

# APPRAISAL

The Journal of the British Personalist Forum

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*In This Issue*

*Paksi on Emergence: Part 2*

*Plus*

*Responsibility  
Without Freedom*

*Bergman on  
Shame*

*Polanyi and Plato*



# Appraisal

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- All contributions should be in good, clear English, without jargon, and with end-notes and frequent sub-headings (at approximately every 700 words).
- Please see inside rear cover regarding references to the works of Michael Polanyi.
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## EDITORIAL

Salutations and welcome to the Autumn 2017 issue of *Appraisal*. Worry not, you haven’t missed something. The current issue has been dubbed ‘Autumn 2017’, not in the interests of verisimilitude or anything like it, but because to name it truthfully for the Spring, where it rightly belongs, is too terrible a reminder. We would forget, rather, our tardiness with this issue; and how far behind we are with all our other work; not to mention ‘flying Time and all it has taken’ from our lives. Decrepitude and senility creep ever closer, as does the chill embrace of the grave.

But enough of such high-spirited folderol, much has happened since the last issue of *Appraisal*. There have been decisions, there have been changes, there have been publications.

Details of the publications can be found scattered throughout this issue as well as on the website ([www.britishpersonalistforum.org.uk](http://www.britishpersonalistforum.org.uk)) and the blog ([britishpersonalistforum.blogspot.co.uk](http://britishpersonalistforum.blogspot.co.uk)). Look out, in particular, for my ‘Study in Applied Metaphysics’: *Beyond Realism: In Search of the Divine Other* as well as *Looking at the Sun: New Writings in Modern Personalism*, edited by Anna Castriota and myself (the cover of which is amazing). We strongly recommend that all our readers consider purchasing several copies of these books (especially mine), which make ideal Christmas presents. Alternatively, we would be extremely grateful if those of you in a position to do so would kindly request that your institutional library purchase copies for their collection.

Of the changes, perhaps the most important has been the recruitment of an Assistant Editor: the excellent Abigail Klassen has taken the King’s Shilling. Besides being the author of numerous articles, including ‘Critiquing Strawson’s Selves’ (*Appraisal*, 10:3), Dr Klassen teaches at the University of Nevada, in spite of the heat. Her research interests range from metaphysics to feminist and queer philosophy, any or all of which we hope to persuade her to discuss on the blog in the near future. In the meantime, we can confirm that Dr Klassen is a first-class writer and editor; she is also the only person I have ever encountered who actually has a nemesis. More information on her teaching, research, and general outlook on life can be found on her website ([www.abigailklassen.com](http://www.abigailklassen.com)). Needless to say, I am profoundly grateful for all her help so far and look forward to working with her for some time to come.

On the matter of decisions, our very best for quite some time has been to embrace Open Access publishing at long, long last. The details of exactly how this is to be implemented have yet to be fully thrashed out. Until this has been done, we encourage all our contributors to upload their papers into their institutional repositories as well as their pages on researchgate.net, academia.edu, etc. In so doing, they will, at the very least be compliant with HEFCE requirements.

Open Access is a hugely important step forward in scholarly communications, albeit one that the majority of scholars are not as interested in as they ought to be. It is also something I am personally committed to and have wanted to do for some time. The idea behind it is simple enough: make scholarly publications available as widely as possible with as few restrictions as possible, i.e. no ‘pay walls’. Where there is access to the internet, there, too, should be access to good scholarship. The motivation is equally simple: big publishers are effectively fleecing our universities and making a very tidy profit from (in the UK at least) publicly funded research. And by ‘tidy profit’ we mean upwards of 30% per year.

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In essence, it works like this: UK universities are publicly funded; they employ academics to produce and publish interesting research; those academics give their research to publishers for free; by and large, they also run the journals, acting as editors and reviewers and whatnot, also for free. Having been given all this content and effort for free, the publishers then *sell* it back to the universities – where the academics are employed at the public expense – for a whacking great subscription fee. Readers may not be aware that a number of publishers also charge whacking great one-off fees to make articles Open Access; on average, £1500 *per article*. As morally suspect as all this may be, it is not actually illegal.

*Nota bene:* the editor would make it known that, if *Appraisal* ever makes the kind of profit Elsevier makes, he will gladly trade in the moral high-ground for a fast car and a big sack with ‘SWAG’ written on the side.

All of which being said, money is not the only or even the principle reason why I believe in Open Access; nor is it simply that the technology is carrying us inexorably in that direction. More important than either of these is the fact that Open Access is, in the end, nothing more than an expression of proper scholarship. What matters, or what ought to matter, most is the dissemination of our work; put simply, we *need* readers. How else are we to test our ideas? How else are we to seek to influence our scholarly communities? How else are we to make the time we spend thinking and writing remotely meaningful or worthwhile? There is only one way: to ensure that our work is shared as widely as possible.

Thanks to modern communications technology, it is possible to share our work very widely indeed nowadays. It is easy to assume, in fact, that the opportunities for accessing one another’s work couldn’t be better. In many institutions, this is true; those who toil in the libraries do so to considerable effect. For independent scholars, of course, the situation is very different. Journal subscriptions and books are not cheap; life can be hard for the independent. And it isn’t just the independents. That the Western world is not the whole world is easily forgotten. Fully and wonderfully stocked university libraries are a commonplace in *our* academic institutions, but not in everyone’s. There are institutions in Africa and parts of Asia which struggle to get hold of any publications; I have taught in just such a place, where access to materials depended almost entirely on my ability to persuade colleagues in the UK to adopt a legally dubious attitude to copyright infringement. Open Access will not solve such problems, but it may go a long way to alleviating them. And so it is this spirit, that we at *Appraisal* and the BPF declare our commitment to Open Access.

On that, admittedly somewhat pious, note, we turn at last to the current issue and its contents. Readers will already have noticed that Polanyi figures large on the roster, once again. We begin with the second part of Daniel Paksi’s fascinating work on ‘Medium Emergence’ in which he draws a surprising but extremely valuable distinction between reductivism and materialism. Paksi is followed by Adriano Naves de Brito’s provocative attempt to ‘disentangle’, as he puts it, responsibility from freedom. He does so in order to preserve the former from dissolution in the face of naturalistic conceptions of personhood, to which responsibility belongs constitutively. Next comes an essay from Torgeir Fjeld, author of ‘Presencing the Writer: Immanence and Ecstatic Communion in *A Clockwork Orange* and *Naked*’ (*Looking at the Sun*, Vernon Press, 2017). In the present article, we are invited to consider two Bergman films, *Shame* and *Hour of the Wolf*, in order to explore the connections between alienation and creativity. Finally, we return to Polanyi, this time in the company of Colin Cordner and Plato, to examine a fruitful comparison and assess the role of indwelling in personal knowing and personal being.

Besides these excellent contributions, we are also pleased to be able to present a brace of commentaries on previous papers. Readers may recall that, alongside Part 1 of Daniel Paksi’s discussion of Polanyi and emergence, the last issue also included an article by Jon Fennell on the same subject. Considering the similarities and differences in these two papers, inviting their authors to comment on one another’s work seemed like a good idea. This, they kindly agreed to do and we present the results here: Paksi on Fennell and Fennell on Paksi. Stripped to the waist, oiled up, ready for combat: two men enter, two men leave; in part because this is philosophy, not bare-knuckle boxing, but primarily because they live on different continents.

Closing this issue, we have something of a seasonal offering. Since the nights are drawing in and the dark season is approaching we bring you a philosophical fiction, a ‘small entertainment’, as M. R. James might say, entitled ‘A Thin Ghost’. It is a traditional, English ghost story after the fashion of James, who was, after all, the finest exponent of the form. Indeed, the title comes from a line in his ‘The Residence at Whitminster’. Unlike that masterpiece, our little story is about ‘personhood’, or rather the absence of it. Our protagonist is named after Daniel Salthenius, a Professor of Theology in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Konigsberg. The original Salthenius was noted, if for nothing else, for having sold his soul to the Enemy for hard cash. As he was an undergraduate at the time, we may assume that want was keenly felt. His namesake, by contrast, imagines himself utterly unencumbered by debt, even the primary personal ones that all of us are, or should be, acutely aware of. And, as Mrs Maple, the formidable housekeeper of Whitminster, observes, ‘a withered heart makes an ugly, thin ghost’.

But we have said enough. Ghost stories are like jokes and sex: if you have to explain what you’re doing, you are almost certainly doing it wrong. Onwards to the articles!

Simon Smith  
Haslemere

**MEDIUM EMERGENCE  
PART TWO:  
A SHORT REDUCTIONIST ARGUMENT AGAINST MATERIALISM**

*Daniel Paksi*

**Abstract:** Medium emergence, which unites the concepts of strong and weak emergences, is the proper personalist ontological position between dualism and materialist monism. Michael Polanyi's ontological conviction of personal reality and his understanding of "existential" and "conceptual" emergence comport with this theory, according to which, persons emerged from inanimate fundamental matter through evolutionary achievements. This is the reason that they have tacit and personal knowledge which cannot be represented in the neutral terms of physics and chemistry and thus cannot be reduced synchronically to matter. Some advocates of materialism claim that every higher-level phenomenon can be reduced synchronically and thus cannot exist ontologically. However, theories of reduction are themselves instances and products of human knowledge; as such, they are higher level phenomena and therefore the necessary precondition for any kind of reduction. Therefore, the (synchronic) reduction of reduction and human knowledge is self-eliminating and logically impossible—that is, materialism cannot stand.

**Keywords:** emergence, reduction, materialism, Michael Polanyi.

**1. Introduction: Medium Emergence**

In the First Part of this paper, I argued that the concept of medium emergence is the proper personalist ontological theory. In this second part, I will show that Michael Polanyi's understanding of emergence comports with this concept. The point of his personalism is not his fierce, well-known anti-reductionism, but his frequently ignored anti-materialism. This is because reduction, in accordance with this concept, is not an ontological conviction, but rather an epistemological method which can be used against materialism too.

Emergence was originally a medium ontological position between dualism and materialist monism. According to dualism, there are two different kinds of reality, generally described as mind and matter or soul and body, which are independent, fundamental substances. This is the ontological conviction of the European Christian tradition. According to materialism, understood generally, there is only one kind of reality: one fundamental substance, matter. This is the ontological conviction of modern European, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century science.

Adherents of emergentism accept the dualist position that there are two different kinds of reality. However, they hold that only one of them is funda-

mental, while the other is emergent—that is, emergentists also accept the materialist position that there is only one fundamental substance, matter. It follows that emergent realities are dependent on matter. Emergent realities must evolve from matter and so they do: *human beings are the achievement of emergent evolution.*

<i>Dualism</i>	<i>Emergentism</i>	<i>Materialism</i>
<b>Mind</b>	<b>Emergent realities</b>	
	↓ dependence	
<b>Matter</b>	<b>Matter</b>	<b>Matter</b>

This is the ontological conviction of Polanyi and the root of his personalism. We are not eternal souls and neither are we merely complex systems of matter. We are real, emerged persons in our bodies.

Since emergent reality is real, it cannot be reduced to fundamental matter. Nevertheless, because it is not an independent reality, but a dependent, evolved one, it can and has to be reduced to fundamental matter.

In the first case, we are referring to reduction in a *synchronic* sense. This method corresponds to the Newtonian concept of the reversibility of time and to the knowledge-ideal of objectivism and exact sciences. Time is not a real, independent factor, but rather a special dimension of space, and therefore, every higher-level phenomenon can be reduced at the moment, that is, synchronically. This means that there are no higher-level phenomena in the ontological sense; every higher-level phenomenon is only an *epistemic* phenomenon. Reduction in the synchronic sense means *ontological elimination*. Since epistemic, higher-level phenomena are dependent on fundamental matter, they are *emergent*; and because they are only epistemic phenomena, they are emergent in the epistemological or weak sense. The theory of weak or epistemological emergence is a *materialist theory*.

<i>Ontological side</i>	<i>Epistemological side</i>
(epistemic phenomena ←)	<b>higher level description</b>
	↓ <b>reduction method</b>
<b>material object</b>	<b>lower level description</b>

In the second case, we are referring to reduction in a *diachronic* sense. According to the views of Henri Bergson, Samuel Alexander, Norbert Wiener, and Michael Polanyi, time is irreversible and constitutes a real, independent factor. We cannot, therefore, reduce every higher-level phenomenon at the moment, that is, without taking account of this independent

factor. This means that higher-level phenomena exist in the *ontological sense*, and thus cannot be reduced synchronically. However, they can and must be reduced in a diachronic sense because they are dependent on fundamental matter and have evolved from it over time. Reduction in the diachronic sense means *ontological emergence*.

According to the theory of strong emergence, highly influenced by C. D. Broad, every higher-level phenomenon is emergent in the ontological sense and therefore cannot be reduced synchronically. Broad's main example of this kind of emergence is chemical phenomena (Broad 1925). Thus, the chief difference between the theories of strong and weak emergences is their relationship to *synchronic reduction*. The former asserts that *no* higher-level phenomena can be reduced in this way, while the latter asserts that *every higher-level phenomenon* can be reduced in this way.

Medium emergence is not just a medium ontological conviction between dualism and materialist monism, but *also* a medium ontological position between strong and weak emergence. Its adherents accept that many higher-level phenomena can be reduced synchronically, but also accept that many cannot. The former has been clearly demonstrated by the physical sciences in the cases of physical and chemical higher-level phenomena such as heat, covalent bonds, etc. The reason for the latter is twofold. First, *no one has ever shown* that biological and cultural higher-level phenomena can be reduced synchronically; moreover, the evolutionary explanations of those phenomena are clearly *diachronic* and do not correspond to the knowledge-ideal of objectivism and exact sciences. Second, it simply *cannot* be done because it is logically impossible; doing so would lead to the denial of our own knowledge or even the denial of our own existence. In Polanyi's words:

If, then, it is not words that have meaning, but the speaker or listener who means something by them, let me declare accordingly my true position as the author of what I have written so far, as well as of what is still to follow. I must admit now that I did not start the present reconsideration of my beliefs with a clean slate of unbelief. Far from it. I started as a person intellectually fashioned by a particular idiom, acquired through my affiliation to a civilization that prevailed in the places where I had grown up at this particular period of history. This has been the matrix of all my intellectual efforts. Within it I was to find my problem and seek the terms for its solution. All my amendments to these original terms will remain embedded in the system of my previous beliefs. Worse still, I cannot precisely say what these beliefs are. I can say nothing precisely. The words I have spoken and am yet to speak mean nothing: it is only *I* who mean something *by them*. And, as a rule, I do not focally know what I mean, and though I could explore my meaning up to a point, I believe that my words (descriptive words) must mean more than I shall ever know, if they are to mean anything at all. This prospect may sound deplorable, but a

programme that accepts it may at least claim to be self-consistent, while any philosophy that sets up strictness of meaning as its ideal is self-contradictory. For if the active participation of the philosopher in meaning what he says is regarded by it as a defect which precludes the achievement of objective validity, it must reject itself by these standards. (Polanyi 1962: 252-253)

Polanyi says of the (cultural) emergence of persons that only a person can understand anything, even in the case of the most precise assertions, and if, in accordance with an objectivist programme, "the active participation of the philosopher in meaning" is left out, then the existence of the person is denied. Of course, nobody can deny his or her own existence; to do so is logically self-contradictory and thus the objectivist programme is simply self-destructive. In the third section, I will show that the synchronic reduction of persons corresponds to this train of thought, and since it cannot be achieved, materialism must therefore be invalid. Before doing so, however, I will first demonstrate that Polanyi's concept of personal reality corresponds to the concept of medium emergence.

## 2. Polanyi's Understanding of Emergence

Polanyi begins "The Rise of Man," the 13<sup>th</sup> and final chapter of his *Personal Knowledge*, with the following:

Living beings can be known only in terms of success or failure. They comprise ascending levels of successful existing and behaving. [...]

Accordingly, it is as meaningless to represent life in terms of physics and chemistry as it would be to interpret a grandfather clock or a Shakespeare sonnet in terms of physics and chemistry; [...] Lower levels do not lack a bearing on higher levels; they define the conditions of their success and account for their failures, but they cannot account for their success, for they cannot even define it. [...]

We must face the fact that life has actually arisen from inanimate matter, and that human beings—including the teachers of mankind who first shaped our knowledge of rightness—have evolved from tiny creatures resembling the parental zygote in which each of us had his individual origin. I shall meet this situation by re-establishing within the logic of achievement, the conception of emergence first postulated by Lloyd Morgan and Samuel Alexander. (Polanyi 1962: 381-382)

Firstly, Polanyi states that the neutral terms of physics and chemistry cannot fully capture the higher-level phenomenon of life, which, according to the logic of achievement, can be known only in the normative terms of success and failure. That is, we cannot give full and explicit descriptions of the higher-level phenomena of life because we have to use our tacit powers to appraise successful achievements and failures and express them in the normative terms of biology. This means that higher-level descriptions of

life cannot be reduced to lower-level physical and chemical descriptions. However, this does not mean that life is entirely beyond matter; on the contrary, life depends on matter because lower levels define the conditions of higher levels and “account for their failures.” Life is dependent on lower levels because it has arisen from inanimate matter during the long course of evolution. This means that life is an emergent phenomenon in the ontological sense.

I would like to emphasize that this is not just my conclusion; in his next sentence, Polanyi himself defines his ontological standpoint as a kind of conception of emergence. It is astonishing how many of Polanyi’s interpreters have missed or overlooked this important fact and its consequences. Polanyi refers to Lloyd Morgan and Samuel Alexander, two of the three great British emergentists. However, it might actually say more that he left out the third, C. D. Broad, who is clearly the most important of the three in the analytical tradition. In contrast, I consider Samuel Alexander to be the most important of the three. The main difference between them, briefly stated, is that Broad’s main example of emergence, as we have seen, is *chemical phenomena* (Broad 1925), while Alexander illustrated his paradigm with *life*; he did not judge the chemical phenomena to be emergent in the ontological sense at all (Alexander 1920 II. 61). Polanyi claims to re-establish Alexander’s and Morgan’s concept of emergence within the *logic of achievement*. His point is that living beings as active knowers who evolve as they try to solve the problems that face them as they act towards their goals. These achievements are the achievements of living beings and are the driving force of evolution. These achievements are not the result of some kind of vital principle or merely the products of a mechanical and neutral notion of natural selection.

This understanding of evolution is once again positioned between two well-known conceptions: vitalism and neo-Darwinism. The former is a kind of dualist theory of evolution, while the latter is a materialist one; between them is the emergentist theory of evolution. This is the reason Polanyi attacks neo-Darwinism so fiercely. As a materialist theory, neo-Darwinism reduces life to inanimate matter. A detailed analysis of these differences and of Polanyi’s understanding of evolution is beyond the scope of this paper; however, it could serve as the foundation of a Third Part.

Living beings can act and solve problems because they have the knowledge to do so, and this knowledge is tacit because—other than human beings—living beings cannot articulate their knowledge into explicit assertions. This means that for Polanyi, *every living being has a kind of personhood* because personhood is the precondition of having any (tacit or explicit) knowledge at all. In his next subchapter, Polanyi writes about emergent evolution in the following way (italics are my own):

The next stage on the way towards *personhood* was reached by the protozoa. The appearance of a nucleus within a bed of protoplasm indicates an increased complexity of internal organization, underlying an external behaviour of immensely augmented self-control. Protozoa move about of their own accord and engage in a variety of deliberate purposive activities. A floating amoeba emits exploratory pseudopodia in all directions, which will catch food or else attach themselves to solid ground and then drag the whole mass of protoplasm with the nucleus in it towards this foothold. All these manoeuvres are coordinated: the amoeba hunts for food. Thus it grows fatter until it reaches the size at which its *personal life* ends by fission.

A further great step was achieved by the aggregation of protozoan-like creatures to multicellular organisms. This enabled animals to evolve a more complex physiology based on sexual reproduction, a manner of propagation which greatly strengthened their *personhood*. (Polanyi 1962: 387)

Let us recall that the title of his book is *Personal Knowledge*. Polanyi makes efforts at many places in his text to make clear that he means to use the term ‘person’ very broadly, denoting with it even the simplest life forms. Hence, for Polanyi, Alexander’s concept of emergence “re-established within the logic of achievement” means the *emergence of persons* during the long course of evolution. There are no eternal souls and nor is mind just a complex bundle of physical processes; there are, instead, emerging persons.

The inarticulate mental capacities developed in our body by the process of evolution become then the tacit coefficients of articulate thought. By the forming and assimilation of an articulate framework these tacit powers kindle a multitude of new intellectual passions. (Polanyi 1962: 389)

Our knowledge is tacit and personal because of our evolutionary emergence as persons and this is the reason we cannot represent the tacit achievements of living beings by the neutral and explicit terms of physics and chemistry; this is also the reason we cannot reduce life.

In a subchapter entitled “The Logic of Emergence,” Polanyi makes clear that he sides with Alexander and not Broad.

The first thing to observe here is that, strictly speaking, it is not the emerged higher form of being, but our knowledge of it, that is unspecifiable in terms of its lower level particulars. We cannot speak of emergence, therefore, except in conjunction with a corresponding progression from a lower to a higher conceptual level. And we realize then that conceptual progression may not always be existential, but that it becomes so by degrees.

For example: pour a handful of shot into a flat-bottomed saucepan, and you will find the grains forming a regular pattern. Crystals owe their symmetrical shapes to a similar principle: molecules of



identical sizes and shapes tend to form regular aggregates in the same way as grains of shot in a saucepan. Is this the emergence of a new comprehensive feature? It is arguable that we could know the complete topography of the atoms in a crystal, without seeing that they form a regular pattern. There is, indeed, always a noticeable logical gap between a topography and a pattern derived from it, and to this extent no pattern is specifiable in terms of its topography. Yet since in the case of a crystal we can easily pass from the pattern to the topography and back again, the conception of such a pattern is in fact not destroyed by a knowledge of its topographic particulars. I would acknowledge, therefore, in this case two distinguishable conceptual levels but not two separate levels of existence. (Polanyi 1962: 393-394)

I believe Polanyi clearly differentiates between the ontological and epistemological sides of reduction, which, as I argued in the First Part of this paper, is highly neglected by mainstream approaches. According to this differentiation, he asserts that there are two kinds of emergence. One of them is when there are two “conceptual” levels but only one “existential,” which corresponds to my understanding of epistemological emergence.

<i>Ontological side</i> (epistemic phenomena ←)	<i>Epistemological side</i> <b>higher level description</b> ↓ <b>reduction method</b> <b>lower level description</b>
<b>material object</b> ← one ‘existential’ level	two ‘conceptual’ levels

The other kind of emergence is, of course, ontological. This is the version of emergence about which we have been speaking throughout this section. Again, this ontological emergence has two “conceptual” and two “existential” levels.

Unlike theorists of strong and weak emergence, for Polanyi, emergence is not defined by synchronic reduction but by the logic of evolutionary achievement. He does not assert that every higher-level phenomenon can be reduced, as is suggested by the theory of weak emergence and nor does he assert that no higher-level phenomena can be reduced, as the theory of strong emergence suggests. Thus Polanyi’s concept of emergence *corresponds entirely to* my theory of medium emergence.

### 3. *A Short Reductionist Argument Against Materialism*

If Polanyi’s emergentist ontology—which I believe to be the foundation of his whole theory of tacit and personal knowledge—is true, then materialism has to be false. But is materialism really false?

In the First Part of this paper, I demonstrated in detail that reduction and emergence are not rival concepts; the rivalry is, however, live in the case of materialism. In the ontological sense, emergent levels

can be reduced (diachronically) to primordial matter, leaving nothing “mysterious” or “magical” in them; diachronical/ontological reduction is only natural science. But now the question is how can we know that a comprehensive object—a rock, a machine, a frog, or a person—is material? The answer, of course, is that the examined object has to be emergent in a synchronic/epistemological sense and has to be successfully reduced to fundamental material conditions. More exactly, if a higher-level description of an object cannot be reduced in this way, this means that it has original reference and meaning, and the object is multi-leveled and not material. (In this paper, I will not argue against dualism by simply denying it; I have instead assumed that non-material objects are multi-leveled and emergent.) But if a higher-level description of an object can be successfully reduced in this synchronic way, then it follows that there is no higher-level object; there are no higher levels at all, but only the fundamental material substance.

<i>Dualism</i>	<i>Emergentism</i>	<i>Materialism</i>
<b>No reduction</b>	<b>Diachronic reduction</b>	<b>Synchronic reduction</b>

Let us put aside our prior convictions for a minute and investigate the objects surrounding us. What does materialism assert? It asserts that there is one kind of reality, one fundamental substance: matter. That is, every higher-level description of objects can be and *has* to be reduced synchronically. There cannot be any exception. If there were, materialism could not stand.

Why, then, do we have to believe in materialism? It is a very *strong* ontological claim, and so far, very few higher-level descriptions have been reduced synchronically (e.g. heat, covalent bonds, etc.); furthermore, these examples are from the *same* field, namely the exact sciences. There are innumerable descriptions of higher-level objects, and there are many fields besides exact sciences that may not mesh well with materialism. Even so, materialism may be true, but if we believe in it we do *not* believe in it because we have established its truth by means of empirical examination, precisely describing higher level objects and synchronically reducing all higher-level descriptions. We can be sure of only one claim about materialism, namely that it is a terribly bold metaphysical program.

What does (medium) emergentism assert? It asserts that there are two different kinds of reality: one kind is the fundamental substance, matter, and the other is the emergent levels dependent upon it that are, in turn, the achievements of emergent evolution. That is, there are higher-level descriptions of objects that can be reduced synchronically and those that cannot be reduced. The former implies epistemological emergence and the latter ontological emergence.

What reasons are there for disbelieving in emer-

gence? Unlike materialism, in the case of emergentism, it is sufficient that only one higher-level description of an object—or, more precisely, only one kind of higher-level description of objects—proves to be epistemologically irreducible, e.g. knowledge or the mind. In comparison to materialism, emergentism is a *far more moderate* ontological claim that, furthermore, *actually corresponds to our experience*, insofar as it seems that there are both reducible and irreducible higher-level descriptions of objects.

If materialism seems far more believable than emergentism, and this is the case for most scientists and philosophers, the reason for its seeming so is certainly not the bright success of its empirical investigations and synchronic reductions of higher-level descriptions of objects. It is rather the false dualism-materialism dichotomy invoked by both materialists and dualists, which undermines the concept of emergentism. We have seen several examples of such argumentation in the First Part of this paper, primarily in the case of reduction, where these theorists skillfully and cleverly discredit the achievements of diachronical reductions, for example.

One final question is of the possibility of the synchronic reduction of one specific object of this section—that is, the possibility of the synchronic reduction of reduction itself as an object. As we have seen in the First Part, reduction has three conditions, at least two different objects (though one of them can perhaps be eliminated), two descriptions of them, and the reduction method itself. On the ontological side are the objects, while on the epistemological side we have the two descriptions and the reduction method that refers to them. However, the latter are not only meaningful epistemic references to the objects; they are also ontological objects in themselves. *Reduction is a human epistemic tool—that is, knowledge itself has to exist and to be wielded skillfully and successfully since otherwise, no reduction will ever be possible.* Thus, if someone believes in materialism, similar to every other object, he or she has to synchronically reduce reduction itself as well.

<i>Ontological side</i>		<i>Epistemological side</i>
(reduction	←)	<b>higher level description</b>
		↓ <b>reduction method</b>
<b>material object</b>	←	<b>lower level description</b>

As we have seen, a successful synchronic reduction is an ontological statement, namely that *only one object exists, the lower level one*. In this case, it is the material substance (in bold on the ontological side of the chart above). However, the other, higher-level object does *not* exist. In this case, it is the reduction itself which, in fact, does not exist. Therefore, in this case, a successful synchronic reduction asserts that *there has been no reduction at all*.

However, the existence of reduction as an object

is the *precondition* of a successful synchronic reduction—*otherwise it cannot be realized*. Reduction, understood as an object, is also present on the epistemological side. It was always there; it has to be there. But now, after a successful reduction, it is no longer there. The consequences, then, are the following:

<i>Ontological side</i>		<i>Epistemological side</i>
<b>Reduction</b>	←	<b>higher level description</b>
<b>material object</b>	←	<b>lower level description</b>

The synchronic reduction of reduction is therefore *unenforceable* and *self-eliminating*. It cannot be turned against itself.

For if the active participation of the philosopher in meaning what he says is regarded by it as a defect which precludes the achievement of objective validity, it must reject itself by these standards (Polanyi 1962: 252-253).

It follows that there is *at least one* higher-level description of an object that *cannot be reduced synchronically*. However, materialism asserts that *every* higher-level description of an object can be and has to be reduced synchronically. Therefore materialism is not and *cannot be valid*.

More precisely, according to this argument, there is more than one higher-level description of an object that cannot be reduced synchronically. This is so because if we believe in emergentism, then reduction—as a form of human knowledge—is the achievement of emergent evolution, which is a single, comprehensive process. Thus, all of the antecedents of human knowledge have to exist and have to be emergent too. I will not argue this point in detail; I would merely like to note that, according to this view, one kind of higher-level description of objects is irreducible synchronically, namely higher-level descriptions of knowledge, from the knowledge of the first primitive prokaryote to the highest levels of human knowledge. A living being like a frog, for example, is ontologically emergent in comparison to heat because the frog has the knowledge required to be successful in achieving its goals—that is, in preserving itself, moving, eating, learning, and storing knowledge about the world. And it cannot be reduced synchronically because its knowledge is tacit and personal, and thus cannot be formulated in the neutral and explicit terms of synchronic reduction or the exact sciences.

Thus, reduction itself is an ontologically emergent object that cannot be reduced synchronically. In point of fact, *this is the reason* that its essence and *real meaning* are the consequence of its success or failure and not its “material” conditions—that is, the concrete reduction method. And now it should be clear why materialists are inclined to think that this is not so and focus on only its conditions.

#### 4. The Main Contra-Arguments of Materialism

In the eyes of materialists, of course, the above argument does not work. The main reason for this, as I discussed in detail in the First Part of this paper, is that materialists do not distinguish the two (epistemological and ontological) sides of reduction, and thus it has no real ontological consequences. But how could it? For materialists, it is clear that everything is material. The only question is the particular synchronic method of reduction—that is, the condition for its success or failure. Thus, if a description of reduction and human knowledge has not been—and, in fact, cannot be—reduced successfully, then nothing happens and materialism remains valid.

Jaegwon Kim himself concedes that human knowledge (in his words, “consciousness” and “qualia”) cannot be reduced, and yet he still wants to defend a kind of materialism (Kim 2005). The reason he neglects elementary logic is the materialists’ false assumption of a dichotomy between monism and dualism. Kim sees dualism as the only other real possibility besides materialist monism, but he finds dualism even less acceptable. Of course, he knows about emergentism, but epistemological emergentism is actually a form or aspect of materialism, but Kim finds ontological emergentism impossible. The main reasons for this skepticism relate to the issues that follow from the concept of physicalism, the notorious notion of downward causation, and the breaking of the causal closure of the physical world (see Kim 1998; 2000; 2002).

In the First Part of this paper, I argued that the now popular term ‘physicalism’ is a *deceptive substitution* for materialism; it suggests that materialism is similar to and inseparable from physics. However, physics is actually an epistemological tool, not an ontological conviction. They are not in the same category. Thus, arguing on the grounds of physicalism is simply an argument from authority; materialists do not consider it to be a genuinely different ontology from materialism.

Nevertheless, there does exist a rationale for using the term ‘physicalism.’ Beginning in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, physics has followed an ontology different from that of the earlier Newtonian paradigm. This argument is, for several reasons, highly problematic. First of all, Newton was not a materialist at all. Second, it is not obvious that theories as varied as Einstein’s General Theory of Relativity, quantum mechanics, or string theory follow the same ontology. Third, if emergentism is true, then physics operates unproblematically with higher-level emergent objects. Thus, materialism follows neither from Newtonian nor from 20<sup>th</sup> century physics, but is actually the consequence of the objectivist ideal of knowledge (Polanyi 1962: 140-141). Moreover, I believe that the facts and theories of 20<sup>th</sup> century physics confirm the principles of emergentism rather than those of materialism,

though there is no room here in which to formulate such a long and complicated argument. It is worth mentioning, however, that even before 1920, Alexander understood Einstein’s theory of relativity as a kind of support for emergentism (Alexander 1920).

The concepts of downward causation and the breaking of the causal closure of the physical world are strongly connected. Higher-level emergent realities act in order to achieve their goals and do so by moving their bodies, which are fundamentally composed of matter. Thus, for example, when a frog catches a fly or a working piston moves a car, both the frog and the piston create top-down effects (downward causation), which interfere with the normal causal chain in the fundamental material level (breaking of the causal closure of the physical world). This is the materialist understanding of what happens when a frog catches a fly or a piston moves a car.

In his famous *Science* paper “*Life’s Irreducible Structure*,” Polanyi clarifies the logic of achievement—that is, how higher-level emergent realities act in order to accomplish their goals—by *differentiating between epistemologically and ontologically emergent higher-level realities, which he calls boundary conditions*. One of them is the *test-tube type*, which *has no influence* on the fundamental material processes taking place within it; the other is the *machine-type* boundary condition, which has the function of *controlling* and *harnessing* fundamental physical and chemical processes for the sake of some kind of *purpose* (Polanyi 1969). The function of a test tube is to make chemical processes observable by isolating them from their natural environment, but without influencing these processes in any significant measure; the test tube is purposeful only in this sense. In contrast, machines are structured not with the intention of making fundamental material processes observable—these processes are interesting only if a machine fails—but in order to utilize these elementary processes for the *purpose* of some kind of work. Consider, for example, a piston that transforms the energy of exploding petrol into rotary motion or a mill that does the same with the energy of flowing water. In these cases, lower-level processes do not go on freely, according to their lower level principles; the specific structures and higher-level engineering principles of the piston and the mill govern (control) and harness these lower-level physical processes in several distinct steps in order to move a car or to grind wheat.

Engineering and physics are two different sciences. Engineering includes the operational principles of machines and some knowledge of physics bearing on these principles. Physics and chemistry, on the other hand, include no knowledge of the operational principles of machines. Hence a complete physical and chemical topography of an object would not tell us whether it is a machine, and if so, how it works, and for what purpose. Physical and chemical inves-

tigations of a machine are meaningless, unless undertaken with a bearing on the previously established operational principles of the machine. (Polanyi 1967: 39)

The fundamental difference between the two types of boundary conditions is that test-tube-type boundary conditions are simply consequences of *lower-level physical processes and principles*, while machine-type boundary conditions are consequences of *higher-level processes and principles*. Consider, for example, an evolving solar system in contrast to an evolving species or a crystal in contrast to a machine.

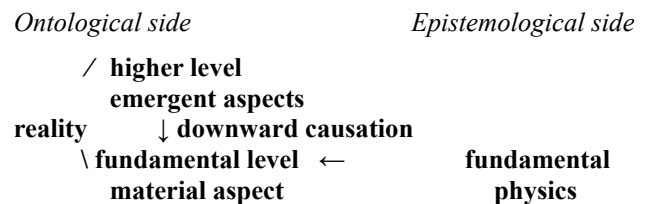
Nevertheless, a machine can control and harness lower-level processes *only via its material parts*, in full accordance with the fundamental laws and principles of physics. The fixed walls of a piston, while controlling and harnessing the flow and explosions of petrol, *do nothing* to contradict the fundamental laws and principles of physics. Higher-level emergent boundary conditions are not independent vital forces or Cartesian substances. Higher-level emergent boundary conditions do not work on their own—that is, against their material conditions—but on the contrary, they rely on their material conditions and work in accordance with them. A piston is a boundary condition shaped into its material fundaments by human beings according to higher-level emergent principles. The interaction between the piston as a higher-level boundary condition and the controlled and harnessed lower-level, physical-chemical processes inside the piston can be understood only at the lower level. This is necessary since the fundamental physical processes, in accordance with their nature, exist only at the fundamental, lower level and thus can interact only at that level. It follows that a higher-level emergent boundary condition can control and harness the lower-level physical-chemical processes in its body only via its own material conditions. Accordingly, the engineer who devises and creates the piston also shapes the piston via his or her material conditions, his or her fundamentally physical body, *just as the piston acts on the petrol*, not by some mysterious mental force or something magical.

So, contrary to materialist impressions, neither the engineer nor the higher level emergent structures violates the fundamental physical laws and principles of nature. The materialist understanding of downward causation and the breaking of the causal closure of the physical world stems from their worldview, according to which *both* the higher and the lower levels are working mechanically, and thus the higher levels would necessarily break the lower causal chains. However, higher emergent levels are emergent precisely because their nature is different in kind from that of the fundamental material level—that is, they are emergent because *they act essentially differently*. In Polanyi's view, they act according to the logic of achievement; they use their bodies to control and harness lower-level processes for the sake of a goal.

According to the logic of achievement, the lower levels also do not have mechanical effects on the higher levels, but merely determine the fundamental material conditions in which higher emergent levels can act. No one can create a piston from air or from water. Iron makes the creation of a piston possible. However, it is not the physical and chemical properties of iron that determine the shape and function of the piston, but rather the higher-level emergent principles of engineering which determine the material conditions in which an engineer can create a piston.

Thus, materialists are correct in positing the existence of downward causation; downward causation must exist since otherwise higher emergent levels could not act and could not be real. However, the breaking of the causal closure of the physical world does not follow from the fact of downward causation; this is merely a materialist (mis)understanding of downward causation. In truth, the concept of the causal closure of the physical world is also only a materialist understanding of the world. According to an emergentist worldview, the causal closure of the physical—or more precisely, the material—world simply does not exist because the world, of course, *is not merely material!* Matter is only one (fundamental) aspect of reality.

In invoking the concept of the causal closure of the physical world, materialists mix up two essentially different concepts, one epistemological, the other ontological. This conflation is camouflaged by the fact that they speak about the causal closure of the physical—not about the causal closure of the material—world as the causal closure of a human epistemological tool called physics and the causal closure of the ontological reality which we call the world would be exactly the same. However, to think that the world is causally closed (I, as an emergentist, would rather say that it is a coherent whole) and to use a causally closed physics are two essentially different things: only materialists regard them as identical.



If someone, according to a materialist conviction, identifies the causally closed system of physics with a coherent system of reality, then he or she will necessarily find that higher level emergent—that is, non-physical—aspects of reality break the causal closure of the lower, physical level. Since higher levels have to act through their fundamentally physical bodies to be real, they then break (by downward causation) the purportedly causally closed system of (physical) reality. This is the reason, according to the materialist argument, that such levels do not and

cannot exist.

Thus, their argument is actually the following: Materialism is true. Physics is a causally closed system. Therefore, reality is physical and is a causally closed system. To be real, emergent levels have to be causally effective. Emergent levels are dependent on the physical level, and thus to be real and causally effective, an emergent level has to have an effect on the physical level (downward causation). However, such causation would create new effects from beyond the physical world, thereby disrupting the causal closure of the physical world. Therefore emergent levels do not and cannot exist, and materialism is true. In short: materialism is true because materialism is true. And facts about the synchronic reduction of objects, of course, do not matter.

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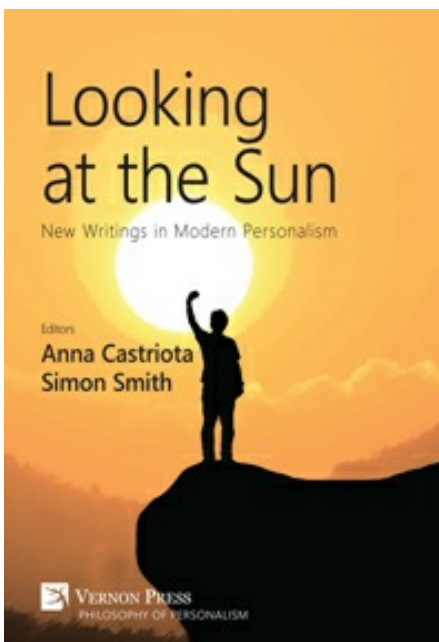
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# RESPONSIBILITY WITHOUT FREEDOM AND THE BURDEN OF PERSONHOOD

*Adriano Naves de Brito*

**Abstract:** Responsibility is a trait constitutive of personhood. A mature person is someone who can be held responsible for their actions. In the prevailing moral tradition, responsibility is dependent on freedom, understood in the strong Kantian sense. The aim of this paper is to disentangle responsibility from freedom in that Kantian sense without weakening the concept of personhood. Therefore, this paper aims to show that responsibility can be understood in naturalistic and immanent terms, i.e. in consonance with the spirit of much of contemporary science, especially the neurosciences. It begins by rejecting freedom as a form of transcendent causality and by placing the debate beyond the dichotomy of compatibilism and incompatibilism. It goes on to describe the evolutionary roots of the human brain's ability to take norms into account in the decision-making process. I finish by applying a naturalistic concept of responsibility to some borderline cases. The main thesis of this paper is that persons are responsible if they can respond in accordance with the social demands, a trait which also constitutes one of the central burdens of personhood.

**Keywords:** freedom, responsibility, determinism, compatibilism, moral evolution

## ***1. Introduction***

Relations between philosophy and sciences have been reworked. In the twentieth century, these relations were weakened, partly due to scientific specialisation and partly to the humanist vocation of philosophy which inspires it to take on a normative bias aiming more at prescription than at description. At the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the last century, physics and mathematics had a great influence on philosophy. Biology, neuroscience and psychology have recently reintroduced science into philosophical reflection, with consequences that are still only timidly taken up by academic philosophy. This is especially true with regard to the concept of personhood. The influence of those disciplines is disturbing, once the biological roots of the cultural nature of humans are more deeply scrutinized.

This paper appreciates this new rapprochement; it is naturalistic in the sense that it espouses the idea that all natural phenomena, whether physical or mental, can be explained only by natural forces, are immanent in nature itself. It is also naturalistic in the sense that it does *not* deny the possibility that there are supernatural forces which determine the world. The denial of this possibility, like its affirmation, would go beyond the knowledge we can have of the world and would, therefore, be a transgression of the limits of natural-

ism. Since I am assuming that epistemically we cannot go beyond what is immanent in nature, I also assume that any assertion about supernatural forces does not provide any explanatory value to a proper account of natural phenomena understood within the constraints posited. Therefore, I assume that the assertion of the existence of supernatural forces has no epistemic value for the kind of naturalistic standpoint I espouse herein; such forces so do not concern a naturalized ontology. In this sense, the naturalism I advocate is ontological and epistemic, but not metaphysical, by which I mean that I am not concerned with entities beyond the limits of physics. From that metaphysical (i.e. transcendent) standpoint, the naturalism that I espouse has nothing to say. In the meaning that the term "critique" has for Kant's mature, transcendental philosophy (1781), the naturalism propounded here may well be called 'critical naturalism.' It is a naturalism that reaches out as far as possible experience reaches; experience, it should be said, such as the sciences aim to discover and are equipped to handle.

It is from this naturalistic viewpoint that I shall discuss ethics and personhood, especially the relationship between responsibility and freedom regarding the ethical dimension of personhood. My purpose is to defend the position that we can get rid of freedom, understood in the strong Kantian sense, without jeopardizing the capacity of persons to bear responsibility and, in turn, without jeopardizing personhood. That position might be considered compatibilist were it not for the fact that it denies freedom as a kind of causality and, thus, avoids the need to render it compatible with the forces of nature. For the same reason, this position cannot be classified within the scope of incompatibilism. This is because, without causality by freedom, there is nothing that might be incompatible with natural determinations. Given that I begin with the denial of causality by freedom, which eliminates part of the problem to which I want to dedicate myself in this paper, my core task will be to explain the second element of the problem, i.e. responsibility, without freedom.

## ***2. Dispensing with Freedom***

Before dispensing with freedom, it may be useful to provide a better explanation of my *ab ovo* denial of it, so that the notion of responsibility, which I have to account for will also become clearer. As regards freedom, I am considering positions that are well-illustrated by those defended by Chisholm (1966) and Strawson (1994) and those that sustain themselves due to the same background concept of metaphysics, namely the idea that responsibility implies the agent's full autonomy, ergo, the agent's capacity, in Kant's

terms, to start a causal chain by themselves.

Let us first take Chisholm's view. He says about the conditioning factors of responsibility:

If we are responsible [...] then we have a prerogative which some would attribute only to God: each of us, when we act, is a prime mover unmoved. In doing what we do, we cause certain things to happen, and nothing—or no one—causes us to cause these events to happen (Chisholm, 1966).

In order to establish a perspective for this position, it is worth noting that, in the philosophies of Kant and of Descartes, it is precisely the property of our being free, in a metaphysical sense, that brings us closer to God. The theory of error proposed by Descartes (1641), for instance, is based on the assumption that our will is infinite, like that of God, but that our understanding is limited. The same, *mutatis mutandis*, applies to Kant (1788). As legislators of a Kingdom of Ends, we are like deities; but as knowing beings, we are limited by the conditions of possibility, of experience. Chisholm is, therefore, one among a long line of thinkers who consistently think about freedom as an *uncaused* causality. I say 'consistent' because only this strong, metaphysically charged notion solves the metaphysical problem of responsibility without further gaps or difficulties. If persons are free in this divine (and metaphysical) sense, persons are responsible, and nothing else needs to be added to the topic. Consistency alone, however, although an important theoretical virtue, cannot settle what reality is like. Since an uncaused causality cannot be the subject of any possible experience, as Kant himself have made clear in his first *Critique*, the metaphysical solution solves a metaphysical problem, but not the ontological doubt concerning the existence of a kind of causality which is not caused.

More recently Galen Strawson (1986) continues this metaphysical tradition with an argument that, although coming from the same metaphysical foundations as those that characterise the relationship between freedom and responsibility, diverges from his predecessors regarding divinity of human being or any other being and consequently derives a skeptical position regarding responsibility. Strawson argues

- (i) Nothing can be *causa sui* – nothing can be the cause of itself
- (ii) In order to be truly morally responsible for one's actions, one would have to be *causa sui*, at least in certain crucial mental respects.
- (iii) Therefore, nothing can be truly morally responsible (Strawson, 1986).

Strawson rules out the possibility that there may exist some being that is, in a metaphysically relevant sense, *causa sui* and takes a position that coincides with metaphysical naturalism, namely, that it is impossible that there are supernatural forces that determine nature. On that basis, and on the basis of the notion of responsibility used by the metaphysical tradition

highlighted above in quoting Chisholm, nothing or nobody can be responsible. Thus, Strawson's skeptical position is consistent with the notion of responsibility that Chisholm espouses and that, as I said, is the same as the tradition for which Kant is the paradigmatic representative. Strawson's position appears to offer a further advantage thanks to the metaphysical naturalism that it incorporates. This is because it can play the same card as its respectable predecessors concerning responsibility, without, however, offending the scientific spirit of our times. In my view, this appearance is misleading. Strawson has already offended the scientific spirit by adopting a metaphysical naturalism and a concept of responsibility, which is not naturalistic. I shall return to this point below.

I disentangle myself from these positions without undoing the metaphysical knots with which they were woven. The type of naturalism I espouse allows me to do this without much trouble, although this move will charge its price, not in the field of freedom, but in that of responsibility. To explain: if the conditions to attribute responsibility imply assertions about the metaphysical status of our species as peopled by individuals who are between gods and mortals, or else assertions about divine entities themselves, these conditions cannot be met by science or any discipline that operates within the limits of ontological immanence. The type of naturalism I adopt is epistemic in character and committed to an immanent ontology, so limits the scope of the investigation and the treatment of the problem, thereby forcing me to dispense with freedom. The same critical naturalism leads us to reject, precisely for the same reasons, Strawson's position, which, as I attempted to make clear, must be committed to a statement of a metaphysical nature, even if naturalistic. This goes beyond the limits of what the sciences can contribute, viz. that nothing can be *causa sui*. Now, no science can claim that there cannot be something that is *causa sui*.

A direct consequence of the conjunction of a critical naturalism with the arguments of this line of thinking would be skepticism regarding responsibility. The argument would be as follows: if we cannot know whether there are or are not beings that can be *causa sui*, whether we ourselves, at least regarding morality, can cause our own actions, then neither can we know whether someone can or cannot be considered responsible for their actions. As I warned, the bill for the position I take is charged in the field of responsibility. How can one respond to this predicament? There is no reasonable response if the terms of the problem are not changed. The skeptical conclusion is inevitable if the notion of responsibility is maintained just as the tradition – that I will call the tradition of Kant – conceives and accepts it. Do we have good reasons to maintain it? My answer is that we do not.

Since, within the Kantian tradition, responsibility

depends on transcendent freedom – a notion which, being no less metaphysically charged, must be eliminated from an explanation of moral phenomenon in consonance with critical naturalism – the notion of responsibility must also be affected by this disentanglement. As regards responsibility, however, the point is not to get eliminate or deny it. Contrary to freedom – taken as a *sui generis* causality – the denial of responsibility unavoidably limits the explanation of morality. Without the notion of responsibility, morality makes no sense, as is confirmed by human moral practices.

Skepticism with respect to responsibility may even prohibit metaphysical certainty regarding guilt, which would require the assimilation of freedom; but it cannot limit the game of mutual evaluations that we humans play daily. Without the act of holding a person responsible, the dynamics of morality simply could not start to move. Responsibility, then, must be able to circulate in this world without its metaphysical counterpart, viz. freedom as causality. A philosophical position that begins with this finding must offer a notion of responsibility, that, although it does not overload it metaphysically, cannot take away the role it plays in the moral phenomenon, i.e. its role as a foundation for the attribution of guilt. Moral skepticism may motivate philosophers, but does not really affect ordinary life.

### 3. Morality and Evolution

Seen from an evolutionary perspective, morality is related to facilitating cooperation. It is, thus, a functional trait of collective human behaviour that evolved from the behaviour of the species that preceded pre-sapiens ancestry. Given its importance for the reciprocal control of the behaviour of individuals in a group, and given the importance of group life for *homo sapiens sapiens*, morality is not only functional, but it also gave it an advantage in dealing with natural selection.

The control of individuals' behaviour for a sustainable life in a group implies both the selection of preferences appropriate to this kind of sociability – as, for instance, the proper dispositions to positive and negative affective reactions, such as indignation, guilt and moral approval vis-à-vis, respectively, the deviation of behaviour or behavioural appropriateness – and the selection of neuronal structures that can correct individual behaviours. In species such as ours, with such a flexible menu of behaviours, the mechanisms of adjustment of individuals' behaviour are decisive to ensure, at the same time, adaptability and functionality of the groups (Brito, 2014). Recent studies show that the neuronal structures are influenced by the threat of punishment in a process that reinforces the susceptibility of individuals to these threats and, in turn, favours the institution of rules of conduct, whose result in turn would be an increment in the capacity of cooperation among groups. These studies illuminate

the functionality of the modern systems of justice based on very primitive, but spectacularly efficient evolutionary processes. The study by J. W. Buckholtz and R. Marois (2012), "The Roots of Modern Justice: Cognitive and Neural Foundations of Social Norms and their Enforcement" goes in this direction. According to the authors, the bias created by the threat of punishment influences the reward-based decision-making mechanisms, so that the individuals will, because of this, have a greater propensity to behaviours appropriate to the rules prevailing in the group, which would make cooperation easier. This conclusion is by Buckholtz & Marois, who formulate it as follows:

The research is consistent with the hypothesis that the evolution of norm-based decision making mechanisms may have been facilitated by the presence of neural circuitry that supports domain-general cognitive processes for value-based action selection. Such processes may have been co-opted and expanded to operate in the social domain where they promote action selection according to higher-order action values linked to social rewards, such as reputation and trust, thereby facilitating cooperation (2012, 655).

The relationship between neuronal structures, biases, and decision-making is clearer when the species 'human being' is considered against the background of their biological condition. Insofar as we are animals, we are a body and a brain that make up the same whole that acts in a given direction, although it is not exhaustively determined. The direction is determined by the basic preferences that result from the traits that were reinforced in the natural selection process, traits that were reinforced because they allowed a better adaptation to the diversities of the evolutionary environment. One of them is sociability. The behavioural bias that is thus outlined, however, leaves considerable elbow room in which the groups can move and organize their behaviour in order to carry out the main tasks and challenges of an individual's life, i.e., surviving and procreating.

In the case of genus *homo*, thanks to its magnificent brain capacity, these tasks and challenges were broken down into a great number of other activities and could be efficiently performed and overcome in such varied ways that the elbow room in the most successful species, ours, broadened to the point of appearing to be free from the determinations of its animal nature. Despite the elbow room that our species has to organize its life as a group, we are animals, animals that end up having a personhood in a given culture.

As animals, we are susceptible to the causal determinations that influence all living beings, but also to those determinations that are specific to us because of the type of behaviour that we have to prefer in consonance with the traits that natural selection has reinforced in us. Everything according to a causal continuum that knows no exception, that is, without



the need to consider any supernatural force to explain this process adequately. As Dennett explains: ‘Our brains have been designed by natural selection, and all the products of our brains have likewise been designed, on a much swifter timescale, by physical processes in which no exemption from causality can be discerned’ (Dennett, 2003, 305). It is in this framework of causal determinations in which we have our peculiarities as a species, but no transcendent privilege that responsibility must fit. And it does fit.

Two conditions are required for it to make sense to attribute responsibility to an individual who is, as Aristotle (1997) defined it, a ζῷον πολιτικόν, an animal with a social life, an animal adapted to urban life, in which interaction and cooperation among individuals is the rule. The conditions are as follows: (1) that they can act in another way, or, as we say about an action that has already been performed, that they could have acted differently from the way they did, and (2) that they are susceptible to the influence of external moral pressure on their behaviour. The concept of human being that I outlined above and these two conditions provide the core for a theory of responsibility that, within the limits of critical naturalism espoused here, dispenses with freedom as causality. Once freedom as causality has been dispensed with, it is not ruled out that, in Dennett’s terms (1994 & 2003), there is room for different courses of action to take place, and that carrying one of them out implies an individual taken as a causal link of events, for whose consequences they can be held responsible given the conditions listed above.

In what follows, I explain these two conditions and show why they are compatible with what the judicial systems consider indispensable for imputability, just as they are compatible with the conditions that we take as indispensable to attribute responsibility to persons within the scope of morality.

#### **4. Responsibility and Control of Behaviour**

The first condition needed to render an individual responsible is that which distinguishes a voluntary action from an involuntary one. The matter is not merely physical or biological – that is, whether the individual was causally implicated in the course of ongoing actions and had biological control of their actions – but also psychological in a subjective sense; that is, in the sense that the individual could exert influence through their capacity to make choices, at the limits of reasonable pressure, on the direction of the facts that conditioned their action. If the physical and biological conditioning factors imposed the action on the individual, or if the psychological pressures were so great that it would not be reasonable to expect individuals generally to resist them and act in another way, then the individual is non-imputable. This means that it does not make sense to require from them that they should have acted otherwise. If the limiting conditions that have just been presented are not given,

then the individual is imputable. The reasoning, once the due adjustments have been made, can be applied to omission. An involuntary omission does not imply imputability, whereas a voluntary omission does. ‘Voluntary,’ therefore, is not defined through a causality by freedom, but through natural causality. The development of facts requires that an individual take action; in the sense that they are a link in the causal chain and have room to choose more than one course of action, according to the forces that prevailed.

The second condition is connected to the first as a specification of the type of requirement, which pertains to responsibility, i.e., a moral requirement in the broad sense, that is, which also includes the legal requirements. If the individual could act in another way (also as regards omitting themselves or not) and if they were susceptible to moral pressures, in other words, if the prevailing normative requirements could prevail in their decision, then they are responsible for their acts, and it makes sense to consider them responsible precisely because it made sense to demand of them that they should have acted in a specific manner and under the then prevailing moral – in a broad sense – constraints. Under these conditions, responsibility, as well as the will as I described it previously, does not demand causality by freedom but, conversely, they assume that the individual is willing to be determined. In other words, the disposition to have behaviour guided by the moral pressure that the socially or legally constituted group exerts on them. Holding a person responsible is itself a fundamental part of the pressure that is exerted on the individual. It is because they anticipate its possibility that they guide their decisions appropriately, in a mechanism that may well be explained by the same neuronal structures and processes pointed out in the study by Buckholtz and Marois (2012) cited earlier. Paraphrasing another Strawson (1962), P. F., the practice of holding a person responsible does not only exploit our nature, it expresses it.

In brief, the responsibility of an individual depends on their action – understood in a broad sense so as to include omissions – being voluntary in a sense that does not imply freedom as causality, but takes into account the causalities involved in the circumstances of the action. An individual deliberates under the effect of the causalities which have an influence over their action, with or without an awareness of all of them, and the judgment as to whether their action can or not be considered their responsibility takes into account the force of these influences and not the individual’s capacity to start, without the concurrence of those influences, a causal chain through an act of freedom. Once the conditions are evaluated by those who judge the case – morally or legally – if the action is considered involuntary, then the responsibility of the individual agent will be excluded. This evaluation is subjective, since it takes into account the agent’s intention. However, it is also objective insofar as it

considers the facts and constraints that influenced or should have influenced the agent, including the very pressure of the then relevant and prevailing normative requirements. The objectivity of the evaluation highlights precisely the second condition required to hold the agent responsible, i.e., that they have the disposition to be affected by the external requirements of other individuals or of the system of norms to which they are submitted. The idea that the agent should have been influenced differently by the circumstances is essential for holding them responsible, but the very act of holding responsible, or the possibility of treating someone as responsible, is considered a factor that should have influenced and finally determined their action. In this way, even if the agent has a second-order wish which is identical in content to the first order wish to commit an illegal or objectionable act, if the circumstances and her dispositions are such that she could have been influenced, concerning her second order desire too, differently by the circumstances, then it makes sense to consider her responsible. In this case, the agent's bias towards the reprobable desire is not an excuse for her not to be imputed. The point is that she should have been influenced differently also in her second-order desire by social and legal norms. Here the burden of a mature personhood has its price. This conclusion agrees with that of Frankfurt (1971), although it comes from a different meta-ethical position.

Once the second condition, the disposition to be effectively affected by moral pressure in the broad sense, is met, it is appropriate to evaluate the merit or demerit of the individual's action in order to establish the extent to which imputability can be attributed to her. In other words, it should be determined to what extent her disposition is susceptible to pressures towards behaviour other than the one she chose. Here, one must find out whether there was deceitfulness or malice. If deceitfulness or malice cannot be found, the objective conditions may be suspended, since it is no longer possible to determine whether the agent could react as the current conditions, norms and pressures required them to act, which includes the possibility that they might be considered responsible for the result of the action. The mature capacity for deceitfulness and malice is also a condition for a mature personhood.

I turn now to paradigmatic legal cases to explain this point. Let us start with that of Phineas Gage. The case, made famous by Antonio Damásio (1994), is a clear illustration of this point. Gage's behaviour was affected by an accident that destroyed a large part of his left frontal lobe, and he was no longer responsible for his acts, not because he did not cause them, but because his susceptibility to the moral pressures of society was affected so that his behaviour became unpredictable and could no longer be determined by the pressure exerted on him by the others. Because of this, even the act of holding him responsible was no

longer effective as a behavioural constraint. Gage's mind could no longer be influenced towards the group's expectations, but was influenced by forces that led his behaviour to disagree with those expectations and disagree in a way that was unpredictable and could not be corrected by ordinary moral pressures, including responsibility. Moreover, he lacked the capacity to feel guilt for not acting in accordance with the social influences he was exposed to. His personhood was impaired.

Another interesting case is that of juveniles. When considering a given reprehensible result, one might suppose that they could, under those circumstances, have acted in another way. However, imputability is impaired by the uncertainty regarding the efficiency of social and moral pressure on them. The matter of deceitfulness or malice cannot be investigated, because the agent cannot yet be considered someone who can conjugate, as expected, the circumstances and normative requirements prevailing at the time of the action. Under these conditions, the evaluation of deceitfulness or malice is suspended and, therefore, also the evaluation of guilt. Considering the stages of neurological development of juveniles, the best explanation to diminish their responsibility is not the fact that they cannot freely start causal chains, but the fact that they are still poorly guided under moral pressure. This means that the moral pressure exerted by the social group on the juveniles can result in behaviours different from expected, without it being possible to determine the guilt of individuals as regards this result, so that investigating guilt also loses its object, i.e. an objective ensemble of circumstances and an agent who is predictably susceptible to normative pressures.

The same reasoning can be applied to another paradigmatic case, viz. psychopaths. Even though they can understand the rules, their susceptibility to the moral pressures of the group is not enough to predict their behaviour accordingly, with an acceptable guarantee for the group that can be harmed by the psychopath. They might be capable of deceitfulness or malice, but in an artificial way, since they cannot feel (and therefore fully understand) the burden of guilt that should accompany those who have developed a mature personhood.

What connects these examples is the following: it makes sense to hold individuals responsible if and only if they are susceptible to legal, moral, or social determinations. Therefore, individuals are responsible if they can be properly determined by socially founded constraints and not if they are free in an empirically enigmatic metaphysical sense. Of course, that an individual could have been determined differently in a given situation is not simply a matter of fact, but also, and primarily, a matter of evaluation that is exactly what a system of morality is about.

To sum up, I am suggesting that, on the basis of the view on responsibility I have defended and the examples that I have highlighted in this paper, a

naturalistic but critical approach to the problem of responsibility can make sense of the way we ordinarily deal with deviant behaviour both in the legal system and daily life. Responsibility is precisely the kind of social and moral concept we need to make life among complex social beings possible. Or, to put in another way, responsibility is an indispensable tool to control the behaviour of social individuals who are complex enough to bear personhood.

### 5. Conclusion

The objective of this paper was to present the outline of a naturalized view of responsibility, such that the latter could be understood in terms of natural and immanent causality; that is, without the assumption of causality by freedom. From the point of view of a critical naturalism, as I have defined it, responsibility can be explained based on the disposition of the agent to be appropriately influenced, that is, influenced by the mutual demands that can be made on them by members of society and that, in turn, are guided by reasonable moral principles. That reasonability, when considered from the naturalist perspective, is aligned with the principles and preferences that favour cooperation and that constituted an evolutionary advantage for our species. It makes sense to hold individuals responsible if they are susceptible to the social influences, amongst which is precisely the act of holding a person responsible, whose anticipation should, by means of guilt and as expected by the other members of the social group, influence the decisions of an individual towards aligning them with the prevailing norms, whether contained in statutes or not.

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### Book Announcement

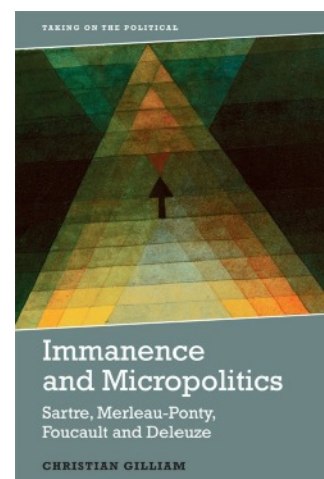
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## ***Immanence and Micropolitics*** ***Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Foucault and Deleuze***

by

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Christian Gilliam argues that a philosophy of 'pure' immanence is integral to the development of an alternative understanding of 'the political'; one that re-orientes our understanding of the self toward the concept of an unconscious or 'micropolitical' life of desire. He argues that here, in this 'life', is where the power relations integral to the continuation of post-industrial capitalism are most present and most at stake.



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## IN THE ISLE OF THE MOUNTAIN KING: BERGMAN ON *SHAME* AND THE CALL OF ART

*Torgeir Fjeld*

**Abstract:** The present article reconnects two of Ingmar Bergman's films from the mid '60s to notions of anxiety, alienation and creativity. *Shame*, a film set in a village ravaged by war, provides the viewer with three senses of transversality: (1) as a crossing of the ego's boundaries; (2) as a sexual and political transgression; and (3) as an intervention of an abstract power. To Søren Kierkegaard, despair and anguish are key emotions to eclipse the sense of powerlessness brought about by depression and alienation. In *Hour of the Wolf*, the main character follows his calling to pursue his art at the expense of his romantic relationship. This summoning has an ambiguous character, since we cannot fully decide if it functions as a liberating or demonic force.

**Keywords:** anxiety; art; Bergman; calling; psychoanalysis

### 1. Introduction

With a twist to Søren Kierkegaard's remarks *On Anxiety*, we could say that man is neurotic in so far as he fears that which would heal him. What is shameful in our existence is precisely that which is unavoidable: to Kierkegaard this core of our being was inextricably connected to our sinfulness. The tragic character of man's fall from grace is an attribute of its necessary relation to our ability to speak and symbolise. When we enter into the order of symbols, we stand in an inevitable relation to a lack: that which we most desire is at the same time the object which must remain hidden to us, since it is the object of desire that belongs to our father. Our unconscious attempts to wrest this object from the very person who inaugurated our participation in the order of symbols is what Kierkegaard referred to as our sinful relation to existence.

Ingmar Bergman – the name that etymologically connects the rugged landscape of the Scandinavian peninsula with the man who inhabits it – remains the premier *auteur* of Scandinavian cinema, the uncrowned king of the silver screen. By the mid '60s he had already achieved fame and secured a name for himself in Swedish cinema as a director who could be relied upon to make films that were both artistically prominent and financially solid.<sup>1</sup> He drew crowds to the theatre. And when hard times hit his production agency, Bergman considered moving out of Sweden.

A bout of serious pneumonia – a case that had Bergman hospitalised and unable to work – and a suggestion from a friend in *Swedish Film* that he should have a look at the small island of Fårø, situated between Sweden and Finland, just north of Gotland in the Baltic Sea resulted in a life-long commitment. It was on this island that Bergman built the home where he read, wrote, thought and directed for the rest of his life, at first living together with the actress Liv

Ullman and their daughter Linn.

Here, nestled almost invisibly along the cliffs Bergman erected a series of buildings, including a full film theatre, where he – in his own words – watched at least one film a day, and it was here that he found his mountain hall. The image connects him to the literary tradition of his partner, Liv Ullmann. Her Norwegian heritage includes Henrik Ibsen, whose most well-known portrayal of the Norwegian psyche – Peer Gynt – has as its corner-piece a depiction of a troll – the Mountain King – who lives inside a mountain with his daughter and their obedient followers.

It is inside this mountain that everything that is ugly in the outer world becomes beautiful, and everything that is appealing to us in our ordinary lives – as the case was with the daughter of the Mountain King, who appeared so attractive to Peer that he decided to follow her into the mountain – becomes ugly and hateful. Inside such a mountain Bergman made his illusions.

What was in the eye of the already acclaimed director when he arrived on Fårø? What is certain is that he brought with him several ideas and manuscripts for films, two of which shall be the topic of our discussion here. Both are set on an island, and shot partly on Fårø, featuring distinct, weather-susceptible landscapes: windy beaches, strange, almost non-figurative rocks that stick out of the cliffs and stretch towards the grey sky. Both movies are shot in black-and-white, and they have a small ensemble cast, featuring Bergman's favourite actors Liv Ullman, his then partner, and Max von Sydow in key roles.

The *I* of Bergman – his personal interrogation of his past and present – is a different matter. In the context of the financial challenges facing his production company Swedish Film and the ongoing and at times volatile debate over the West's war in Vietnam, the two films *Shame* and *Hour of the Wolf* in different ways bring Bergman's childhood experiences into the domain of Kierkegaard's view on anxiety, sin and redemption. Bergman grew up with a strict, pietist father, who served as a priest in the local church. At several points in his career Bergman alludes to the corporal punishment and austere lifestyle he experienced as a boy. His speculations around sin and guilt are core components of his *oeuvre*, and the ways his characters endure and work through such emotions typify his work.

The isle of the Mountain King thus became the site of the *I* of a rapidly more acclaimed *auteur* of international cinema, and a place where his *eye* worked to incorporate the Scandinavian landscape and his times into artwork that had a peculiarly *personal* approach.

## 2. *Transversing Power*

While Bergman has become mostly known for his films that discussed *universal* themes, such as trauma and healing in *Persona*, life's existential conditions in, e.g., *The Seventh Seal* [Sjunde inseglet], and childhood and memory, for instance in the semi-autobiographical *Fanny and Alexander*, he also made films – and particularly one film – that was not only universal in its thematic approach, but also *global* and *political*. It is fair to say that this movie – *Shame* – is his least loved film. He would comment later that it was an unsuccessful attempt.<sup>2</sup> However, when an *auteur* such as Bergman fails, it is not the ordinary kind of failure. *Shame* really stands as an extraordinary film, both with reference to the dogma of what it would mean to make political artwork at the time, but also – and more importantly – in the context of Bergman's own production.<sup>3</sup> *Shame* is a war-drama, a political thriller, and yet first and foremost a psychological chamber-piece that outshines most attempts. Let us be very clear about this from the very beginning: Bergman did have a political engagement in his youth that culminated in the disaster of Dresden. It was not something he was particularly keen on talking about. In fact, his participation in rallies in Germany in the 1930s in support of the NSDAP only became properly revealed in his autobiographies late in life<sup>4</sup> And it is not unreasonable to assume that it was precisely his disastrous affiliation in his youth that led Bergman to eschew political topics in his theatre productions and films from the very beginning. There is, however, one important exception from this general outlook, and that is *Shame*, the film Bergman made at the height of the American engagement in Vietnam. What is clear is that Bergman had seen footage from Vietnam on television and was deeply moved, like many young people of his time.<sup>5</sup>

What is also clear, however, is that *Shame* is no direct commentary on the contemporary conflagration. We are presented with events that take place on an island outside Sweden: invading forces overtake a small village and its inhabitants flee in search of safety. When the film ends we are following the two main characters as they drift in a sea of dead bodies. They haven't arrived anywhere; they haven't found what they're looking for. In other words, the ending is open. But what is crucially present, is that they are still somewhere in the vicinity of the island where the film began. The dialogue is in Swedish, the actors are known Scandinavian stars, and the landscape and sets place us in rural Sweden. However, since there are no direct references to either place or time, the action could essentially take place anywhere and at any particular time.

Bergman, even at his most political, cannot abstain from bringing to the table questions that are best regarded as theological: what seems to be a war drama and a political thriller quickly transforms into a psychological chamber play, and, as the logic of the

spiritual order of events unfolds, it culminates in a kind of destitution known only from the ontology of Søren Kierkegaard: this is man at the moment of reckoning, when all we can do is to – in a phrase from Franz Kafka – *give it up*.

Let's begin by unpacking the notion of transversal, which is crucial to our understanding of *Shame*. In the psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan the term is applied to cases where the subject migrates from a fantasmatic order, either through therapeutic work or by some event that renders our frame of self-understanding vulnerable and potentially threatened. There are essentially two responses to such a situation: either we retort by aggressively trying to re-establish the perimeter of our previous ego, or we are transported into the domain of what Lacan referred to as hysterical inversion. In the latter case, the subject experiences an immense sense of threat to the self, often communicated as images of severed limbs and monstrous apparitions, or as a traumatic separation from any secure harbour. What is crucial is that through the latter response, there is a possibility of a momentous effect on the subject, in the sense that as the old ego defences are rendered obsolete, new perceptions and a novel understanding of the self appears.

To understand how Lacan uses the term *fantasy* it is crucial to know that in his psychoanalysis illusions are necessary defences that uphold and sustain the ego. The loss of a fantasy can be experienced as highly traumatic, and we should see the therapeutic work as not engaged in some project of in any sense *ridding* the subject of illusions. Rather, we should heed the pessimist Leopardi's words that man is happier the more illusions he harbours.

What is the case, though, is that in Bergman's *Shame*, the two main characters – a middle aged couple who live happily in rustic, rural Sweden – have their idyllic fantasy ruptured through the intervention of what Lacan in his later works referred to as the Real. The way this domain is introduced in the film is by an uncanny malfunctioning of their radio. Several of the opening scenes pass as we are introduced to their domestic life at the farm, all the while they can't get the radio to work. It takes persistence, and even a bit of force, to get the technology that connects them to modernity to work. And when it *does* work, it is only to inform them that war is impending: invading forces are in the area, and the couple drives off to the village to connect with their neighbours and catch up on the latest news.

Transversal in this *first* sense, then, describes how the structures of the ego is overrun by some external force, which in this case is emerging from Lacan's Real. The effect is to disrupt a perception of one-self and one's surroundings as harmonious and settled. What we have, rather, is a sense of deep uncertainty: about the future, about the forces that govern the main characters' existence, and about what actions are necessary to reconfigure their domain of operation.

In the village, events in the larger social space have overtaken ordinary expectation to such an extent that the film ushers into a new trajectory. We are no longer in the rustic Arcadia of young love, but in the middle of a political thriller. The main characters are accused of abetting the enemy, and exposed to severe interrogation. When they are later acquitted, it happens under the benevolence of a local strongman. The former political chief of the village has become head of its military defence, and it is to *him* the main characters are told that they owe their freedom and their lives.

What happens next is that on their return to their smallholding, the military strongman knocks on their door, treats them to wine and promises, and ends up sleeping with the heroine, first making overtures to her in their bedroom while her partner is sleeping in the kitchen, and later making love in the green-house, where enemy troops surprise them. In the end, her partner betrays the military strongman, who is taken out to the courtyard to be shot. It is, finally, the male hero of the film who is charged with the task, and he completes his assignment off-screen. The political drama has, in a sense, come to an end: the strongman who threatened the relationship has been eliminated, and – despite the tumultuous context – order has been restored in the affair.

The kind of transversal we have in this *second* part, then, is somewhat different from the strictly psycho-analytic encounter we saw at the opening scenes. Here, the migratory claim is *not* made on the strictly mental domain, but in the larger political space. The analogy lies in that in both cases there *is* an established order – of the psyche or of sexual affairs – that is unsettled, and in the latter case the male protagonist *restores* order by eliminating his rival.

In that sense, the second case of transversality is constituted as a *double*: it is efficient *both* as a primary disturbance of a settled sexual relationship, *and* as its *reassertion* through the removal of the disturbing element. What is crucial, however, is to note how the power dynamic of the sexual relationship acts as a motor to alter the dynamic of the larger political space. When the male hero kills the military strongman he *does* in fact aid and abet the enemy, an act that he had previously been accused of, but which he – at that time – had not done. The deepest fear of the forces tasked with defending his country has therefore come true: there *was* a traitor among them, and it *was* the person they feared it to be, but they made their accusation at *the wrong time*.<sup>6</sup>

While the first transversal was constituted in the psychological domain – as an unexpected intervention into the fantasmatic *Lebenswelt* of the main characters –, and the second in the political arena – when the military strongman intrudes into the psycho-sexual relations of our heroes, only to be eliminated as an unwanted rival – the third transversal announces itself as an imposition of power *as such* (see fig. 1). What *is* this power that we should refer to as a purely abstract force?

To borrow from Giorgio Agamben's re-reading of the Torah and the New Testament, the power referred to by theology is a force that establishes itself as eternal, and therefore absolute. What is required of mortals and beings that are *finite* in character is to enter into a relation of power that is marked by *praise* and *glorification*. For instance, when Paul states that eternal life is placed under the sign of glory it means simply that the bodies of those who are just will arise in glory and turn into glory and indestructible spirit:

That which is sown in dishonour is raised in glory.  
That which is sown in weakness, is raised in power.  
That which is sown in a body of nature is raised in a body of spirit. (1 Corinthians 15: 43-44)

It is in this context we should understand the final scenes of *Shame*: as a confrontation with a power that has the potentiality to raise our sinful, or – as psychoanalysts would say - patricidal character to the domain of spirit and the Absolute. In *Shame*, this disjuncture takes the form of an aftermath to the bloody upheaval caused by the alien invasion: our heroes, now bereft of any rustic illusions with regard to the erotic, are fleeing from their war-torn island, and in the final scenes we encounter them in a rowing boat, drifting through the fog, crammed together with other refugees, thirsty and starving. What holds the two main characters together in the end is merely their purview of what Lacan referred as the Real of sexual reproduction: the man protects his partner and the potentiality of a future child to the best of his capacity (Lacan 1981: 205). What is it he must do? In the waters around the boat bodies of dead soldiers float by. The small vessel carrying the refugees get stuck among the bodies, and the male hero takes an oar to push away the corpses so as to allow their boat to continue toward what they can only surmise to be a haven that will take them in.

What is this but a scene of utter despair and destitution? War – it's a horrible shame, we should say, but there is more: in psychoanalysis we become

conscious of the relation between the violent passage of a subject that is destitute and the anguish and despair that follows. Is this not precisely what Bergman shows us in *Shame*? It is only *after* the bloody deposal of his rival that the main character fully enters into the gruesome reality of war. It reminds us of the kind of hysterical imagery conjured

**Fig. 1: Transversals in *Shame***

Transversal	Domain	Order	Restoration	Efficacy
1	Mental	<i>Lebenswelt</i>	Connectivity	Uncertainty
2	Political	Sexual	Elimination	Double
3	Abstract	Power <i>as such</i>	Praise	Spirit

in the canvases of Hieronymus Bosch, where bodies are deprived of spiritual meaning, and cruel and incomprehensible forces hold the day. However, and this is the key to understand *Shame*: the images we encounter and requirements made of the heroes in the film's final scenes transport us to Kierkegaard's notion of *despair*, as, precisely, a despair that never leaves us. It is despair unto death.

There is a fundamental choice confronting us at this our most desperate moment. It is at *this* juncture Kierkegaard urges us to

Despair, and your light-mindedness shall never again allow you to wander like an uncertain spirit, as an apparition among the ruins of a world that certainly is lost to you. Despair, and your spirit shall never again sigh in sadness, since the world shall again become wonderful and joyous. And if you only behold it with different eyes than you have, your spirit will rise liberated into a world of freedom. (Kierkegaard 1843: 227)

This is the anguish of an existence that is brought about through a passage we encounter in psychoanalysis, and it is demonstrated as a possibility in Bergman's *Shame*. The three transversals, then, on the psychological, sexual and spiritual levels together in truth constitute a *theological* statement, and at the core Bergman's most political endeavour reveals itself as a prospectus on what it is to live under circumstances that are shameful and that nevertheless must be confronted in all their inscrutable horror.

### 3. The Call of Duty

In so far as shame is something we experience when we get *too close* to the desire of the father, it is a feeling that we associate with the phallic function. To put it differently, shame is the response we get as the voice of conscience intervenes, which is to say that we get a sense that we have done something *wrong*. When we say that shame is what we feel precisely at the moment when we are set apart from our individuality, it is because this emotion is indicative of the *tragic* character of our being. In the psychoanalytic sense this effect is due to the *primordial* character of jealousy, while in the Christian narrative, it is because we are – in so far as we are symbolising creatures – ushered into sin.

In the psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan, jealousy is something we experience when there are more than one subject who desires the same object, or, to put it more succinctly, it is the effect of the child's awakened desire as it is heralded as a symbolising figure. This insurmountable experience lies at the core of Lacan's claim that jealousy is *primordial*. It is only in so far as we experience jealousy that we can be said to adhere to the symbolic order, and the reason for this lies in the fundamental *lack* that is distinctive of desire: we desire that which we don't have, and that which we can *never* have is that which we desire the most. This hidden object is precisely what ushers us into the symbolic order in the first place: the desire of the

father.

The *tragic* character of this component to our existence indicates that it is a moment that removes us from our individual existence. In the words of Hegel, the tragic hero tends to attain the pose of a sculpture, as if removed from our ordinary lives, cast in a material that sets him or her *apart* from our everyday experiences (Hegel 1838: 528). This is why it makes sense to say that the experience of shame is a *social* effect, or, to put it differently, while guilt is in on the side of the personal, shame is what envelops us in our *culture*.

What is it that holds the power to pull us out of the morass of shame? To Martin Heidegger, the relevant term – one that he used to much consternation among his opponents in a widely published interview with *Der Spiegel* where he famously refused to denounce the atrocities of the political party of which he was a member until the end of the war – is the notion of a *saving grace* (Augstein and Wolff 1976). For someone who spent so much time and ink to denounce the truth of metaphysical speculation it appears a tad contradictory, since *salvation* and *grace* are two of our most deontologically charged terms.

It is *here* that we find the force of Heidegger's terminology, for is it not so that *grace* indicates precisely that power which stands beyond the brute force of our political, social and biological existence? It is in *this* sense that the grace Heidegger referred to is perfectly consistent with his work in philosophy and the task of thinking: what is called for, he claimed, was not so much a more efficient and refined application of power, but a turning away from the instrumentality of reason so as to make an opening for a thinking that belongs to the meditative and graceful. What has the capacity to *save* us, then, from our everyday utilitarian encounters with desire and the drive is rest, meditation and prayer: it is through such a *releasement* of thought that we can begin to approach what Heidegger called the *clearing* of truth.

Kierkegaard provided two distinct formations of anxiety. Primarily we fear evil when we have entered into symbolic relations with others (Kierkegaard 1844: 131). Our repulsion in the face of shame is a sincere and good response to a condition that renders us social: as the case would be in *Shame*, the atrocities that follow from warfare are repulsive, and our experience of them as horrific shows that we are fearful of evil.

However, in a second formation of anxiety, man is not situated in the good, but in evil, and his anxiety is not directed against that which is bad or wrong, but against the good that could serve to free him from his condition. This state is what Kierkegaard referred to as the demonic: the liberator appears as a demon, so that he who is possessed fears his own freedom. To Kierkegaard, then, what could abet our liberation from a state of fear is a call from God, and it is when we are possessed by demons that this call appears as a threat. The answer to this conundrum is the notion of duty:

the call from the Other is something it is *necessary* for us to heed in a way that should bring to mind Kant's idea of the categorical imperative.

It is this sense of *calling* that becomes an increasingly central part of Bergman's *oeuvre* in the 1960s.

Already before his relocation to Fårø he had written a manuscript with the title 'The Cannibals.' However, his hospitalisation in 1965 made him put the project aside. Instead he started writing on what would become *Persona*, mostly to 'practice the hand,' as he put it. When it was released, it brought Bergman recognition and international fame on a level he had never experienced before.

*Persona* is about a distinguished actress – some would say a *diva* – who has lost her voice. In an attempt to recover, she spends convalescence in the Swedish *skjærgård* – shot at Fårø from July 1965 – with her nurse and soon-to-be friend. Their conversations circle around sexuality, loss and healing, but, crucially to our topic, their common ground lies in the way they affect the arts and the artist.

The manuscript for 'The Cannibals' would be reworked into *Hour of the Wolf*.<sup>7</sup> In the mean time, *Persona* had been released in the USA, and Bergman could quit his job at the Royal Dramatic Theatre to focus solely on his film work. *Hour of the Wolf* was shot on Fårø in 1966. Even though the manuscript for *Shame* was finished only in 1967, it had a shorter production time so that it reached theatres first. While *Shame* also features a minor motif that relates to the arts – the two main characters are in the opening scenes more engrossed in artwork than the current events that soon overtake them completely – it is clear that *Hour of the Wolf* is more of a key film [film à clé], analogously to *Persona*, but in a way that distinguishes it from *Shame*.<sup>8</sup> What is common to *Persona* and *Hour of the Wolf* is their questioning of the artist's calling, how this summoning appears as a threatening force, and how the artist ends up in a state of possession by these forces.

Briefly, *Hour of the Wolf* is composed as a 'who-dunnit,' in the vein of *Oedipus Rex* or *Hamlet* (Lacan 1982: 43). In the opening scene, the wife Alma – played by Ullmann – relates the loss of her painter husband, Johan Borg (von Sydow), and that the only recollections she has of him are his diaries and the story she is about to tell.

The following sequences depict Borg struggling with his art and existence. Together with Alma he has retreated to an island to paint in splendid isolation. His waking hours – Borg suffers from insomnia – is spent talking to Alma about his visions, perspective on life, and his most haunted memories. The title of the film refers to the hour of the night when

most people die, when sleep is at its deepest, when our nightmares are at their most real. It is the hour when the insomniac is tortured by his most crippling anxiety, when ghosts and demons are at their most powerful. The hour of the wolf is also the hour in

which most children are born.<sup>9</sup>

It is in these hours that Borg shows Alma his most opaque drawings: a bird man, an old woman who takes off her head, a group of meat eaters, school masters, and chattering iron hard women. Every morning Borg goes out to paint landscapes on the coast, while Alma stays behind to keep the house. Borg is increasingly embittered and hardened by what he perceives to be an insurmountable barrier between his artistic attempts and the calling of the artist.

Ingmar Bergman described Borg as someone who perceives his calling as a form of tyranny: 'It is something he can't get away from. It isn't a gift' (Stig Björkman, Torsten Manns and Jones Sima, Bergman on Bergman: interviews with Ingmar Bergman, translated by Paul Britten Austin (New York, 1993), cited in [ingmarbergman.se](http://ingmarbergman.se) 2016). It is *this* world that Borg is increasingly drawn into, while Alma is left as a hapless outsider.

What finally pulls Johan away from Alma is the mysterious power of a Palace that is situated on the island. Accepting an invitation from its proprietor – baron von Merkens – Johan and Alma find themselves in the company of figures that resemble those of Johan's visions. These personages claim they are 'used to humiliation,' and that they 'find it pleasurable,' so that it only makes sense that during dinner, the guests insult Johan's art under the guise of praising him. The baron, who claims to be a great admirer of Johan's, informs him that he – von Merkens – once had a painting that he had acquired hung upside-down. He invited several friends 'who appreciated a good joke' along with the artist himself. 'How we laughed, then.' Did Johan appreciate the joke? No, Borg feels insulted and isolated. However, after dinner, Johan gets a chance to explain his artistic vision:

I call myself 'artist' for want of a better term. There is nothing self-evident in my creative work except the compulsion to do it. Through no intent of my own, I have been singled out as something apart, a five-legged calf, a monster. I have never fought for that position, nor do I know how to keep it. Yet I may well at times have felt the winds of megalomania sweep across my brow. But I believe myself to be immune. I need only for a second remind myself of the utter unimportance of art in the human world.

What is clear is that there is no *choice* of vocation on the side of the artist. Borg himself finds it to be a compulsion: he cannot *but* make art, and he makes it quite manifest that he experiences the art of creation as a moment in which he is *beyond intention*. In other words, what we have is a notion of creativity that lies in the region of what the surrealists referred to as *automatic*: it is a sense in which the artist takes the rôle of the scribe or clerk for an instance that is far more dominant and powerful than himself.

#### 4. From Alienation to Separation

His commentary with regard to the way he perceives



himself underscores the relation between obsessive compulsion and demonic appearances. Borg sees himself as a monster, 'as something apart,' that is to say as a figure that has become *alienated* from his domestic domain. What is crucial here is to note the distinction we find between *alienation* and *separation*: in the former formation what we have is a subject that is trapped in his own inability to break with the position that renders him as impotent and weak. In the symbolic order the subject experiences a 'constitutive *alienation*' in which some more powerful instance pulls the strings (Žižek 2000: 327). It is this sense of *entrapment* that affects both the obsessive compulsion and the demonic appearances that supplement it.

In lieu of *escaping* the hold of the alienating instance, the subject acts in a compulsive manner to the extent that he is confronted with his own visions of doom and impotence. In the case of Johan Borg this is precisely what enables him to make art, and yet his art is nothing but those exact demonic appearances that result from the compulsion. The demonic figure *par excellence* in Western culture is the Minotaur: the monstrous product of an illicit liaison between the queen Persifae and a bull, who was doomed to subsist in a labyrinth where he annually was fed young victims from a nearby village.

It is *thus* we find the artist's self-perception: an outcast with a compulsive obligation to make art, and it is this rôle that enables Borg to get by in his vocation. While he might be flattered by the many references to his art by the proprietors of the Palace, he is also self-consciously aware of his status. He has admirers, even collectors, and it is this reflective relation to his work that can render him with a sense of 'megalomania.' However, as he notes, he needs only briefly to recall the unimportant place that art occupies in his contemporary society to detach from such feelings.

It is here that we should re-introduce the sense of the claim from his fellow diners that they are 'used to being humiliated' at the Palace. Is this not precisely the sentiment Borg expresses when he describes how he returns from his pangs of megalomania? What is in any case clear is that the indignity experienced by Borg earlier in the evening has been countered by his eloquent articulation of the way he perceives his position as an artist. To put it differently, behind the fantasmatic shell of self-importance that was cracked during dinner lay a different and more crucial sense of self, and it was this latter notion that emerged as a result.

In order to understand the subject's transversal from alienation to separation, it is necessary to introduce a character that the artist meets already prior to the dinner at the Palace, a figure who claims to be a therapist. Johan Borg runs into him one afternoon after a particularly gruelling session of painting by the sea, and after a series of insistent attempts in the side of the therapist to get Borg to engage with his repressed thoughts and wishes, Borg lashes out at him, and –

eventually – strikes him so that the therapist falls over and is incapacitated. Borg runs off in anger.

When they meet again outside the Palace, the therapist reminds Borg that they 'have met before,' and it is in *this* context it makes sense to say that the previous encounter constitutes a kind of transference, whereby Borg takes the position of the analysand, addressing, as it were, the therapist as the *subject-supposed-to-know*.<sup>10</sup> It is such a relation, based as it is on a presupposition of love between the analyst and analysand, that works as the enabling mechanism that sets into motion both the initial *humiliation* first expressed by the dinner guests and subsequently experienced as a disparaging attitude towards art by Borg himself, *and* the following articulation of the artist's perception of himself *qua* artist. One layer of fictional address (the respectful, and somewhat haughty position the artist is placed in) is shredded after another (the artist's self-address as compulsive and self-deprecating), and all the while the therapist observes from the wings: what follows can be nothing but a complete devastation of the life-world Alma and Johan has established for themselves, and the *separation* that serves as the apposite of *alienation* in Lacan's formulae, takes on a literal component in our case. Through the abyss of analysis, the artist becomes – in the end – separated from his Alma, and their entangled destinies become entwined so as to end in a question: where did Johan Borg the painter go?

On their return from the dinner at the Palace, Johan recounts two harrowing experiences to Alma: his loss of his youthful love Veronica Vogler, and his murder of a young boy who had troubled him. When Johan is invited to the Palace a second time – this time explicitly to meet Vogler – he goes there only after having fired two gunshots at Alma. She falls, but apparently survives. Inside the Palace, Johan is made over, he meets again the demonic figures from his imagination, and on his way to be reunited with Vogler he runs into baron von Merkens, who literally climbs up the wall and upside-down in the ceiling. When Johan asks him the reason for these unusual antics, the baron answers that he is seething with jealousy, but 'please, don't let it stop you, go and meet her,' as if the announced encounter was in some way directed by a destiny that out-powered them both.<sup>11</sup>

In the final scenes, Borg finds Vogler laying under a sheet, as youthful as he remembers her. When he touches her, she starts laughing hysterically, as if possessed. In the background the other guests at the Palace show up, equally obscure in appearance. Borg ends up joining them, and the final image shows Alma trying and failing to approach him. He is no longer available to her.

What is clear here is that the alienation Borg experienced *in* the Other – i.e., the sense that he was *deprived* of the *effects* of his acts and reduced to a mere *automaton*, compulsively reacting to the determinations of the Other – is overcome as a *separation*, and what is, in effect, a formulation of a *new* fantasy. The

organising illusion that held Borg together in his work as artist and as companion to Alma has been revealed as inconsistent and 'deprived of the Thing' (Žižek 2000: 327), and it is as a reconstitution of a fantasy that includes within itself a relation to the instance that is *wholly Other*, that Borg can move beyond the alienating attachment to what had become a semblance.

### 5. *The Opaque Summons*

Crucially, what instigates Borg's second visit to the Palace is the prospect of an encounter with his lost love, Veronica Vogler, which is to say, that what lies at the core of his quest is not so much an attempt to break with Alma, or to reconstitute his art, but to reclaim his (lost) desire. The summoning to the Palace is thus an invitation that extends to the domain of *Eros*, even if the hook that captured Borg's imagination during his first visit was the prospect of a relinquished relation to an inauthentic artistic *Lebenswelt*.

Nevertheless, the mystery remains: what is the call that Borg receives at the height of his artistic powers? As Martin Heidegger noted in *Being and Time*,

The call asserts nothing, gives no information about world-events, has nothing to tell. (...) 'Nothing' gets called to [zu-gerufen] this Self, but is has been summoned [aufgerufen] to itself – that is, to its own-most potentiality-for-Being (Heidegger 1962: 318).

This is the call of the artist: what Borg experiences as his new summons lies *beyond* the compulsive character of the fantasmatic bindings of his life-world that was typical of his encounters prior to the second visit to the Palace. From now on, he is *fully entangled* in a world that is no longer *of* the living, and yet it is also not fully in the domain of the dead: the curious location of Borg's *second life* is the realm of the *un-dead*, with the vampires and were-wolves that inhabit the Palace and that, in the end, refuse to engage with Alma's pleas to communicate.

This is why we, in the final scenes, cannot be fully assured of the instance that announces the summons. As a distant echo of the Scandinavian film pioneer Carl Th. Dreyer's *Joan of Arc*, Bergman's Johan Borg *does* receive a call, but is this a call from above or from some sinister source *beyond* the grave? As Heidegger put it,

The peculiar indefiniteness of the caller and the impossibility of making more definite what this caller is, are not just nothing; they are distinctive for it in a *positive* way. They make known to us that the caller is solely absorbed in summoning us to something, that it is *heard only as such*, and furthermore that it will not let itself be coaxed. (ibid.: 319)

What we have, then, is the artist Borg – indeed with a striking similarity to the trickster and story-teller Peer Gynt in Ibsen's play – abandoning himself to the world of the un-dead. Against the promise of rekindling his lost desire and artistic remembrance that would extend his life beyond the temporality of his

limited being, Borg is lost in the world of illusions, make-belief and twisted perceptions. To Alma he is vanquished. She remains on the this-side in her appeals for him to return: a figure that cannot but remind us of Solveig – Peer Gynt's youthful mistress who never abandons him even at his most deprived – or, indeed, Faust's Gretchen. While Borg disappears into The Hall of the Mountain King, Alma appeals to us to solve the mystery: what was it that deprived her of Johan?

The form of the film – structured as a 'whodunnit' – is resolved at the *opening*, as the case would be with *Hamlet* (Lacan 1982: 43), so that the event – the disappearance of Alma's husband – has *already taken place* at the time of narration, and the proceeding story unfolds events that precede the time of the opening scene on the level of *narrative*. This distinction is crucial: when we get to the final images of *Hour of the Wolf* we have known all along that Johan Borg will disappear from Alma's life. What we have gotten to know from the story is *how* he disappeared, so that we have been furnished with potential *causes* for her loss.

She asks us to provide an *explanation* for Borg's departure: her gaze fixed at the camera, her body-language pleading with the viewer. We are the detectives, the analysts. Alma is the analysand, but what is the resolution to her riddle?

The answer is opaque and ambiguous. It is clear that on one level, Borg has taken up a *Faustian* bargain, siding with the undead in his artistic quest, and abandoning his beloved to boot. The call to attain the skill and knowledge that would fulfil the promise of Faust and Borg lies at the heart of this interpretation: the subject's claim to an existence that goes beyond his mortality nurtures and enables his voyage in pursuit of his utmost potentiality.

However, in so far as this path demands his separation from Alma, the resolution also entails a break with the sense of alienation that had haunted their relationship. At the end of Borg's working-through of his traumatic memories lies some kind of liberation: his incapacitation in the face of debilitating events ends at the moment when he can release himself from their entanglements, and among these are his bond with Alma.

Finally, the summons that Borg receives is in some ways analogous to the call that Kierkegaard described in his work on the anxiety of the possessed: as the case would be with Icarus, the way out of the labyrinth and its attendant demonic appearances is to follow the voice of the good. From within the walls of the Minotaur it is his *father* that leads Icarus to his release, and so could it be that the call that Borg receives holds the power to release him from the compulsions and obsessions that have plagued him?

It is here that we again encounter the mystery that lies at the core of the notion of the calling: how can we know that the voice we hear is the voice of the Father and not some other, darker power? In so far as it is Borg's calling to make art to the full extent of his

abilities, it is as if this summoning transverses his earthly relations only to arrest him in a realm that is more sinister, more desolate. We are unable to decide if it is *this* desperation that, in the view of Kierkegaard, enables the artist to again find a world that is wonderful and joyous, and to make him see with new eyes a liberated universe.

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### Notes

1. Bergman had won Academy Awards with both *The Virgin Spring* [Jungfrukällan] and *Through a Glass Darkly* [Såsom i en spegel] in 1961 and 1962 respectively, and *The*

*Silence* [Tystnaden] turned out to be a major box office success in 1963.

2. Bergman commented that 'we are talking about poorly constructed manuscript. The first half of the film is really nothing more than an endlessly drawn-out prologue that ought to have been over and done within ten minutes. (...) I did not have [the necessary] patience' (*Skammen* 1968; Ingmar Bergman, *Bilder* [Images: My life in Film] (Stockholm, 1990), cited in *ingmarbergman.se* 2016).

3. Bergman was self-consciously inserting the film into divergent traditions of 'war epics.' As he put it, 'in American film, the depiction of violence has a long tradition [while] in Japan, it has developed into a masterful ritual, matchlessly choreographed.' Bergman's project was to show what he called 'the little war' (ibid.).

4. In fact, when Bergman *did* reveal the details of his trip to Germany – recalling that his host family had put a portrait of Adolf Hitler by his bed, and, on attending a mass rally in the *Führer's* honour, Bergman had found him 'unbelievably charismatic: he electrified the crowd,' so much so that for years he would be 'on Hitler's side, delighted by his success and saddened by his defeats' – Bergman would claim that it was his *father*, the preacher Erik Bergman, who had been the Nazi of the family. While it is true that Bergman senior had joined the Swedish Nazi party, he quit in 1935 (Ingmar Bergman, *Laterna magica* (Stockholm, 1987), cited in ibid.; 'Bergman admits Nazi past' 1999; Mattsson 2010).

5. In *Persona* Elisabeth Vogler responds strongly to a television image of Vietnamese monks who set themselves on fire. Bergman commented that 'the man who set himself on fire to bear witness to his faith.' The large catastrophes 'leave my heart untouched. (...) But I shall never rid myself of those images' (*ingmarbergman.se* 2016).

6. Gorgias' notion of *kairos* – a persuasive truth that appears in an opportune moment or 'opening' – comes to mind: notice, he says, the 'arguments of the philosophers, in which speed of thought is shown off, as it renders changeable the credibility of an opinion' (Gorgias 1999: §13).

7. Frank Gado notes that 'The cannibals' had been 'pared to a quarter of the original length and thoroughly rewritten' before it was shot as *Hour of the Wolf* (Gado 1986: 345).

8. The term is used to designate films where familiar figures are depicted in a realistic way. It is often used with reference to films that portray artists and their creative work.

9. 'Vargtimmen är timmen mellan natt och gryning. Det är timmen då de flesta människor dör, då sömnen är djupast, då mardrömmarna är verkligast. Det är timmen då den sömnlöse jagas av sin svåraste ångest, då spöken och demoner är mäktigast. Vargtimmen är också den timme när de flesta barn föds' (*Vargtimmen* 1968, author's translation).

10. To Lacan transference is delimited as the attribution (by the analysand) of knowledge to a subject (the analyst): 'as soon as the subject who is supposed to know exists somewhere there is transference.' He goes on to ask what would be the point of having an organisation of psychoanalysts if not so as to 'indicate to whom one may apply to represent this subject?' (Lacan 1981: 232).

11. The experience of jealousy in this scene reconnects von Merckens with the primordial encounter with the symbolic, and his claim to be habitually humiliated is given some empirical flesh.

## TRUST, UNDERSTANDING, AND PARADIGMS IN THE WORKS OF MICHAEL POLANYI AND OF PLATO

Colin Cordner

**Abstract:** The purpose of this comparative essay shall be to delve into how indwelling (Polanyi) or *mimesis* (Plato) bear upon the education, maturation, and existential ordering of our knowing and being. The reflections herein shall proceed in an exegetical format, and enucleate the parts played in the maturation of knowing and being by what Plato termed *mimesis* and *paradeigmata* (paradigms of life), and Polanyi termed *indwelling* and *apprenticeship*. These shall be further related to *noesis/comprehending* and thereby to *episteme/understanding*, and their reliance upon some form of *pistis/trust* or faith. Methodologically, this shall be done by bringing together the elements of two representative works which directly bear upon the problem - those which Polanyi explored in his reflections on the 'logic of commitment' in *Personal Knowledge*, and those with which Socrates' prepares for the presentation of the 'Divided Line' in Book VI of the *Politeia*. The essay ends with a brief recapitulation of the parallels in both men's insights into the essence of a mature human being, and his diametric opposite - what Polanyi dubbed the Minotaur, 'man masked as a beast'.

**Keywords:** Michael Polanyi, Plato, apprenticeship, paradigms, faith, science, commitment, understanding, mimesis, indwelling, episteme, nihilism, Minotaur

### 1. Introduction

'I went down to the Piraeus the other day with Glaucon, the son of Ariston, there to see what sights we may' (*Republic*, 327a), so spoke Socrates of Athens, son of Sophroniscus the stonecutter and Phaenarete the midwife, of the clan of Antiochus, to his anonymous speaking companion, thereby inaugurating the recollection of a descent from which arose the *Politeia*. From its opening lines, the dialogue is thus intrinsically structured as an anamnestic exercise on the part of Socrates-Plato. The audience of the dialogue would therefore seem to be purposefully induced to remember something through their active engagement in its recounting, and, as I propose, the chief questions which we are induced to meditate upon are those of who man is, whom and what he is meant to be, and the whence and whither of his induction.

Michael Polanyi's *magnum opus*, *Personal Knowledge* (*PK*), too bears upon our questions, and does so in a not entirely dissimilar fashion. For, as Polanyi himself alludes to, and his commentators sometimes note, his opus itself ultimately bears the form of a reflective confession. And, a confession is nothing if not a remembering bearing upon something beyond the simple facts of a matter: it must bear upon their meaning.

Our immediate purpose here shall be to delve into indwelling (Polanyi) or *mimesis* (Plato) as aspects of faith and induction which bear upon the education, maturation, understanding, and existential ordering of human beings. Our reflections upon induction shall find their own specific purchase by relating the parts played in education by what Plato termed *mimesis* and *paradeigmata* (paradigms), and Polanyi *indwelling* and *apprenticeship*. These themselves shall be related to *noesis* or *comprehending* and thereby to *episteme* or *understanding*, and the underlying disposition of *pistis*, trust or faith. This comparison shall be brought to bear on that structure of consciousness which Polanyi explored in his reflections on the 'logic of commitment' and which is reflected in the 'Divided Line' of Book VI of the *Politeia*. All this is meant to enucleate the parallels in the two philosophers' insights into the place of faith in human understanding and in existential ordering.

Our method shall be comparative and exegetical, rather than critical or strictly analytic, for this in keeping with the tacit premise of the authors that the question of who man is, may only be addressed through an exegesis of human experience through a confessional or anamnestic exercise. By induction, we should understand it in the broad sense in which one may 'be induced' or 'induce oneself', of which inductions in our own knowing and the explicit operations of formal logic are specific or even special instances.

### 2. Personal Knowledge

As we read through *PK*, we witness an initial focus upon the nature of the scientist, who pursues knowledge and discovery within his own domain of study, shift gradually to a discussion of the self-discovery of the post-critical philosopher.<sup>1</sup> At the hinge of that book, the exposition comes to bear directly upon the subject of the book's sub-title. Polanyi, we might recall, was a scientist before turning to philosophy. What his portrait of those two ways of being are then systematically placed in contradistinction to, are very particular kinds of defective self-understanding among intellectuals. These too are personified in very particular figures - most notably Bertrand Russell and Jean-Paul Sartre - and are classified as exemplars of pseudo and truly morally inverted types.

Polanyi's principal opponent in *PK* was that frame of mind which he termed *objectivism*, the crucial components of which he felt were best and most consistently exemplified in the radical skepticism of the Pyrronic skeptics and by Democritean atomism, and which had been synthesized into a single dogma by European intellectuals during the Enlightenment.

Objectivism thus designates the intellectual framework from which is birthed the wider range of –isms (including scientism, positivism, Machiavellism, Sadism, Fascism, National Socialism, Freud-ianism, psychologism, and Marxism) which come under analysis through the course of *PK*. Each is treated by MP as classifiable as particular species of objectivism proper. Taken together, the two form the basis of objectivism as a habit and disposition of being, and so deserve a showing, so as to better illuminate, by contrast, MP's insights into indwelling, apprenticeship, and commitment, as indelible aspects of understanding.<sup>2</sup>

In so far as Democritean atomism is a concern, two dimensions are quintessential (i.e., the embedded ontological and epistemological claims of the school) and several others may be termed secondary (e.g., specific methods and methodologies). As the secondary features of one tacit or avowed Democritean's practice may differ from that of another operating in a different field of study, we shall attend primarily to the essential features.

For the Democritean, reality is held to be reducible to its most basic parts, and the goal of any objective science is held to be to describe entities in terms of those most basic parts. As with Democritus, who posited atomic matter and void, i.e. being (*to on*) and non-being (*to me on*), to be the *archai* of reality, the objectivist asserts reality to be a complex interplay of mechanistic, physio-chemical interactions, and that reality ought then to be explicitly describable as a whole – as well as in its particulars – in terms of sensible, atomistic qualities. For Polanyi, the dream of the objectivist-as-Democritean is most brilliantly and succinctly expressed by Laplace, who posited that if a demon of unlimited calculative ability were supplied with an atomic map of the universe, comprising the entirety of atomic positions and velocities, then that demon would be able to predict every future event to arise ever in the future. The objectivist sees the goal of science as attaining or at least approaching the Laplacean ideal as closely as possible.

Several assumptions underlie this ideal, which Polanyi subjects to examination. The first is a particular definition of knowledge, in which 'known', 'knowing' and 'to know' are held to denote clear, immediate, and explicit concepts on the part of the knower of the thing cognized. One is then held to have such knowledge of an entity if one can, at least in principle, model it in terms of a complete atomic map. One can furthermore at least claim relative knowledge of a thing in so far as an entity's discrete physio-chemical qualities can be sensed and so modelled.

This then brings us to the second position of the framework, which is that sensation and perception are but synonyms. To see is to perceive, and vice versa, and similarly for the other senses. To whatever extent that it is admitted that sense-perception may be skewed by the prejudices of an otherwise passive beholder, it

then asserted that it is necessary to overcome such barriers to knowledge. Thus, we are brought to the third feature: methodology, and especially experimental methodology, as the means of limiting and overcoming those prejudices which might otherwise hinder knowing the qualities of an entity.<sup>3</sup>

What then attends these three positions is a fourth. That is that the proof of knowledge is one's ability to explicitly describe the modelled entity in terms of how it is known. To truly know something would thus be reflected in an ability to completely describe its physio-chemical parts and their interactions, and to attend explicitly and assiduously to the methodology by which the original sense-data was collected in an unprejudiced manner. This would mean that one had proceeded methodically from an hypothesis to a result, which hopefully is amenable to a generalisation or 'theory'. A theory, in this instance, is thus understood to be an explicit linguistic or mathematical generalization from sense-data, which has been gathered and organized according to the strictures of a proper methodology. Similarly, by extension, a thing would be relatively known to the extent to which all of these conditions have been met. Objectivity is a measure of how clearly 'knowledge' can be abstracted from the knowing 'subject', and represented in clear language symbols.<sup>4</sup>

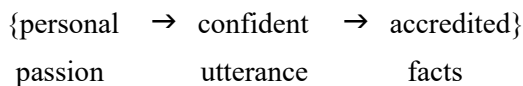
Much as the Democritean's approach will be to attempt to break comprehensive entities into what he considers to be its fundamental parts, the skeptic will breakdown the structural whole of comprehension into its isolated elements (a point which we will expand upon in the proceeding section). In practice, however, these two features of objectivism are not truly isomorphic. The Democritean's conception of reality may be thought to be reductive and misleading, but it entails a belief in the existence of brute facts which are accessible to the senses and amenable to rational modelling. Universal doubt as a way of life, on the other hand, could only ever reduce the knower to a 'voluntary state of permanent imbecility'.<sup>5</sup>

In reality however, few, if any, avowed skeptics reduce themselves to Pyrrho's legendary state of paralytic incomprehension. In normal practice, the skepticism of a Laplacean objectivist has tended to be over-ruled or by-passed through an appeal to one or more saving graces or values. Chief among those has been the scientific method (i.e. an appeal to methodology), which has been faithfully accepted as the source of the scientific discoveries over the centuries, the guarantor of their objectivity, and itself sufficiently well-proven by its fruits to be generally exempted from critique. This method, in turn, is often complemented, or sometimes supplemented, by such devices as Kant's 'working hypotheses' and Hume's appeals to 'habits' as a basis for accepting any un-critiqued thought or knowledge into the processes of scientific endeavour, or into life generally. In Polanyi's analysis, all of these represent devices to sneak a belief in truth

in through the back door, while playing to objectivist scruples.

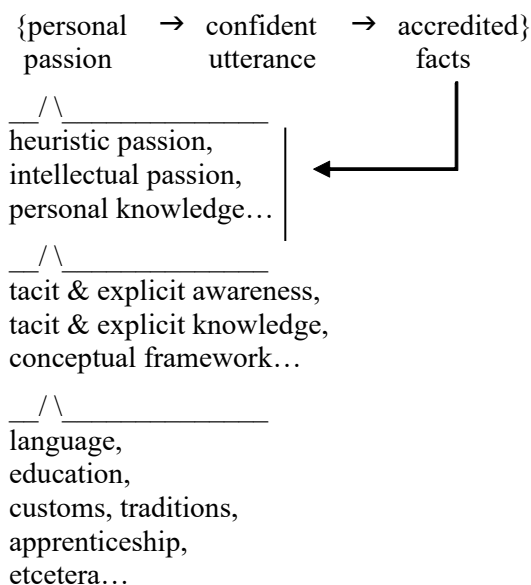
### 3. *The Scientist and the Philosopher*

In his reflections upon these matters in *PK*, Polanyi came to focus at length upon one particular feature of the structure of knowing and being which bore both upon the fundamental existential question, but also (quite importantly for us) upon the phenomenon of objectivism. That feature is the structure of commitment as the indispensable feature of knowing, which Polanyi illustrates thusly:



Here then, the arrows ‘indicate the force of commitment, and the brackets the coherence of the elements involved in the commitment.’<sup>6</sup>

This seemingly simple diagram, however, serves us as a shorthand or clue as to what underlies it. To bring that fully to light requires considerable unpacking of the individual elements of personal passion in order to better view the structure in its depth. Thus, I believe that we may expand the diagram like so:



At each stage of abstraction (represented by the successive stages of vertical expansion, or differentiation), we bring to awareness succeeding elements which give particular shape and direction to our personal passion. This giving of shape and of direction would then be what Polanyi termed our *calling*. Our calling is thus constituted, in great part, by the conceptual and fiduciary framework of our personal knowledge, which is itself constituted by a myriad of factors of tradition, biography, pedagogy, and historical circumstance. Nevertheless, these give a foundation for a responsible exercising of our knowing and being in a passionate, committed pursuit of those undisclosed, but intimated, aspects of reality which yet allude us. When we find illumination, our commitment

allows us to make sense of what we have found or discovered, and to accredit the facts as real. Those accredited facts themselves then becomes part of us, for every *heuristic leap* across a *logical gap* which is supported by the *clues* and *intimations* of our knowing and awareness is the crossing of a Rubicon which cannot be uncrossed, and which changes our very way of being in the crossing.

The implications of the structure of commitment for the subjects of science and scientism, is perhaps made clearer if contrasted with the structure of doubt:

*Subjective belief; Declaratory sentence; Alleged facts*

Perhaps the most striking difference about the structure of doubt is its status as a non-structure. Absent is the holistic character of commitment, symbolised by the brackets enclosing its various moments and by the arrows joining them. In doubting, our knowing is taken apart, or else falls apart: its constitutive elements are rendered free-floating parts in our focal awareness, rather than allowed to be comprehended as subsidiary clues bearing upon a focally-intended meaning. As such, we dispose ourselves to them separately and from the outside, rather than from the inside and as parts of a whole which gives them meaning.<sup>7</sup> Thus, each element of our knowing in our committed pursuit of reality becomes the object of skeptical interrogation, thus reflecting in the intent of our consciousness something akin to a physical atomization and analysis of comprehensive entities in the pursuit of their causes.<sup>8</sup> Personal passion is analysed for subjective belief, the confident utterance judged as a declaratory statement in terms of the rules of logic and grammar, and accredited facts are transformed into alleged facts, all through the simple act of disposing ourselves skeptically or critically towards what we ‘know’.

In the normal course of our pursuit of knowledge, however banal or rarefied, vulgar or precious, doubt serves a purpose of critical analysis, including critical self-analysis. By doubting our conclusions or those of others, we subject what is being accredited as a fact to standards of verification or of validation, according to whether the alleged fact bears upon observation or invention, or else interpretation. Having submitted ourselves or others to such critique or review (of which scientific peer review is a particular species), we may [a] declare that what we or they purported to know is true indeed, [b] find what we know clarified, perhaps in a manner which was completely unexpected, though implied, or [c] it may be declared mistaken, false, misleading, illusory, or untrue.<sup>9</sup>

Should we ultimately satisfy ourselves that what we know is true, the structure of commitment reasserts itself, and we allow our beings to be transformed by our new comprehension and deepened understanding of reality, to some greater or lesser extent. In a sense, we commit ourselves to being transformed, and in doing so, clarify, deepen, and expand the *from* side of

the *from-to* structure of our beings. This, Polanyi affirms, constitutes the essence of science, and he therefore explicitly affirms the logic of Augustine's maxim: '*Nisi credideritis non intelligitis*.'<sup>10</sup>

#### 4. *Mimesis and Indwelling*

What is ultimately crucial to the commitment of both the scientist and the philosopher is education of a very specific sort. It is not a training in the maxims of an art which serves as a foundation for free thought, nor the addition of a training in the explicit rules of logical deduction from such premises, nor yet methodical procedure. Rather, the bedrock of our commitments to truth, to knowing and being as a scientist or philosopher, lies in a critical *apprenticeship* under the guidance of some form of master. Education thus begins as an attempt to be as our heroes, teachers and masters are, so as to experience and apprehend reality as broadly and deeply as they do, and to better satisfy our heuristic (and to some extent moral) passion.<sup>11</sup>

What such an education demands of the student, however, is a considerably more active and demanding role in reforming himself than that which is supposedly demanded by training. Training, in and of itself, requires a truly passive submission to rules, and the memorization of those explicit bits of instruction which are to be carried out.

Through education and apprenticeship specifically (as with even basic childhood maturation), we seek to mature our contact with reality by learning, from an authority, how to see it, how to touch it, how to think along with it. This need to learn how to get a handle on reality by example holds true whether we are seeking understanding of some particular part or dimension of reality, or reality as a whole. The act of learning itself proceeds through acts of *mimesis* and *indwelling*, as Polanyi terms them.

Mimesis, in Polanyi's (as opposed to classical) usage, differs from its classical Platonic-Pythagorean meaning in that he restricts his usage of the term to designate only the most simple, imitative activity by which knowledge is transferred from one generation of intelligent animal life to another. It is itself an imitative, heuristic act by which one learns a trick or an art by sharing in the intelligent efforts of another who is accomplishing something, and by doing as they do. Learning through mimicry thus involves the active, bodily and imaginative participation of one in the efforts of another as one seeks to interiorize the knowledge and the know-how of another. It as much underlies an ape's learning of a trick which she has seen invented and performed by a more intelligent and daring colleague, as it underwrites the stumbling attempts of a human child to pick-up language and how to act when she imitates her guardians.<sup>12</sup> Through her trust and imitation of the authority of her guardians, the child's tacit judgments and continuous practice allow her to build up a repertoire of tacit knowledge. What is entailed in this primordial, con-

vivial imitation is not only know-how and language, but also the stable roots of our emotional life, most especially - for our purposes - our *personal passions*. The upbringing and education of our passions is completely and inextricably interwoven into the strivings of our embodied minds.<sup>13</sup>

*Indwelling*, on the other hand, emerges throughout MP's work as the more comprehensive and general category of mental activity, of which imitation is a particular instance. It is thus the equivalent of the fuller, classical conception of *mimesis*. Our deepest and most fundamental indwelling, by MP's recounting, is in our own bodies, from which we pour ourselves into the world, bodily and mentally, and the vast operations of which we experience only subsidiarily and often tacitly as we attend to matters outside of ourselves.<sup>14</sup> It is through our initial upbringing, beginning from our simplest mimicries and continuing on through the entirety of our informal and formal educations within our inherited convivial culture, that we acquire our more or less articulate conceptual frameworks, and make them the 'happy dwelling places of our minds', from which we can then work to understand the world. This makes MP's concept of indwelling the symbolic equivalent of the original Platonic-Pythagorean meaning of *mimesis* (henceforth italicized when indicating the Greek P-P meaning), which, as scholars such as A.E. Taylor, Guthrie, and Hans-Georg Gadamer highlight for scholars not versed in classical Greek, bears both the meaning of intelligent imitation and also of passive or active instantiation of a paradigm, *eidōs*, or *idea*, of which more will be said in later sections.<sup>15</sup>

As apprentice scientists or philosophers, to become like a particular paradigm or exemplar - to become like our chosen masters or teachers - it is necessary, as with all education gained from an authority - that we attend focally to their minds (which we understand to be the fullest, most comprehensive and the controlling principle of their knowing and being) from the subsidiary signs and working of their minds which we perceive (or strain ourselves to perceive) in their words, gestures, body-language, and acts: most of which will prove, upon a moment's reflection to be known to us only tacitly and unspecifiably in terms of their comprehensive meaning. To follow the mind of a master requires us to attend from the subsidiary workings of his mind - what he says, what he does, and how he does it - to the mystery of his mind in itself, and that which it intends. Moreover, we can only come to understand the master's mind and see the world as he sees it by committing to holding him over us as an authority fit to judge us, and thus we actively subordinate ourselves as his students in order to rectify ourselves and come to a truer way of being human.<sup>16</sup>

What we do, in effect, is accept our master's mind, interiorizing his way of knowing and of being into ourselves, as tokens of a higher or more comprehensive reality which is capable of yet expressing itself

in innumerable and unexpected new ways, ways which are intimated to, but un-comprehended by us. That higher reality, I submit, may indeed be the very way of being of the master himself – who, by his example, teaches us to live more fully and deeply – or it may in fact be the more comprehensive whole to which our master himself attends, and even submits. Indeed, our deep outpourings of ourselves into the objects of our questioning and our passion, will, by their nature, always carry us *from* a state of being which we have come to find dissatisfactory, *to* embodying a state which we sense to be more universally satisfying. In science and philosophy, this perfectly natural process is simply clarified, heightened, corrected and directed by a supporting culture of the likeminded - a ship, if not a flotilla, bearing upon the same loadstar, the truth of reality. Polanyi's formulation of the pursuit of the universal pole of our commitment can thus be said to be the symbolic equivalent of the Socratic-Platonic symbolism of the philosopher's mimetic pursuit of the paradigm laid-up in the heavens (of which more shall be said in the next section).<sup>17</sup>

In short, we, as philosophers or scientists, seek-out our teacher's curious mixture of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, a personal state of permanent existential tension, which is characterized by a lasting need to reform one's person in the search for truth. We become deeper and more open human beings. This particular, pedagogical form of indwelling, in which we submit to the guidance and judgment of someone whom we consider to be an authority on the matter, is itself a particular pronounced form. Indwelling is, in fact, the basis for all forms of comprehending by which we pour ourselves into and interiorize the subsidiary clues of a problem, a question, or an entity, whose meaning we are attempting to understand: whether it be a physicist seeking the laws underlying inanimate matter, a biologist seeking the operational principles and functions of an organ, two friends attempting to understand one another, or an apprentice submitting herself to judgement from a great teacher.<sup>18</sup>

By this reckoning, a truly scientific or philosophic education is a moral education, which matures our embodiment and conceptions of the true. It is something which requires a very basic commitment to hold faith with our teachers insofar as we know - or at least suspect - that we are thereby holding faith with our pursuit of the truth with universal intent. We feel the light of the tacit, personal dimension of knowing - what we know to be true, even if we cannot put it into words - to put certain demands upon our beings. The greater our comprehension of things, the greater our appreciation of their value, and the deeper and more precise is our personal calling and responsibility towards them - a feeling that necessarily carries over to our responsibility within reality as a whole. Still, we may indeed, as scientists and philosophers, choose to ignore, to deflect, or to run from our responsibilities to what we know to be true and from our calling to

live truly. This, though, comes at the cost of knowingly living in untruth and under the shadow of critical self-judgement – of conscience. To not live-up to what we know to be true is an essentially moral failure. Only the complete fool, in his lack of comprehension, is relatively free of responsibility in the dead of night. But even he is subject to the intrinsic need to understand, and thus the call to mature and to take responsibility. But let us turn, for the moment, to the *Politeia*.

### 5. *The Polis as Man Writ Large*

The status of the Kallipolis, the Beautiful City, of the *Politeia* as a metaphor for the philosophic *psyche* is well attested to, both within the dialogue itself, and in a sufficiently vast scholarly literature that we shall not belabour the point overmuch. In keeping with the premises of this essay, we shall instead submit to the authority of the text, its authors, and our teachers who've instructed that accepting the *politeiai* as symbols of psychic types is the essential premise of a proper interpretation of the dialogue.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, this very necessity of submission as the precursor to interpretation, and, ultimately, to understanding, will come to light as we progress. For now, let us accept the matter upon faith, or, if we need to maintain modern scruples, perhaps accept the *polis-as-psyche* metaphor as a 'working hypothesis' for hermeneutic purposes. It bears mentioning in passing as well that a wealth of English and German scholarship since the 19th century has made the case that any exegesis of a philosophic dialogue requires at least as much care, consideration of symbolism, and analysis of the meaning of dramatic action and context as one would give, say, to a work of Shakespeare; Strauss, Rosen, Voegelin, Klein, Dodds, and A.E. Taylor are representative examples of this tradition. The status of the dialogue as an anamnestic meditation is moreover, declared in its opening sentence, 'I [Socrates] went down to the Piraeus yesterday...' Plato purposively structures the dialogue that follows as a recollective meditation.

The dialogue's ascent itself follows a lively, if not entirely friendly debate betwixt Socrates and the sophist Thrasymachus of Chalcedon, who had rigorously defended a reductive vision of justice which defined it as a mask for power and self-interest (336b-354c). With the conclusion of that difference of opinion, the dramatic personae – or, at least, the son of Sophroniscus - are well set for the matter of feasting in the house of Cephalus (literally 'Head'). Whatever such appetites the other may have seen fit to indulge, however, they are quickly interrupted by Glaucon and Adeimantus, the sons of Ariston and brothers of Plato. They have not been so easily satisfied by Socrates' defence of justice (*dikaioisune*), and sharpen weapons to be brought to bear against her, so as to force him to steel himself in her honour. Socrates declares that he cannot, in all piety, abandon *dikaioisune*, though he despairs of protecting her against the brothers' spirited



charges (367e-368b). These can be summarized as follows, either *dikaosune* is:

- a) Good for what it brings,
- b) Good in itself,

or,

- c) Good in itself and good for what it brings. (357b-358a)

If (c) as Socrates judges, then he must defend it against the charges of The Great Sophist – the teachers, parents, friends, and fellow-citizens of the *polis*, who teach and assert variations of (a). They assert that *dikaosune* results in one or more of the following:

- a) Being just renders external goods and honours in life,
- b) Being just renders external goods and honours in an afterlife or in posterity,
- c) Being just avoids harm and dishonour in life,
- d) Being just avoids harm and dishonour in an afterlife or in posterity. (358b-359c, 362e-363e)

However, it is also claimed that:

- a) Being successfully unjust renders potentially greater external goods and honours in life,
- b) It renders potentially greater external goods and honours in an afterlife or in posterity,
- c) It avoids harms in life,
- d) It avoids harms in the afterlife. (359c-360e, 362a-d, 364a-366b)

The arguments of the enlightened Athenians of the day (as with the enlightened souls of MP's time) hinge upon several reductivist judgements and interpretations of traditions received from the poets – chief among those being Homer, though with honourable mention paid to Hesiod, Simonides, and others. The first position is an acceptance of a certain utilitarian or hedonic calculus, to borrow a paraphrase from the *Protagoras*. (357b) That is to say that the goodness or worthiness of a life may be measured according to its weight of pleasures and pains. Being just is held to render the pleasures of life – food, drink, merriment, the opportunity to dally with boys, women, and flute girls – and to avoid the pains and travails of an *adikia*. Moreover, it is held to render the goods of honours, a fine reputation, and high-standing amongst both gods and humans, both in life and in death. But, in point of fact, it is also admitted by both the common man of Athens, as well as his teachers, that even greater pleasures and ampler goods may be won by running the risk of committing the greatest *adikia*.

As for the gods, as Glaucon puts it to Socrates, one should know that all the young have been enlightened to hear from their elders and pedagogues that either:

- i) They do not exist
- ii) They do exist, but do not care
- iii) They exist, and do care about our doings, but are easily bribed. (364b-366b)

*Adikia*, then, upon all of these premises, must be admitted to be the superior path. *Dike* must be relegated to the status of a social contract meant to strike the mean between the greater rewards of doing *adikia* unto others, and the pains of having *adikia* done unto oneself. *Dike* is definable as conduct conducive and in keeping with the *nomoi*, which moderate the potential pleasures and pains of life, and evenly distributes goods and evils amongst all. *Dike* is thus held to be the moderate goddess of a utilitarian existence, honoured chiefly for being a less risky marriage than her sister, *adikia*. In principle, however, both the sophisticated democrat and the tyrant are in agreement that power and profit are the highest ends of human life.

In the meantime, the dialogue, has sharpened the matter of justice to a vorpal edge. In forcing the distinction between the just man who appears unjust before the authority of the *polis*, and his unjust counterpart, the brothers force us to question the principles overarching the life and death of Socrates (360b-362d).

To widen the chasm of thought further between appearance and being, and therefore between what we might call a routine, formal, or procedural practice of *dike*, and the essence of *being just* - *dikaosune* - additional distinctions are introduced. *Dikaosune*, as opposed now to *dike* and the *nomoi*, is accepted by the brothers as being the *arete* (excellence) of *psyche*. *Dikaosune* shall be to *dike* what *wn* (being) is to *phaninwn* (appearing).<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, as a single *psyche* is a small thing, difficult to perceive even with young eyes, the young men further agree to inflate its size up to that of a *polis* (368c-369d).<sup>21</sup>

## 6. *The Psyche and the Paideias*

It is upon this footing that the companions venture forward and commence in founding their *poleis* in their search for justice. Sequentially they are introduced to varying and more differentiated paradigms of life, each 'writ large' in different *poleis* and 'mimicking', i.e. participating or partaking in a more or less open and matured existence. Their very first founding quickly finds its strictly necessary proportions. It is relatively small, self-sufficient, and un-luxurious. Its residents each attend to their own *technē*, trade their respective surpluses amongst one another through a differentiated class of merchants, and import and export as little as possible through traders (370e-371d). The *polis* and its underlying *psyche*-type are characterized as *sophrosune* (temperate), as opposed to *polypragmosune* (over-reaching and meddlesome), and is for that reason declared to be a likeness of *dikaosune* proper (371e-372c). It is also promptly declared by Glaucon to be a City of Sows, suggesting the psychic-type to be both compact, old-fashioned, and, in so far as those can be held true, deficient (372c-e). The moderate, archaic *anthropos* is sensed to be missing something.

What is then conceived from Glaucon's immediate and immoderate demands for such unnecessary things as couches, fancy relishes, and prostitutes, is a Phlegmatic or Feverish City, reflecting a feverish or disordered *psyche* which commits *adikia* and *hubris* in proportion to its abilities, its *pleonexia*, and the calculated safety of the ventures. Its *adikiai*, particularly with regards to its neighbours, are the true and open expression of its *polypragmosune*. It too shows forth as it is. However, the small matter of carrying off its *adikiai* against its neighbours presents itself. The *epithumetikon* (appetitive drives) of the feverish *psyche* lacks *arete*, proportion, and relative *autarkeia* (self-sufficiency), and its fever is the manifestation of its *epithumia* – an objectifying lust which is opposed to true *eros* and *philia* – for things beyond its means. (373b-374a) To attain such things requires bold (if immoderate and unreasonable) action, and the cultivation of such boldness required a new organ be added to the *psyche-polis*. The new organ is the *thumos* (heart), symbolized by the soldiering *phulakes*. And, in keeping with the earlier, if now highly attenuated, precondition for *sophrosune* and *dikaiosune* of one job to one human being, the *phulakes* take on sole responsibility for cultivating the *arete* proper to their vocation. It just so happens that their *arete* is *andreia* (courage).

The following sections of the *Politeia*, from 375b to 443c, then deal with the question of the *paideia* (education) of the *thumos*, for the sake of achieving its excellence. Already, though, we find the matter at hand made-out to be considerably more obstreperous than that of the *epithumetikon*. The latter seemingly required little more than a training in the productive arts, an informal traditional education in self-sufficiency and respect for one's fellows, and the pleasant affections of a private, family life, with minimal *schole*. The paradigm of life of the archaic city is characteristically static, consisting in an almost stubbornly incurious and closed *mimesis* of the received forms of the past. The differentiation of the *thumos*, however, suddenly requires the elaboration of a formative *paideia* which demands massive reform of the archaic traditions. This is all the more striking, for the *phulakes* of the Feverish City resemble nothing so much as the archaic warriors of the Homeric epics.

The dialogue therefore turns to the issue of the education of the heart, such that it strikes the mean between being overly 'soft' and excessively 'hard'. Among other things, then, the *paideia* of children and youths must strengthen and toughen them through gymnastics, while encouraging a love of harmoniousness through the practices of *mousike*. (410a-412a) Both parts of the *paideia*, it is suggested, are necessary for the excellence of that *cosmion* (little cosmos or order) which is to be reflected in the *psyche*. Making reference to common-sense exemplars from their own experience, they agree that with too much of one or the other, psycho-somatic discord of one sort or

another will tend to arise, and results in a falling-short of *arete*. Perhaps more important to the education of young souls, however, seems to be the *mimesis* of good *paradigmata*, for Socrates broaches the topic, and the sons of Ariston readily agree on their importance (409a).<sup>22</sup>

What then follows is a rapid, hatchet surgery upon the fine arts of Hellas, as the epics, mimetic poetry, tragedies and comedies which make up the air of Athenian cultural life in the Periclean Age are subjected to judgment. The criteria of judgment appears straightforward: gone must go all examples of money-loving among the heroes, all examples of *hubris*, *pleonexia*, and *megalothumia*, depictions of rape and incest (particularly when such acts are ascribed to the gods), all suggestions that it is proper for something better to intentionally become or mimic something lesser or base (as when the gods transform themselves, or poets pretend to be beasts or river), and all depictions of an afterlife which make death to seem a thing of horror - in essence, any myths which are prone to sophistic or reductivist distortions (379b-394b).

The young, in short, should not be encouraged to mimic paradigms which would disorder them. An unsteady heart is a corruptor of one's *psyche*, and an impediment to *dikaiosune*. Hence, there arises a need for the ordering forces of Eros and Thanatos - young ones' *philotimia* (love of honour) and *philonikia* (love of victory) must be brought back into balance by educating their inherent love of beauty itself ('*ta tou kalou erotika*') (403c). Only then will their love of particular things be put into proper proportion. With regards to Thanatos, they are to be given stories which place the particular deaths of oneself and that which one loves in proper proportion relative to the cosmos as a whole ('*cosmos holos*').

Be that as it may, within the action of the dialogue a bit of sleight of hand has been played up to this point in Book IV. In spite of Socrates successfully securing Glaucon's agreement that good *phulakes*, like good judges, should not be able to find *kaka paradeigmata* within themselves to emulate (*mimesthai*), no *agatha paradeigmata* have been supplied. It has merely been assured that such paradigms are necessary. No less unfortunate is the fact that their education, up until this point in the discussion, has been based in *doxa* without established roots in *episteme*. The lack of real *episteme* within the young, correlates to their lack of an *agathon paradeigma*. A remarkable lack of finish remains in the picture of the *psyche* and its education at the hinge of the dialogue.

Up until the point of the infamous declaration in the dialogue that there will be no end to human suffering until kings are philosophers or philosophers kings (473d), there has been no attempt to make the city in speech account for itself without blandly appealing to its faith in the *nomoi* handed-down by its *nomothetai*. Even such an appeal, however, merely pushes back the problem in time. For, what account

can the *nomothetes*, Glaucon, give of himself? The quest brings us to the dead point at which the lawgiver's law must be grounded in some comprehensible wisdom, or risk being declared the particular fancy of a particular person. To do the latter is to abandon it to sophistic relativism of Thrasymachus' type, or the modern objectivist equivalent, in which justice can, with Luciferic vigour, be declared to be the advantage of the stronger and nothing else. (338c) The *zetema* into which Socrates has attracted the sons of Ariston points beyond the measureless political relativism of the sophist, towards the paradigmatic measure of the philosopher's soul. The city, it has been declared, is the man writ large, and the measure of man, and therefore of the city, is now revealed to be the philosopher, who is truly the *cosmos* writ small - a *cosmion* (410e).

### 7. Faith and the Beautiful Psyche

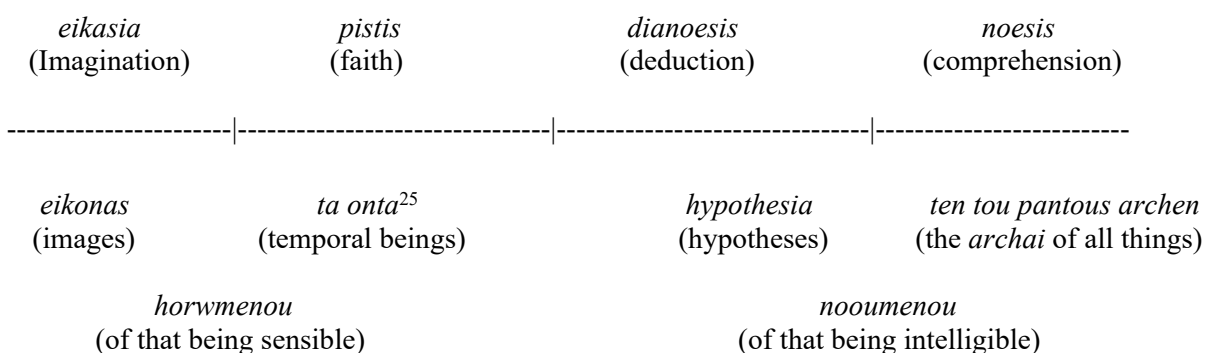
The chief defect of the courageous *psyche*, as well as its likeness in the Courageous City, is her reliance upon the *nomoi* as the foundations for *phronesis*.<sup>23</sup> In so far as such a being possesses understanding, it is an *episteme* rooted and articulated from unquestioned hypotheses, often presented and grasped solely through the *muthoi*, tacitly grounded in the love of beauty and harmoniousness, and developed through the *mimesis* of the good examples of one's community rather than through a life in the active and conscious process of self-reformation in the pursuit of and imbibing of the truth of reality. There is a component of wisdom yet missing.<sup>24</sup> Such a person's *phronesis* therefore has the characteristics of deductive, dianoetic thought, lived in their habits and practices, and supported by confidence and imagination (*pistis kai eikasia*). This sort of common-sense *phronesis*, though, is rather vulnerable before the critical mind, particularly of those who practice false dialectics or eristics (e.g., the Sophists or modern equivalents), who undermine faith in all hypotheses with their combative argumentation, and who pay no honour to *aletheia*; thus, a danger arises of a falling apart of the articulate and the tacit components of existence.

The pedagogical process of overcoming this vulnerability in common-sense thinking is acted out in

dramatic form for readers in the very dialogue between Socrates and the youths, as a process involving tying thought and understanding to an open-ended quest for an *arche* transcending all hypotheses. Terminologically, the process of investigative ascent – in which the *psyche* feels induced from problems and paradoxes to potential solutions – is designated *noesis*. The structuring and encouragement of noetic thought coincidentally becomes the subject and the action of the dialogue; at the end of Book VI, it fills the fourth and final position of the divided-line, next to *dianoesis*, *pistis*, and *eikasia*, and their isomorphic counterparts. Under Socrates instruction, Glaucon draws a line which we may roughly reproduce as in the diagram below.

The result of these further differentiations in one's manner of knowing and being - as Plato depicts it - is the open soul of a *philosophos*, one whose *phronesis* takes its bearing from being itself (*to on/twn wn*), the suchness of what truly exists (*ousia, hoi eidoi, hoi ides*), and, finally, the vision of the good beyond being (*to agathon epekeina tes ousias*), rather than from only the climate of opinions, customs, and ideas of the same. (576d-580a) Such a person, who has taken the *agathon* as the ground of their *paradeigma*, would be able freely to form conjectures (*doxazein doxa*) and imagine the suchness of existing things which wander in the light of being (*to planeton*) - they would be able to make the inductive ascent (or, in Polanyi's language the heuristic leaps) from particular things and clues to the most general realities, guided by their passion for the *arche*; it is faith in particular things - the particulars of one's language, one's culture, and one's masters - which provides the soul with a basis for seeing beyond them. Imagination then can serve as the ladder by which new symbols are conjured for the understanding.<sup>26</sup> Thus ordered, the philosopher, in her *phronesis*, can then turn and play freely in the space between here and there – the *metaxy* – and maintain *dikaiosune* in her inner *polis*, for it cannot be swamped by eristic arguments. Rather, having established some ground for faith in her comprehension of things, her understanding may plunge onwards, evoking and conceiving new symbols, new accounts, and new

### Glaucon's line:



myths through the use of her imagination - all for the sake of establishing new toe-holds in her climb.

The *psyche* of the *philosophos* Socrates is presented as the measure of human being; his *epistemé* is not simply of things (*ta onta*) or numbers (*hoi arithmetoi*) but the forms, formation, and tensions of *psyche* as such, and he knows speculation on *to me on* (a central premise of Democritean philosophy) to be the path of folly. His *mimesis*, moreover, is no longer of the particular forms of the earthly *polis*, but of the paradigm laid up in heaven, existing in an ineluctable tension towards the *agathon*. The trust and the yearning which form the substance of faith are, in one who loves wisdom or learning (a *philosophos* or a *philomathes*), borne-up in the endless pursuit and *mimesis* of that paradigm. In something closer to Polanyian language: the philosopher or scientist is forever indwelling in the potentially infinite future manifestations of the ever-unfolding truth of reality.<sup>27</sup>

To prepare the *psyche* for this rigorous leg of the ascent into the noetic life, Socrates prescribes a *paideia* which includes *arithmetikos*, *logistikos*, *geometrikos*, the as-yet unnamed science of geometric solids, and true *astronomia*. (522b-531c) These will bring the *psyche* to bear upon the plethora of problems and questions which induce a search for answers and understanding which lay beyond immediate perception - beyond the habitual prejudgment of sensation. After many years of study, the student, now quite aged, will be inducted into the formal practice of *dialektikos*. (531d-535a)<sup>28</sup> Taken together, these studies represent a *paideia* reflecting *to on* and the *cosmos* in all its known dimensions, but one which primarily bears upon the endless questioning, emulating, and participating in the truth of reality. It only incidentally yields any practical or productive results, whenever it does. Whatever sensible gifts which the newly purified noetic and dianoetic arts may provide can only come as a fortuitous blessing, and Socrates warns his young friend against praising them for their practicality. Practicality, it would appear, is the death of *episteme*. If people wish to find the *paradigm* for this blessed *politeia*, they should look for it laid-up in the heavens, if they can find it nowhere else - certainly the private citizens (*idiotas*) should not blame the companions (or, for that matter, philosophers in general) for its concrete absence. The end is a *psyche* who is *cosmion*. The *dikaiosune psyche* is the *cosmos* writ small. It is *sophrosune*, *andreia*, *phronemos*, and maintains its openness and dynamic order through the erotic, noetic search for the beginning and the beyond (*arche kai epekeina*) - a permanent state of fulfilment in existential tension. The just life of the philosopher is thus fulfilling, brings *eudaimonia*, and is accompanied by the highest, most lasting, and most inexhaustible of enjoyments; the charge that Socrates prove *dikaiosune* is both good in itself and for what it brings is fulfilled.

At the end of the laying-out of the divided-line under Socrates' guidance, Glaucon declares that he has understood (*manthano*) what Socrates has attempted to impart to him, though he admits his knowledge is bit vague. Socrates', for his part, states his satisfaction with his young friend's comprehension of the meaning of what has been imparted. (511b-e) His drawing of the line, and interpretation of it, exemplify the movement from ignorance to understanding. It is a movement which is set on a stable course by the *periagoge*, and it is the *periagoge* which alters the young man's direction such that he becomes committed to the pursuit of the most true things. The young man's questing imagination, guided under faith by a teacher and working from an inherited trust of informal and formal education, has striven proceeded to comprehend the meaning of that to which all the words and images were signs and clues, and then to deduce consequences from that comprehensive understanding. Glaucon's is still not a deeply articulable understanding, but it is 'very satisfactory', for all that. The son of Ariston needs no further convincing that the just life of the *philosophos* is better and more satisfying than the life of the tyrant as was held and argued by Thrasymachus.

### 8. *Separating Them Out*

Certain questions remain, for all the parallel conclusions: What then separates the philosopher from the scientist/*philomathes*? Moreover, what essentially distinguishes them from the examples of the nihilist and the modern, objectivist revolutionary - whom Polanyi terms the Minotaur, 'man masked as a beast'? Primarily it is the commitment to understanding in the sense adumbrated. Such a commitment on the part of our two exemplars, as we have seen, amounts to a responsible dedication to knowing the truth, which entails a dedication to at least attempt to be induced into a life - a way of being - which is conducive to that truth; a life in pursuit of truth thus naturally gives rise to the virtues, or moral maturation. Both the nihilist and the Minotaur, on the other hand, represent objectivism as a way of life. But human life is ultimately guided by the mind and its disposition of itself from and through the body, with the aid of our largely tacitly grounded conceptions and questing imaginations, but the dispositions of mind demanded by modern objectivism and its ancient antecedents are fairly clear.

On the one hand, what is demanded is the absolutely impersonal representation of knowledge in explicit and external form. Thus knowledge is only recognized as such when it can literally be presented as an object. On the other hand, objectivism also demands the suspicion of anything which is not strictly and immediately sensible, regular, and quantifiable. In theory, this conjoining of Greek skepticism and Democritean physics insists upon doubt as the *sine qua non* of knowing, and thus of being. Doubt as a

way of life, however, would not even be absurd, it would be completely impossible, as the legend of Pyrrho points out.

In modern practice, the demands of objectivism must be resolved into less pure forms, such as that of Sartrean existentialism, for it to be at all liveable; the relentless criticism of the skeptical mind overcomes itself through a resolute stand upon confessedly absurd principles. There is simply no other way out of the dilemma of the critical thinker who resolutely refuses to commit to understanding and comprehending anything which evades objectification; they must simply contradict themselves and to commit to something. And yet, the treatment of all knowledge as essentially nominal, relativistic, or perspectival is hardly steady ground for the scientific life, and does little to explain or to understand the manifest facts of scientific inferences and intuitions.

That said, for Polanyi, what separates the Minotaur from the mere nihilist is the former's dynamo-objective coupling of his now shiftless moral passions - which can no longer be brought to bear upon any real, comprehensive meaning - to that which he can safely acknowledge as real and objective: power and profit.<sup>29</sup> Plato, for his part, portrays much the same inverted passions at play in the soul of his Thrasymachus in *Politeia*, as well in the character of Callicles in the *Gorgias*.

Our two defective types, then, may be delineated by a propensity to reduce all of reality in its many aspects to deductions of power and profit. It is, as Eric Voegelin put it, a sort of substitution of a second, pseudo-reality for the one given us. Both the nihilist and the revolutionary deduce or construct reality from a hypostatically derived first principle, resulting in elaborate systems of thought, complete with epicyclical revisions, and other such protective constructs. The distinguishing characteristic of the Minotaur, a Thrasymachus, or a Callicles, is his resolute commitment to the ultimate logical consequences of such deductive speculation from the principles of his deformed, reductive conceptual framework: a furious life of activity dedicated to recreating reality in the image of an objectivist system.<sup>30</sup> The fact that such a quest can only be doomed to catastrophic failure is almost beside the point, for the objectivist is not cognitively or emotionally equipped to perceive the given, and thus cannot comprehend the very notion of overstep, nor the shadow of Nemesis.

On the other hand, our two healthy exemplars are characterized by what we may term an open, inductive disposition. They are both induced into a way of being which bears them on an impassioned search for truth of a reality understood as given, and only awaiting discovery, comprehension, and semantic expression - be it in words, actions, or practices. Tradition and education, in such cases, serve as the firmament bearing upon something beyond them. It is a life of active induction from particular roots in particular

traditions and authorities, to something both true and universal, the discovery of which ultimately modifies and perhaps expands the firmament of beliefs.

What separates the philosopher from the scientist/*philomathes* (and, incidentally, the older Polanyi from the younger - or the older Socrates from his younger self) is the element of self-reflection and the attendant search for personal consistency with oneself. I believe that this element is, on the whole, firmly represented in the confessional nature of *Personal Knowledge* as a work, as readily as it is in the self-conscious structuring of *Politeia* as an anamnestic exercise. The scientist may *be* a scientist, even a pre-eminent one, while being unable to give a coherent account of himself or what he knows.<sup>31</sup>

I will maintain, then, that it is therefore the exegetical, or reflective, character of both the Polyanian or Platonic philosopher which sets him apart as the most sound and well-rounded example of human being. In his humble acknowledgement of the universal intent of his calling, of his commitment and of his responsibility, he is nevertheless aware of the personal and tacit dimension of what he knows. He is simply aware that there is something ineffable about existence, that there is no objectivist escape from the hazards of error nor of failure, nor from moral weakness and temptation, but that the burden must be born and the hazards run, if life is to be lived fully, lived well, and lived humanely. Such is what the exegetical enterprise of the philosopher adds to that open, inductive existence - that balancing of faith, comprehending and critiquing, from which issues understanding - which he shares with the scientist. Both the classical *philosophos* described by Plato and the post-critical philosopher as defined by Polanyi simply understand Who Man Is: a Whence and a Whither in search of a Why.<sup>32</sup>

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#### Notes

1. Polanyi’s sudden shift of focus from the nature of the scientist to that of the philosopher occurs at *PK*, p.300, in the context of the discussion of the structure of commitment. See Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 300.
2. D.M. Yeager extrapolates from Polanyi’s work, that *moral inversion* may arise from a combination of one of four particular forms of *perfectionism* with one of four forms of *skepticism*. For the sake of the scope of this essay, I shall limit myself to outlining objectivism and inverted moral passion in their generalities. See D.M. Yeager, “Confronting the Minotaur: Moral Inversion and Polanyi’s Moral Philosophy,” *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 29, no. 1 (2002-2003): 22–48.
3. See *PK*, 306-309
4. We should note here that two conflationations are being made here by the objectivist thinker: first between what the Socratics distinguished as *episteme* and *gnosis*, and secondly between sensation and perception. In his conversation with the young Theaetetus, Plato’s Socrates spends considerable time attempting to disentangle the nature of *episteme* from that of *gnosis*, and to also distinguish it from *aisthesis* (there initially defined, following Protagoras’ *On Truth*, as passive sensation). In the end, the younger man is unable to give a *logos* of what it means for him to *epistesthai*, but he sees that his understanding can neither be *gnosis* nor a result of passive *aisthesis*. Polanyi as well makes the point that passive sensation, or pure sensation, is of a wholly separate experience from the activity of perception (stressing the latter’s active, rather than passive nature). A similar point is made by the psychologist William James in *The Principles of Psychology*. See *Thea*, 151e-183d for a lengthy exploration of the absurdities which arise from identifying *episteme* with *aisthesis*. See *Thea*. 193d-e, 206b for the subtle differentiation of *gnosis* (knowledge of a part) from *episteme*. Cf. *PK*, p.314-315, 342, 361-363, 388. Cf. William James. *The Principles of Psychology, volume 2* (Dover Publications, 1950), ch. XVII.
5. *PK*, 294-298.
6. *PK*, 303.



7. *PK*, 303-304.

8. My focus here is, of course, primarily upon Polanyi's analysis of knowing and commitment, rather than his ontology. Thus, I shall defer from fully summarizing his analysis of emergence for the sake of space, save to point-out his oft-made observation that, contra Laplacean objectivism, wholes are not reducible to their parts, and that lower strata of reality - so defined by their lack of the boundary conditions, operational principles, and relative meaning which is actual and present at higher levels - cannot define the reasons of a higher level, but only the conditions and causes for their potential success or failure, formation or deformation, rightness or error. For Polanyi's own overview of emergence, see for instance Michael Polanyi. "Life's Irreducible Structure", *Science*, New Series, Vol. 160, No. 3834 (Jun. 21, 1968), 1308-1312

9. See *PK*, 303-304. Cf. *PK*, 120-121, 125-127, 320-321, 373-374.

10. *PK*, 267.

11. Allen affirms that Polanyi attempts to reinstate an Augustinian, or Burkean, conception of the place of belief in the structure of knowing, in which belief, trust, and fellow-feeling lead to and sustain knowledge and understanding. See Richard Allen, "Some Implications of the Political Aspects of Personal Knowledge," *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 34, no. 3 (2007-2008): 8-17.

12. *PK*, 204-207.

13. Polanyi himself recounts several studies taken by experimental psychologists, which demonstrate the extent to which sapient animals rely upon some sort of convivial upbringing in order avoid complete pathology, if not simple neurosis. See *PK*, 204-207.

14. See *PK*, 58-59, for more on the subsidiary and tacit awareness of our bodies in our focal acts of intent. See also Michael Polanyi, "Sense-Giving and Sense-Reading" in *Knowing and Being* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 183-185; and "The Structure of Consciousness" in *K&B*, 211-223.

15. For more on the isomorphism of the Pythagorean *mimesis* and Platonic *methexis*, see W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, v.1, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 230-231; A.E. Taylor, *A Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1928), 27-31, 311-5, 324-5; and Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Relevance of the Beautiful" in *The relevance of the beautiful and other essays*, trans. Nicholas Walker, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

16. See in particular, chapter 4 of *PK* for the importance of apprenticeship in the arts and sciences. See also Michael Polanyi, *The Study of Man* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1959), 83, 94-99; in which Polanyi stresses that 'every act of understanding somewhat rectifies our being, and we may well accept therefore that a conversion to a truer way of *being a man* will induce a better understanding of man', and on the important influence upon us of those persons whom we set-up as our ideals - and the hazards of picking our ideals badly.

17. We will set aside the issue of what Polanyi termed logical levels and of whether the master attends to lower, equal, or higher realities than himself, to his own status as a predicate of reality, or to a comprehensive vision of the real.

18. As Polanyi puts it in a later work, 'This is the *dynamics of tacit knowing: the questing imagination vaguely antici-*

*pating experiences not yet grounded in subsidiary particulars evokes these subsidiaries and implements the experience the imagination has sought to achieve.'* *K&B*, 199-200. I emphasize this in order that we understand that our acts of understanding and of rectifying our being (either to achieve a higher degree of mental control of our environment, or to become better human beings and to exist more fully), is deeply active on our parts, and evocative - a characteristic which carries over into our attempts to understand the mind of those whom we idealize or hold as teachers.

19. Within the dialogue, the status of the *poleis* and *politeiai* as metaphors for the *psyche* is attested to at 386c-369b, 441c-442c, 443b-444a, 444d, 543c-544b, 580a-581c, 580d-583a, and 591d-592b. Eric Voegelin, for his part, emphasizes that there is an interplay of the symbols Man - Polis, Demon - Ruler, Paradigm of Life - Politeia, such that even the 'political' symbol *politeia* comes to refer to the inner *polis* of the philosopher; see Eric Voegelin. *Plato*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966), 86-87.

20. Conversely, we might conceive of the distinction as that of *being* just, and *doing* right, as *doing* right does not necessarily entail *being* just, as the Myth of Er highlights.

21. In fact, this analogy allows the subject matter to be magnified in scale, but furthermore to ease the induction of the students from the matter of particular manifestations of relative justice as they might appear in particular actions, to the more general and more essential matter of being just. The analogy allows Socrates-Plato to lead the party on an inductive ascent from particular appearances to a more universal, intelligible form or essence.

22. It seems apparent to me that Plato's use of mimesis covers much of what Polanyi means with the terms mimesis and indwelling - a largely a-critical attempt to become like another in one's being and understanding by pouring oneself into the act of comprehending them - and I believe this does much to explain the extended focus on mimetic poetry within the *Politeia*. In Polyanian terms, and by the logic of tacit knowledge, indwelling in the mental life of bad examples cannot be a detached act, but must rather be transformative, to some extent, for the actors, as well as the audience.

23. Cf. Eric Voegelin. *Plato*. Louisiana State University Press: Baton Rouge. 1966. 112-114. Voegelin affirms that the *arete* of *phronesis* as such is not to be found in the *polis* sketched in Book IV, but only truly comes to light in a soul after the vision of the *agathon epekeina tw'n ousias*; rather he lists the character of the souls of that city as possessing the *aretai* of *sophrosune*, *thumoeides* [sic], and *dikaiosune*.

24. Voegelin's interpretation of the divided line, and its meaning, is to identify *episteme* closely with the outcome of *noesis*, such that pure *dianoesis* does not bring with it understanding. His reading thus tends to emphasize the contemplation of the *idoi*, if not to *agathon auto*, as the basis for developing an actual understanding of things; cf. Voegelin, *ibid*. However, in so far as the *idoi* and *ousias* of phenomena are ever making themselves manifest in the perception of things, and thus spurring thought, I interpret this to indicate that a *degree* of understanding is always and already given to all human beings - that the difference between one soul and another is the sheer depth and breadth of her understanding.

25. This is my own abbreviation; the actual Greek is *to toinun heteron tithei hw touto eoiken, ta te peri hemas zws kai pan to phuteuton kai to skeuston holon genos*, and

implies all which comes into being or is brought into being, of which the *eikonas* (icons or shadows) are reflections or images.

26. Cf. Allan Bloom. *The Republic of Plato*. Basic Books: (United States of America.: Basic Books 1991, p.), 403-406, in which he writes, for instance, 'Imagination is no beginning point for knowledge, because, it cannot distinguish between what is merely a shadow... and what is an accurate reflection of the objects [of the second sub-part of the line].'

Bloom too hastily conflates the divided line with the myth of the cave, and then too hastily assumes the cave to represent the *polis*. The effect is to conclude that imagination and faith occupy a degraded position with respect to cognition and understanding. But, given that the *Politeia* itself is a work of the imagination; that Glaucon is instructed to use his imagination with respect to the allegory of the Sun and the Good, to draw the divided line, and to imagine the cave; and given that the philosopher's questing imagination is responsible for evoking the symbols which may serve as the props for pedagogy and dialectics, I see this as a highly problematic interpretation. It is more consistent with both the drama and dialectic of the dialogue to view the parts of the line as bearing upon the whole. That is to say, that imagination and faith underlie understanding, both providing the soil for and evoking the creative fruits of *dianoesis* and *noesis*.

Nor do I see it as plausible to suppose, as Bloom seems to at times, that *dianoesis*, and *noesis* are the exclusive domain of philosophers, given that any understanding of anything is logically defined as a consequence of dianoetic or noetic thinking. Here, I believe the confusion is caused by Bloom erring too far in the direction of identifying *episteme* (as he translates it, 'knowledge' or 'science') with a formal, explicit *logos*, or account. If that were the case, then the entirety of the dialogue would be rendered no more than fanciful non-sense. This is so, for philosophy and scientific investigation have been agreed to hinge upon, among other things, an upbringing in which one is immersed in informal, tacit acts of *mimesis*; of informal and formal apprenticeship; and an understanding of the Good - and such acts and experiences can, at best, only be circumscribed or pointed-to. For these reasons, I see the account of understanding given in the *Politeia* as being much closer to Polanyi's than is usually recognized, and the divided-line as running in parallel with the logic of commitment, as Polanyi outlines it.

27. It is worth noting that an explicit rejection of Democritean physics has been implied: all speculation based upon the assumption that *to me on* - of which Democritus' 'void' is an example - is a real thing, is labelled a form of folly or ignorance. In *The Sophist*, *to me on* will be posited by the Eleatic Stranger to be a synonym for difference, rather than a thing in itself which can be treated as a legitimate speculative concept. In the *Politeia*, the issue is bracketed in favour of exploring the dimensions of *to on*, the *epekeina*, and *to planeton*. In *Timaeus*, the sequel to *Politeia*, 'void' and therefore Democritean doctrine, will be challenged again.

28. Socrates also makes a point in referring to young people, who have gotten hold of the tools of dialectics before they've matured, as 'puppies' who will delight in pointlessly tearing apart whatever they get between their teeth. See 539a-d.

29. Yeager argues that, for Polanyi, the passions (including therefore moral passion) are a sub-category of the appetites,

in do far as they are in-born appetites which have been shaped and directed by one's upbringing, writing, 'The passions have to do with a layer of reality that is essentially a social construction, a layer of reality which comes into being only insofar as our complex symbol systems enable us to enact into being institutions and practices—an entire convivial order—that, while being contingent upon materiality, cannot be reduced to material conditions.' (Yeager, 2002-2003, 38).

I believe that Yeager is mistaken in this reading, as, logically, it would entail a disjunction between natural morality and conventional morals, thus reintroducing problems which Polanyi seems to have considered pseudo-problems, and which yet have preoccupied historicist thinkers such as Rousseau, Hegel, and Freud. Those questions are namely how did we get started on this road (i.e. the problem of the origins of 'civilization'); what is the relationship between the true and the moral; what is the basis for saying that some moral vision is better than another; and what if the immoral (i.e. the 'natural') is superior to the moral? Though space prevents a lengthy exposition, let it be said that, if what I have said of Polanyi is at all valid, then it would rather hold that all of our affects bear upon the true and the real, and spur us to undergo a continuous conversion of our beings in order to gain mental and bodily purchase and control, or simply to understand. Morality would thus be a *way of truly knowing and of being true in body and mind*; a way which, by virtue of our convivial upbringings, would of course be given particular shape and direction within a particular tradition (or *noosphere*), which is itself the inheritance of our fellows' and forebears' attempts to live a better and truer life, as best they can or could understand and conceive it, in their own strivings with universal intent.

Thus, I would suggest that it would be more correct, or at least less misleading, to interpret Polanyi's conception of the appetites as a kind of passion, rather than the reverse. 30. Wiser, drawing upon both Polanyi and Voegelin, emphasizes that a sort of divorce from reality has occurred in those modern minds which have committed themselves to the doctrine of explicit knowledge and the myth of the fully autonomous self. He writes, 'It [Western society] no longer is grounded in those historical experiences which give definition to the common forms of human existence. As such, philosophy suffers from abstraction and the inevitable systematization which accompanies such a process.' See James Wiser, "Michael Polanyi: Personal Knowledge and the Promise of Autonomy," *Political Theory* 2, no. 1 (February 1974): 77-87.

31. Polanyi mentions Ernst Mach's pseudo-substitution of 'mental economy' for truth as the criterion for the validity of a theory as an example of this sort of confusion among otherwise brilliant scientists. *PK*, 166.

32. As Polanyi himself put it, 'I believe that in spite of the hazards involved, I am called upon to search for the truth and state my findings.' This sentence, summarizing my fiduciary programme, conveys an ultimate belief which I find myself holding. Its assertion must therefore prove consistent with its content by practicing what it authorizes. This is indeed true. For in uttering this sentence I both say that I must commit myself by thought and speech, and do so at the same time. Any enquiry into our ultimate beliefs can be consistent only if it presupposes its own conclusion. It must be intentionally circular.'; *PK*, 299. Cf. *PK*, 324 and *TSoM*, 87.

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## DISCUSSION NOTES

### *Understanding Emergentism: Fennell is Right, Polanyi's Emergence is Reductive*

Daniel Paksi

**Abstract:** In his paper 'Is Polanyi's Emergence Reductive?' Jon M. Fennell, after a detailed analysis of the problem, rightly answers the question asked. Nonetheless, he sheds light on some deeper problems too. In this reaction-paper I try to follow his lead and drill further down, to better understand the concept of emergence and Polanyi's philosophy.

**Keywords:** emergentism, reduction, materialism, Jon M. Fennell, Walter Gulick, Michael Polanyi.

#### *1. Preface*

I have been asked to write about Dr. Fennell's paper 'Is Polanyi's Emergence Reductive?' published in *Appraisal* last winter (Fennell 2017). Receiving this request is a great honour for me, and I'm gladly fulfilling it. However, my task is hard because my opinion is simple: he is right, Polanyi's emergence is reductive. So, what should I write? I could only recommend that you read his excellent and detailed analysis as he examines the problem from different angles.

Nonetheless, I feel that his paper, in its real spirit, is not about the reductiveness of Polanyi's emergentism, but sheds light on the deeper meanings of Polanyi's philosophy and emergentism by mainly arguing against the claims of Walter Gulick. Dr. Fennell's paper is highly analytical and dense in information; in this reaction paper, I will choose a more Polanyian style to speak about the point of emergentism and Polanyi's philosophy to delve more deeply into Dr. Fennell's reasoning.

#### *2. The Reality of Persons and the Reality of Evolution*

There are several ways to explicate the point of emergentism; however, the point of the point is *tacit*. You need a genuine heuristic effort, a 'Gestalt switch' in your angle to understand it.

Emergentism is *the fundamental belief and acknowledgement of two personal facts*: 1) *the reality of persons*, and 2) *the reality of evolution*. However, these words in themselves mean nothing. You will understand them on the basis of your own fundamental beliefs. For example, Walter Gulick would certainly say that he believes in both of these facts. He still argues beside neo-Darwinism and against Polanyi; and neo-Darwinism explicitly denies both of these facts. If you feel now that there is a severe contradiction in my words that's okay, but in fact there is none. Because, of course, both Polanyi and I understand these explicit words on the basis of our tacit fundamental beliefs, which are clearly very different from Gulick's. For example, the word 'evolution' means

for a neo-Darwinian, simple change based on natural selection, whereas for Polanyi evolutionary emergence is based on natural selection and ordering principles.

#### *3. The False Dichotomy of Materialism versus Dualism*

Emergentism is about *breaking the false dichotomy of materialism versus dualism*. It is our natural human experience that reality has many faces, and at least two of them can be well-recognised. They were already called a kind of spirit and a kind of body in archaic times. Nonetheless, Plato defined them philosophically as Ideas of the spiritual world and bodies of our shadow world, and Christianity believed him. Aristotelian philosophy and science, which become influential only in the Middle Ages, in a sense tried to leave behind this dualism with a hierarchical view of reality. But then modern critical philosophy and science were born, especially from the efforts of René Descartes and Galileo Galilei, and it established Plato's dualism in a new form: mind and matter. Materialism is also a consequence of modern critical philosophy, and it doubts even the existence of minds or persons, that is, the reality of our natural tacit experiences about ourselves, about our free nature. According to materialism, there are no minds, there are no persons; these are just vacant, naïve terms for complex material systems. There is only matter. Neo-Darwinism is the materialist theory of evolution against the 'unscientific' creationism and vitalism of dualism. So, emergentism is all about breaking this materialism-dualism dichotomy of modern critical thinking and establishing a middle ground between these fundamental beliefs towards reality. This is why Polanyi gave the subtitle 'Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy' to his *Personal Knowledge*.

Emergentism was established by Samuel Alexander with his *Space, Time, and Deity* (1920), but it never became a real independent philosophical school. First of all, it was swept away by the rising power of materialism, and secondly neither of the two major followers of Alexander could acknowledge his starting point: that reality in its fundamentals is space and time. Lloyd Morgan took a path that could easily be understood as a new kind of dualism, whereas C. D. Broad in turn took another that could be understood as a new kind of so-called non-reductive materialism: 'emergent materialism' in Broad's words. The dualism-materialism dichotomy broke the new school at its birth and not the new school broke the dichotomy. Polanyi tried to breathe new life into emergentism at the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with his theory of tacit

and personal knowledge, but he clearly failed. Nonetheless, I believe it's time to try again.

So, if emergentism is true, this means that there are human persons, the reality of whom 1) *cannot* be explained merely by their explicit material parts of the present, and 2) *can* be explained by their tacit evolutionary history, that is, on the basis of their explicit material conditions and comprehensive ordering principles of the past and present. The first thesis explains why Polanyi's theory is not 'reductionist,' in Thomas Nagel's terms, and the second thesis shows that it is still reductive, as Fennell rightly observes. However, the deeper meanings of Polanyi's and Nagel's positions are clearly different.

#### 4. *There is no Objective Point of Reference*

Emergentism is facing the fact that *there is no objective point of reference*, that all knowledge is based on a personal point of view in a particular place and time. In science, the concept of objective knowledge is based on the worldview of Newtonian mechanics, the point of which was presented so perfectly and famously by Pierre-Simon de Laplace. Polanyi always cites this short passage from Laplace, and we mention Laplace's demon as the ideal objective knower so often in almost every scientific field. According to Laplace, this ideal objective knower is a super-intellect that, at any given moment, can grasp the exact place and velocity and any other fundamental characteristics of all of the objects in the universe. Since this super-intellect is also perfectly familiar with the laws of mechanics, it follows that it can deduce from these two factors all the possible past and future states of the universe. In this concept of the universe, time is merely a fourth dimension of space; there is no present which follows the past or future which follows the present but all time of the universe exist beside each other in the so-called block universe at a long-drawn fourth dimensional 'present.' You can't choose what you will do next because you are, of course, also a part of the block universe, and everything in the universe is strictly determined in this mechanical sense. As a matter of fact, not just free will, but also motion becomes an illusion because everything is written in the hard stone of the fourth dimensional block universe. So, if this picture of the universe is true, as so many eminent physicists believe today, that means there is no real meaning, there is no free will, and there are no responsible actions: Hitler and Stalin were not evil men, just the vacant puppets of the physical laws. Polanyi always emphasizes the importance of this severe tension between modern materialist science and free moral judgments, which are the basis of a free society.

Nonetheless, for us the other severe consequence of this concept of ideal objective knowledge is now more important: following the demon, we try to explain every phenomenon by their explicit material parts and laws. However, comprehensive phenomena

and the ordering principles of comprehensive phenomena can be grasped merely by tacit knowing; the ideal Laplacian knowledge simply does not contain these phenomena. Therefore, if we are insisting on our ideal of objective knowledge, we inevitably start to deny the reality of any kind of comprehensive phenomena and ordering principle or use deceptive substitutions by which we hush up the whole problem. With Polanyi's words from *Personal Knowledge*:

The tremendous intellectual feat conjured up by Laplace's imagination has diverted attention (in a manner commonly practised by conjurers) from the decisive sleight of hand by which he substitutes a knowledge of all experience for a knowledge of all atomic data. Once you refuse this deceptive substitution, you immediately see that the Laplacean mind understands precisely nothing and that whatever it knows means precisely nothing (PK 141).

So, a Laplacian Fault or deceptive substitution is kind of a magic trick by which exact, perfectly explicit formulas fill the positions of tacit experiences and concepts that are based on personal knowledge, and then we pretend that the two knowledges correspond to each other exactly; therefore, there is no need for tacit skills and personal knowledge in true scientific knowledge and our knowledge can be separated into two distinct, contradictory parts due to the objective-subjective dichotomy.

When Polanyi introduces the concept of deceptive substitutions in the first chapter of his *Personal Knowledge*, his more detailed example for the concept is the *principle of simplicity*, which is the basis on which one scientific theory is preferred over another one. However, according to Polanyi, the real meaning of simplicity cannot be defined and understood only by explicit objective criteria, as we like to pretend, if in the meanwhile we do not refer to the concealed rationality of reality behind the theories that in fact guide our choice and that cannot be specified objectively. The theory of relativity or quantum mechanics are not simple at all at the exact and objective level of their mathematics if we tacitly refrain from referring to their implicit scientific rationality and meaning concerning reality. (PK 16)

Perhaps it is worth mentioning that Polanyi in turn introduces in an explicit form the concept of personal knowledge through the concept of deceptive substitutions when he speaks about simplicity, which he actually does only in regard to the case of Albert Einstein's theory of relativity. He emphasizes that *scientific beauty* was mentioned several times by Einstein's followers in their explanations of why they chose Einstein's special relativity over H. Lorentz's ether theory, which complied with the experimental data just as much as Einstein's had. Or later, they cited it as the reason why they chose Einstein's general relativity over D. C. Miller's experimental results when, of course, the latter complied with the experi-

mental data. According to him, the concept of beauty refers to that *inherent rationality of nature* that was revealed by Einstein's theory, and it is exactly what we mean by the words scientific beauty. By using another term instead, however, we conceal this fact as if it is only about some aesthetic point. Then we do not have to contradict the materialist dogma that there is no deeper, inherent rationality in nature beyond the strict and exact data of fundamental material particles and their governing explicit physical laws.

Polanyi asked Einstein what the motivation was for his discovery of special relativity, and we know that the answer was not the results of the very famous Michelson-Morley experiments, but his vision of how the universe would look if someone could ride a light beam. According to Einstein's theory of relativity, simultaneity (of the ideal objective observer) is always in question. Different observers at different times, places and velocities could find the time sequence of events different. An event A that is before another event B for one observer could be after event B for yet another one. Furthermore, time and space is not absolute, but depends on the situations of the observers, that is, what their points of reference in the universe are. For example, time on Earth will go differently from that experienced in a fast spaceship, as the famous twin paradox depicts it. Moreover, observation itself is highly limited, not just because of human imperfection, but also because it can only be carried out at the maximum speed in the universe, that is, at the speed of light. Anybody who looks up to the night sky does not see how Sirius is doing at that very moment, but instead witnesses how it was doing eight years ago. There is no time here to go into details, but notice how Einstein intuitively left behind the Newtonian-Laplacian point of reference.

Polanyi says in the first page of *Personal Knowledge* that 'as human beings, we must inevitably see the universe from a centre lying within ourselves,' and this is the main point of personal knowledge. Einstein speaks about there being no absolute space and no absolute time, how every point of reference has its own space and its own time, and that from every point of reference every other time and space seems to be different. In these statements, both Polanyi and Einstein are, in fact, speaking about the same thing. *There is no objective point of reference.*

### 5. Emergentism is not anti-Darwinian

When neo-Darwinians describe the different changing processes in an allele-distribution with exact probability calculations or the spread of a new mutation in the gene pool of a population, they try to follow the concept of ideal objective knowledge. They use highly advanced mathematics and point-like entities in a multi-dimensional mathematical framework to describe these processes as exactly as possible. However, these descriptions in themselves tell us nothing about any higher-level comprehensive processes or

phenomena of life that we are interested in, as the ideal Laplacian knowledge tells us nothing about 'any kind of tools, foodstuffs, houses, roads and any written records or spoken messages' (Polanyi 1959, 49). Imagine thousands and thousands of exact probability data expressed in a multidimensional matrix. How can any of these data *in themselves* tell us anything, for example, about a change in the hunting habits of a species?

Emergentism is the acknowledgement of the reality of comprehensive orderly wholes and the acknowledgement of the reality of ordering principles responsible for these orderly phenomena. Lower-level random processes like natural selection or mutation cannot produce and cannot explain these comprehensive orderly phenomena. In Polanyi's words:

Randomness alone can never produce a significant pattern, for it consists in the absence of any such pattern; and we must not treat the configuration of a random event as a significant pattern, whether by attributing to it fictitiously a distinctiveness that it does not possess, as in the case of the scattered pebbles, or by granting it erroneously a specious significance, such as the fulfilment of a horoscope (PK 37-38).

Emergentism is anti-neo-Darwinian, but not anti-Darwinian. The theory of natural selection is, of course, the fundament of all kinds of Darwinisms. From a scientific point of view, the most important difference between the Darwinian and the neo-Darwinian theories is that the former does not yet include genetics. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was not clear at all what the relation is between Darwin's theory of natural selection and genetics based on Gregor Mendel's principles. Darwin's theory, due to observation, simply supposed that there are variations of living beings among which selection works, and it gave no explanation for the formation of variations. Mendel, at the same time, explicated the principles of heredity entirely independently from the theory of natural selection.

Concerning its methodology, Darwin's work is rather a *historical explanation* by detailed *empirical examinations* based on his personal experiences from his voyage on the Beagle onward, whereas genetics is *highly theoretical* and *mathematized*. It is mainly R. A. Fischer's merit, based on his statistical methods, that this methodological gap was bridged and the Darwinian mechanism of natural selection was reinterpreted in the framework of genetics. According to Polanyi, by this interpretation, Fischer moved the Darwinian theory in the direction of the Laplacian ideal of objective knowledge and this process only continued and was strengthened through neo-Darwinian synthesis.

From a philosophical point of view, the conflicts just multiply. Since Darwin himself never claimed that the theory of natural selection can explain the compre-

hensive phenomena of evolution or the first formation of life, and thus that natural selection is the only fundamental mechanism in evolution. However, it is perhaps the most important principle of neo-Darwinism. In *The Origin of Species*, Darwin argues more modestly that natural selection can explain the formation of new species in wild nature in the same way as artificial selection, that is, livestock breeding can explain the development of new subspecies of dogs, pigeons, sheep, etc. Here I would just like to recall the last words of Darwin in *The Origin of Species* indicating that his theory does not explain the origin of life.

There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being evolved (Darwin 1872, 429).

In most cases, in *Personal Knowledge*, Polanyi speaks about only Darwinism. We discover only from the context which kind or level of Darwinism he is exactly referring to. Nonetheless, to understand the point of his critique, it is enough to see the difference between Darwinism and neo-Darwinism. Then when he harshly argues against explanations by random genetic mutations or he states that the theory of natural selection as a lonely fundamental mechanism cannot explain any real comprehensive evolutionary orderly phenomenon of nature, then he, in fact, does *not* contradict Darwin because Darwin himself never claimed these things. So, Polanyi does not debate Darwin at all. To the contrary, he debates merely the neo-Darwinian expansion of his theory.

It follows that if we do not identify Darwinism with neo-Darwinism then Polanyi could and *should be* regarded as a Darwinian because in the limited original sense he completely acknowledges Darwin's theory of natural selection. Moreover, I dare to say that he is more faithful to the original spirit of Darwin's work because Darwin did not conclude the questions about, for example, the comprehensive orderly phenomena of evolution and its ordering principles, as neo-Darwinism does due to materialism. Of course, Darwin was not an emergentist, but he was not a materialist either. I believe that he did not know yet what to think about these fundamental questions and therefore left the door open for further examinations.

## 6. Ordering Principles

However, as Fennell notes so insightfully, neo-Darwinians try to shut the door, not with arguments, but with labels and the power of authority.

So, what price is exacted for embracing a pre-existing ordering principle? To begin with, it certainly entails censure by scholars committed to the neo-Darwinian account, especially its contemporary form, bolstered as it is by features such as those cited by Gulick (Fennell 2017, 29).

As a matter of fact, if you strictly follow Polanyi's criticism of neo-Darwinism, your paper will probably not be published even in *Tradition and Discovery*, The Polanyi Society Periodical; because everybody 'knows' that neo-Darwinism is good science and there is no need for further examinations. Polanyi vehemently complains about this situation already in the fifties:

It is obvious, therefore, that the rise of man can be accounted for only by other principles than those known today to physics and chemistry. If this be vitalism, then vitalism is mere common sense, which can be ignored only by a truculently bigoted mechanistic outlook (PK 390).

Fennell notes that even Gulick acknowledges at one point that Polanyi is not necessarily a vitalist if he thinks that there is a need for ordering principles to explain the comprehensive phenomena of life and evolution. Yes, he does but then he continues:

I referred to the vitalistic aspect of his thought because *Polanyi describes himself* (in the passage I [...] quoted from PK 390) *as a vitalist* insofar as he thinks a principle beyond the laws of physics and chemistry is what is necessary to explain evolution. My point is neo-Darwinian thought provides all the principled richness necessary to account for evolutionary emergence and does not deserve censure on this point (Gulick 2012, 59).

So, since the neo-Darwinian theory has every principle that is needed for the explanation of evolutionary emergence, if Polanyi does not realize this, then even with these words he acknowledges that he is a vitalist: 'If this be vitalism, then vitalism is mere common sense, which can be ignored only by a truculently bigoted mechanistic outlook.' Because he is either a neo-Darwinian or a vitalist; there is no third option. Do you also wonder whether what Gulick understands under the term of 'evolutionary emergence' if he thinks that the neo-Darwinian theory with only 'the laws of physics and chemistry' 'provides all the principled richness necessary to account for' it? For him, evolutionary emergence refers only to a complex material process. Otherwise, it cannot be explained solely by the laws of physics and chemistry. He is clearly thinking in the modern critical dichotomy of materialism vs. dualism, in this case neo-Darwinism vs. vitalism, where Polanyi's emergentism simply does not exist.

What is an ordering principle? The principle of simplicity, which is the basis on which a scientist chooses between two different theories, for example, between those of Einstein and Lorentz, is an ordering principle of scientific discovery. 'Thou shalt not kill' is an ordering principle of morality that was clearly not followed by Hitler or Stalin. The principle due to which a hunting lion chases its prey towards her hiding flock members is an ordering principle of animal life. The operational principle according to which a

machine works is an ordering principle of engineering. The information due to which the skilled flight of a bat develops during ontogeny is an ordering principle of biological development. In our everyday life, in scientific practice and in biological explanations of life, we use these ordering principles to act or to explain comprehensive orderly phenomena. This is as natural as possible. However, the objectivist ideal of science and the materialist conviction of the ruling neo-Darwinian theory force us to doubt the reality of these ordering principles, that is, question their own existential meaning. According to neo-Darwinians, genetic information is nothing other than a specific sequence of DNA. According to Polanyi, this claim is false even in the logical sense (Polanyi 1969) because genetic information is a comprehensive emergent reality; in many cases, it is a coded ordering principle of biological development. According to materialism, the ordering principles of morality are also not real. According to emergentism, they are meaningful ordering principles of human cultural life.

To explain the meaning and workings of the most general ordering principles, that is, the ordering principles of life and evolution, is a much harder and longer task. They mean nothing to a person, such as Gulick, who committed himself to the fundamental beliefs of neo-Darwinism and materialism. Nonetheless, I think I understand them much better now, so I will make an attempt in another paper in the near future. Perhaps, now you already suspect that materialism and emergentism are also types of ordering principles of philosophy and human understandings of reality.

### 7. Meaning

Fennell cites Gulick at great length during the subchapter titled ‘Gulick’s Sharpening the Issue’ (Fennell 2017 31-32). Here, to save the meaning of human life, Gulick speaks again of different kinds of emergences and operational principles of machines – after he had rejected so many times Polanyi’s emergentism and any need for ordering principles beyond ‘the laws of physics and chemistry.’ Nonetheless, Gulick understands well that neo-Darwinism and materialism in case of human life would lead to the loss of any real meaning and, as we have seen, there would be no free will or responsible actions. Everything and anything could be justified by power and ideology.

So, what is the answer according to Gulick? ‘Participation in a purposeful cosmos’ (Gulick 2005, 95). Fennell describes this concept of Gulick in the following way:

Interestingly, this participation is made possible through worship of God. Giving oneself over to God – and here Gulick indicates that he understands himself to be closely following Polanyi – constitutes an affirmation of meaning. In Gulick’s felicitous phrasing, such commitment ‘is a virtually self-authenticating way of discovering how life is

invested with purpose and significance (Fennell 2017, 32; quoting Gulick 2005, 96).

It is important to see two things at this stage. Firstly, Gulick, up to this point, has attacked Polanyi and emergentism on the basis of neo-Darwinism and materialism. He has stated that Polanyi’s ordering principles are vitalistic, that is, unscientific and unnecessary because they are on the wrong side of the materialism vs. dualism dichotomy, and because the neo-Darwinian theory, with only ‘the laws of physics and chemistry,’ ‘provides all the principled richness necessary to account for’ evolutionary emergence. But now Gulick makes a big leap to the other side of the dichotomy – which now, by the way, seems also to be necessary and scientific – and claims that meaning can be saved by ‘giving oneself over to God.’ If neo-Darwinism is true, then there is no God. Just ask Richard Dawkins; he has a consistent position on this question.

Secondly, Gulick is wrong if he thinks that he is following Polanyi in any sense. For Polanyi, meaning comes from the evolutionary emergence of persons due to the ordering principles of life and evolution, which were denied by Gulick. If you are an emergentist, God does not exist. Man cannot be at the same time the achievement of evolutionary emergence and the creation of God. This is simply a logical necessity. Nonetheless, the question is in which sense we use the term ‘God.’ Up to this point, I have used this term in the classical sense, which complies with the materialist-dualist dichotomy. Both materialists and dualists use the term in the classical dualistic sense according to which God is an infinite spiritual substance, the source of every meaning in human life through creation. Materialists explicitly deny this concept. As do emergentists. However, contrary to materialists, emergentists do not deny the reality of every higher-level ordering principle or comprehensive phenomenon.

Polanyi claims that religion ‘is an indwelling rather than an affirmation.’ Therefore, its point is not the affirmation of the existence of God, as it was generally treated due to dualism, but instead the immersion in a peculiar system of knowledge as an intellectual tool, that is, the *indwelling itself*. This process can be identified with the process by which a swagger-cane as a tool becomes a part of someone’s hand, only it is realized at a higher existential level (PK 279).

God cannot be observed, any more than truth or beauty can be observed. He exists in the sense that He is to be worshipped and obeyed, but not otherwise; not as a fact – any more than truth, beauty or justice exist as facts. All these, like God, are things which can be apprehended only in serving them (PK 279).

It means that the statement that ‘God exists’ is an affirmation of a tacit commitment, just as the statement that ‘snow is white is true’ is an affirmation of

the tacit act of claiming that ‘snow is white’ and not an affirmation of an explicit fact referring to an aspect of reality as ‘snow is white’. (PK 255) There is no such factual reality as God.

[Modern critical thinking] destroyed the religious meaning of things without fully compensating for this loss by a different meaning, and the total volume of belief, from which all meaning flows, was effectively reduced. (PK 286)

Every affirmation is the consequence of a person’s tacit commitment; explicit sentences in themselves mean nothing. In this sense, *belief is nothing other than a tacit commitment towards reality* that an aspect of reality has a peculiar nature, character, property, etc. and the roots of belief stem *from human evolution* and not from a divine creation. Therefore, religious faith is a type of natural human belief in which someone’s tacit commitments are caged into an explicit religious conceptual and explanatory system. The role of religious traditions (among others) was to provide the intellectual tools by which human societies could explicate their fundamental tacit beliefs meaningfully. Of course, the consequence of this process was that societies think about the universe, about their places in it, and about their goals. In other words, the meanings of the different aspects of reality were determined by religion. According to Polanyi, we have to be thankful that critical philosophy destroyed religious dogma and the static societies of the medieval and the early modern eras and thereby made thinking freer. But we do not have to be thankful that it did not give answers to the most fundamental questions of human life. Moreover, it often explicitly rejected these questions as unscientific, anthropocentric, and vitalistic, and we have seen that also in this paper in the case of neo-Darwinism. So, we do not have to be thankful at all because in the end the consequence of this process was that, according to the Laplacian ideal of objective knowledge, the universe has become meaningless.

The book of Genesis and its great pictorial illustrations, like the frescoes of Michelangelo, remain a far more intelligent account of the nature and origin of the universe than the representation of the world as a chance collocation of atoms. For the biblical cosmology continues to express – however inadequately – the significance of the fact that the world exists and that man has emerged from it, while the scientific picture denies any meaning to the world, and indeed ignores all our most vital experience of this world (PK 284-285).

However, the universe is not meaningless at all, since in the universe there is life and there are human beings who have emerged from primordial material beginnings, due to the ordering principle of life and evolution, who do not merely give meaning to the world by means of their languages, but also by means of their lives and existences. These humans, most of all, can reveal and understand the inherent hidden rationality

of reality, for example, by the discovery of the theory of relativity. This is the real participation in a purposeful cosmos.

Samuel Alexander uses the term ‘Deity’ to make it clear that he speaks about a finite comprehensive emergent reality above the level of human persons or minds and not about the traditional dualistic and infinite concept of God. However, according to Alexander, ‘Deity’ does not yet fully exist, its emergence is not at all complete, and, actually, never will be because that would mean the existence of God (Alexander 1920 II.: 347, 361-362).

So, if Gulick rejects the emergentist concept of meaning for the sake of neo-Darwinism, then he is not following Polanyi in any sense; he is fighting him. The reality of persons, the reality of evolution, and thus the real meaning of human life cannot be established on neo-Darwinian grounds.

### 8. Conclusion

Emergentism cannot be understood on the basis of materialist or dualistic fundamental beliefs. Its point is that it has its own fundamental beliefs regarding reality in contrast to dualism and materialism. One needs a really brave heuristic effort, a ‘Gestalt switch’ in one’s angle, to understand it. But since different fundamental beliefs towards reality have different explanatory powers, I can assure you that if you have understood Polanyi’s emergentism you will never turn back to materialism in any form.

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## DISCUSSION NOTES

### *Polanyi, Emergence, and Common Sense: Reflections on the Paksi Essay*

Jon Fennel

#### 1. Introduction

The editor of this journal has invited me to comment upon the two-part essay by Daniel Paksi that is published in Volume 11, Numbers 2 and 3. Paksi's essay elaborates in considerable detail the concept of 'medium emergence' and brings it to bear upon the thought of Michael Polanyi.

To his credit, Paksi is conversant not only with the history of British emergentism but also with important elements of the contemporary academic literature on emergence. I should confess at the outset that I am largely uninformed by this material. On the other hand, I do bring to this commentary the fruit of extended reflection on Polanyi's position on emergence (as captured in my own essay in Volume 11, Number 2 of *Appraisal*).

#### 2. The Argument Against Materialism

Paksi makes two central claims: 1) Materialism, due to what is elsewhere referred to as 'retortion' or 'performative contradiction', is invalid; and 2) 'Polanyi's concept of personal reality corresponds to the concept of medium emergence' (II, Section 2).<sup>1</sup> In supporting the first of these claims (II, Section 3), Paksi points to an important well-known passage from *Personal Knowledge*: 'any philosophy that sets up strictness of meaning as its ideal is self-contradictory. For if the active participation of the philosopher in meaning what he says is regarded by it as a defect which precludes the achievement of objective validity, it must reject itself by these standards' (*PK*, 252-253). Materialism, for Paksi, is such a philosophy, for it denies the reality of a personal dimension which is a vital element in assertion. Since materialism is itself an assertion (of startling expanse), the position is self-defeating, or performatively contradictory.

Paksi's argument occasions two comments. The first of these, perhaps trivial, is that he overlooks in *Personal Knowledge* a passage that makes the case against materialism even more effectively than the one he cites: 'our conceptions of man and human society must be such as to account for man's faculty in forming these conceptions and to authorize the cultivation of this faculty within society' (142). Polanyi refers to this principle as 'a criterion of consistency'.<sup>2</sup> Far more important than the selection of passage, however, is that while Paksi is certainly correct to find in Polanyi a refutation of materialism, the argument employed here by Polanyi plays an indispensable larger role in his thought. The requirement of self-accreditation or self-confirmation (both concepts are used by Polanyi) that demonstrates the bankruptcy of materialism and leads to its defeat has the essential positive function of grounding Polanyi's

entire philosophical position. Polanyi's supreme contribution is not the defeat of objectivism (or materialism) but instead its replacement by an alternative that is virtuously circular. This is the logic through which he offers a source of meaning and justification that possesses grounds but not foundations.<sup>3</sup>

The second comment, bringing us closer to the heart of Paksi's enterprise, concerns the interpretation assigned by him to the passage from *Personal Knowledge* that he employs in his refutation of materialism. To clarify this matter, it is necessary to take an extended excursion into Paksi's position

It is most revealing of Paksi's project that he labels the Polanyian refutation a '*Reductionist Argument against Materialism*' (II, Section 3; emphasis added). On Paksi's telling, materialism is the ontological claim that 'there is one kind of reality, one fundamental substance: matter. That is, every higher description of objects can be and *has* to be reduced synchronically'. Earlier, in Section 1 of Part II, he defines synchronic reduction as the position that affirms the 'reversibility of time' and asserts that 'Time is not a real, independent factor, but rather a special dimension of space, and therefore every higher-level phenomenon can be reduced now, that is, synchronically'. A principal implication of this view is that 'every higher-level phenomenon is only an *epistemic phenomenon*' (II, Section 1). Further, 'Since epistemic, higher level phenomena are dependent on fundamental matter, they are *emergent*; and because they are only epistemic phenomena, they are emergent in the epistemological or weak sense' (*ibid.*). In opposition to this view Paksi poses his 'medium emergence' according to which 'there are two different kinds of reality: one is the fundamental substance, matter, and the other is the emergent levels [that] depend on it which are the achievements of emergent evolution. That is, there are higher level descriptions that can be reduced synchronically and those that cannot be. The former implies epistemological emergence and the latter ontological emergence' (II, Section 3). Essential to an understanding of Paksi's position is a further observation: 'In comparison to materialism, emergentism is a *far more moderate* ontological claim and *actually corresponds to our experience*, insofar as it seems that there are both reducible and irreducible higher-level descriptions of objects' (*ibid.*; bold print added). In other words, unlike materialism, medium emergence respects and authorizes common sense. In an interesting aside, Paksi notes that the plausibility of materialism depends in large measure on the presupposition that the sole alternative to it is dualism, which, presumably, is

for the modern mind manifestly beyond the pale. One is here reminded of nominalism under which, as Polanyi reminds us in *Personal Knowledge*, universals must be rejected because of the metaphysical consequences they necessarily imply. Polanyi, in an echo of C. S. Peirce, rejects this *reductio ad absurdum* by distinguishing between actual and real. Universals are indeed *real*. But they are not *actual*.<sup>4</sup> The unacceptable consequences that drive the nominalist's argument do not actually exist. As we shall see, at the heart of Paksi's thesis there is a comparable move. We have already noted that Paksi rejects materialism on the basis of its performative contradiction. Where, then, is the self-refutation of materialism? Paksi's move in this direction follows from his observation that if materialism is to be the comprehensive doctrine that it claims to be, then synchronic reduction must itself be susceptible to synchronic reduction. More specifically, on Paksi's account reduction is itself an 'ontological object'. If materialism is true, then the phenomenon of reduction is fundamentally material. As a higher-level object, it does not in fact exist. Hence, 'The synchronic reduction of reduction is therefore *unenforceable* and *self-eliminating*' (II, Section 3). We might expand Paksi's account by noting that materialism's fatal problem is that it purports to be a meaningful claim which, if true, eliminates all meaning (since such meaning cannot exist within the categories of physics and chemistry). The argument outlined by Paksi, and Polanyi before him, is articulated by other commentators as well, including Alvin Plantinga (in regard to 'warrant') and C. S. Lewis (in the revised Chapter III of *Miracles*). Given that this argument against materialism stands on its own, why does Paksi even mention Polanyi in this context? One answer is that to show that Polanyi is an ally in the refutation of materialism on the basis of performative contradiction bolsters Paksi's own attack. But, while some of Paksi's readers will certainly respond in the expected positive fashion, those who are suspicious of Polanyi will not. Another answer to the question is that citing Polanyi in the critique of materialism opens the door to rendering his theories of tacit integration, personal knowing, and meaning subsidiary to Paksi's theory of medium emergence. Whether that strategy proves successful remains to be seen. To that matter we need now to turn. But in doing so, let us recall that the question of the viability of materialism exists independently of Paksi's superficial references to Polanyi in Part II, Section 3 and, indeed, even should Paksi's reasoning prove compelling, independently as well of Polanyi's own arguments on the matter.

### 3. Medium Emergence

In Part II, Section 2 Paksi offers his summary of Polanyi's position on emergence. Articulation of this synopsis is for Paksi a preliminary step in subsuming Polanyi's account under his own formulation of 'me-

dium emergence'. The astute reader of Paksi's essay will notice that he does not employ the formulations 'subsume Polanyi under medium emergence' or 'rendering Polanyi subsidiary to it', but instead states, as noted above, that Polanyi's position 'comports with' and 'corresponds to' medium emergence. On my reading of the essay, Paksi aims to do more than these two tentative phrases suggest. For the scholar interested in Polanyi, it is the more ambitious project that Paksi in fact executes—interpreting Polanyi in terms of this new vocabulary—that is of most interest in his essay.

I stated above that it is most revealing that Paksi labels his argument against materialism 'reductionist'. That is because the formulation clarifies the sense in which Paksi's 'medium emergence' represents a creative and fruitful third alternative to what he views as the conventional and sterile opposition between 1) materialism and 2) dualism. Paksi's startling thesis is that 'reduction and emergence are not rival concepts; this is only a materialist interpretation' (II, Section 3). The idea is startling because defenders of emergence typically view reduction as the dark enemy. But Paksi persistently argues that were the emergent not reducible to something more fundamental, we would inescapably have dualism (and its attendant difficulties). This, he says, is precisely what the materialist camp desires. Avoiding this fate, by pointing to a third alternative not burdened with the metaphysical consequences of dualism, is the move, mentioned above, comparable to that executed by Polanyi in regard to nominalism.

Making Part I of Paksi's essay so difficult to understand is the need, in order to explain medium emergence, to distinguish between, on the one hand, epistemological emergence and reduction and, on the other, ontological emergence and reduction. In explanation, Paksi states the following:

*epistemological emergentism* asserts that *there are two (or more) different kinds of epistemic levels*. However, there is *only one fundamental* description: *fundamental physics...* The other(s) is emergent...The emergent level(s) is not self-sufficient, but necessarily *relies on* the fundamental level (I, Section 3);

*Ontological emergentism* asserts that there are at least two different kind[s] of reality, but contrary to dualism, only one is fundamental substance. The other(s) is/are emergent... There are no two independent objects, just one multileveled one that consists of one fundamental and at least one emergent level(s) of reality (I, Section 4).

To this Paksi adds the striking claim that in both sorts of emergentism reduction and emergence presuppose one another, an assertion that we will in a moment clarify. But it is what Paksi then states that will be our primary concern: 'an emergentist has to be a (kind of ontological) reductionist otherwise he would not

be an emergentist at all. To my knowledge the first person who recognized this was Michael Polanyi' (I, Section 4).

Paksi's account of the relationship between reduction and emergence in the two sorts of emergentism, and his explanation of the actual conflict between emergence and reduction (as opposed to the mistaken conventional view), are clever. In the case of epistemological emergence, what makes the common-sense appearance of an *emergent* quality possible (i.e., what permits it to have 'meaning and relevance for us' [I, Section 3]) is precisely the (non-commonsensical) fact that it is reducible to something more fundamental. Were it not reducible, there would be two independent and equally fundamental objects between which there would be no relationship of emergence. On Paksi's account, under epistemological emergentism, we have two meaningful, yet quite distinct, descriptions of the one object. In the case of ontological emergentism, there again is only one fundamental object. But that object is 'multileveled' and the emergent Y cannot, as with epistemological emergentism, be synchronically reduced to the original X. That is, Y possesses a reality of its own that emerged over (irreversible) time. But, and this is key to Paksi's account, the Y of ontological emergentism is also not independent, for 'although it exists, it cannot exist without its material fundament' (I, Section 4). In short, epistemological emergentism gives us weak emergence under which we preserve a meaningful description of an emergent quality, while ontological emergentism represents a condition (in which there is neither weak nor strong emergence, because the latter denies reduction) under which we have not only a meaningful description of the emergent quality but also its real existence. For Paksi, epistemological emergentism is consistent with materialism, for it allows only for the (meaningful and relevant) appearance of emergence, while ontological emergentism, with its non-reductive emergent quality, denies materialism. But *it does so reductively*, since, versus dualism, there is here only one fundamental substance. And finally, the actual conflict between emergence and reduction, says Paksi, exists not between the reduction and emergence internal to each of the two sorts of emergentism, but instead '*between the reduction and emergence of the different sides*. Epistemological reduction excludes ontological emergence just as ontological reduction excludes epistemological emergence' (I, Section 4). For your current author *qua* reader, sorting out all of this was no easy task!

#### 4. Polanyi and Medium Emergence

So, is it accurate to say that Polanyi is an emergentist, and hence an ontological reductionist, in the sense outlined by Paksi? Paksi's analysis rests to a significant degree on a brief and somewhat cryptic passage from *Personal Knowledge*. This is the passage (PK,

393-394) where Polanyi, in a section titled 'The Logic of Emergence', distinguishes between 'conceptual' and 'existential' levels of existence. When Paksi boldly asserts that 'Polanyi's concept of emergence *corresponds entirely* to my theory of medium emergence' (II, Section 2), he does so on the basis of his having established an equivalence between Polanyi's two 'conceptual' levels associated with a single 'existential' level and his (Paksi's) 'epistemological emergence', as well as between Polanyi's multiple existential levels and his (Paksi's) 'ontological emergence'.

Is this acceptable? In the text Polanyi says that emergence is always characterized by a 'progression from a lower to a higher *conceptual* level' but 'that conceptual progression may not always be existential' (PK, 394). He employs two examples: pouring shot into a saucepan, and crystals. In both cases, aggregates of individuals (grains of shot and molecules, respectively) form patterns. Polanyi asks, 'Is this the emergence of a new comprehensive feature?' He replies that although there is 'a noticeable logical gap between a topography and a pattern derived from it, and to this extent no pattern is specifiable in terms of its topography', the fact that we can in these examples move back and forth between topography and pattern without the pattern being destroyed means that we have 'two distinguishable conceptual levels but not two separate levels of existence' (ibid.). This is in contrast to the relation of atomic physics to chemistry where 'the conceptual gap between two levels' broadens to the point that we have two levels of existence: chemistry asks questions that 'cannot be raised without experience of ...substances [not present to atomic physics] and of the practical conditions in which they are to be handled' (ibid.). Atomic physics can in its own way explain everything that is occurring in chemistry, but it is incapable of conceiving the problems and solutions that consume the chemist. Polanyi then goes on to cite the comparable but even more striking two levels of existence present in life (as well as personhood, broadly understood) where there is both a level 'governed by physiology' and another 'defined by physics and chemistry' (ibid.).

In commenting on Paksi's thesis the first thing to note is that if he is correct in his account of emergence, it does not in the final analysis matter what Polanyi (or any other particular authority) says. Yet, Paksi claims that Polanyi's theory of emergence 'corresponds to' and 'comports with' his own. Both terms mean 'to be in agreement or harmony with'. In light of the obscure character of Polanyi's discussion of conceptual and existential emergence, Paksi's claim is easier to make than to evaluate. At first glance, it surely appears plausible. But are there any features of Polanyi's position on emergence which are in conflict with what Paksi asserts about the

matter?

On the assumption that my own paper portrays Polanyi accurately, we know that he embraces a conception of emergence that is, to use Thomas Nagel's distinction, 'reductive' (explainable in terms of what existed before) but not 'reductionist' (accounted for and understandable in terms of material categories). That is, Polanyi avers that over time there emerge phenomena (e.g., operational principles) that are not reducible to something more basic (viz., the material categories of physics and chemistry). But that which emerges is 'reductive' for it is the product, under appropriate triggering conditions, of something which existed from the beginning. For Polanyi, that which existed from the beginning is ordering principles and fields. Emergence consists of their unfolding.

Paksi's detailed account of epistemological and ontological emergence is replete with reference to what is 'fundamental'. This is understandable, given his desire to rinse his 'medium emergence' of any trace of dualism. Both of his types of emergence avoid dualism by including reduction to something—matter—that is more 'fundamental' than the emergent quality itself (though, under ontological emergence, with its *diachronic* reduction and multileveled account of a single fundamental X, the emergent Y possesses a reality that cannot be synchronically reduced). (See, for example, II, Section 1. Cf. I, Section 4 [p. 20].) Turning to Polanyi, we do not find such abundant reference to what is 'fundamental'. But, if there is anything that qualifies for this label, it would be the ordering principles and related fields. After all, they exist from the beginning. Anthropogenesis, including the advent of personhood and the appearance of life generally, is a chronicle of their unfolding. They are the spring of evolution.

In I, Section 4, Paksi states that 'successful ontological reduction asserts that the higher level(s) *did not exist at the beginning* of the process of emergence but *at the end it does*'. This, of course, must be true for emergence to exist at all. But one wonders if Paksi's account might benefit from the distinction between 'actual' and 'real' mentioned above (see note 4 and the related text). For Polanyi, that which is emergent was potentially present from the beginning. In that sense the emergent has always existed. When the emergent quality appears, it is not *actual* in the same way that a material thing is, but it is, says Polanyi, even more *real*.<sup>5</sup> By constantly referring to 'primordial material substance' as the truly fundamental thing, Paksi runs the risk of denigrating the significance of the emergent and that which is responsible for it (a tendency which, if not estopped, would turn Polanyi on his head).

We noted earlier that among the prominent features of Paksi's medium emergence is that it preserves the authority of common sense. In this regard, he is an ally of Polanyi. In II, Section 2, Paksi

attributes to Polanyi an understanding of evolution that is 'positioned between two well-known conceptions: vitalism and neo-Darwinism. The former is a kind of dualist theory of evolution, while the latter is a materialist one; between them is the emergentist [yet monistic] theory of evolution' (that Polanyi and he jointly embrace). Paksi accurately notes that, for Polanyi, evolution is driven by 'the logic of achievement' (i.e., it consists of living creatures, in accordance with emergent operational principles, striving to succeed, and even excel, in the struggle to survive). The materialist framework cannot account for what we observe. In this connection, Polanyi shows some asperity when he states, 'It is obvious, therefore, that the rise of man can be accounted for only by other principles than those known today to physics and chemistry. If this be vitalism, then vitalism is mere common sense, which can be ignored only by a truculently bigoted mechanistic outlook' (PK, 390). Of course, Polanyi's impatient comment cannot responsibly be read as a defence of vitalism. Rather, what is important here is that, despite his investment in a grand ontological framework, Polanyi continues to recognize the legitimate claim of common sense.

In Paksi's determined defence against dualism we are reminded of Nagel's refusal to acquiesce to an 'intentional' account of emergence (which corresponds to the 'creationism' that, for Paksi, the monistic account of emergence renders otiose [see I, Section 4]). Although he rejects intention, Nagel declines, in reaction to this rejection, to take refuge in a purely materialistic 'causal' account. Instead, he opts for a third alternative, namely, teleology. In my view, this is what Polanyi, via reference to ordering principles and fields, does as well. There is, he believes, a tendency in the universe, a tendency that existed from the beginning, toward emergence. It is of the utmost importance to Paksi to preserve monism. This is precisely what Polanyi (and even Nagel, despite terminological complications regarding the meaning of that term) in their portrayals of the universe do. But, unlike Paksi, they are willing to acknowledge the teleology that is required for us to have a third alternative to creationism and materialism.

That Paksi in his essay stops short of explicitly incorporating teleology into his account of emergence is perplexing, given that, to his considerable credit, he acknowledges that 'Polanyi himself defines his ontological standpoint as a kind of conception of emergence' (II, Section 2). He adds, 'It is astonishing how many of Polanyi's interpreters have missed or overlooked this important fact and its consequences' (ibid.). This observation was surprising, since from my first encounter with *Personal Knowledge*, the essential place of emergence in his ontology has appeared obvious. It was also clear from this early reading that for Polanyi something has been operating

from the beginning. For this reason, it was not difficult in my own essay to marry Nagel's position to Polanyi's. The vehement negative response to Nagel's *Mind and Cosmos* demonstrates, however, that there is a high price to be paid for endorsing teleology. If Nagel and Polanyi are correct in believing that a coherent theory of emergence requires acknowledgement of teleology, then we perhaps have an explanation for what Paksi views as the lamentable state of scholarship on Polanyi's ontology. If teleology is outrageous, then it is discreet to ignore the vital role assigned by Polanyi to emergence. It is reassuring to note that Paksi appears to be moving in a contrary direction.

**5. Concluding Thoughts**

Summing up, it is evident that Paksi has executed an important and significant task. Because this project was as difficult as it was ambitious, Paksi's arguments at times are not as clear as one would like. His refutation of materialism is not original, but the linking of it to Polanyi's theory of emergence is a welcome clarification. Paksi's rendering of Polanyi's conception of emergence in terms of 'medium emergence' is inconclusive. There appear to be no straightforward conflicts between the two positions, but there is reason to believe that Paksi has not yet harvested the full bounty of Polanyi's insights. This is not disabling to Paksi's central program, however, since both his refutation of materialism and his own theory of emergence stand or fall independent of what Polanyi says on these matters.

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**Notes**

1. 'I' and 'II' will refer to the two parts of the essay. In II, Section 1, Paksi states that he 'will show that Michael Polanyi's understanding of emergence comports with' medium emergence. Both terms—correspond and comport—are vague. Usefully, in I, Section 1, Paksi makes the following explicit statement: 'I will show that Polanyi's ontological position is exactly the same as I understand under medium emergence: this is the true personalist theory of emergence'
2. Cf. 347 (!) and 299 (!), as well as 262-264, 256 (the 'fiduciary mode'), 354 ('modern intellectual prevarication'), 315 (Polanyi's response to scepticism), 358, and viii.
3. See Jon Fennell, "'Balance of Mind": Polanyi's Response to the Second Apple and the Modern Predicament'. This paper, scheduled for publication later this year, was presented at the November 2016 meeting of the Polanyi Society, and is accessible at <http://polanyisociety.org/2016pprs/2016PSocietyAnnualMeeting-Prog-11-9-16.pdf>.
4. For more on Polanyi's response to nominalism, see Jon Fennell, 'Polanyi, Universals, and the Nominalism Controversy', *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (2013), pp. 365-387.
5. See, for example, *The Tacit Dimension*, early in Chapter 2: 'I shall say, accordingly, that minds and problems possess a deeper reality than cobblestones, although cobblestones are admittedly more real in the sense of being tangible [might we say 'actual']?. And since I regard the significance of a thing as more important than its tangibility, I shall say that minds and problems are more real than cobblestones'.

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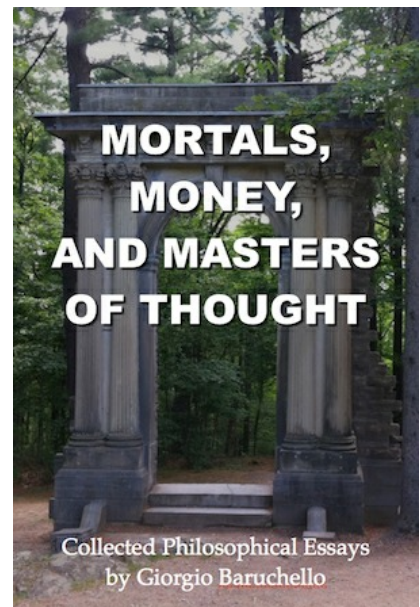
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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Freedom, Authority, and Economics: Essays on Michael Polanyi's Politics and Economics*, Editor R. T. Allen. Wilmington (USA)/Malaga (Spain): Vernon Press, 2016. 167 pp.

For Michael Polanyi freedom is not an end in itself, it helps us pursue the Good. A social order which facilitates progress towards the Good is superior to a static order. His key contributions to political theory are 1) Communities are polycentric systems. 2) Above a modest level of complexity centrally directed polycentric systems are impossible. 3) Interactions between the nodes of a polycentric system generate a spontaneous order. 4) Every polycentric order is constrained by boundary conditions. 5) Science is a spontaneous order in which interactions between its practitioners are constrained by the boundary condition imposed by their commitment to truth. 6) When acquiring a practice (and this includes the practice of science) we know more than we can say. 7) We not only know more than we can say, we also say more than we can know. 8) Because we say more than we know, our knowledge claims are fallible. In short when Polanyi defends a free society he is defending Classical Liberalism i.e. he advocates private property rights, free markets, decentralized power, and individual responsibility. When he defends a free society on the grounds that values are objective, he is a Conservative i.e. Polanyi endorses authority and tradition. He believes in a free society, on the grounds that values are objective.

*Freedom, Authority, and Economics: Essays on Michael Polanyi's Politics and Economics* (2016) is a collection of papers delivered (in English) at a conference in Germany in July 2011. In his introduction, Richard Allen sets out some of the political and economic ideas which Polanyi expressed in his writings. He notes (as mentioned above) that Polanyi does not justify freedom on the negative grounds that we should be free to do what we like, but on the positive grounds that it helps the communities that form a Civil Society pursue objective values. Polanyi makes a distinction between Spontaneous and Corporate Orders, and while he argues in favour of the former, he rejects any attempt to justify science on utilitarian or sceptical grounds, because it is a practice grounded in a commitment to truth. Allen notes that Polanyi distinguishes between A) Static Societies - which uphold existing arrangements B) Revolutionary Societies - which undermine all existing arrangements C) Dynamic Societies - which uphold existing arrangements while constantly reforming them. A free society is a Dynamic Society. Allen reminds us that Polanyi rejects the notion that science is simply a practice of applying explicit and exact rules to data. All knowing

(including science) relies upon personal commitments guided by our tacit awareness.

Polanyi argues that it is not the case that there are facts on the one hand, and valuations in the other. All facts are personal evaluations, and all evaluations strive to be correct. By indwelling within articulations, we enhance and extend our bodily awareness, but all articulation relies upon our tacit awareness. When we (the implication is all conscious beings) make sense of our experience we attend from a "subsidiary" to a "focal awareness". This "from-to" structure has perceptual, instrumental, and semantic aspects, but it also has ontological and axiological implications. Polanyi reminds us that the laws which apply to a lower level are also determined by the boundary conditions imposed upon it by the next highest level. A plant such an oak tree for example is not only determined by various physical laws, it is also determined by the principles which determine what it is to be an oak tree. Operational principles are rules of rightness that determine how a system functions or malfunctions. These rules of rightness supply the ground for values. In addition to his aforementioned contributions to political theory we should add a further point 9) Polanyi seeks to elucidate the inversion which occurs (as a consequence of a reductionist undermining of values) when the Good is attacked with moral passion.

In the first essay Endre Nagy draws our attention to Polanyi's early writings. In these writings, Polanyi claims that far from being only driven by material interests, the First World War demonstrated that people can also be motivated by nationalist fantasies. After their coup d'état in Russia, the communist fantasies of the Bolsheviks led to the death by starvation or execution of yet more millions. Polanyi sought to understand the destructive passion of the Bolsheviks as an example of what he called moral inversion. In a materialist account, there is no objective ground for value, and so every attempt to judge anything as objectively superior or inferior to anything else is invalid. All valuations are subjective. Attacking the good (true, just, and beautiful) and justifying the bad (false, unjust, and ugly) enables a mind driven by (Christian inspired) moral passion to express this commitment while satisfying its commitment to objectivity. For Marx, the objective reality which underlies value judgements is class struggle, and the end of history is a classless society in which nobody is judged to be superior to anybody else. Nagy ends by noting that Polanyi makes a distinction between the Anglo-American and the Franco-German intellectual tradition. The puzzle for many thinkers in the latter tradition was not why liberal civilisation was being rejected, but why intellectuals in the former tradition, despite being

passionate advocates of science and liberty, were refusing to pursue their beliefs to their logical conclusion.

In the second essay Phil Mullins notes that Marxists in the Thirties and Forties of the last century were claiming that science is and ought to be (because they are engaging in a moral inversion they would flip between them) a response to practical needs. In a society organised on behalf of the interests of all, rather than the interests of the few, scientists would be directed to solve the practical needs of the whole community. Polanyi responds that scientists form a polycentric community whose dynamic order is impaired by external interference. It is neither a case of letting scientists selfishly do what they want, nor of advancing collective ends by telling scientists what to discover. Problems are an opportunity to apply knowledge. Advancing collective ends is best served by letting specialists select and pursue their own tasks. Polanyi illustrates this by using the example of the Common Law, Polanyi notes that when ruling, judges do not rely upon a personal whim, they consult the precedents set by other judges. When deciding what they believe to be right in the particular circumstances of a case, judges both consult and contribute to the tradition of the Common Law. Their judgements are made in the conviction that they are discovering what is just.

In the third essay Simon Smith reminds us that Polanyi elucidated the concept of authority by using the example of language. Although he comprehends language as a tool for deploying our predominately tacit awareness, Polanyi views articulation as a key competence in what it is to be human. When we first learn a language a "Specific Authority" tells us what is correct. We assume that what we are being taught is correct. Once we master a language however we can use it to make our own articulations. We may change linguistic practices, and these changes may be passed onto the next generation. This freedom however operates within the context supplied by the authority of existing practices. Polanyi uses what he calls the "Republic of Science" to illustrate how, because scientists have areas of expertise, authority within the community of scientists is dispersed and unequal. But under the constraints which the "General Authority" of a commitment to objective values imposes (it is important to realise that because all of our valuations are fallible, all Objective Ideals serve as Transcendent Ideals) the response of practitioners to each other's work (including their responses to past masters) generate the spontaneous order of a dedicated practice. In a free society, the spontaneous order which is generated by these interactions is not fixed, valuations are constantly being adjusted to new insights.

In the fourth essay Viktor Geng describes how Enlightenment thinkers, in a quest to banish obscurantism, set out to render knowledge claims

explicit and secure. Hume argued that we ought to ask if a claim is consistent and empirically verifiable, and if it is not consistent, it should be rejected, and if it cannot be empirically justified, it should be identified as subjective. For the next two hundred years, philosophers were excited (or appalled) by the claim that values have no objective ground; that a judgement such as "You ought not kill people" has no more justification than "You should cut the crusts off cucumber sandwiches." At the same time, Enlightenment intellectuals were keen to reform existing practices, indeed the French Revolution was an attempt to destroy all existing social arrangements and replace them with something new. But if as Hume argued, reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions, why be good? Polanyi argues that moral passions are not simply subjective. There is an objective difference between better and worse, and to endorse the validity of these passions is to sustain the cultural life of which they form a part. Arguing that truth is only subjective is contradictory. It is a moral inversion which disguises its moral passion as a statement of what is the case. All claims about what is the case are valuations.

To return to the above-mentioned claim that science is nothing more than a response to practical needs, in what Polanyi described as a "dynamo-objective" coupling, those engaged in a moral inversion may seek to instruct you that truth claims are determined by nothing more than material or social realities. Objections that science ought to be dedicated to the pursuit of truth are dismissed by invoking the veracity of science. Criticism of that declaration is rebutted by the declaration that science ought to solve practical problems; that a social arrangement which lets scientists do what they like is immoral. Hitler relied upon an ethics which was grounded in Social Darwinism. According to this theory it is a law of nature that the strong overcomes the weak. At the same time, Hitler was indignant about the hardship which reparations demanded by the victors caused after the First World War. To use a more contemporary example, advocates of multiculturalism declare that all cultures ought to be given the freedom to pursue their own practices, because all values are subjective, and therefore no culture is better than any other. At the same time if a Western country imposes its values on immigrants from other cultures, this is racist.

In the fifth essay Tihamer Margitay argues that people who are keen on shopping (he refers to it as "the tyranny of consumerism") are also engaged in a moral inversion. Shoppers switch from asserting that they like to shop, to shopping is a necessity; and this is inconsistent. Well I like to eat, and I also eat to live, and this is not inconsistent. In the sixth essay Richard W. Moodey points out that Polanyi argued that we rely upon our bodies, upon our particular experience, and upon tools. He says that when using a tool, we

use it in a manner analogous to the way in which we dwell within a body. When hammering, I focus my attention not upon the hammer but upon the nail I am trying to hit. Moodey notes that Polanyi sought to make an analogy between physical and conceptual tools. In an attempt to understand how an economy works, Polanyi constructed a physical model in which water flowed into different containers, and made two animated films showing how money circulated through an economy. He also sought to explain why it would be better to stimulate employment by increasing the money supply rather than increasing government spending. Polanyi believed that free markets are the only way to run a complex economy, but he argues that free markets should be constrained by government intervention.

In the seventh essay Richard Allen suggests that Polanyi derived his insight that the particulars of a comprehensive entity are controlled by the laws of a lower level and by the autonomous operational principles of a higher level (which he called the "Principal of Dual Control") from the difference between lower level market activity and higher level political activity. According to Marx, economics (and more specifically the social classes which are generated by a particular means of production) are the base which determines what happens in the superstructure of politics. All thought systems are merely ideologies designed to promote class interests. Allen, in accordance with Polanyi, accepts that a lower level permits and limits what can be done at a higher level, but he denies that it is only the economy which matters. Economic activity is also determined by political constraints, such as whether or not there is security of possession, an impartial and reliable system of law, and provisions for company law and bankruptcy. The Bolsheviks in the Soviet Union, or to use a more recent example Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, give us examples of conspicuous consumption that instead of being determined by the needs of the economy, were determined by the political desire to demonstrate the joys of living in a socialist State.

In the eighth essay Richard W. Moodey attributes the absence of discussion of economics in his later writings to the fact that Polanyi developed a richer conception of what it is to be person than agents merely calculating profits and losses. The economic order is just one polycentric order. We are members of other polycentric social orders, which are motivated by passions other than the desire for profit. In the ninth and final essay Klaus Allerbeck observes that after Manchester University granted him the honour of becoming a professor of Social Studies minus any requirement to teach, Polanyi chose to devote his time to philosophy. Although it has been speculated that this move away from chemistry led him to be passed over for the honour of a Nobel Prize, something that his son would later achieve, his work

outside chemistry was not much appreciated by the scholars in the fields upon which he trespassed. This however is not to say that his work was not influential. One of the most remarkable features of his thought is not only the quantity of his contributions, but how often his insights are cited as an influence on other thinkers. I would argue however that many of his most profound insights have yet to be fully digested.

You could read these essays and be forgiven for not noticing the elephant in the room, that Polanyi supplies a devastating critique of the Left. His mother, who set up a famous salon for intellectuals, his siblings, and his fellow students at the Galileo Society, were all left-wing. If you are on the Left and heard the name Polanyi you might assume it was a reference to his left-wing brother Karl. But as George Polya pointed out, Michael followed his own path. The fashion of his day was to enthuse about Communism or Fascism. Intellectuals despised liberal bourgeois civilization. They claimed that science has killed God, and that we should adjust our societies accordingly. Polanyi however (after reading Dostoevsky) converted to Christianity. Now he did not (or he says only in rare moments) believe in the Incarnation, so you might dispute whether this counts as Christianity, but Polanyi saw Western civilization (which is a fusion of Greek and Jewish values) as something worth defending. So why is it that civilisation being morally inverted into a passionate rejection of objective values? Polanyi argued that as a consequence of a false account of science the enormous moral energy which Christianity inspired, liberated from the constraints imposed by objective values, was diverted into a quest to create a world in which we are God.

In any review of Michael Polanyi's work in the social sciences, not only would it have been desirable for there to be some discussion of his influence on Hayek and Kuhn (surely two of the most influential social scientists of the C20th) and on other figures such as Oakeshott and Feyerabend, it would also have been preferable if there had been some discussion of scholars unfamiliar with Polanyi but whose work illuminates his ideas. I am thinking here of Voegelin (for example his analysis of the Gnostic character of modernity) and Jaki (who examines the Christian origins of modern science) and Bruno Leoni (a lawyer who describes Napoleonic Law as inferior to the Common Law) and the economists Joseph Schumpeter (who explored the phenomena of creative destruction in free markets) and Milton Friedman (who studied the role which the money supply plays in inflation and economic growth) and the mathematicians Erdos and Renyi who studied the properties of networks. There has been new research on what happened to the economy and science in Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany, and the extent to which politicians should keep out of the economy and



scientific research remains controversial e.g. privatization and climate science to pick just two examples. This collection avoids controversial political topics, and the reader is left with the impression that what Polanyi discusses relates to disputes that happened a long time ago, which are of no or little relevance to today. This of course is quite wrong. Most of the political and economic assumptions he attacks are still popular, it is just that the authors prefer to avoid discussing issues which are politically current.

*Christopher Goodman*

***In the Sphere of the Personal: New Perspectives in the Philosophy of Persons*, Eds. James Beuregard & Simon Smith.** Wilmington (USA)/Malaga (Spain): Vernon Press, 2016. 377 pp.

This book is a collection of articles which concern the philosophical tradition known as ‘Personalism’. The articles were originally presented at the 13th International Conference on Persons in August 2015. The International Conference on Persons is a biennial event founded by Thomas O. Buford and Charles Conti in 1989, taking place each time at different universities. In 2015, it was held at Boston University, Massachusetts.

The essays in this collection encompass a broad scope of research interests. Some of them focus on classical metaphysical and epistemological debates or theories from different eras of the history of philosophy; whereas the others discuss typical contemporary topics like neuroethics or social justice in current societies. The authors, as much as the articles, show a wide range of diversity: among them we can find graduate students as well as university lecturers, university professors and researchers.

As the editors expose in the Introduction, ‘Personalism’ cannot be defined by a strict, exact definition but only in a broad sense: the aim of Personalism is to defeat all types of impersonalist trends. Personalism can be understood as a general approach, so it may concern all fields of philosophy. Therefore, this collection contains essays from many branches of philosophy without any restrictions. The common aim of the fourteen articles is ‘to defend the idea that persons are the metaphysical, epistemological, and moral ‘bottom line’’ (10) and to ‘construct the richest and deepest description of ‘personhood’’ (11).

In the Introduction, the editors present Personalism as incompatible with materialism, since materialism tries to eliminate personal agency. In their viewpoint, ‘materialism transforms personal agency and the meaningfulness of its actions into an epiphenomenon’ (20). The editors also point out that according to the materialist evolution theory,

‘[P]ersonality can have no “survival value”, no “natural utility”. (...) Since personal agency adds nothing to our evolutionary development, it can only

be a “treat” bestowed upon us by evolution, a notion which explicitly contradicts the whole science of evolution’ (21).

The anti-materialist stance can indirectly be discovered in all articles: none of the authors defends any type of materialism; furthermore, materialism as an option does not appear in the essays at all.

As the editors explain, action is closely connected to the notion of ‘personhood’. How acts are owned, intended and executed, has meaning. Actions are the manifestations of ‘personhood’ (23). Actions are usually performed for an audience, and how our actions are understood and responded to, they are the traces of our identities (24).

The essay of Juan Manuel Burgos (chapter 2) is the most cardinal part of this collection, since it explains some fundamental characteristics of the Personalist investigation itself. Burgos’ aim is ‘to propose a Personalist philosophical methodology’ (41). He demonstrates that all of our knowledge comes from personal experience, and all of our experience is primary and original. However, according to Burgos, this does not mean that impersonal knowledge does not exist, or we could plausibly doubt the exterior world. He underlines that persons should be analysed through Personalist categories, instead of those impersonal categories which were originally developed by Greek philosophers in order to reflect the natural world (41-58).

The other essays in the collection do not discuss Personalism or the Personalist approach itself but analyse a diversity of topics from Personalist viewpoint.

Chapters 4 and 7 discuss metaphysical problems concerning personal identity. In chapter 4, Mark C. R. Smith underlines three points in Descartes’ theory: 1) ‘a person is essentially her mind and contingently her body’; 2) ‘the second person has a constitutive role in the individuation of the first person’; and 3) ‘passions individuate persons’ (92-3).

In chapter 7, Robert F. DeVall, Jr. exhibits Pringle-Pattison’s criticism of the soul-substance. DeVall suggests, following Pringle-Pattison, that we should ‘see the soul as organic, developing along with the body through its actions and experiences. In this way, it earns its personal immortality rather than automatically gaining it’ (134). DeVall demonstrates Locke’s theory, too, according to which ‘consciousness and memory are necessary conditions for personal identity’ (136). Then he contrasts Bosanquet to Pringle-Pattison concerning their views on personal immortality. DeVall interprets Bosanquet as he ‘cheapens the individual when he views him or her as a by-product whose whole purpose is to await absorption in the Absolute’ (145).

Chapters 5 and 14 are related to German idealism – the former literally, and the latter in a broad sense. In chapter 5, Rolf Ahlers demonstrates the views on persons and machines in the philosophy of Spinoza,

Jacobi and Hegel. Ahlers thinks that ‘our culture operates with conflicting anthropologies that view human beings *either* as holy *or* as robots’ (96). He argues that ‘any position which focuses on either the one or the other is reductive’ and ‘we must find a new synthesis that encompasses everything: God, man, and nature’ (96).

Myron Moses Jackson denotes his aim in chapter 14 as ‘in true Schellingian fashion, this paper seeks to interpret corporations and other social organizations (...) in new ways. It is an attempt to think *with* and *through* Schelling’ (247). He contrasts Hegel and Schelling and argues that according to Hegel’s reading, ‘corporations, like the state, overtake the individual’s free will and direct it to the “universal aim”’ (257). Jackson argues on the basis of Schelling’s philosophy against the de-personalising forces of the multinational companies in our contemporary societies.

In chapter 6, Jeffrey M. Jackson points out that according to Nietzsche and Freud, ‘adversity is not an obstacle to success, but the *pathway* to becoming who and what we are’ (121). He analyses Freud’s account on mourning and Nietzsche’s concept of convalescence. Jackson concludes that ‘wisdom arises from the “ability” (...) to embrace our vulnerability, to bear what happens to us and what has been made of us, so that we may live *better*, i.e. make something more of ourselves’ (131). He also thinks that a convalescent society would ‘facilitate greater social sensibility to singularities of vulnerability and the flourishing of singular persons’ (131).

In chapter 8, Robert G. Fiedler analyses Henri Bergson’s account on self and person. Bergson makes a distinction between *fundamental self* and *inactive self* (155). He emphasises that memory is ‘an essential feature of our experience’ (158), ‘there is no perception which is not full of memories’ (159). Fiedler points out that the notion of person includes the actions we have performed and also those actions we believe we could have performed. ‘Personality is descriptive of what we *have been*, what we *currently are*, and what we *aspire to be*’ (161). In Bergson’s system, the person ‘unifies the multiplicity of selves over time, possessing a body that constitutes its physical basis’ (163).

In her creatively written essay, Mackenzie Lefoster demonstrates that the spiritual exercises of medieval philosophy can provide healing for an annihilated self. In chapter 10 she presents a story written in literary style in which a sexually assaulted woman finally succeeds to rebuild her dignity after having a conversation with Boethius, Augustine and Al-Ghazzali. Lefoster presents the argumentations of the philosophers to the woman on the basis of their original works. This essay is an example for showing that the original intention of philosophy was not only to gain theoretical knowledge or to play an abstract

intellectual game, but to provide therapy for suffering humans.

The remaining chapters of the book discuss ethical and social issues from Personalist perspective.

In the first chapter, Richard C. Prust argues that ‘it makes sense to identify persons as *individual characters of resolve*’ (31). He claims that monotheism provides a basis for believing in moral integrity, and his aim is to highlight the importance of the belief ‘in moral integrity, in its conceivability, its actuality, and its attainability’ (31).

The topic of chapter 3 is neuroethics, in which the author Denis Larrivee discusses ethical issues concerning neuroenhancement. He demonstrates the conflicts of individual and social welfare and argues against impersonalist tendencies. He points out that current developments in neuroscience ‘drive new ethical perspectives that embrace the normative dimensions of community fulfilment, but eschew individual worth in favour of an alleged improvement in value states’ (79).

Lawrence J. Nelson’s research focus is on the legal status of prenatal humans. In chapter 9 he underlines that prenatal humans are not regarded as persons according to U.S. laws and argues that ‘the law must set a (more or less) clearly discernible point at which a living human entity becomes a person and acquires all the rights of personhood’ (176). The reason for this is that ‘only persons can be victims of crimes’ and ‘only persons can inherit property through intestacy’ (176). He points out that in philosophy, a profound, exact definition of personhood is not necessarily needed, but law undoubtedly does need such definition (177).

In chapter 11, Brian J. Buckley criticises the five dominant theories of punishment and argues for the Secular Redemption theory, according to which prisoners should be treated less as objects, ‘and more as subjects who can become authors of their own reform and redemption’ (199). He presents the GRIP (Guiding Rage Into Power) program which encourages prisoners ‘to use the punishment as an opportunity to take responsibility and self-examine’ (209). As a part of this program, prisoners ‘practice meditation and mindfulness to explore their emotional intelligence in order to understand the basis for their past anger’ (209).

In chapter 12, Philippe-Edner Marius shows that in the Roma integration programs occurs regularly that ‘the Roma is treated not as social *subject* but rather as political *object*’ (214). In order to demonstrate this statement, he analyses some sociological case studies from the past few years. He argues that ‘a more welcoming integration process would arrive ready to *speak with* rather than *talk at* Roma individuals’ (222).

Finally, in chapter 13, Carol J. Moeller focuses on the relationship of ““psychiatric”/psychosocial disabilities’ and personhood. She refers to Elizabeth Kamarck Minnich who points out that Western culture takes ‘the knowledge claims of privileged white men’

to be universal, while the knowledge of other social groups is left out or misrepresented (226). In Moeller's viewpoint, 'reductionist Western medical science tends to deny or pathologize that which it does not understand, thereby blocking the development of other kinds of knowledge' (229). She shares her own medical experience as a patient and argues that people with "psychiatric"/psychosocial disabilities' may contribute to a social transformation which leads us toward 'a world in which everyone flourishes' (243).

It is the merit of the editors James Beauregard and Simon Smith that they collected the works of so many different authors together; and created, as far as possible, a coherent whole from the essays. However, the topics in the collection show such a huge diversity that it demands effort from the reader to find coherence between the essays. A possible reason for this is that the International Conference on Persons is not restricted to a narrow field of philosophy but is

open to a wide range of philosophers with very different research areas.

The detailed introduction provided by the editors is beneficial, since it demonstrates the main aims and foci of the Personalist tradition. In my opinion, Burgos' essay is so cardinal that it could have been the first chapter instead of being placed as second. The reason for this is that Burgos exposes the Personalist philosophical methodology, whereas the other articles do not discuss Personalism itself but analyse certain topics from Personalist viewpoint. But apart from this, the order of the articles seems reasonable and appropriate. The editors did not include a brief summary of the collected essays in the Introduction, so some readers might miss that. But after all, this book is a valuable collection in which readers with very different interests may find articles relevant and inspiring for them.

Éva Bekő

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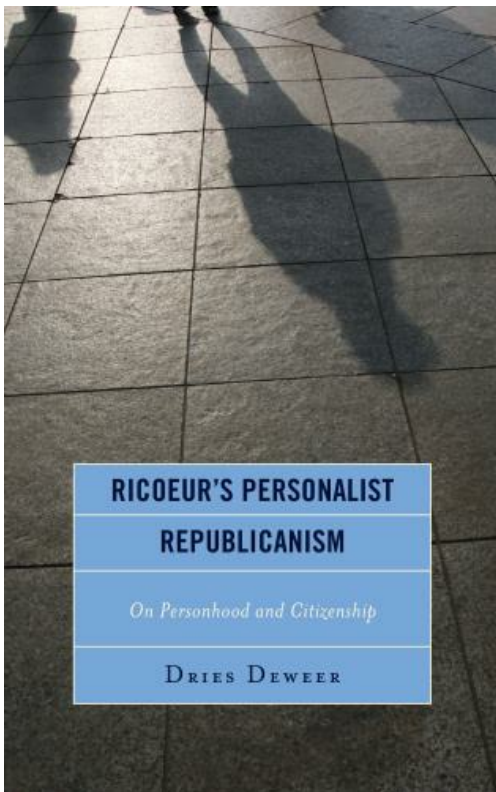
Book Announcement

Rowman and Littlefield Presents:

***Ricoeur's Personalist Republicanism***

by

Dries Deweer



Moral and political convictions never stand alone. They are always connected to an underlying view of mankind. Liberalism, which currently predominates, is connected to a focus on the free individual. Marxism thinks of man in terms of class struggle, determined by economic relationships. Halfway the twentieth century a powerful alternative came about, by the name of "personalism". This term stood for a social and political thought based on the concept of the human person. This concept stresses that a human being only becomes human in relationship with others and in a commitment to values that go beyond one's individual interests. Although personalism has an important influence in western society, in philosophical circles it is often regarded as dead and gone. This tension brings Paul Ricoeur to the fore as an interesting interlocutor, because he was considered a representative of personalism in his younger years, while he later on also supported fatal criticisms of original personalism. This book investigates to what extent the thought of Ricoeur bears a continuing stamp of personalism that allows him to instigate a personalist perspective within contemporary political philosophy. The final result lies on three fronts. First, there is more clarity in the status of personalism in contemporary philosophy, as Ricoeur's

hermeneutical phenomenology shows that there are still viable means to elaborate the core ideas of personalism. Second, a personalist kind of republicanism is shown to provide a valuable input in the contemporary philosophical debate on citizenship. Finally, the most tangible result is a deeper understanding of the oeuvre of Ricoeur, in the sense that this book shows that personalism is an important and above all underestimated perspective to understand his entire work.

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## A THIN GHOST

*Simon Smith*

The rooms once occupied by Daniel Salthenius stand at the top of the North Staircase of Montague House, in the grounds of Lufford Abbey. They are modest: a small sitting room-cum-study and a bedroom; and they are sparsely furnished, the furniture being not of the best quality, as when a room is kept exclusively for visitors. The rooms are still bright and warm, as any who sees them is bound to agree, but the atmosphere is liable to change quite suddenly.

Daniel Salthenius threw himself down into the old armchair by the window and rubbed his hands together with particular glee. He was satisfied, very satisfied. In point of fact, quite delighted with himself. His *viva voce*, about which, he told himself, he was not particularly concerned in any case, was finally over. He had defended his thesis with courage and vigour, defended it before a panel of his peers, so they imagined, defended it against a barrage of questions, unnecessarily difficult and frequently unfair. They had probed his defences with every appearance of the integrity and rigour proper to their office. Their aged, flabby faces practically glowed with it. Of course, he knew perfectly well what they were up to. Searching for a chink, a gap, any little error or confusion which they could turn to their advantage. There had been no chink nor gap nor error; he had sealed the walls with pitch and barred the gates. None could penetrate. Even Professor Croupe's supposedly friendly advances had been repelled; 'divining the common ground' he called it.

'What use to me is common ground?' Salthenius had replied. 'Let common minds graze upon whatever slender shoots they find there.' He had been pleased with that; it vexed the panel and made them huff irritably. All except Croupe; momentarily surprised by the violence of his former student's parry, he merely looked disappointed and withdrew the proffered hand; a Trojan sheep, if ever Salthenius had seen one.

In the end, he knew very well that they would not, could not, cheat him of his success, though one or two of his examiners most certainly wished they might. What they wanted was to remind him of his youth and inexperience, remind him, more importantly, of the pecking order and 'knock him down a peg or two.' They wished, in short, to bring him down to their level. He had not, of course, succumbed. Instead, with utmost courtesy, he had invited them up to his. Sadly, they declined to join him. Thus did he lay siege to them and all their antediluvian ideas. With flawless logic and elegant argument, he cracked open every Corinthian riddle and sliced through every Gordian knot; midst his intellectual onslaught, every hallowed

illusion, every sacred absurdity was dragged out and exposed for the outdated fol-de-rol it was. He challenged that which they were pleased to call their 'wisdom' and found it wanting, tore off its mask and revealed the idiot child beneath. The confused nonsense of centuries soon lay scattered all about, corpses on a battlefield. Before his brilliance, they bent the knee; and those who would not bend, he broke.

His performance had been exceptional; he had covered himself in glory. Old Croupe was right to shake his head. Before very long, Salthenius predicted silently, there would be a new Professor of Ontography at Lufford Abbey.

His victory was doubly pleasing because it was owed to no other. He smiled again, hugging himself. His mind, his will, he had trained them, stretched them, directed them unrelentingly upon his chosen ends. Against the advice of lecturers and tutors who knew very little and understood even less, he had shaped his studies ruthlessly to suit himself, and then pursued them to no little accomplishment. His resolve had never wavered once. Assiduously, he charted his course, spent long days in the Abbey library, worked until his vision blurred and his fingers ached with scribbling. At last, he had succeeded, despite those learned seniors. Even old Croupe, had shown himself to be utterly hopeless as a supervisor, as inept at that as everything else, it seemed. Salthenius had no unpaid dues in that direction; he owed no one and was grateful to no one. What appreciation he had, he felt, could be fairly reserved for himself and, just possibly, his God.

But it was ever thus, he reflected, gazing out at what remained of the rose garden below his window. The summer blooms, full fat in pink and red and yellow, had long since dissipated, their petals shaken loose by autumn breezes, and left to rot upon the damp grass. He had walked through gardens such as this many times as a child. His home – his father's home, he should say – was a large, oddly proportioned red brick construction in the Queen Anne style, hidden away somewhere in the Surrey downs. It boasted several, well-tended, rose gardens, an orchard or two, and even a maze. Though not a great admirer of the outdoors, Salthenius had generally taken to the gardens in an effort to avoid his tutors. Owing to some peculiarity of temperament in his father, he had not been sent to school but had instead been forced, from early childhood, to suffer a long series of these 'educationalists'. They had, it seemed, been unsuccessful in other fields for one reason or another, often disastrously so; embarking on a career in pedagogy did little to alter their prospects. It was true that one or two of the men who came had been kind and even

enthusiastic, but on the whole they turned out to be drunken or predatory, all dissolute in one way or another, all utterly incompetent. He had become adept at avoiding them. His walks had been solitary, apart from one occasion, when the lean, middle-aged gentleman who had come to teach him Greek, sought to waylay him in the apple orchard. Excepting that one, narrowly avoided, encounter, those hired to teach him had, in the end, taught him nothing; what he learned, he learned for himself.

Gazing out at the world from his favourite armchair, Salthenius harboured no resentment for those inadequate men. Being entirely self-taught had, he was certain, sharpened his perceptions immeasurably. He did not belong to the world, not even here among the Abbey cloisters; he was not a part of it, but stood aside, independent, isolated. Uncompromised by their ignorance, uncontaminated by their corruption, he was the very essence of himself. Therein lay the clarity of his vision. Looking down on the petty whirl and fuss of the world from his transcendent perch, he could see the flickering candlelight of their reason, so-called, ready at any moment to wink out and disappear into the darkness.

No resentment then; he did not, in any case, surrender easily to emotion. Yet he might have felt some sympathy for his former tutors, had he not despised them quite so much. It was, he supposed an amusing paradox, but the education of others was at best an unedifying business. The student received little benefit and the teacher less reward. In the course of his studies at the Abbey, Salthenius had done his duty in lecture theatre and classroom a number of times already. He did not covet a repetition of the experience. There was little point, in any case. The students were, without exception, dull and stupid. They complained that they did not understand him, he told them they were not supposed to. They complained that the work he set for them was too difficult, he invited them to leave his class, to seek out something more suited to their abilities. Let them sweep streets, or clean lavatories, or teach. They wanted spoon-feeding; they wanted pap. Then let them plague his colleagues for it; he had, he gladly confessed, no talent for that.

If the students were bad, his colleagues were worse. At least the students were embarrassed by their ignorance. The faculty did not even attempt to conceal theirs, nor the ugliness of their hearts and minds. Among these venerable sages, intellectual cowardice was practically a badge of honour. He pictured their faces, slack and imbecilic, as he delivered his paper on moral evil before the Chit-Chat Club, Wednesday last. Victims of evil, he explained, of genocide and war: their suffering served a greater purpose. They provided their murderers and torturers with the opportunity to turn to God, they were the soil in which the fruits of moral heroism might blossom. The reaction had been typically muted, typically uninspired. His arguments could not be faulted, his courage was

unquestioned, his case, a model of clarity and simplicity. So much he knew already and he bore their unenthusiastic praise with as much dignity as he could muster. In the end, however, they could not conceal how appalled they were, how afraid. The whole experience had left him not a little disgusted and more than a little depressed. If not for that, he might have felt some sympathy for them too. Could they help it if he was on a higher intellectual plane, a higher plane of *being* altogether? They could not, he knew; but neither did they want to.

He thought about the moral and intellectual decay which surrounded him. They would see their error of their ways, of course, those that had the imagination to do so. Ben Sira was quite right, after all. Some spirits there be that are created for vengeance, and in their fury lay on sore strokes. Salthenius would gladly pour out his fury, when the opportunity arose, to appease him that made him.

The afternoon was waning, the sun hung low and sullen in the sky. The red-gold season was taking its leave from the Abbey already. Quite soon, the mists that creep along the narrow streets would come, cowered in chilly silence, smudging the street lamps into something like prettiness and concealing the lack of mellow fruitfulness in the gardens below Salthenius' window. For today, however, the sky remained clear. An icy squall had blown in off the fens, sweeping it clear of lowering autumn clouds. Leaves danced giddily about the grounds, while the wind whistled indiscriminately up and down the staircases like a piper who had forgotten his purpose. The steep North Staircase was particularly prone to such mournful gusts, as Salthenius well knew. Indeed, as winter drew in, they would 'rattle the doors and 'owl down the corridors something fierce;' so the ancient Porter, Mr Meek, never tired of reminding him when he collected his keys from the little office by the door.

Salthenius twisted in his chair and squinted at the clock on the mantle. High time a fire was in the grate beneath, past it rather. Doubtless he would be forced to go down to the Office and remind the decrepit Meek of his duties. The lazy brute was probably asleep next to his glowing little iron stove. Why the Abbey authorities had paid for its installation, the scholar was at a loss to imagine. Ghastly Meek would be a good deal warmer if he did a good deal more work about the place. The pre-Adamite creature complained, of course, complained often and endlessly about his crumbling bones and creaking joints, but nary a word about the money he was paid to drink cheap rum of an afternoon and smoking that foul pipe of his. And then, one day, no doubt he would die and put the Abbey to the trouble of finding a replacement. At least in doing so, he would, as Mr Dickens so sensibly put it, 'decrease the surplus population.' Salthenius would like sometime, he thought, to count up all the Meeks in the Abbey's comfortable employ, count them up

and, having counted, drown them all, like cats in a sack.

Hauling himself from his chair with an amused snort, he made for the door. He did not, however, get so far. Halfway across the room, Salthenius halted abruptly, with a sudden jerk, as though yanked hard from behind. Slowly, he turned towards the empty fire grate, the clock, the mirror that hung above the mantle. He did not know why. He simply stood, lifting his gaze to his reflection. With a horrified gasp, he stepped sharply backwards, inconceivable terror thudding in his chest. He did not, just then, know what he said, or if he said nothing at all but cried out like a wounded beast. For at that moment, he did not recognise this apparition leering from behind the glass above his fireplace. The skin, grey and pallid, was lined with rage and pain. Below the eyes, flesh hung in dark, heavy folds, while that around the nose and mouth was dry and drawn, stretched tight so the thin blue veins beneath were clearly seen. Eyes met eyes; they were deeply sunken, red-rimmed and hollow; but they were his. It was an old man's face that looked back at him from behind the glass, an old man who glowered and sneered with beetling brows and thin, dry lips, an old man whose *Nunc Dimittis* was long overdue.

Tearing his eyes away from the grotesque countenance, Salthenius lurched sideways and found himself leaning heavily against the door. Eyes firmly closed, he breathed deeply for few moments. The day had evidently taken more out of him than he realised, he told himself firmly, nothing more than that. He was tired and drawn; who, under the circumstances, would not be? The labours with which *he* had been tested were heavy indeed. Hercules himself would have rebuffed them. But Salthenius had not. Into the fray he flung himself, body and soul; and he had triumphed. A rest of some sort, a holiday perhaps, was now most certainly in order; yes, a holiday. Eyes still shut tight, he shook his head in an effort to dislodge the horror that clung resolutely to his consciousness. After a moment or two, he opened his eyes and shivered. Feeling, once again, the chill of an autumn afternoon, his eyes flickered automatically in the direction of the fireplace and the spell was broken. Another visage, fully as old and raddled and ugly as that which leered behind the mirror, swam languidly before his mind's eye. Meek's puggish face, smiling inanely, as was its wont, had evicted the mirror image completely. Scowling, Salthenius stalked from the room, slamming the door behind him.

Upon reaching the Porters Office, Mr Meek was, unfortunately, nowhere to be seen. Muttering irritably to himself, Salthenius peered around the little room. The creature's chair was vacant, his black iron stove, warm but unaccompanied at present. A door on the far side of the room was open and light spilled through the gap from some unseen source beyond. Rapping on the doorframe with his keys, he called out, 'Hallo? Hallo?' There was no answer. He rapped again, harder,

and called again, this time with greater insistence, 'Hallo?! Is anybody there?' After a moment or two, a chair scraped across the floor in the far room and feet shuffled towards the door. 'Quickly now,' he snapped impatiently, 'come out here.' The shuffling stopped and a girl peered, wide-eyed and blinking, around the door. Strands of dark hair strayed from under her white cap; she was one of the maids, Salthenius recognised her. On more than one occasion, he had overheard the other inmates of Montague House comment on her appearance, comment rather lewdly, he thought. A pretty thing though; infinitely pleasanter to look at than ghastly Meek, who was commonly to be found, at this time of year, with some vile rheumy pendulum dangling from the end of his nose.

The girl was staring around the room, looking everywhere, in fact, but at Salthenius. He coughed loudly and glared at her. She looked sharply in his direction then, but seemed confused and, he thought, not a little alarmed. Her mouth hung open idiotically as she cocked her head on one side, listening, while her eyes continued to dart back and forth about the Porters Office. Angry now, Salthenius rapped on the doorframe very hard and barked another loud 'Hallo!' Startled, the girl gave a squeak and jumped backwards into the far room, almost slamming the door. And then, quite suddenly, she seemed to see him, as though for the first time, standing in the doorway. She jumped again, though not as high, and blinked owlshly at him. 'What's the matter girl?' he barked again. With no little reluctance, the maid stepped forward into the room.

'I'm very sorry sir,' she said, evidently wishing she could retreat and bolt the door behind her. 'I didn't see you there for a moment, in the dark.'

'What are you wittering about? The lights are all on, you can see me perfectly.'

'I'm sorry sir,' she said again, taking another step backwards and staring hard in his direction.

'Impudence and stupidity,' he growled. 'Stop gawping child and answer my question.'

'What question sir? I di'n't hear no question.'

'That is because I haven't asked it yet.' His teeth were tightly gritted now. 'Now stop your nonsense and tell me where that creature Meek has got to.'

But the girl's attention seemed to have wandered. She had was peering around again, squinting into the corners and behind the furniture, as if she had lost sight of him for a moment and was trying to spy him out.

'Girl!' he barked for the third time, rapping very hard with his keys. The girl fairly leapt for the door behind her and stared wildly at him. This was intolerable, utterly intolerable! She must be let go, immediately. He would speak to Meek about it, if he ever turned up. 'Meek! Where is he?'

'Mr Meek sir?'

'Yes girl,' he hissed, patience all but exhausted. The desire, the very reasonable desire, to beat this

thing about the head and neck was almost overwhelming. 'Mr Meek. Stop squinting at me and tell me where he is?'

'He's doing the rounds of the gentlemen, sir, lighting the fires and taking their orders for tea sir. Set off half an hour ago, he did, sir.'

For several, long moments, Salthenius stood silently, feeling his self-control ebb silently away. Eyes and fists clenched, he pondered the great benefit he would be conferring upon his neighbours, the Abbey, indeed, all mankind, should he decide to slaughter the filthy little creature there and then. Presently, however, when he could trust himself to move without lunging for the girl's throat, he spun smartly upon his heel and stamped back towards the North Staircase. Thankfully, the maid, who was still quite young and not very sophisticated, did not understand the vicious remark he flung over his shoulder as went.

As soon as he was gone, the girl whipped about and all but flung herself through into the back room. Before closing the door, she paused a moment, overcome by a peculiar desire to examine the little Porters Office once more and quite carefully. She quickly scanned the walls and floor, into corners and behind the furniture. Lastly, she cocked her head on one side and listened very carefully. She could have sworn that someone had been in Mr Meek's office just then, someone knocking, talking, she could have *sworn* it. Only ghosts, Mr Meek would doubtless remind her, only the Abbey ghosts. Very restless this time of year they was, he often said. Wishing there was a bolt on her side of the door, she went back into the far room and closed it softly. Being reasonably well-brought up, she whispered a little prayer while putting the kettle on for Mr Meek's tea. It was a cold afternoon and he'd be wanting it when he got back.

Salthenius stumped angrily back up the stairs, promising himself that the stupid girl would be out before the end of the week. And Meek would have to go too, most definitely. The sound of boots dull-thudding down from above brought him to an abrupt halt. Looking up, he was just in time to see his neighbour, the inebriate Dr Power, bouncing cheerfully towards him, two steps at a time. Power was coming so quickly that Salthenius had no time to signal his presence before the young doctor bounced cheerfully into him.

'Hells bells, Danny Boy!' he laughed, grabbing Salthenius' shoulder. 'You nearly took a tumble there, right enough.'

'Watch where you're going, damn it!' snarled Salthenius, pulling free and gripping the banister. He glared up at his neighbour, prepared to remonstrate further, and stopped. Power was peering oddly at him through half-closed eyes. He seemed to be struggling trying to make Salthenius out, as though the latter was somehow fading from view, as in a fog or mist.

'Power?' he grunted, clicking his fingers and waving his hand; but the just other cocked his head on one side, listening, eyes darting back and forth about the stairwell.

'Power!'

The doctor stared keenly then at Salthenius, seeming to discern something in the invisible mist that hung before his eyes. Very slowly, Power began to reach out towards his neighbour's face. His hand trembled slightly. Salthenius slapped it away and the startled Power jumped, stumbling rapidly backwards up the stairs.

'What are you doing?' Salthenius demanded. 'Why are you squinting at me like that?'

Power blinked and stared. He could see Salthenius again now very clearly. Bewilderment meandered across his plump, rather vapid features.

'What in God's name is wrong with you Power?'

Power coughed with embarrassment. 'I don't – er, I don't know.' He spluttered. 'You seemed to – you seemed – er – ' He paused and looked hard at Salthenius again, then, apparently to change the subject, asked, 'Did you hear shouting just now, downstairs?'

Ignoring the question, Salthenius pushed past his neighbour and began to make his way upwards. After a few steps, however, he stopped and turned back to his neighbour. 'Have you seen Meek this evening?' he snapped. But Power was no longer listening. Scratching his large head, he was walking, slowly now, down the stairs again.

'Power!' Salthenius almost bellowed. 'Have you seen Meek?' Dr Power didn't answer. He only paused a moment and lifted his head, cocking it on one side again, listening for something.

The exasperated Salthenius threw up his arms and offered his retreating neighbour the same unintelligible suggestion as he had directed at the maid five minutes previously. Glowering, he stumped back to his rooms.

On the stairs below, Power paused again and looked behind him. He could have sworn he saw someone on the stairs just now, almost bumped into them, in fact. He could have *sworn* it. One of Mr Meek's ghosts, no doubt. He shook his head and smiled at himself for his foolishness. Too easily spooked, he supposed that was all. But then, as Mr Meek would surely remind him, the Abbey ghosts are very restless this time of year. He shrugged and, still smiling, bounced onwards, towards the old man's little office and the pretty little maid who, he hoped, still waited for him.

Salthenius slammed his door and made for his chair by the window. He did, however, not get so far. Half way across the room, he halted abruptly, with a sudden jerk, as though yanked hard from behind. Slowly, he turned towards the empty fire grate, the clock, the mirror that hung above the mantle. He knew very well why. Slower still, and with fearful fascination now,

he forced himself to look at his reflection. The face glaring back had aged very terribly. Savage lines scored themselves ever deeper into the sallow skin, skin which clung tighter still to hollow, fleshless, cheeks. A waxy sheen lay upon the countenance; thick lidded eyes, filmy and filled with a dull red glow, had sunk deeper into the heavy folds that hung about the sockets. His eyes met his eyes and icy fingers curled about him, cold, dark dread knocking hard against his ribs. Staring, dumbly horrified by the spectre, he watched as cadaverous features slowly, very slowly, began to fade. The grey pallor washed out and away, sinking silently, merging and blending with the image of the room behind him. Terrified, unable to turn away, he squinted at the evaporating vision of his slowly disappearing self and reached up to touch the face. His hand trembled slightly. And Salthenius slipped away, taking his wages with him.

Some little while later, Mr Meek, who had completed his rounds of the gentlemen on the South Staircase, stood knocking at Salthenius' door. On arriving at this end of the building, he had come, as he always did, to the young scholar first. What a twitchy fellow he was, that Mr Salthenius, and so easily upset. But if he lacked a cheerful disposition and was sometimes a little short tempered, Mr Meek did not mind. They worked them very hard at the Abbey nowadays and if the gentlemen were sometimes a little tired and a little fractious, it was not to be wondered at. Besides, Mr Meek reminded himself with a rueful smile, he had been a porter at Montague House for a great many years and he had seen a great many gentlemen come and go. On the whole, they made out well enough in the end. No, the cantankerous Mr Salthenius did not trouble Mr Meek.

Receiving no answer to his knock, he tried again, calling Salthenius' name as he did so. Once more, there was neither voice nor, apparently, any that regarded. Turning the handle, Mr Meek found he had no need of his keys, which were, in any event, still hanging on their hook behind his door. He cautiously inserted his head into the room and called again, but the room was empty. A brief inspection confirmed that there was, in fact, nobody home at all. Exactly where Mr Salthenius had got to was, of course, none of his business. Content with this, Mr Meek shuffled over to the mantle and, crouching, began to lay a fire in the grate.

He was busy with the kindling, stacking it and stuffing thick twists of newspaper, which he called 'firelighters,' into the gaps, when the atmosphere of the room changed quite suddenly. Mr Meek looked about, expecting to see Salthenius at the open door. There was no one there; the door was closed. Yet the room was noticeably colder now, colder and emptier somehow, than he considered it had any business being. Larger too, he judged, as though, beneath the yellow cracking plaster of the ceiling, old walls had fallen away to reveal some vast, cavernous space, a

space so huge and desolate that it sucked at his eyes and ears and all his senses, dragging them out into the unfathomable twilight beyond.

The old porter remembered, then, the Abbey ghosts who were, as all knew very well, quite restless at this time of year. He sought to smile, but the memory fled quickly away into gloom, leaving him alone. No, not alone, as he bethought himself, not precisely that. Cocking his head on one side, he listened carefully, trying to catch something, a sound, a whisper, something almost unspoken, like words upon the wind. Eventually, after a few moments, he sighed and shook his head. There was no presence here. He had known the Abbey ghosts all his life, near enough. They hung about the place, unable to leave, he supposed, moths around a candle flame. They troubled nobody, but they were there, at least. They were there as sure, as real as anything, as real as this room, for instance, as real as Mr Salthenius himself. Yet, in the room, there was no presence at all; not here, Mr Meek came back to himself and was certain of it. Certain, too, that there was *something*, something most peculiar. It was as though a terrible absence hung about the room, the *absence* of a *presence*. The effect was almost like a photographic negative; or no, not a negative, but a picture with a missing figure. A family group, say, huddled together, and one face missing, sponged out somehow, leaving no trace, its former place marked only by those remaining, figures standing awkwardly, arms clasped about an empty space. There was, he told the maid, his daughter, later that evening, something inexpressibly sad and lonely about that emptiness, that absence. It was the sadness of a child's grave, long forgotten.

Wheezing, and with no little creaking of joints, Mr Meek straightened up. Leaving the fire unmade, as it was, he shuffled quietly from the room, and locked the door behind him.

The rooms once occupied by Daniel Salthenius stand at the top of the North Staircase of Montague House, in the grounds of Lufford Abbey. They are modest: a small sitting room-cum-study and a bedroom; and they are sparsely furnished, the furniture being not of the best quality, as when a room is kept exclusively for visitors. The rooms are still bright and warm, as any who sees them is bound to agree, but the atmosphere is liable to change quite suddenly. Asked if anyone lives there now, Mr Meek, the ancient Porter, will only smile a little sadly and shake his head. The Abbey ghosts, he says, are very restless this time of year.



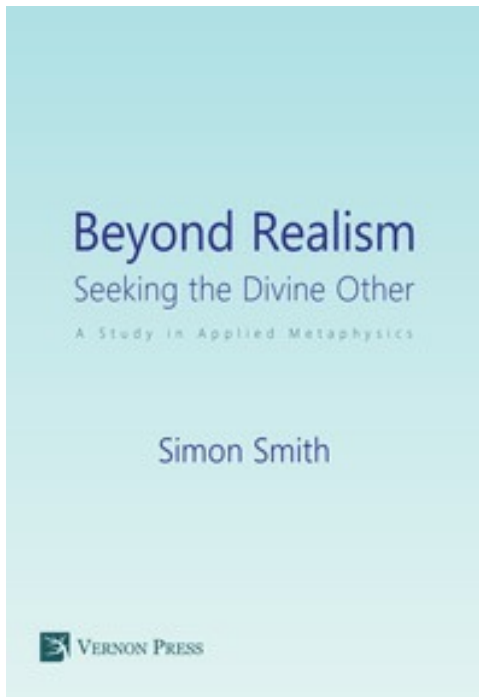
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