray, *The Self As Agent,* p.41
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5. cf. J.A.T. Robinson, *Honest to God* (SCM Press, London, 1963); K.R. Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies,* Vol. 2 (RKP, London, 1945); R.D. Laing, *The Divided Self* [1960] (penguin, London, 1965).
6. Quoted in John Hellman, *Emmanuel Mounier and the New Catholic Left,* p. 53.
7. Ibid.
8. Berdyaev, N., *Dream and Reality* (Bles, London, 1950), p. 274.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Hellman, op. cit., p. 31.
13. Hellman, op. cit., p. 3.
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15. Macmurray, *Freedom in the Modern World,* p.20.
16. Mounier, *Personalism,* p. 98.
17. Mounier, *Be Not Afraid,* p. 115.
18. Domenach, *Emmanuel Mounier,* p. 76.
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22. Mounier, *Personalism,* p. 17.
23. Mounier, *Introduction aux Existentialismes,* p. 109.
24. Mounier, op. cit., p. 107.
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26. Mounier, op. cit., pp. 149-50.
27. Mounier, op. cit., p. 150.
28. Cf. Macmurray's Gifford Lectures, *The Form or the Personal*, and, in particular, *The Self As Agent*, Ch. 3, and *Persons in Relation*, Oh. 2.
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30. Cf. John Hellman, pp. 236-40 and pp. 250-52.
31. Hellman, op. cit., p. 42.
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33. Hellman, op. cit., pp. 156-7.
34. Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion*, p. 27.
35. See, for instance, Macmurray, *The Clue to History*, Ch. 2, and the Essex Hall Lecture *Idealism Against Religion*.
36. Macmurray, *The Self As Agent*, p. 17.
37. Hellman, op. cit., p. 214.
38. Mounier, *Be Not Afraid*, p. 37.
39. Mounier, op. cit., p. 38.
40. Mounier, op. cit., pp. 153-5.
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42. Mounier, op. cit., p. xiii.
43. Mounier, op. cit., p. xiv.
44. See, for instance, Macmurray, *Search for Reality in Religion*, pp. 22-27, and *Challenge to the Churches*. Mounier's re-examination of his faith is summarised by Hellman, op. cit. pp. 190-201.
45. Macmurray, *Challenge to the Churches*, p. 50.
46. Macmurray, op. cit., p. 52.
47. Macmurray, op. cit., pp. 62-3.
48. Hellman, op. cit., p. 199.
49. Macmurray, *The Self As Agent*, p. 222.
50. Domenach, op. cit., p. 71.
51. 'Christianity and the Idea of Progress' in Mounier, *Be Not Afraid*, pp. 65—106.
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53. Ibid.
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55. Macmurray, op. cit., p. 74.
56. Mounier, *Introduction aux Existentialismes*, p. 65.
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70. Mounier, op. cit., p. 130.
71. Macmurray, *The Self As Agent*, Ch. 4.
72. Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, Ch. 4.
73. Mounier, *Personalism*, p. 34.
74. Mounier, *Be Not Afraid*, p. 152.
75. Mounier, op. cit., p. 164.
76. Mounier, op. cit., p. 63.
77. Macmurray, *The Self As Agent*, p. 98.
78. Macmurray, op. cit., p. 38.
79. Macmurray, op. cit., p. 15.
80. Mounier, *Personalism*, p. 20.
81. Mounier, op. cit., pp. vii-viii.
82. Macmurray, *The Self As Agent*, p. 98.
83. Macmurray, op. cit., p. 17.
84. Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, p. 224.
85. Mounier, *Personalism*, p. 80.
86. Mounier, op. cit., p. viii.
87. Macmurray, *The Self Agent*, p. 202.

POLANYI ON LIBERAL NEUTRALITY

C.P. Goodman

Abstract: This paper suggests that moral neutrality erodes the liberal practices which sustain a free society It supports the Polanyian claim that a free society is the political arrangement which is best able to realise universal ideals.

Key Words: pluralism, neutrality, dedicated community, universal ideals.

Liberty is the political orthodoxy of our age. Why? Because it accompanies the pluralism of modern society. Constant noted that during the French Revolution his contemporaries tended either to be Royalists, who because of their reverence for Throne and Altar sought to return to a feudal order, or Jacobins, who inspired by the ancient *polis* sought to establish a new republic of virtue Both were content to enforce a comprehensive vision of the good life. Among our contemporaries, however, the desire for freedom—both economic and political—has undermined the intellectual respectability of alternatives to a free society. We are all liberals now. Does that mean that political debate has come to an end? Clearly not. There exists a plurality of liberal outlooks. We can however identify two broad tendencies. Classical liberals invoke a narrow definition of freedom and seek to decrease the power of the State. Welfare liberals invoke a broad conception of freedom and rely upon the State to increase opportunity. Does Polanyi contribute anything to this debate? In his early writings he set out arguments exposing the limitations of central planning. His claim that the essential problem which faces any planner is the impossibility of any central agency being able to obtain the knowledge it requires for effective decision-making influenced the classical liberal Hayek: it was Polanyi who coined the now familiar term 'spontaneous order' [1]. Polanyi also supported the Keynesian analysis that interventions by the State into the general workings of a market order are necessary if we wish to promote full employment [2].

His contemporary political significance, however, does not derive from his support for various liberal causes, but rather from the extent to which his work addresses some current anxieties about the implicit nihilism of a society dedicated to moral neutrality.

Polanyi did not believe that a free society is an 'Open Society': he claimed that it is a society dedicated to promoting the ideals and practices associated with a liberal account of the good. He does not defend liberalism on the grounds that we have a right to pursue our own conception of the good, nor does he defend freedom as an end in itself. He defends it on the grounds that liberal virtues, such as tolerance and fairness, enable us to pursue universal ideals. His defence of liberalism therefore is not derived from a belief that the State ought to be neutral, it is derived from his recognition that what constitutes a good life is controversial. Unlike many Communitarian critics of liberalism he does not attempt to supply a comprehensive vision of the good. He simply observes that without a belief in universal ideals we lack the intellectual grounds to protect liberal freedoms. His polycentric vision of what it is to be a liberal society, in which the State tries to sustain general conditions for human flourishing but in which individual achievement is nurtured within the practices associated with a plurality of dedicated associations, tries to reconcile individual liberty and the pursuit of universal ideals. Polanyi also seeks to integrate private and public freedoms. While the first protects our freedom from the State, the latter relies upon the State to promote our liberty to realise a conception of the good.

The problem with a private conception of liberty is that it encourages an atomistic understanding of human flourishing. The problem with a public conception of liberty is that it encourages the State to impose a comprehensive vision of the good. Polanyi strives therefore to balance private and public freedoms by defending individual liberty via an appeal to transcendent ideals. Thus while he believes that a State has political duties, he also seeks to limit its powers. While he defends the claim that a liberal society is a dedicated society, he also seeks to encourage pluralism. Polanyi believed that a liberal society is made up of a plurality of enclaves of freedom which exist within the context of a society dedicated to pursuing universal ideals. In order to understand this claim it is helpful if we look at the historical analysis which Polanyi provides in Chapter Seven of *The Logic of Liberty*. Anglo-American liberalism, he suggests, was initially formulated in opposition to religious intolerance. In the *Areopagitica* Milton asserts that we need freedom from authority so that truth maybe discovered. To this Locke added the argument that because we can never be sure of the truth in religious matters we should refrain from imposing our views. Polanyi observes, however, that this latter argument carries with it the implication that we ought to refrain from imposing any belief which is not demonstrable:

> But of course, ethical principles cannot be demonstrated. We cannot prove the obligation to tell the truth, to uphold justice and mercy. It

follows therefore that a system of mendacity, lawlessness and cruelty is to be accepted as an alternative to ethical principles on equal terms. But a society in which unscrupulous propaganda, violence and terror prevail, offers no scope for tolerance. Here the inconsistency of a liberalism based upon philosophical doubt becomes apparent. [3]

According to Polanyi, the destructive implications of a liberalism secured by the argument from doubt was avoided in Britain and America by a reluctance to pursue philosophical premises to their logical conclusion. One way of avoiding it was to claim that ethical principles could be scientifically dernonstrated Locke himself pioneered such an approach by suggesting that good and evil can be identified with pleasure and pain, and that maxims of good behaviour are simply maxims of prudence. Because it was the pursuit of religious truth which was being protected from interference by the State, Catholics were discriminated against in Britain on the grounds that the Roman Church opposed free religious inquiry. Atheists were exempted from toleration on the grounds that they did not esteem religious inquiry. On the Continent some intellectuals, however, began to take seriously the claim that moral standards cannot be scientifically justified, and many identified religion as an enemy of liberty. According to Berlin [4], the failure by Enlightenment philosophers to secure a generally accepted foundation for moral values, together with the recognition by thinkers such as Vico and Herder of the existence of a plurality of human cultures, helped to prepare the way for a more pluralistic liberalism. It is clear however that pluralism does not in itself support the case for toleration. Only by suspending logic is it possible to deny that we could equally well argue that pluralism undermines the justification for tolerating alternative visions of the good. In *Fathers and Sons* the Russian novelist Turgenev wrote about a new figure, the nihilist, who combined a rejection of moral values with a contempt for existing society. According to Polanyi, liberalism therefore needs to be able to defend the need for pluralism. His defence relies upon the assumption that it is possible to converge upon common moral beliefs. In the light of the moral disenchantment which has accompanied the progress of modern science this may seem a dubious hypothesis. Polanyi, however, does not seek to derive our values from the structure of the cosmos. In his final work, *Meaning*, he asserts that human values are what he calls trans-natural integrations. We create novel patterns of action and emotion. This does not make values arbitrary. Nor does it absent them from rational debate. Our value-judgments are the product of long running disputes. What sustains these disputes is the belief that agreement is possible. It is this assumption, according to Polanyi, and not the assumption that a free society ought to be neutral about conceptions of the good, which sustains a liberal political order.

According to Polanyi a liberal society is a society committed to the beliefs which uphold freedom. In their more recent attempts to provide a theoretical foundation for liberalism, John Rawls, in *A Theory of Justice*, and Robert Nozick, in *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, both defend the claim that a liberal State ought to be neutral about different conceptions of the good [5]. Rawls interprets this neutrality as the demand that a State ought to strive to ensure that all its citizens are equally able to pursue their particular conception of the good. The rules governing a liberal State, he asserts, should be the rules we would adopt if we were pursuing our self-interest from behind 'a veil of ignorance' which prevented us from having any particular knowledge about ourselves. Rawls claims that in this 'original position' we would agree upon a concept of 'justice as fairness' and a political order capable of delivering the greatest amount of liberty consistent with the liberty of others—tolerating inequalities of wealth only if they benefited the worst off in society. For Nozick, neutrality requires that no political action be taken which promotes any specific idea of the good. He asserts that individuals have various rights, such as the right not to have your liberty restricted, your person injured, or your property taken away from you without your permission. Nozick concludes that the best sort of State is one which has no other purpose than upholding and defending these individual rights. Rawls and Nozick therefore both claim that before contracting into a State, we can agree upon the rights we would want to enforce independently of any conception of the good. Both seek what Rawls has called 'an overlapping consensus'—that is a conception of justice able to command a universal allegiance within a society with a plurality of moral viewpoints [6]. Any defence of procedural rights, however, invokes a hidden conception of the good. It relies upon the assumption that rational beings are able to agree in practice upon a common set of political principles. According to Polanyi, a liberal society ought to defend only the possibility of agreement The actual content of any consensus should evolve in accordance with the dynamics of open-ended debate.

Joseph Raz claims that personal autonomy is an essential component of any liberal political practice. He also suggests that a defence of personal autonomy carries with it an endorsement of moral pluralism [7]. Is the rejection by Polanyi of an 'Open Society' tantamount to a rejection of liberalism? John Gray [8] identifies four general characteristics of a liberal political thought:

1. Individualism
2. Egalitarianism
3. Universalism
4. Meliorism.

Polanyi emphasises the importance of autonomous agency and opposes the establishment of an absolute source of authority. He is thus in harmony with both individualism and egalitarianism. It is clear however that he justifies individualism and equality not as ends in themselves, but as means in an extended quest to realise universal ideals. Polanyi defends a liberal society as the political order which is best able to promote human progress. He is thus in harmony with both universalism and meliorism. He does not, however, want to identify a set of universal rules: he seeks rather to encourage a liberal tradition. Polanyi thus defends freedom, but rejects the concept of freedom as an end in itself. He advocates universalism, but defends the need for an apprenticeship to the evolving practices of a liberal society. Are his arguments going to convince an opponent of liberalism?

When Polanyi began his philosophical work liberalism was in retreat. He thus set out to defend liberal institutions and practices. A key argument is his claim that progress relies upon dispersed sources of innovation. Critics, however, might dispute his claim that liberty is the political framework which encourages most innovation, or they might deny his assumption that progress contributes to human flourishing. Although Polanyi rejects the possibility of securing an absolute source of truth, how exactly does he undermine those who claim to have reached such an understanding? He addresses this latter problem in his epistemological work. But what about the claim that progress undermines human flourishing? An opponent might claim that increasing understanding drains meaning from the world, because cherished beliefs are exposed as illusions. They might assert that pluralism replaces the order and meaning derived from a comprehensive vision of the good with the ephemeral lifestyles of a consumer society. The Polanyian response to this is clear. To the claim that liberalism does not encourage progress he draws our attention to the limitations inherent in all forms of central direction. The more comprehensive the central direction the more limited the scope for innovation. To the allegation that pluralism erodes all meaningful order, Polanyi makes it clear that a free society is structured by the disciplines associated with a plurality of dedicated communities. More generally he claims that a free society is not simply the product of abstract laws: it is sustained by the liberal practices which accompany those laws. He suggests that the illiberal excesses of the French Revolution were due in part to the adoption of liberal principles without the liberal practices through which such principles must be interpreted [9]. In response to the charge that freedom destroys more than it creates, it is clear that Polanyi believed that if we combine individual liberty with the plurality of local disciplines which accompany the pursuit of universal ideals, the demise of the illusions which derive from ignorance is more than justified by the freedom which liberalism gives us to discover more satisfying ways of life.

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Notes:

1. Polanyi has influenced a number of thinkers whose political writings are much better known e.g. F.A. Hayek, Paul Craig Roberts, and Michael Oakeshott. His most important political influence has been his part in drawing attention to the importance of the tacit in our economic and cultural life. See: Don Lavoie, *National Economic Planning: What is Left?* (New York: Harper and Row 1985); Paul Craig Roberts, *Alienation and the Soviet Economy: The Collapse of the Socialist Era* (New York: Holmes and Meier 1990); Harwell Wells, 'The Philosophical Michael Oakeshott', *Journal of the History of Ideas,* 55/1, January 1994, pp. 129-145.
2. R.T. Allen points out that Polanyi argued that in times of depression there should be a lowering of taxes not an increase in government spending. Conversely when there is an inflationary boom the government should reduce the money supply by increasing taxation. See 'Some Notes on Polanyi's Economics', *Appraisal,* Volume 1:2, October, 1996.
3. LL p.97.
4. See *The Crooked Timber of Humanity* (London: Fontana 1990).
5. *A Theory of Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1971) and *Anarchy, State, Utopia* (Oxford: Blackwell 1974).
6. See 'The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus' in *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press 1993) pp. 131-168.
7. *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1986).
8. *Liberalism* (Buckingham; Open University Press 1986).
9. 'On Liberalism and Liberty', *Encounter* IV March 1955, pp. 29-34

Many thanks to Bob Stern whose help and encouragement has sustained my quest to understand the work of Michael Polanyi.

DISCUSSION

More on Macmurray and Polanyi

Phil Mullins

In the March, 1997 Discussion column of *Appraisal* 1(3), Harold Turner poses several interesting questions about John Macmurray and Michael Polanyi. These figures were born and died in the same year and were both British philosophers who in their day swam against the stream in philosophy. As Turner puts is, 'both made the concept of the personal central to their thinking, and one would have expected them to complement each other' (p.155). Indeed, Turner goes on to show this complementarity by quoting a passage from Macmurray which he proposes could well have come from Polanyi, since it describes what Polanyi would have termed tacit knowledge.

I recall that a teacher years ago recommended Macmurray's *The Self As Agent* and *Persons in Relation* as likely to be of interest to anyone who appreciated Polanyi's attempt to re-orientate philosophy. In the 'Introductory' to the second volume based on his Gifford Lectures, Macmurray suggests that his first volume sought to

> transfer the centre of gravity in philosophy from thought to action. It went on to consider the structural implication of such a change and the manner in which the forms of reflective activity are derived from and related to action.[1]

His second volume, Macmurray describes as following out the implications of his new 'centre of gravity' by showing how 'the personal relation of persons is constitutive of personal existence'.[2] He notes that his philosophical revolution 'sets man firmly in the world which he knows, and so restores him to his proper existence as a community of persons in relation'.[3]

I certainly concur with Turner's judgment that Polanyi and Macmurray seem to be attuned; there is much in Macmurray's new 'centre of gravity' that seems strikingly akin to Polanyi's philosophical program.

Turner goes on to ask whether Polanyi and Macmurray every met, corresponded or studied each other's books. He points out that the University of Chicago 'Guide to the Papers of Michael Polanyi' recently published in *Tradition and Discovery* 23 (2) does not list Macmurray as a correspondent or as an author on whose works Polanyi made notes. Of special interest, Turner suggests, are questions about J. H. Oldham's familiarity with Macmurray. Oldham convened the Moot and successor groups from 1939 until the early sixties. Polanyi participated in many of Oldham's gatherings beginning in 1944 and there he met a succession of theologians, philosophers and literary intellectuals. Turner raises the question as to whether Polanyi might have known something about Macmurray through Oldham, the Moot or Moot contacts.

Anyone who reads the Oldham correspondence and the Moot materials housed in the Papers of Michael Polanyi at the University of Chicago Library (Department of Special Collections) cannot doubt that Oldham was a close and important friend for Polanyi. Study of this material makes understandable Polanyi's comment to Richard Gelwick in 1962 that his participation in the Moot did more to influence the development of his thought than anything other than his experience as a scientist.[4] Also the Oldham correspondence sheds a bit of light on a few of the questions which Turner poses. Oldham was familiar with Macmurray's work and mentioned it several times to Polanyi in letters.

The first mention of Macmurray's work comes in an Oldham letter to Polanyi on May 19, 1958, when Oldham is reading his prepublication copy of *Personal Knowledge* which was to be out on June 20, 1958. He recommends Macmurray's *The Self As Agent* to Polanyi, identifying Macmurray's book as akin to *Personal Knowledge*:

> A book that has in it something of the same temper and that might, from a somewhat different angle of approach to re-enforce your effort is John Macmurray's *The Self As Agent.* Whatever difference there may be on particular philosophical issues, the fundamental existential attitude to the contemporary situation seems to me to be the same. The attack is directed towards the same fundamental errors. There is in both books the same recognition of the intimate connection between philosophic beliefs and social consequences.[5]

At 86, Oldham, still a very active reader and thinker, wrote to Polanyi on March 20, 1960, again mentioning Macmurray:

> Have you read John Macmurray's *The Self As Agent*? I have just been reading again his two chapters on Kant. They contain much material that seems to bear on our discussions. Macmurray holds that Kant's work can be understood only in relation to the faith philosophy of Hamann, Herder and the Romantics generally. This has some resemblances to your position. I would like to understand what the resemblances and differences are. I see some of them. I hope to receive further light in the course of the week-end and may turn my

reading somewhat in this direction when the week-end is over.[6]

The reference to the forthcoming weekend was to a discussion meeting that Oldham had organised for March 25-18, 1960 at St. Julian's near Horsham. The meeting, modelled after sessions of the Moot which Oldham organised in the forties, was to be devoted largely to discussion of Polanyi's thought. Polanyi apparently attended, but there is no information about whether the discussion turned to Macmurray.

A little over a year later on June 14, 1961, Oldham wrote to Polanyi, who was in the United States:

> I am trying at present to digest the second volume of John Macmurray's Giffords, for which we have been waiting for five years. In spite of the great differences in the angle of approach and in the method of treatment I have the feeling that his central concern is very much akin to your own. I wonder whether you have any similar feeling. I find your mode of presentation more congenial and Macmurray annoys me at times by what seem to be over-simplifications. But I admire the clarity with which he formulated the fundamental issues which he wants to raise and the force with which he drives home his argument.[7]

In sum, it appears that J. H. Oldham, like many of the rest of us, noticed that Macmurray's thought and Polanyi's thought have deep affinities. Clearly, Oldham encouraged Polanyi to read Macmurray, spelling out for him some of the things he liked in Macmurray's books. But there is no record in Polanyi's letters to Oldham that indicates Polanyi followed Oldham's suggestion.

Notes:

1. John Macmurray, *Persons In Relation* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1961), p. 11.
2. Macmurray, *Persons In Relation*, p. 12.
3. Macmurray, *Persons In Relation*, p. 12.
4. Richard Lee Gelwick, 'Michael Polanyi: Credere Aude--His Theory of knowledge and Its implications for Christian Theology', Th. D. Dissertation, Pacific School of Religion, 1965, p. 11, note 8.
5. J. H. Oldham letter to Michael Polanyi, May 19, 19958, in The Papers of Michael Polanyi, Box 15, Folder 5. This and succeeding quotations from the Polanyi Papers are used with permission of the University of Chicago Library's Department of Special Collections. Citation of this material will hereafter be shortened to the particular document, box number and folder number.
6. Oldham letter to Polanyi, 20 March, 1960, Box 15, Folder 5.
7. Oldham letter to Polanyi, 14 June, 1961, Box 15, Folder 5

Continued from p. 178

Notes:

1. John Macmurray, *Freedom in the Modern World* [Faber & Faber: London, 1932], 16-17.
2. Ibid.
3. John Macmurray, *A Challenge to the Churches* [Kegan & Paul: London, 1941] 51-52.
4. John Macmurray, *Reason and Emotion* [Faber & Faber:London, 1935], 126.
5. Ibid., 175.
6. Thomas Butler Feeney, *When the Wind Blows* [Dodd, Mead: New York, 1947], 86.
7. Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, 44-47.
8. John Macmurray, *Religion, Art and Science* [Liverpool University Press: Liverpool, 1961], 65.
9. Ibid., 68.
10. Macmurray, *Freedom in the Modern World*, 35-36.
11. Macmurray, *Challenge to the Churches*, 61.
12. Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, 47.
13. Ibid., 48.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. John Bannister Tabb, *Best Poems* [Newman: Westminster, Md., 1957], 182.
17. Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, 48-49.
18. Ibid., 48.
19. Ibid., 50.
20. Ibid., 60-61.
21. Ibid., 63.
22. John Macmurray, *Interpreting the Universe* [Faber and Faber: London, 1933], 136.
23. Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, 170.
24. Macmurray, *Interpreting the Universe*, 137.
25. Ibid., 137-138.
26. Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, 77.
27. Macmurray, *Interpreting the Universe*, 140.
28. Macmurray, *Reason and Emotion*, 65.
29. Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, 73.
30. Ibid., 74-75.
31. Ibid., 91.
32. John Macmurray, *Conditions of Freedom* [Faber & Faber: London, 1950], 82.
33. Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations* IV, Kevin Smyth, tr. [Darton, Longman and Todd: London, 1966], 115.
34. Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, 170.
35. Ibid., 169-170.
36. Macmurray, *Freedom in the Modern World [*, 61-62.
37. John Macmurray, *To Save from Fear* [Friends Home Service Committee: London, 1964], 5.
38. Ibid., 6-7.
39. Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations* I, Cornelius Ernst, tr., [Helicon: New York, 1961], 310.
40. Ibid., 184.
41. Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, 63.

Michael Polanyi
Society, Economics and Philosophy: selected papers [of] Michael Polanyi.
Edited with an Introduction, annotated Bibliography and Summaries of other articles, by R.T. Allen.
New Brunswick, NJ, Transaction Publishers, 1997. ISBN 1-56000 278-6; pp. 395; £29.
Obtainable in Britain from:
Transaction Publishers UK Ltd, Book Representation and Distribution Ltd, 244A London Rd, Hadleigh, Essex SS7 2DE

Until about 1970 Michael Polanyi's writings show a 'deepening coherence' (his phrase, p.258) across an exceptionally wide range of knowing and doing. He certainly knew, at any one stage, more than he could tell. But as, gradually, he made more of it explicit, there came moments of quite startling unity and originality. For some of his mid-century readers such moments could provide a correspondingly powerful sense of liberation: from the boring chatter of materialist nothing-buttery that dominated most discourse about science.

Richard Allen has done a fine job in choosing, linking and threading these pieces, of which very few have appeared before in book form. There is a useful list of all Polanyi's non-scientific writings and additional, valuable, synopses of papers that so far have not been republished. Polanyi scholars will be much in his debt and even a modest Polanyi library will be enriched by this book.

In the latter part of this review I shall point to one or two issues in Polanyi's world-view which still seem to be problematic. One of the values of a collection such as this is that it helps to locate and to fuel possible controversies. Any observations I make will be tentative and tinged with doubt, because it well be my obtuseness or myopia, rather than Polanyi's partial vision or lack of clarity which is causing the problem.

The book as a whole is well presented and reasonable value. It deserves a somewhat fuller index and one experiences occasional irritation from minor typographic blemishes. Anyone who has read widely in the Polanyi field is likely to have personal views about just what should or should not have been selected. Inevitably there is a bias towards his earlier social and economic writings because so many of his best papers from the nineteen-sixties were netted in Marjorie Grene's *Knowing and Being*. I don't think that 'The Determinants of Social Action' (Ch. 13) merits a place. It had already been reprinted in Hayek's *Festschrift*. It is not of high quality and Polanyi himself had left it on one side for a decade. On the other hand, I looked in vain for 'On the Modern Mind', an old favourite from a 1965 *Encounter*. In this, Polanyi is grappling, among other things, with the crucial issue of the nature of machines, a subject which should still be on our agenda and which the *Encounter* article handles in a very interesting way. It includes references to Martin Buber's I-Thou/I-it concept which Polanyi does not seem to have been aware of when he wrote *Personal Knowledge*. This has a bearing on the idea that we look 'down' to see analytically or 'up' to see and know 'wholes'. Here, too, Polanyi introduces an important political slant when he suggests that if you were a communist and espoused Marxist-Leninist 'scientific' determinism you were making a claim 'to embody a mechanism, [so] you must behave like a machine'.

Similarly, any connoisseur of Polanyi vintages is likely, after reading this book, to have different favourites. Two very strong candidates are a pair of seminal reviews: first, the fascinating demolition of the Webbs' *Soviet Communism: a New Civilisation*—hard hitting, witty, prophetic, and a splendid critique of 'Sage' Bernal's famous, infamous and influential *The Social Function of Science*. These two, alone, make the book worth buying.

One of the intriguing opportunities which the volume as a whole offers is that we can glimpse how the timing of the emergence of Polanyi's key ideas affected the emergence of other ideas. Richard Allen, in his valuable Introduction, indicates how Polanyi's ideas about parts and wholes, about the dispersed energies and initiatives made possible in a 'polycentric' as opposed to a centralised, hierarchical model of an economy or of a culture, were being made explicit long before Polanyi had developed his 'parts-focused-on-the-whole' model of how an individual performs a skill or 'does' science. There is a problem here. I do not think that Polanyi was denying the importance of hierarchies in nature or in our knowing of it but he would probably have suggested that we should be modest in our attempts to create hierarchical organisations ourselves and be ready to act against, or out of step with, a man-made (military) hierarchy at times (p. 124). This whole question is one towards which Polanyian scholars could well pay further attention.

In the rest of this note we will briefly turn to Polanyi's crucial idea that machines, in essence, do not belong to the domain of physics (or chemistry or biology)—they *transcend* it. He opened up this question of what machines and tools really are but he left many aspects of it problematic (see Prof Percy Hammond's article in *Appraisal* I, 1). Chapter 19, 'Life Transcending Physics and Chemistry', starts with a rather unsatisfactory debate with Barry Commoner

about DNA but it ends with a strong challenge to our way of thinking and talking about 'mechanisms' being operative in nature. 'Mechanistic' explanations are regarded by their critics as being much the same as materialist or reductionist ones; but that is wrong. Machines, Polanyi stresses, are always created around one or several high level principles. These are, in their essence, mental. For example, the many-staged invention of the wheel may have drawn something from the physical world, from the sun's disc, perhaps, or from biology, dung beetles?—who knows? But the coming together of it all was mental. People (and occasionally intelligent animals) perceive some causal principle and embody it in matter to make a tool. The conceptual space of *hitting* is where hammers evolve.

I don't think that Polanyi ever defines a tool. However, in *Personal Knowledge* (p.329) he does offer an arresting definition of technology. 'Technology', he writes, 'comprises all acknowledged operational principles and endorses the purposes which they serve'. Wonderfully comprehensive but does he really mean 'endorses' or should it have been 'is guided by' those purposes? That would have been less political and more in tune with his interest in Waddington's developmental fields and pathways. At the end of his 'Life Transcending . . .' paper, Polanyi shows that we have all—even some of his historic anti-reductionist allies—been getting into a linguistic twist about mechanisms.

> The moment one succeeds in proving that machines cannot be explained in terms of physics, this appears so obvious that one wonders whether some thing so trivial could have been overlooked . . . It may seem unbelievable, but it is a fact, that for 300 years writers [such as John Ray] . . . contended the possibility of explaining life by physics and chemistry by affirming that living things are not or not wholly, machine-like, instead of pointing out that the mere existence of machine-like functions in living beings proves that life cannot be explained in terms of physics or chemistry . . . . Up to this day one speaks of the mechanistic conception of life both to designate an explanation of life in terms of physics and chemistry, and an explanation of living functions as machineries—though the latter excluded the former. The term 'mechanistic' is in fact so well established for referring to these two mutually exclusive conceptions, that I am at a loss to find two different words that will distinguish between them .(p.295).

What would you suggest? John Puddefoot in *God and the Mind Machine* distinguishes accidental 'collisions' and purposeful or focused 'correlations'. But something more static is needed to contrast contingent forms with forms embodying some kind or principle or goal. What about 'contingent forms' as opposed to *'pro*tingent forms'? The distinction is profoundly important, even if it does not deserve neologisms.

Robin Hodgkin

Irving Babbitt:
Character and Culture: Essays on East and West
ed. Claes G. Ryn, with Introduction, Bibliography and complete Index to all of Babbitt's works;
Transaction Publishers (New Brunswick, NJ, and London), 1995;
ISBN 1-56000-918-7; £14.95.
Obtainable in Britain from:
Transaction Publishers UK Ltd, Book Representation and Distribution Ltd, 244A London Rd, Hadleigh, Essex SS7 2DE

If Conservatism is the politics of Original Sin, then Irving Babbitt (1865-1933, Professor of French and Comparative Literature at Harvard) ranks as one of the foremost Conservative thinkers of this century and all time. For he took as his central theme Rousseau and his disciples and their rejection of—in Edmund Burke's words:

> that class of virtues which restrain the appetite. They are at least nine out of ten of the virtues. In place of all this they substitute a virtue which they call humanity or benevolence.

Or, as Babbitt's great friend and colleague, Paul Elmer More, said, the heart of Babbitt's message is in a footnote to his criticism of Rousseau in *Literature and the American College* (1908):

> The greatest of vices according to Buddha is the lazy yielding to the impulses of temperament (*pamâda*); the greatest virtue (*appamâda*) is the opposite of this, the awakening from the sloth and lethargy of the senses, the constant exercise of the active will. The last words of the dying Buddha to his disciples were an exhortation to practise this virtue unremittingly.

The troubles of the world, and especially the modern world, stem from neglect or denial of 'the civil war in the cave', the conflicts within each one of us between the Old Adam and the 'higher will' which manifests itself primarily as 'the inner check' or 'the will to refrain'. That denial takes many forms, principally the Rousseauist one of holding man to born good but corrupted by 'society', institutions, habits, customs, 'the system[1]', or whatever, or the determinist one of denying any power of will whatsoever. In all such cases, the remedy is falsely sought in *outward* working alone, in 'benevolence', doing good to others, changing circumstances and not oneself, and that, today, means political action and hence one form or another of Collectivist politics and imperialistic expansion, first of the unrestrained self and then of the unrestrained state. Rather, the true remedy is *inner* work upon oneself, self-discipline and self-restraint, and thence the best thing that one can do for others, setting them an example of inner working and standards. Indeed, standards, the 'law of measure', are themselves denied by these modern movements, who lose themselves in the flux and make no effort to discern imaginatively the One in the Many, the permanent in the transient.

In his books and essays, Babbitt traced the deleterious effect—upon art and literature, education, politics and society generally—of both the Rousseauist-Romantic denial of the need for the higher will and the scientific-utilitarian neglect of it in favour of improving physical conditions (which he associated with the name of Bacon), and elaborated his alternative, based upon ancient wisdom, Eastern as well as Western: Confucius and the Buddha in addition to Plato and Aristotle. (He studied Sanskrit and Pali and translated the *Dhammappada*, published posthumously). This he called, with P.E. More, a New Humanism, a return to old virtues but on an experiential, experimental and imaginative basis ('the moral imagination', a favourite phrase, he took from Burke), a human law equivalent to the modern world's study of physical laws. The New Humanism was opposed to sentimental and utilitarian Humanitarianism, and open to yet independent of religion: it understood Original Sin in an empirical sense and not also in a theological one. It was there that More eventually found it insufficient, as also did their best known pupil, T.S. Eliot, whose essay on the New Humanism and obituary of Babbitt are the ways by which most English readers will have come across Babbitt (he does not appear in our Hutchinson's Multimedia Encyclopaedia: is he in *Encarta*?).

This collection was put together and published in 1940 *as Spanish Character and Other Essays.* It includes examples of all of Babbitt's interests, with essays, *inter alia* on the Spanish character, education, Pascal, Racine, Matthew Arnold, Croce and Hinduism. Those new to Babbitt should probably begin with the last: 'What I Believe: Rousseau and Religion', one of his last works, wherein he concisely stated his position.

Reviled in his lifetime, though a man of fine character, Babbitt has gained in recent decades more of the attention that he deserved, and Prof. Ryn, a follower an expositor of Babbitt in the USA, and his publishers are to be congratulated on putting another of Babbitt's works back into print. (His two most important works, *Rousseau and Romanticism* (1919) and *Democracy and Leadership* (1924), are currently obtainable, respectively, from Transaction Publishers and Liberty Press (Indianapolis)).

R.T. Allen

(ed.) Richard Gelwick:
From Polanyi to the 21st Century: Proceedings of a Centennial Conference, Kent State University, April 11-13, 1991.
The Polanyi Society, University of New England, Biddeford, Mass. 1997; x + 936 pp.

This volume was obtainable only by subscription in advance, and arrived too late for a full review for this issue of *Appraisal*. A fuller review will appear in our next issue.

Some papers given at the Conference were not submitted for inclusion (the programme is reproduced after the Preface) and 10 of the 48 included have already been published in *Tradition and Discovery.*

The editor regrets that cost prevented the editing of the papers into a uniform style. Instead, they have been photocopied as their authors supplied them. (Yet they all appeared to have been composed on PC's or word-processors, and it is relatively easy to export text files in ASCII format from one operating system and to import and edit them on another.) This is unfortunate, for space could have been saved and the weight reduced if those with double-spacing or large fonts had been edited. Also, two or three papers were obviously printed on 9-point dot-matrix printers and consequently are rather faint and difficult to read. And the binding may not survive much handling.

It is, of course, the contents that matter, rather than the appearance, and they range over all of Polanyi's extra-scientific interests, including art and economics, and from commentaries upon aspects of his work, to comparisons with other thinkers and further applications of his ideas.

To date I have been able to read, with appreciation but not thoroughness, the following papers:

Prof. W.T. Scott's 'At the Wheel of the World: the Life and Times of Michael Polanyi' which is especially informative on Polanyi's earlier years in Hungary and Germany;

Prof. T. Torrance's 'The Transcendent Role of Wisdom in Science', which draws upon St Augustine on *sapientia* as distinct from *scientia*, andthe use by Faraday, Clerk Maxwell and Einstein of methods that move from the whole to the details in contrast to the hitherto prevalent movement of analysis in the opposite direction, to argue that the universe points beyond itself to a personal and active source;

John Apcynski's 'Polanyi's Augustianism: A Mark of the Future?' also takes up the relation of Polanyi's epistemology to Augustine's;

Nimai Mehta's 'Authority, Structure and the Economic Performance: A History of the "Relations of Authority" in Post-Revolutionary Russia', which develops the economic theories of Polanyi and Hayek to explain the failure of the Soviet régime to solve its problems of authority, legitimacy and knowledge;

Dru Scott's 'Michael Polanyi: Philosopher of Freedom', which relates Polanyi's interpretation and defence of freedom to recent developments, intellectual and political.

If the remaining papers match these, then it will be a very rewarding volume.

As mentioned elsewhere, a copy was ordered for *Appraisal* and will be made available on loan to individual subscribers.

R.T.Allen

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