APPRAISAL

The Journal of the British Personalist Forum

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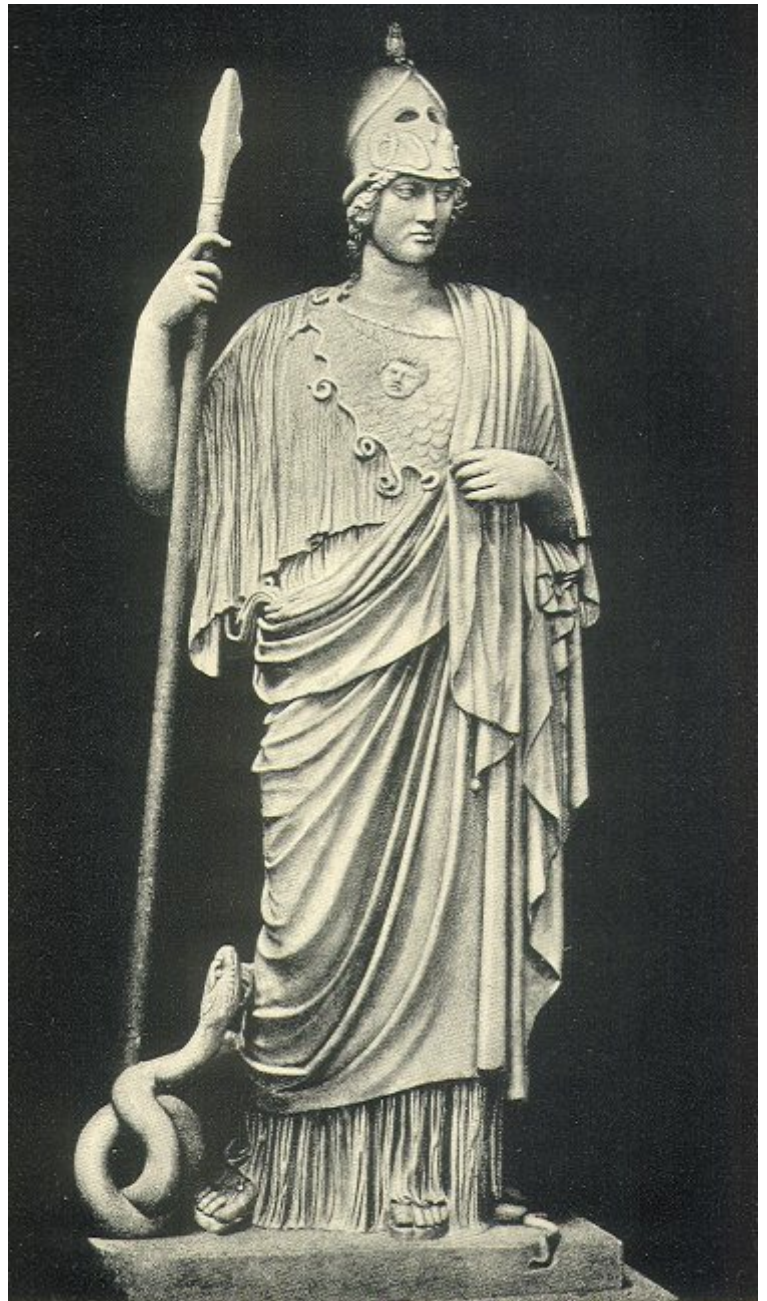
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Appraisal

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Editorial Policy:
- *Appraisal* seeks to develop and promote constructive ways of thinking, from within personalist perspectives, in philosophy and other intellectual disciplines.
- *Appraisal* believes that philosophy should not be a narrow, academic and technical specialism, but should address itself to the general public and to the intellectual and practical issues of the present.
- From time to time *Appraisal* will include *Re-Appraisals*, articles or collections of articles upon 20th C. thinkers whose work deserves to be more widely known.
- *Appraisal* takes a particular, but by no means exclusive, interest in the works of Austin Farrer, John Macmurray, and Michael Polanyi.

Format:
- The maximum length of articles is 10,000 words, although longer articles can be split into 2 parts for publication in successive issues.
- 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.
- **Please ask for the Style Sheet or save or print it from our web site:**

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NB All submissions must be composed, or rewritten after acceptance, in accordance with the Style Sheet.

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APPRAISAL

The Journal of the British Personalist Forum

Editor: Dr. Simon Smith

Assistant Editor: Dr. Abigail Klassen

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NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTORS

Phil Mullins has edited the Polanyi Society journal, *Tradition and Discovery*, for 21 years and is presently the President of The Polanyi Society Board of Directors. He and **Struan W. Jacobs** have collaborated in publishing a number of intellectual-historical articles on Polanyi's social thought and his depiction of science. These have appeared in such journals as *Perspectives on Science*, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, and *History of European Ideas*.

J. Edward Hackett is a Lecturer at Savannah State University. He received his Ph.D. from Southern Illinois University in 2013, and specializes in American pragmatism, phenomenology, and personalism. He is the recent author of *Persons and Value in Pragmatic Phenomenology: An Exploration in Moral Metaphysics* with Vernon Press (2018) and has co-authored an edited anthology with J. Aaron Simmons entitled *Phenomenology for the Twenty-First Century.*

Simon Smith has been the editor of *Appraisal* for far too long now. He has edited two collections of essays, one with James Beauregard, entitled *In the Sphere of the Personal: New Perspectives in the Philosophy of Persons* (Vernon, 2016), and one with Anna Castriota, entitled *Looking at the Sun: New Writings in Modern Personalism* (Vernon, 2017). He has also published a monograph with a nice blue cover on the subject of applied metaphysics; the title is *Beyond Realism: Seeking the Divine Other* (Vernon, 2017) and it has recently come out in paperback. He runs the BPF blog, which he would like more people to read and more people to write for. But mostly read. When he gets five minutes to himself, he thinks about the alignment of science and religion via the personal analogies at work in modern physics and modern metaphysics and tries not to think about the likelihood of the world ending before he finishes his next book.

Abigail Klassen currently teaches at the University of Winnipeg in both the Department of Philosophy and the Department of Sociology. She holds a PhD in Philosophy from York University. Before going home to Canada, she taught in the Philosophy Department and at the Honors College at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She has been a Visiting Student at the School of Humanities at the University of Aberdeen as well as Visiting Student in Philosophy at San Francisco State University, Washington University in St. Louis, MIT, and UC Berkeley. Her interests lie in philosophy of feminisms, the productive role of skepticisms, queering the university system, and philosophy of the social sciences.

R. T. Allen obtained a BA in Philosophy (Nottingham, 1963), M.Ed. by thesis on 'Emotion and Education, (Leicester in 1973), BD (external, King's Coll., London, 1976), and Ph.D. (external, King's College, London, 1982). He taught in Colleges of Education in England and Nigeria, and as a Senior Lecturer at the University of the West Indies, Trinidad. He began the journal, *Appraisal*, and then founded the British Personalist Forum. Now retired, he writes books and articles, and has published 6 books, edited or co-edited 5 others, plus 50+ articles in refereed journals across the world, on philosophy, philosophical theology, ethics, education, politics and economics. His special interests are the philosophical works of Michael Polanyi, R.G. Collingwood, Max Scheler, Gabriel Marcel, Aurel Kolnai and Lucian Blaga. He is now working on a book, *Identity, Individuality and Value*, which will summarise, extend, and apply his principal publications with new work to present a comprehensive personalist philosophy.

Alan Ford is a retired Senior Lecturer in History & Theory of Art at the University of Gloucestershire, where he taught for too many years. His research interests are in the theory of modernism, especially in the visual arts, and the ideas of John Macmurray, regarding issues of identity and notions of value. He is editor of the *John Macmurray Newsletter* and Chair of The British Personalist Forum. He lives happily with his wife near Stroud, where he interferes in local environmental and planning issues – and continues to mourn for the loss of his yellow Labrador, Perry.

James Beauregard is a Lecturer in the psychology doctoral program at Rivier University, Nashua, New Hampshire, USA where he teachers Neuropsychology, Biological Bases of Behavior, Psychology Health Care Ethics and Aging. His research interests are in the fields of neuroethics and personalist philosophy including the intersection of these two areas as they impact our understandings of personhood.

EDITORIAL

On with the dance! Let joy be unconfined;
            No sleep till morn, when Youth and pleasure meet
                  To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet –
– There only to trip over the new issue of *Appraisal*.

Yes, here we are, in all our heatwave-defying, temporally displaced glory. Finally and at long, long last. I know, it's taken ages; but do not think, I beg of you, that I am unaware of the deadlines, or being aware, my snook – or *snoek*, for any readers familiar with 17th century Dutch – I blithely cock in their direction. No indeed. The truth is, I tackle deadlines, I grapple with them and mangle them, I beat them and batter them and occasionally, if only for the sake of alliteration, I bite them. In short, I leave them brutalised, shivering in a corner of the room, staring blankly into space, and whispering "why me?"

At which point, I usually go out to meet Youth and Pleasure for a jar of 'Finsbury cider'. Sometimes blushful Hippocrene comes along for a giggle too.

Leaving all such purely imaginary debaucheries aside, however, we find ourselves well advanced, once again, upon a year of no little activity. Books have been published, as the briefest of glances through the following pages will confirm. Among them are two which may be of particular interest to our readers: viz. the eagerly awaited English translation of Juan Manuel Burgos' *Introduction to Personalism*; and *Persons, Intuition, and* Trust, a *festschrift* for Thomas O. Buford, edited by the Jameses McLachlan and Beauregard, and Richard Prust. Reviews of these, and many others, we hope to be able to put before the reader in future issues.

In other news, some preliminary details of the next International Conference on Persons, organised primarily by our friends in the United States, have begun to emerge. It seems this most popular biennial event in the personalist calendar is likely to be held next August in Israel. Given recent events in the region, I confess to experiencing some feelings of ambivalence on hearing this news. Quite the adventure, it would most assuredly be; and yet, one cannot help thinking that there is something just a little incongruous about a conference on persons being held in a country which seems to unable to recognise the personhood of its own neighbours; an inability often violently expressed. One cannot help wondering and, perhaps, feeling just a little squeamish. To be clear, no one, I should hope, denies the people of Israel the right to defend themselves against attack. On the other hand, it is not entirely obvious that following the Trump presidency in deciding to put children in jail is the best way to do that. Although, of course, putting Palestinian children in jail may well be better than shooting them. All of which has, no doubt, been taken into consideration by the organising committee. Next year in Jerusalem it would very much appear to be.

Closer to home, and, one hopes, in less controversial vein, our very own Richard Allen is organising a workshop on the Ethics of the Person to be held at Nottingham Trent University in the next few months. The workshop will primarily be aimed at postgraduate researchers in an effort to introduce them to personalist themes and thinkers. It will, however, be open to anyone who would like to come along; indeed, the more the merrier. Further details will be posted on the website and the blog in due course.

On which youth-corrupting note, we turn to the current issue and a fresh philosophical crop of superlative cerebrations. Fresh and fine they are, as the very moment the pod began to wonder about the nature of existence and reality and whether all this popping business would really be worth the candle.

Herein you will find, as loudly hinted at on the cover, a fascinating review of writings from the early years of Michael Polanyi's career by Phil Mullins and Struan Jacobs; and among those writings, many of which remain unpublished in the archives, the green shoots of a quite revolutionary approach to epistemology. You will, moreover, encounter a detailed exploration of one of the great American personalists, Edgar Sheffield Brightman, and his 'moral science'; this, from J. Edward Hackett, author of the recently published *Persons and Values in Pragmatic Phenomenology* (Vernon Press: 2018).

Questions of knowing and doing are swiftly followed by a discussion of John R. Searle's individualist/internalist description of intentionality by yours truly. One aim of this paper was to demonstrate how much better Austin Farrer's interactional, socially embodied understanding of intentionality really is. This is somewhat ironic because, as those familiar with Searle may be aware, his analysis of intentionality is a key dimension of his Social Ontology. Given this, however, we are fortunate to be able to present, alongside, a more balanced and more disciplined discussion of Searlean intentionality and its flaws by our most excellent Assistant Editor, Abigail Klassen.

The issue concludes with a trio of papers from the BPF international conference, held in Oxford back in 2015. We had hoped to bring you these in a separate and very special issue; however, due to circumstances unforeseen, our authors, R. T. Allen, Alan Ford, and James Beauregard, have been forced to bunk down with the rest of us. Thus, you will read about the hitherto little-known W. R. Sorley; the exile of persons from modernity; and the influence of the unfortunately named Object Relations theory on personalist favourite John Macmurray. All of which, I am sure you will agree, makes for a rich harvest indeed.

POLANYI'S EARLY WORK ON KNOWLEDGE

Phil Mullins & Struan W. Jacobs

Abstract: Michael Polanyi's early writing – some published but also unpublished material – shows he was deeply puzzled by, and was probing, matters concerned with human knowledge. This early material, which is sometimes provocative and not particularly systematic, has been largely overlooked in the extant Polanyi literature. Although this short essay does not discuss any of the pieces in detail, we review a selection of Polanyi's early writing. Visible in this material are some seeds of what later are developed in Polanyi's account of science and society, and his epistemology, which by the 1960s he called the 'theory of tacit knowing.' We also illuminate some tensions among ideas with which Polanyi seems to be experimenting. In sum, this essay examines a selection of early Polanyi writing, briefly discussing what appears to be Polanyi's early questions about knowledge and his thinking about human knowing in science and society in the late 1920s and 30s.

Keywords: criticism, evolution, faith, framework, knowledge, science, truth.

1. Introduction

How did Michael Polanyi understand the nature of knowing in the 1920s and 1930s? Most scholarly discussion of Polanyi's philosophy of science and his developing interest in epistemology has focused attention on *Science, Faith and Society* (1946) and publications thereafter. There are, however, interesting Polanyi writings, published and unpublished, which bear on the subject of knowledge reaching back to the 1920s. Scholars with historical-biographical interests, (e.g., Scott and Moleski, 2005, and Nye, 2011) have briefly commented on some of this literature, but it has not received much scrutiny. Although Polanyi's early discussions are at times sketchy and ambiguous, it is possible to see some patterns in them. Some seeds of themes treated in later Polanyi books and articles are visible in this early literature. Also visible are tensions between some ideas that interest Polanyi and which he, in turn, begins to explore. The present essay briefly discusses a selection of early Polanyi writings, which appear to be first steps on the path toward his later more mature epistemic account of science and of knowledge beyond science.

2. The 1926 Notebook

Perhaps the earliest evidence of Polanyi's interest in epistemic questions appears in 'On the Way to the Truth, ' a notebook entry comprised of aphoristic declarations.[1] Written in German, this entry is undated but very likely was written by Polanyi in 1926, since it is sandwiched in the notebook between entries dated Summer 1926 and December 1926.[2] In the notebook entry, the Polanyi biographers Scott and Moleski (2005, 104) find Polanyi questioning whether he would be able to remain 'on the path and avoid the abyss,' appreciating there are 'many ways and many truths.' They aver that 'the arbitrariness of life troubled Polanyi, for he saw no way to resolve the tensions objectively . . . Physical laws are subject to experimental constraint, but moral laws are arbitrary.' This means 'that in moral matters we have to take personal responsibility for our actions.'

Surely Scott and Moleski are correct in suggesting that there is in this early notebook entry a certain poetic ambience and what seems a general anxiousness, but there is more in Polanyi's reflection. Clearly, one of the main points in the notebook entry concerns truth. The title of Polanyi's note perhaps gives the impression that there is a single path to truth, but early in the text he ruled out this possibility: 'There is not just one Path and one Truth, just countless paths and truths.' The different truths Polanyi considered to range along a spectrum from the rudimentary to the well advanced: 'There is a population of truths, or better yet, a community of truths that is split and intertwined . . . There are highly developed civilizations of truths and wild tribes, with all transitions of development in-between.' Polanyi speculated that 'between true and false, or, more colloquially, right and wrong, there is a steady progression.' Each discipline of science has 'one piece of the world…to cultivate' and the seeds planted 'grow strong or perish.'

Another related theme in the 1926 notebook entry is that each body of knowledge rests on its own particular assumptions: 'What profoundly separates the ages are the silent assumptions they are built on.' Polanyi also apparently was curious but skeptical about much of the interest in method in philosophical and scientific discussion. He refers to 'the particular method, which always leads to the truth, which Descartes and so many others have searched for' without having found it.

Finally, in his 1926 notebook entry, Polanyi questions the view that science always demands exactness. He was perhaps asking if exactness should be a scientific ideal. Different disciplines of science impose different degrees of precision, and demand different degrees of 'clarity of. . . terms' and require different 'measuring techniques.' Standards of exactitude in one branch of science may prove to be inordinately strict in another branch. Medical science, for example, would not be able to cope were it subject to the 'critique. . . which is common in Physics.'

The themes in the 1926 notebook entry, interest in truths and the role of assumptions plus questions about

method and matters of exactness in science, are complemented and expanded in some subsequent early Polanyi writings. In December 1928, Polanyi wrote a laudatory piece praising Fritz Haber on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday.[3] As paraphrased by Scott and Moleski, Polanyi associated outstanding scientific researchers with one of two

> Hindu gods, Shiva, the destroyer, and Vishnu, the preserver. Scientists like Einstein, Planck, and Rutherford are the 'destroyers' of old ways, the radical reformers. Haber and others are the 'preservers' who build additional structures on the current scientific outlook and explain the new in terms of the old (2005, 110).

These two imperatives of scientific research, namely innovation and conservation, become a recurrent theme of Polanyi's later discussions of scientific knowledge. Polanyi early recognized the tension between these imperatives but also saw they both deserved respect.

Mary Jo Nye (2011, 155) notes that in 1930 Polanyi wrote a short essay for *Der deutsche Volkswirt* arguing 'for government support of pure, or fundamental, science even when practical benefits might not be immediately obvious as in medicine or engineering.' In an unpublished essay, 'New Morality,' probably written in the early thirties, Polanyi wrote of the need for a 'morality' to ground science. Scott and Moleski (2005, 128) comment that this 'remained a leitmotif of Polanyi's social analysis and philosophical reflection.' Polanyi early seems preoccupied with understanding how scientific knowledge (and, more generally, all knowledge in human communities) changes or grows and yet maintains continuity. He seems early to have affirmed the importance of pursuing the transcendent ideals of truth, justice and beauty, which sustain a good society.

3. 'The Value of the Inexact' (1936)
What is arguably Polanyi's first philosophical publication on science was an April, 1936, four-paragraph letter which follows up on his 1926 notebook musings about the relative value of exactness in science.[4] His letter, published under the title 'The Value of the Inexact' in *Philosophy of Science*, treated 'the subject of chemical concepts as opposed to physical ones,' arguing that chemistry is built on an appreciation for 'the great value of inexact ideas.' Polanyi suggested 'Chemistry is a world of ideas expressed by such terms as 'relative stability,' 'affinity,' 'tendency,' 'inclination,' 'general expectation,' as descriptions of behaviour. There is not a single rule in chemistry which is not qualified by important exceptions.' Polanyi noted that 'the character of a substance or class of substances is as complex as the features of physiognomy and the art of chemistry appears to be the power of being aware of these complex attitudes of matter.' Chemists must not 'let themselves be frightened by physicists into abandoning all vague methods, and to restrict

themselves to the field where exact laws (or what are supposed to be such by the physicists) pertain,' for to do so would 'have stopped dead' the development of chemistry and 'its most valuable parts would have melted away.' Polanyi points out as a chemist that it 'is good to contemplate how useless, or even harmful exactitude becomes at so close quarters to physics. Just link up two of three of the atoms of physics, and their behavior becomes so complex as to be beyond the range of exactitude.' He extended this scientific perspective to suggest it is 'supremely unreasonable' to contend that 'by precise measurements and mathematical treatment, i.e. physical exactitude, a vital knowledge and command of such objects as living organisms and social bodies should be found.'[5] There is an implicit rejection of reductionism in Polanyi's 1936 letter – everything cannot be reduced to physics, even in theory, and pretending it is reducible is destructive of science.

4. The Economic and Political Context
Polanyi developed his ideas about knowledge in the context of analysing the great economic and political upheaval of the first decades of the twentieth century. Given Polanyi's family history (with interests in political economy), his life in Hungary before, during and just after World War I, and his later experience in inflation-plagued Germany after the war, it is not surprising that he developed a serious interest in European politics and economics, including Soviet affairs. The Bolshevik Revolution inspired for many a utopian dream of a new society with absolute freedom and equality that operated on scientific principles. But Polanyi was no utopian. In 1930, Polanyi organized a study group of scientists and economists at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes' Harnack House. Before the middle of 1931, this economics study group held nine or ten meetings (Scott and Moleski, 2005, 121-122; Nye, 2011, 154-157).

In April of 1928, Polanyi took the first of several scientific trips over the next few years to the Soviet Union (Scott and Moleski, 2005, 108, 120, 134; Nye, 2011, 153, 156-157) and these trips stimulated his study of the functioning of the Soviet economy, Soviet politics and ideology and the pressures on Soviet scientists. Scott and Moleski (2005, 109-110) emphasize that on his 1928 trip Polanyi recorded in his notebook and incorporated in a letter to his sister notes about the badly functioning Soviet economy, including some observations about prices, wages and housing.

In the same year, Polanyi read economics books and studies of social-cultural issues, including Julien Benda's *The Treason of the Intellectuals* which would likely have strengthened Polanyi's commitment to the importance of theoretical scientific inquiry. Polanyi read Benda's *The Treason of the Intellectuals* shortly after it appeared (Scott and Moleski, 2005, 109) and there are several pages of Polanyi reflections on

Benda's book dated '17 December 1928' in archival materials (Box 44, Folder 2).[6] He may have noticed Benda's motto for the book: Charles Renouvier's words, 'The world is suffering from lack of faith in a transcendental truth.' Benda depicted the clerks in society (i.e., the intellectuals) as people who historically had 'interests [that] are set *outside* the' mundane sphere of power and wealth, reputation and patriotism (1928/1969, 47, 57, 139). These for Benda were the true clerks, people who dedicated themselves to the 'disinterested life,' the life of study (148), to discovering and spreading '*spiritual*' ends (103), including universal truth and justice (57), universal good (95) and beauty (101). Benda, however, pointedly described many contemporary intellectuals as having abandoned the clerk's true and traditional role in favour of a more practical, political and materialistic orientation. Polanyi likely saw Sydney and Beatrice Webb as exemplars of Benda's corrupted clerk. He sharply reviewed the Webbs' apologia, *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation*? in 1936.[7] Concluding his review, 'Truth and Propaganda', Polanyi (1940/1975, 116) bemoaned the fact that '[M]any thinkers to-day do not believe in truth; of those who do, few consider it to be right to tell the truth regardless of political consequences' and, as a result of this, 'thinkers have . . . forfeited their right to restrain governments in the name of truth.' Intellectuals need to 'make a new departure, inspired by unflinching veracity,' otherwise 'truth will remain powerless against propaganda.'

Polanyi's most memorable later trip to the Soviet Union came in the spring of 1935, two years after he had left Germany for a physical chemistry position at Manchester University, following Hitler's rise to power. Scott and Moleski (2005, 154-155) report that Polanyi went to Moscow to present a paper on proton transfer and, while there, he discussed Soviet science with Nikolai Bukharin, editor of the government newspaper *Izvestia* and a leading Communist party theoretician. The conversation was a watershed moment for Polanyi; he later referred to it several times. Bukharin's ideas about Soviet science seem to have shocked Polanyi into the recognition that his own experience as a scientist and his largely unformulated ideas about science were diametrically opposed to Marxist ideas. But Polanyi, in the next few years after his conversation with Bukharin, as he monitored and publicized the Stalinist Soviet persecution of geneticists, concluded that the logical positivist ideas about science, knowledge and truth in the West were themselves not defensible alternatives to the misguided account of scientific knowledge of Marxism.[8]

Polanyi first wrote about Bukharin's claims in his 1939 essay 'Rights and Duties of Science,'

> He [Bukharin] explained that the distinction between pure and applied science made in capitalist countries was due only to the inner conflict of a type of society which deprived scientists of the consciousness of

their social functions, thus creating in them the illusion of pure science . . . [T]he distinction between pure and applied science was inapplicable in the U.S.S.R. In his view this implied no limitation on freedom of research; scientists could follow their interests freely in the U.S.S.R., but owing to the complete internal harmony of Socialist society they would, in actual fact inevitably be led to lines of research which would benefit the current Five Year' Plan. And accordingly comprehensive planning of all research was to be regarded merely as a conscious confirmation of the pre-existing harmony of scientific and social aims (1940/1975, 3-4).

Although Polanyi (1946/1964, 8) later reported that he was at first amused at Bukharin's 'dialectical mystery mongering,' it launched Polanyi's philosophical effort to articulate the nature of science and the place of science in modern society. In 1939 in 'Rights and Duties of Science', Polanyi commented he had been observing through the thirties the rise of a movement in England and other countries that advances 'a claim for the reconsideration of the position of science in the light of Marxist philosophy. More recently . . . this movement, while further gathering in breadth, is adopting a less orthodox attitude' (1940/1975, 1). He began to work at countering Marxist views of science visible in the British 'planned' science movement that aimed to direct research. In 'Rights and Duties of Science,' Polanyi proposed as an alternative to Marxist influenced ideas about science what he called his 'liberal view . . . concerning the distinction between pure and applied science and concerning the relation of science and society' (1940/1975, 4). In his lectures and writing in this period, Polanyi strongly rejected the Marxist idea that thought, including scientific thought, is socially determined; he also rejected Marxist ideas about class warfare (1940/1975, 10-11; 1937/2016, 21-22).[9]

In 1935, the same year he met with Bukharin, Polanyi published 'USSR Economics – Fundamental Data, System and Spirit.' In this largely statistical study of the Soviet economy, one of the earliest of such studies in the West, Polanyi (1940/1975, 61) provided an outline 'sufficiently certain to base reasonable conclusions on it.'[10] These conclusions distinguished the truly disastrous early communist phase, following the Russian Revolution, of economic affairs from the more recent socialist phase 'following the consolidation of Stalin's dictatorship' which he (1940/1975, 61) argued had brought a certain 'improvement in [Soviet] economic life' by effectively reintroducing (although not acknowledging) certain market mechanisms.

In 1937, Polanyi published a short report in *Nature* just after returning from *Congrès du Palais de la Découverte*, an international scientific meeting in Paris. This international scientific meeting was one in which all present were mindful of the ways in which the international scientific enterprise hung in the balance as the Third Reich moved to dominate Europe.

Reporting on this scientific meeting, Polanyi connected the growth of knowledge with freedom. 'Science, and generally the independent search for truth, is destroyed when political liberty falls . . . By its very nature such [religious, political and scientific] thought must claim superiority to temporal power' (1937, 710). In effect, Polanyi was agreeing with Benda's argument in *The Treason of the Intellectuals* that science and other forms of inquiry require a commitment to truth, and truth necessarily must be regarded as independent of the state. In Stalinism and fascism, Polanyi saw the undermining of, and ultimate dissolution of, the ideal of an external truth. Bukharin's model of planned scientific research glossed over the importance of the necessary independence of the search for truth. The political and social events of the twentieth century led Polanyi to see democratic institutions and practices as best able to promote what he called the 'reciprocal' connections between science and liberty:

> [T]he link between science and liberty is completely reciprocal: while the profession of truth needs for its protection the free institutions of democracy, these institutions themselves must decay and fall if people abandon their belief in reason. The idea of liberty derives its strength from many roots but among these there is one most vital: the belief that men can reach a better understanding by free discussion, that in fact society can be continuously improved if public life is steadily guided by reasoned controversy (1937: 710).

The survival of both democratic institutions and science depends upon the continuing confidence modern human beings have in reason. Polanyi affirmed that free discussion relying upon reasoned controversy provided the only way in which the growth of thought in society could be promoted.

In sum, Polanyi's (1940/1975, 4) 'liberal view . . . concerning the distinction between pure and applied science and concerning the relation of science and society,' affirms several key convictions that have epistemological bearing if not always a clear, conventional epistemological formulation. (1) Science and a society guided by science must believe in truth and this implies a continuing belief in reason. (2) Science and a society guided by science must be committed to an ongoing independent search for truth. (3) Such an independent search requires political liberty. (4) The independent search for truth yields what Polanyi calls 'reasoned controversy' which is the vehicle through which knowledge grows and society takes steps forward. There is an on-going public conversation in society – a reasoned and lively discussion – about truth, and that public conversation can occur only in a non-totalitarian social context.

5. The 1937 Numbered Papers
5.1 An Introduction to the Suite
By 1937, at the same time Polanyi was working out some elements of his socio-economic political philosophy, he was also probing epistemological questions more directly. There is a suite of four unpublished short papers dated 1937 and numbered two through five (Box 25, F11, MPP), which Polanyi presumably linked together. There is no first paper in the series, but the titles of the surviving papers, numbered two through five, are 'On Truth,' 'On Reason,' 'Truth and Justice, Ideas and Belief,' and 'Notes on the Position of Science.'[11] As we discuss below, this material, which seems to be a sketchy set of meditations, suggests questions and tensions in Polanyi's thinking in this period but also it reveals some tendencies visible in his early thought.

Only one Polanyi commentator, Stefania Jha (2002, 284, n. 20), has to our knowledge made any reference to this unpublished suite of short papers. Jha's comment is no more than a passing reference, which in some ways confuses matters. She notes 'a 1937 attempt' by Polanyi 'at working out the dynamic order among truth, reason, justice, ideas and beliefs with regard to science and learning, in which he explored the concept of hierarchies and frameworks.' Jha's use of the phrase 'dynamic order' suggests the papers are more interconnected than they really are. Although these reflections were all written in 1937 and Polanyi sometimes comments on the same theme in more than one paper, the papers are certainly not well integrated. Jha's use of 'dynamic order' is also anachronistic in that Polanyi nowhere used the phrase in the 1937 papers, which became a key term in 1940. Polanyi borrowed 'dynamic order' from the Gestalt psychologist Wolfgang Kohler, as he notes in his essay 'The Growth of Thought in Society' (1941, 435), and adapted Kohler's ideas to characterize science and other orders (Mullins 2010, 11-16). The concept does also appear a year earlier in Polanyi's essay, 'Collectivist Planning' (Jacobs 2015, 377). Polanyi used this phrase to describe natural and social orders, underscoring the way in which equilibrium is achieved when forces interact in the context of set boundary conditions.

In our view, the 1937 papers convey a sense of a thinker exploring and probing certain fundamental ideas and initiating what, with the benefit of hindsight, might be described loosely as an agenda for further future philosophical inquiry, a philosophical research program. The papers vary in terms of the level of their epistemological interest. 'On Truth' and 'Truth and Justice, Ideas and Belief' are the deeper epistemic explorations of the four. 'Notes on the Position of Science', Polanyi's reflection numbered five, is more straightforward and provides a bridge from Polanyi's social and political ideas to the deeper epistemological probing in this suite of papers. This is the only paper in the suite that directly refers to the planned science movement. It also articulates Polanyi's views about the nature of scientific education (which connects this paper with others in the suite – see the discussion below). Polanyi cites one of the planned science

protagonists, the zoologist and statistician Lancelot Hogben, author of *Mathematics for the Millions* (1936), suggesting that Hogben misrepresents mathematics and particularly science insofar as he does not recognize the ways in which mathematical development, after Newton, is largely 'theoretical and independent of welfare' (V: 1). Polanyi explained 'it is extremely rare' for a scientific discovery to 'result in a particular invention' (V: 1). It is the case that 'the discovery of certain scientific truths make [sic.] a whole order of now useful things possible,' but 'as to *where* they are made possible is a second discovery to which the particular status of *invention* is attached' (V: 1). Polanyi held – and this is directly contrary to Bukharin's view – science is not 'guided by the need for solving certain practical problems' (V: 1). Polanyi reaffirmed the distinction between pure and applied science, contending that the 'drama of science' cannot be reduced to 'practical implications' for 'to try to put it in such terms' is to 'completely miss the beauty and depth of' scientific discoveries (V: 1). He further notes that advances in applied sciences have been stimulated by discoveries in basic science. Modern medicine advanced when it ceased trying to improve methods of healing directly and took notice of discoveries that had been made in the pure sciences of anatomy, physiology and pathology (V: 2).

5.2 An Analysis of the Suite

We believe it helpful to analyse Polanyi's discussion in his 1937 papers in terms of four dimensions of knowledge: biological-evolutionist, social-psychological, rational, and fiduciary. Polanyi regarded these dimensions as complementary; but there remain tensions between some dimensions, and they also overlap. Hence discussion below of these dimensions includes some repetition.

5.2.1 The Biological-evolutionist Dimension

Polanyi likened ideas to biological organisms, contending that they 'live, feed, spread, produce progeny' (IV: 1). 'New ideas' he considered

> rise like new species from old at the bidding of sudden changes in our mental structure and spread favoured by temporal circumstances, pushing out older ideas by taking away the ground consuming their nourishment, occupying the minds by which they were held, nesting in their minds and transforming them by their growth and progeny. They live in books, habits, forms of greeting, new words and reticences, customs, prejudices and when overcome by a new growth of rival ideas they finally die, these remains are left as fossils (IV: 1).

Elsewhere Polanyi wrote that 'truths . . . struggle with one another for the minds of men' and truths compete 'for the minds of the leaders' or the 'intellectual elite' and these leaders in turn 'compete for' the allegiance of the masses (II: 4). Ideas are in competition with one another to survive. 'The evidence of truth lies in the force of ideas. Ideas convince and supersede other ideas' (V: 2).

Our knowledge often has survival value for us, and we are impelled by biology to accept that there are conclusions 'we can trust to be true' (II: 3). In his 1937 meditations, Polanyi appears to be preoccupied with reconciling his thinking about truth and his thinking from a more evolutionary biological perspective. Doubting conclusions such as 'we will starve if we don't eat[,] and be run over if we cross the road' in front of a car are not biological options (II: 2-3). A person trying consistently to apply an attitude of doubt would paralyse herself or else behave randomly, and thereby prevent herself from taking precaution against dangers. Absolute doubt contradicts 'the instincts of life' (II:3). Human beings draw conclusions from evidence as part of 'our determination to live,' in the interests of our 'own preservation' (II:3). Convictions help to 'guide life a good way on its further continuation' (II:5).[12]

In 'Truth and Justice, Ideas and Belief,' Polanyi described the validity of statements as 'relative' to the 'framework of method by which they are ascertained' (IV: 1). Polanyi later develops a philosophical outlook strongly linking perception and conception; in 1937, he seems already to be trying to work out this connection. The framework in which we believe functions as 'a sensory organ,' a 'means of perception like eyes and ears,' forming a 'part of our living self,' and providing a particular view of the world (IV: 1, 2).[13] The implication is that statements validated in one framework may not be verifiable, and perhaps cannot even be formulated in other frameworks, although Polanyi allowed that 'a struggle based on reason between rival doctrines might be possible in terms of a super framework accepted by both parties'(IV: 1). He noted that while in use we cannot scrutinize our framework any more than 'we can see our own eyes;' when using a 'method of discussion,' it is not subject to discussion (IV: 1). There is no preferred method of discussion and there is no neutral framework. People defend their sense organs and their 'methods of perception' with a 'desperate instinct' whether these methods are 'reasonable or mystic, scientific or intuitive' (IV: 1). Polanyi affirmed that 'a Communist or a Catholic defending his faith' struggles for 'a higher more significant form of existence' and resists 'degredation (sic) to a shapeless meaningless death-like arid form of life' (IV: 1-2). All of our responses have biological survival value.

Polanyi contended that 'the fact that we and others go on living is the justification for our belief in the existence of Truth' (II: 3). But he wondered if the conclusions we draw according to our instinct for life represent 'just one Truth out of many or are they the truth?' (II: 3) This is a question that the early Polanyi does not clearly answer. While Polanyi regarded belief in truth as important and perhaps inevitable for living persons, it is hard to know more precisely how he

regarded truth. On one interpretation, he seemed to imply that true conclusions in any field of inquiry are *relative* to one or other of the frameworks in that field. Each framework provides the concepts in which its believers formulate conclusions and determine what is true. When Polanyi refers to the possibility of 'many' truths, he may be suggesting truth is simply relative to an individual or a social group's framework of belief, in which case the early Polanyi was a relativist about truth. He seemed to rule out objective means of preferring any framework as the cognitively best available at the time: 'The decision between rival frameworks is a pure judgment of value imposed upon the mind by doctrines' (IV: 1).

Another possibility is that Polanyi meant that there are different fields of inquiry, *each of which* has its own standard of truth. Truth in this case would seem to be more objective (or absolute) and emergent rather than simply relative. Four years later he suggested such a view in 'The Growth of Thought in Society,' affirming 'the ideals' of the various 'aspects of truth' (1941, 429). He argued that truth 'is so complex, and each particle of it hangs together directly with so many others,' and that 'there are . . . many *kinds* of truth, corresponding to the wealth of' human faculties (1941, 448 emphasis added).[14] Twenty-five years later, Polanyi repeated this view in 'The Republic of Science' in affirming different '*kinds* of truth' (1962, 73 emphasis added).

It is worth emphasizing that Polanyi began his 1937 meditation 'On Truth' by affirming that the 'miracle of Truth is like the miracle of Life. To lose faith in Truth because there is no absolute Truth is like denying life because we are not immortal' (II: 1). At times, Polanyi spoke of 'the Truth as each of us conceives it,' which suggests truth is subjective (and relative), but he clearly believed that our survival in the physical world constrains what we can believe (II: 3). He explained that the truth depends on 'our will to live' and on our personal choices and our circumstances in nature and society (II: 3). He described 'the degree of safety of life' as depending 'on the validity' of the statements which a person accepts as true. 'Convictions' that give no lasting solutions provide no 'effective guidance to life and are, in effect, delusions, which have to be soon discarded if life is to go on' (II:3).

Polanyi wrote there are various 'possible lives' and they are determined by different convictions (II: 4). Polanyi's 1937 papers include the expression 'form of life,' an expression later used by Ludwig Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigations* (1953). Each 'form of life' for Polanyi is 'conditioned by various possible convictions' (II: 4). His examples include Communism, capitalism, Catholicism, Buddhism, and Fascism as forms of 'faith' (IV: 1). Each form of life, Polanyi notes, 'represents a rival form of Truth,' and such truths have varying degrees of validity depending on 'the value of the life' such truths make 'possible

and on the permanence of the solution they offer to it' (II: 4). Polanyi emphasized differences among forms of life or patterns of lived faith: 'The intellectual life of a mystic is different from that of a rationalist as the spiritual life of an epicurean is different from that of a yogi. Each of these reveal different Truths' and these truths compete for people's intellectual allegiance (II: 4). 'The evidence of truth' consists in 'the force of ideas' to convince people (V: 2c). Polanyi described each body of truth as 'a heritage' approved of by the 'intellectual elite,' the members of which compete for citizens' support (II: 4).

5.2.2 The Social-psychological Dimension

The 1937 suite emphasizes a social-psychological dimension of knowledge in which Polanyi stressed how children and adults receive their understandings from others. Few people decide for themselves what is true and how they should behave. 'Children are baptised at birth, they are taught their religion, they are trained to conform to custom and instructed in language, crafts and science according to the conviction of the parent generation' (IV: 4). 'The main truth' about most people's convictions is they rely on the cognitive authority of others, whether it be their doctor, the journalist reporting in the daily newspaper, or better educated neighbors (II: 4). In short, people with training and education are trusted by the less-educated members of society.

Particularly in 'Notes on the Position of Science,' Polanyi emphasized the social nature of education. Schools in a democratic society instil its body of knowledge, including a high regard for reason and 'properly established facts' (V: 2). But science teaching is authoritarian, the content of science being imposed on students. Students are not presented with the evidence and encouraged to 'draw their own conclusions' (V: 3). They are expected to accept the knowledge claims being taught, without demur. The student must believe his teacher is right before he can understand him or her (V: 3). The actual truth found in a discipline such as physics is too complex for it to be intelligible to beginning students. Scientific truth remains 'practically unrevealed' to students being taught science (V: 3). Polanyi affirmed that 'we apply every trick to make one aspect which is teachable enter the minds of the pupil and refrain from referring to the whole truth which would only confuse him' (V: 2-3). Schools teach theories – for example, Bohr's atom theory, Newtonian mechanics, and the undulatory theory of light – which are strictly speaking 'wrong' (V: 2).

Elaborating on the social dimension of knowledge, Polanyi envisaged people as belonging to social-cultural 'circle[s]', in some cases by virtue of birth – for example, a religion or a nation – and in some cases not – for example, professions (II: 4). A social-cultural circle has its 'centre' of specialists – for example, 'the central authority of science' – who have been trained

in, and have experience of, their area, and these specialists produce the 'convictions' of the circle (V: 3, II: 4). These specialists, Polanyi (II: 4) suggested, represent the circle's 'leaders' who are an 'intellectual elite' and each circle also includes 'dependents.' The intellectual leaders generally add 'only …[a] little' to the inherited body of truths of their circle but every so often there are 'new revelations of truth', and these are transmitted by 'intermediaries' along 'the threads of intellectual allegiances to the people' (II: 4 and 5).[15]

5.2.3 The Rational Dimension

In his 1937 reflections, Polanyi outlined a very modest account of the potential of human reason, an account at odds with the heritage of eighteenth century rationalism. He seems to have been reading and thinking carefully about some of the events and new literature of this period. Polanyi affirmed 'reason is a particular method of approach to nature and human affairs' but it is not 'an adequate method for a comprehensive study of nature' (III:1). Conservative religious people reject rational accounts of nature and

> many others would agree that the picture of the Universe which it [science] presents is so incomplete that it scarcely satisfied our intellectual needs. The origin of Life is left unexplained [by science], the purpose of Evolution with the rise of conscious being from primordial slime is denied, the Universe as a whole is given no beginning and no end (III: 1).

Reason can contribute to people's 'material welfare,' but it provides 'nothing definite' by way of understanding human needs apart from confirming the obvious fact that we need 'food and shelter' (III: 1). Tastes vary and people have changes of heart, which are often not motivated by reason. Reason can 'only register the changes in taste' and try to cater to 'the new tastes as it served the old ones' (III: 1). It cannot invalidate moral conclusions nor pronounce 'one moral doctrine' as superior to another and 'in the limited field of welfare' reason is ill-equipped to decide any 'major issue' (III: 1, 2). Reason may be able to clarify certain 'issues by pointing out consequences' but people select the consequences that best suit their interests and their underlying motives (III: 2). In many situations, 'reason has nothing to say at all' (III: 2). An illustration of the infirmity of reason is its failure to provide a convincing argument against racial intolerance. Polanyi considered 'reasonable argument' to be ineffectual against the German anti-semite who has no objection against a person with whom he has been friendly in the past other than that he is now aware this person is Jewish (III: 2). Polanyi's overall assessment is 'as an approach to human affairs Reason is scarcely more than a sectional method. A guide for a short while here and there' (III: 1).

What animates the follower of reason? Polanyi considered people like himself to be 'propagandists, making propaganda for reason' (III: 1, see also III: 3).

He cites Leonard Doob's recent study, *Propaganda: Its Psychology and Techniques (*1935), in the nascent field of social psychology and suggests propaganda 'is inevitable and its abolition can be secured only by rupturing practically all of the complicated social bonds through which men associate on friendly or hostile terms with one another' (III: 3). In his reflection on education in democratic societies, he suggests many ideas might be regarded as ''propaganda' if propaganda means the inculcation of an order of ideas which can be controverted by another order of ideas' (V: 2). According to Polanyi, 'the propaganda for Reason' is grounded in the idea that people 'behave better' when they take notice of their 'material welfare and . . . [of] those conditions which prevail in a more placid state of mind' (III: 2). To say that reason is an object of propaganda entails that there can be no convincing justification of reason other than that we like it, and this consideration for Polanyi is 'a perfectly sound one' (III: 2). Reason and freedom have had their 'martyrs' who did not preach the case for reason and freedom but rather 'they fought for their ideals destroying its enemies or losing their own lives' (III: 3). Reason and free discussion inevitably depend on propaganda. Propagandists for reason and free discussion need to provide a personal 'example of toleration while preaching toleration' and they also 'must argue against intolerance' and 'evoke all emotions to blacken its picture' (III: 3). In the case of the 'propaganda of dictatorship' – unlike the case of democratic orders in which the propaganda for reason prevails – propaganda is not merely the means for the establishment of the dictatorship but also constitutes 'part of its doctrine' which requires one 'to submit unquestioningly to the Leader's assertions' (III: 3).

5.2.4 The Fiduciary Dimension

Learning, for Polanyi, is a process of discovering 'meaning' and it cannot proceed without the learner having faith in what he or she is being taught (II: 1). The child cannot learn to speak unless it accepts on faith that the sounds heard are significant. The child 'is guided by its trust that' what he is hearing includes 'a hidden significance' (II: 1). Polanyi compared the child's faith or trust in learning to speak with the scientist seeking a discovery who is guided by his trusting that there is 'significance in the objects which he investigates' (II: 1). 'The strength of faith in learning to speak is illustrated by the reluctance of children to speak a language which is not the right one' (II: 2). Regardless of whether he or she is learning a language, or learning quantum mechanics or grasping an 'ethical revolution,' the student is sustained by believing there is 'hidden truth' to be discovered (II: 2).

Polanyi noted that faith underlies scientists' decisions on which experiments to conduct, and it may take them 'a lifelong practice of devotion' for the results of an experiment to become manifest (IV: 3). Experience won't accurately guide a scientist as to

which experiment he ought to conduct. He has to fall back on his 'faith' in what he believes the experiment will yield, and ultimately his decision is 'arbitrary.' Polanyi believed 'Chastity, Revolution, education, parentage' to be '*fateful* experiments,' each of them based on faith (IV: 3). The scientist expects to 'find something' and he is prepared to brush 'significant evidence' aside when it disagrees with scientists' 'expectations as expressed in current theory' (IV: 3). Polanyi illustrated this with the example of what he labelled the 'position' but, because that name makes no sense in this context, the present authors suggest that he probably had in mind Carl Anderson's recent (1932) discovery of antimatter in the form of the '*positron*' (IV: 3).

Belief, for Polanyi, supports the *status quo* but every so often knowledge changes because someone has come up with a new 'daring' idea' or a 'bold' generalization' that disturbs established views (IV: 3). Max von Laue's discovery of diffraction of X-rays by crystals was driven by his believing intensely in his inquiry which Polanyi described as 'a miracle of belief' (IV: 3). Perhaps Polanyi also intended his notion, 'miracle of belief,' as an argument against Laplacean determinism. In a similar vein, at the end of 'On Truth,' Polanyi wrote that 'The most scientific way to look upon life seems to me to regard it as a miracle. That is to realise [sic.], that looking at the universe not knowing of the existence of life there could be nothing more amazing than to come across the fact that life exists' (II: 5).

Polanyi affirmed a deep connection between belief and truth. The assertion 'Truth exists', in his view, expresses a faith that there are ideas in which we 'can safely believe' (II: 2). Believing an idea to be true, we assign it significance 'beyond the range of evidence which forms its foundation' (II: 2). Ideas are 'incomplete presentations of experience' and the 'validity of accepted ideas' (including those in science) requires that we ignore a good many 'elements and issues as irrelevant to their validity' (IV: 3). Polanyi contended 'the only path to discovery is the expectation to find something and most significant evidence is overlooked so long as it does not fit in with our expectations as expressed in current theory' (IV: 3). He held that the 'suppression of a great deal of information is necessary to establish truth and convey it to the public' (IV: 3). These and other similar statements make it plain that by 1937 Polanyi had rejected the critical, falsificationist perspective on science.

Faith, for Polanyi, clearly trumps criticism and is intimately connected with life. The 'state of absolute doubt' is not a real option 'because the instincts of life set us such aims with which it is irreconcilable' (II: 3). Questions about whether certain 'conclusions should be drawn or not are set by our determination to live, to seek mental and bodily existence' (II: 3). Although he does not mention Saint Augustine, Polanyi considers 'we cannot understand without first

believing. If that is true for the study of Quantum Mechanics it holds still more for ethical revelation' (IV: 2). Polanyi notes that Buddhist philosophy states the case 'admirably': 'It is the practice of faith that conveys enlightenment, not the other way round' (IV: 2). Communists and fascists have formed a similar view.

> Revolutionary Socialists believe that not before a complete revolution has been achieved and has reigned for a few generations can the truth of their faith be perceived by the masses. Similarly to the Fascist it is useless to 'consider' Fascism. It must be established and lived to be appreciated by the community (IV: 2).

Polanyi perhaps here foreshadows his view developed later that realities have indeterminate future manifestations; a true theory shows its truth in future disclosures. His discussion also appears to presage what in *Personal Knowledge* (1958) he signified as 'universal intent.' Certainly, in light of what we have been discussing, in 1937, Polanyi was developing a philosophy of belief, the centrepiece of his research program that is fully manifested in his Gifford lectures (1951-1952) and *Personal Knowledge*.

6. Conclusion

This essay has reviewed a selection of early Polanyi writings, some published and some unpublished. These selections roughly outline the contours of Polanyi's first explorations of questions about human knowing and the nature of human knowledge. From the mid- twenties, Polanyi had a consuming interest in the nature of truth. He puzzled about what appeared to be the diversity of knowledge and truth. He was attuned to the discovery of new scientific ideas, but he also appreciated scientific institutions and the continuity of the scientific tradition. Polanyi's early writing suggests that he saw precise measurement and mathematics as central to physics, but as often being inappropriate and even misleading when applied in most other kinds of inquiry. In the context of the economic and political upheaval of the first part of the twentieth century, Polanyi became an outspoken critic of planned science and he rejected the Marxist effort to undermine the distinction between pure and applied science. Polanyi early promoted the importance of belief in the independence of truth in science and other socio-epistemic orders in society. But it is unclear whether he affirmed a relativistic or a pluralistic, emergent approach to truth. In the face of rising totalitarianism, Polanyi emphasized a democratic social order as that most likely to promote rational public discourse (his 'reasoned controversy') in scientific circles and other social orders. Polanyi's 1937 meditations indicate he did not entertain great expectations about the powers of rationality to transform society. His suite of unpublished 1937 papers suggests that Polanyi was at the time thinking about knowledge in both social and biological-evolutionary terms. He

sketches out a social-psychological perspective which is woven with his stress upon fiduciary elements, emphasizing the importance of trust, faith and social location. Exactly how 'truth' fits into this account, which also focuses attention on 'frameworks,' is not altogether clear. Polanyi's social-psychological and fiduciary views are strongly linked with ideas of biological-evolutionary epistemology that concern the survival value of ideas and commitments. Polanyi suggests that ideas compete in human culture and society and that idea frameworks are like organs of perception through which human beings attend to the world. Some of the themes that appear in early Polanyi writing are clearly topics that he further explores and develops in his middle period and late philosophical writing.

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Notes

1. Box 43, Folder 8, Michael Polanyi Papers, Department of Special Collections, Regenstein Library, University of Chicago Library. Citations of subsequent archival material will be in the text, using simply box and folder numbers and MPP. In this period, as one of our reviewers reminded us, it was fashionable among intellectuals in Austro-Hungary to write a book of aphorisms.

2. We are most grateful to Dr. Evelyn McBride and Mr. Paul Dijkzeul, a 2015 Fulbright Scholar residing in northwest Missouri, for helping us translate this 1926 text. Our several quotations (in this and subsequent paragraphs) are from this translation of the notebook entry (Box 43, Folder 8, MPP) and are not cited separately.

3. Haber was the Nobel prize winning physical chemist who headed the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Physical Chemistry and Electrochemistry (Scott and Moleski,

2005, 25-26, 67). See also Nye's discussion (2011, 51-57, 80-81) of Haber's importance in German science.

4. 'The Value of the Inexact,' first published in *The Philosophy of Science* (13: 233-234) was reprinted in TAD (18:3, 35-36) and is available at http://polanyisociety.org/Ltr-Vlu-Inexact-18-3.pdf. Quotations from 'The Value of the Inexact' in the discussion following are not cited separately but are from the reprinted TAD copy at his web address. Richard Gelwick discovered 'The Value of the Inexact' and showed it to Polanyi in 1962. Gelwick reports that Polanyi laughed since he recognized the continuity between this early letter and ideas developed in his 1962 Terry Lectures which later became *The Tacit Dimension* (1966).

5. Polanyi's brief 1936 reflection on the nature of chemistry and its relation to physics hints at philosophical ideas later developed as his peculiar hierarchical ontology and his corresponding way of understanding the spectrum of human inquiry running from physics to dramatic history. These ideas Polanyi begins to work out in his Gifford Lectures (1951-1952) but it is only with the publication of *Personal Knowledge* (1958), especially in Part IV, and *The Study of Man* (1959) that Polanyi makes his case carefully and lucidly. Polanyi cites his 1936 letter in his 1971 essay 'Genius in Science' (SEP, 278), noting that the value of the inexact extends much beyond chemistry and 'makes possible the science of biology.'

6. Scott and Moleski (2005, 109) translate parts of this Polanyi notebook entry in German on Benda's book and suggest the entry confirms Polanyi's commitment to modern civilization with its science and technology. We emphasize, however, that Benda's book likely confirmed Polanyi's sense of the importance of pure scientific research in the changing German university context. See the discussion in Nye (2011, 42-46).

7. This 1936 review, 'Truth and Propaganda,' along with other material written from 1935 to 1940 is included in Polanyi's 1940 collection *The Contempt of Freedom: The Russian Experiment and Thereafter.* Material in the collection is parenthetically cited hereafter in the 1975 Arno reprint as 1940/1975 plus the page number, although the year of original publication of particular material may be identified in the text.

8. See the 1964 reprint of *Science, Faith and Society* (1946/1964, 8-11), where Polanyi, in his new 1963 introduction, 'Background and Prospect,' gives an account of his turn to philosophy of science which begins with his conversation with Bukharin but culminates in his recognition by the early forties that the Western defence (i.e., the Western philosophical account of science) of the persecuted Soviet geneticist Vavilov was baseless. See also Nye's discussion in her 'Foreword' to the 2015 reprint of *Personal Knowledge* (xiv-xv).

9. Polanyi's formerly unpublished 1937 lecture 'Popular Education in Economics' was published in 2016 in *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Journal* (42:3: 18-24) and is cited as 1937/2016 with page numbers.

10. 'USSR Economics—Fundamental Data, System and Spirit' (*The Manchester School of Economic and Social Studies*, VI [Nov. 2, 1935]: 67-89 was republished in 1936 as a monograph, *USSR Economics*, by Manches-

ter University Press. With minor changes, this material was published a third time as 'Soviet Economy: Fact and Fiction' in Polanyi's 1940 collection of essays, *The Contempt of Freedom: The Russian Experiment and After* (1940/1975, 61-95). Quotations are from the 1940 publication.

11. In the following discussion, these archival papers from Box 25, Folder 11, MPP are referred to either by name or they are cited in parenthesis in the text using Polanyi's identifying Roman numerals for each respective paper, followed by page numbers in that paper. Since we often, on a particular topic, bring together Polanyi's comments in more than one of his four papers, we normally, for clarity, put the citation at the end of a sentence or group of sentences.

12. Some of Polanyi's comments linking ideas and survival echo notions developed in classic pragmatism (e.g., Peirce and James). They also seem akin to arguments found in Anglo-American epistemology over the last 75 years or so, as for example in the work of W. V. O. Quine, Donald Campbell, Karl Popper, Konrad Lorenz, David Hull, and Fred Dretske.

13. Years later Popper (1994, 8) would express a similar view. 'All observations are theory-impregnated. There is no pure, disinterested, theory-free observation. (To see this, we may try, using a little imagination, to compare human observation with that of an ant or a spider.)' Popper added, 'theories are like sense organs' and 'our sense organs are like theories… [in that] they *incorporate* adaptive theories (as has been shown in the case of rabbits and cats).'

14. In the same period, in his 1940 lecture 'Collectivist Planning,' incorporated in *The Contempt of Freedom* (1940, 42), Polanyi argues,

> The mutual consistence between discoveries made simultaneously or in close succession to one another requires no explanation to those who recognize the existence of Truth. A statement which is part of Truth will always be consistent with another part of Truth; and both parts together will reveal a further, more comprehensive aspect of Truth. This is just as necessary as that two pieces which fit into neighbouring gaps of an unfinished jigsaw puzzle must also fit to one another.

Later in the same essay, Polanyi notes 'Science has emerged from medieval scholasticism precisely by abandoning such comprehensive tasks as the search for the Philosopher's Stone and for the Elixir of Life, and by applying itself instead to specialized pieces of research, knowing that the parts of truth thus discovered must form a joint pattern in the end' (1940, 45). See Mullins (2003, 168-170) for further discussion of some early Polanyi comments on truth and ways these ideas are extended in the writing of the late forties.

15. Some of Polanyi's comments here are akin to suggestions made four years later in 'The Growth of Thought in Society' (1941, 42-46) about the role of the 'influentials' in the 'dynamic orders' (such as science) which constitute society.

WHY ETHICS IS A NORMATIVE SCIENCE: ON BRIGHTMAN'S MORAL LAWS

J. Edward Hackett

Abstract: By normative science, I mean that (i) ethics is like logic in the sense that it actively tries to arrive at knowledge of objective norms that apply to all people at all place and at all times and that moreover, (ii) ethicists have a particular expertise about the content of their discipline in the same way that the law professor or physicist claims in their own respective fields if ethics can be made scientific in the normative sense. In what follows, I explain Edgar Sheffield Brightman's (1884-1953) model of ethics described in his Moral Laws and evaluate his reasons for thinking that ethics is a normative science. Along this argumentative journey, I adopt Brightman's language as I walk with the reader in the text almost to appear as if I am endorsing the view of ethics as a normative science. In writing this way, I want to experiment with this thought as if I had adopted it.[1]

Keywords: Brightman, ethical personalism, personalistic idealism, normative science

1. Introduction: Implications of Ethics as a Normative Science

In this essay, I will explain what I call Brightman's *Argument from Science Conditions obtains*. In other words, I will explicate the central reasons for why Brightman considers ethics a normative science. I begin by presenting Brightman's *Argument from Science Conditions.* I will explain Brightman's three conditions for science below.

(1) If the three conditions of any science obtain, then x is a science.

Phenomenal-Limit Condition: Every science is limited by its field of study.
Methodological Limit Condition: Every science has its own methods of study.
Unity of Explanation Condition: Every science strives for explanatory unity of its observations to formulate laws.

(2) The three conditions of science obtain in ethics:
Ethics is limited by its own field of study in that it studies ideals and possibilities.
Ethics employs its own methods to study how values are given in experience.
Ethics systematizes what it studies to formulate the best moral laws of conduct.

(3) Therefore, ethics is a science.

(4) Either ethics is a *descriptive science* in which inquirers formulate explanations about what is the case through experimentation and discovery or ethics is a normative science in which inquirers formulate explanations about what *ought to be* the case.

(5) It's not the case that ethics is a descriptive science in which inquirers formulate explanations about what *is* the case.

(6) Therefore, ethics is a normative science in which inquirers formulate explanations about what ought to be the case.

Restatement of (6) using Brightman's own language: Therefore, *ethics is a normative science of principles or laws of the best types of human conduct.*[2]

In considering ethics a normative science, one might object to the constitutive conditions of science presented in premise (1).[3] In fact, Brightman's conception of science conditions is ambiguous with respect to exactly what might count for the methods employed in any science. With that said, many methods can count as scientific insofar as regularities and patterns allow moving from observations to generalization, criticism, and interpretation. This moving between regularities and patterns is only a problem if reality is not experienced-as-coherent with the chosen scientific methods employed. For Brightman, even as a proto-phenomenologist (as I think the case can be made), the content of reality is always being interpreted coherently since either reality is given to us because it is intelligible or consciousness constitutes the content coherently.[4] In the *Moral Laws* (1933)*,* Brightman suggests that the moral law system would still be true regardless if the reality of values were naturalistic or idealist.[5] In more contemporary meta-ethical language, ethical naturalism and non-naturalism would stand in for values being naturalistic or idealist. In other words, there would still be a systematicity of such moral laws regardless of what the underlying nature of the connected whole truly is. In what follows, I will explain why this is for Brightman and ask whether or not this argument is adequate to establish what a normative science can be.

2. Ethics and its Fundamental Concepts

Brightman defines ethics as '*the normative science of principles or laws of the best types of human conduct.*'[6] Throughout this essay, I will expound upon this definition. Since ethics is a study of human conduct, ethics is similar in scope to other social sciences. Both ethics and other social sciences are all rooted in human experience. However, the striking difference between social sciences and ethics is that ethics is a normative science, not a descriptive science. A descriptive science tries to formulate what is the case through systematic observation and experimentation. In the strictest sense, descriptive statements are different than normative statements. Norms are rules,

and in the case of Brightman's definition of ethics, one must take note of his notion of 'best types.' Ethics deals with not just a descriptive statement about what various populations believe to be valuable, but addresses directly what is valuable, the 'best types of conduct' are achievable even if this conduct is not yet manifest in the world—in other words, *what ought to be!* To put this difference more clearly, Brightman states: 'The so called descriptive sciences deal only with the actual and the necessary; ethics deals with the *ideal* and the *possible.*'[7]

I should also like to say that a science of the ideal and possible is already seen in logic and this analogy might render my claims regarding ethics clearer. Logic is the study and evaluation of arguments. In logic, we have discovered that deductively-valid argument forms will guarantee the truth of the conclusion. Validity expresses the logical truth that some argument forms are better than other forms. If we contrast invalid structures with valid ones, then these invalid forms allow that the premises be true and that the conclusion could be false. In essence, these are bad argument forms since they do not guarantee the truth of the conclusion like valid forms do when you have true premises. Human beings are free to argue poorly or effectively according to the standards suggested by logic just as much as human beings are free to act morally wrong or right according to the standards suggested by ethics. The normativity of both logic and values transcend history. Consider,

> Not only is validity of logical analysis and coherence Given, but so also is the realm of true value... Here, of course, there will be more difference of opinion, especially from naturalists, pragmatists, instrumentalists, and positivists; and at this point, no attempt will be made to argue the matter out. Suffice it to say that *if* truth is better than error, *if* science is better than ignorance, *if* respect for persons is better than violence; *if* love is better than hate; *if* beauty is better than chaos--then no will, no activity, no war, no experiment can reverse these judgments. However confused [humanity's] understanding and application of them, however different the tribal mores of the communists and the capitalists may be, no social or economic revolution and no anthropological deviates can affect the truth of the true values.[8]

From the passage above, the ideal and possible are real objects of inquiry, 'the realm of true value.' Despite one's philosophical proclivity or tradition, one will find that there is agreement that science, truth, respect, love, and beauty are better than ignorance, falsity, violence, hatred, and chaos. The same holds true about one's political persuasion. The truth of these ideals, the realm of true values, does not depend on the contingent facts of real life. The contingent facts of real life may call for the realization of some of these higher values just as much as an unjust world will call for that which is not yet.

In noting that ethics deals with the *ideal and possible* is to situate ethics in relationship to its fundamental concepts given in his definition. Brightman lists three fundamental concepts concerning: good (value), duty (ought), and principles (law). 'Ethics must reveal what value ought to be attained; it must explain the obligation to achieve the good.'[9] Values refer to concrete possibilities of action about *what we ought to do*. Duties refer to those specific obligations that we find are possible, and most importantly for the purposes of my analysis, the moral laws are required in order to be a science. 'The concept of law is required for any science.'[10] Without laws, which give and express the unity of related facts, we could only have a bunch of unrelated facts and statements. For Brightman (and me), a science must aspire to explanatory unity of either its actual or ideal facts. If it cannot exhibit unity, then it cannot be a descriptive or a normative science.

At this point, someone may ask what Brightman means by the 'best types of conduct?' Conduct is synonymous with morals according to Brightman. According to any ethicist, conduct does not mean an empirical account of what someone has done like a police officer taking a witness's statement of a crime or the anthropologist observing societal behaviour. Instead, conduct in this context refers to the freely chosen voluntary behaviour of a person—what we would call their will or their choosing. From Kant onward (and perhaps earlier), if ethical actions are not freely chosen, they have no moral value since they could not have happened otherwise. Therefore, a postulate of any ethical science depends on the ability to choose and will moral conduct freely. Alongside Kant, Brightman embraces 'ought implies can.' The best types of conduct do not refer 'to Utopian or to a purely theoretical ideal,' but only to the 'best types of willing (choosing).'[11] While a normative science, ethics is grounded in achievable willing.

For Brightman, there have been several influential historical theories in ethics (Epicureanism, Aristotelian, Kantian, and Christian Ethics), and to some degree, there's an element of truth in all of them (though his list omits utilitarianism without giving a reason why). What's really at issue is that 'there has been a clear-cut lack of progress and of scientific systematization in ethical thought.'[12] Indeed, the lack of theoretical progress is often evidence used against the possibility of objectivist ethics. Moreover, this claim is often repeated in the actual historical lives of every moral philosopher. Sometimes, moral disagreement is framed as an argument to establish that no unity is possible. Recall that any science for Brightman must be capable of 'systematization' and unity of those fundamental propositions that make up the science. Coherent unity is necessary for anything to be a science such that it can explain phenomena adequately. Hence, we can thus ask the question of

this essay: Is there a possible unified normative science about the best types of conduct?

If we answer the previous question negatively, then we concede that ethics is even possible, and yet that rejection seems false. For Brightman, the negative answer flies in the face of how we experience the world. Like a phenomenologist, he seeks out how moral experience functions. At first glance, appealing to human experience might seem like an embrace of subjectivism, and yet it's not. Brightman's appeal to experience will conform to later criteria for the requirements of a science (which I will explain in an upcoming section). At this point, I claim only that Brightman's methodology in the *Moral Laws* makes it possible to appeal to moral experience. Values are experienced. 'If I actually experience the value of at least some moments of life, I cannot logically deny all value to life, nor can I deny the possibility of some knowledge about value.'[13] In other words, the very irreducible content of experiencing values should be taken as evidence that it's inconceivable that values are so apparent that it's not just my experience of them that proves their reality, but the fact that we experience them like others.

To say that Brightman is appealing to experience to explain values doesn't mean that he is claiming knowledge of all values. That would be too ambitious and too philosophically irresponsible. In fact, ethicists might only be capable of knowing some of these moral principles better than others principles, but as Brightman would, and as I contend, values are a phenomenological reality, which is to say that evidence for the moral laws can be made intelligible through conscious experience.[14] As such, first-order phenomenological evidence (here not meant in the way that neither Nagel or other analytic philosophers employ the term 'phenomenological' to mean simply the subjective report of what-its-like-to-experience-x) indicates a commitment to a theory of *how experience works*, and for Brightman, ethics cannot be 'built solely out of 'ought' with no relation to what 'is' [such an account would have] no basis and no function.'[15] Experience, then, functions as the bridge between the descriptive and the normative.

Given what we can appeal to experience for objective ethics, sadly, ethics is in an unsatisfactory state. Just as in Brightman's time, there is no systematicity of ethics today and the very demand for unity and possibility of a normative science can find traction in today's world. Brightman's moral law system can be offered as a new possibility just as it was back in 1933.[16] There are plenty of discussions about applied ethics or courses in professional ethics internal to many majors, but not much in the way of what principles should be applied in these many discussions or professional codes. In some of these endeavours, prudence is mistaken for moral truth. At both Notre Dame College and Savannah State University, I have been involved in seeking and asking if philosophy faculty should teach business ethics either in business departments or if philosophy departments should teach the course for them. I get the same response *all the time.* The answer is always negative, and when I learn how it is they teach ethics, there is a constant refusal to see ethics as involving any expertise on the part of moral philosophers, or that ethics is capable of being a normative science. Instead, the discipline of business ethics never questions the very foundation on which the entire edifice of business rests. Values are an inconvenience to the attainment of profit, and ethics almost always means either public relations dilemma, human resources problems, or an uncritical identification of legal procedures and morality. How is this so? Oftentimes when non-philosophers teach ethics, the class looks at applying principles of a professional code to likely anticipated problems faced in a profession. In those discussions, there is no awareness about what moral principles should be applied (or even if those principles found in the professional code are enough). Ethics goes deeper and asks what moral principles should be applied in the first place or about the underlying reasons why these principles in the professional code are moral?

Within moral philosophy, the same lack of unity about ethics is present, though for completely different reasons. Contemporary moral theorists are often simply taking up the mantle of a historical thinker and/or approach and attempting to be logically consistent (e.g., Peter Singer as a utilitarian or Carol Hay as a Kantian) with that thinker or approach. In this way, ethicists are not striving for the unity that thinking about ethics as a normative science can provide. Instead, these ethicists present historical figures and approaches *as if* they satisfy the unity of a normative science. Now, presenting Kantian deontology or utilitarianism *as if* they are theoretically complete and autonomous answers to satisfying the demand of a normative science, these approaches are still closer to being a normative science than when non-philosophers present problems one will face in a future profession rather. The upshot is that even these ethical theories cultivate in students the vision of the good, duty, and law to see, appreciate, and understand the objective scope of ethics as a normative science.

3. Brightman's Criteria of Science

As I outlined in premise (1): If the three conditions (*Phenomenal-Limit Condition*, *Methodological Limit Condition*, and *Unity of Explanation Condition*) of science obtain, then *x* is a science, Brightman outlines three criteria for something's qualifying as a science in general. First, the *Phenomenal-Limit* condition spells out that every science is limited by its field of study. Second, the *Methodological-Limit Condition* indicates that each science uses its own methods of observation, and finally, the *Unity of Explanation Condition* spells out that every science aims at discov-

ering and formulating laws as limited by its phenomena and methods. Let me take them up in order.

There is a difference between science and philosophy. For Brightman and the phenomenologist, 'philosophy deals with experience as a whole, in its completeness, its unity, and its totality.'[17] Brightman never abandons this separation of philosophy from science. For instance, 'philosophers have been distinguished from works in the special sciences by their interest in the unity of experience.'[18] Accordingly, the philosopher must know all relevant information, facts and points of view whereas the scientist need not know the whole. According to Brightman, 'philosophy is an attempt to discover a coherent and unified definition of the real.'[19] Scientists must only deal with the part given the overwhelming complexity and division of labour with respect to their explanatory domain. For instance, the biologist is always limited to and restricted to life and its processes. The astronomer, if asked about Europa's oceans, must default to the microbiologist's expertise about the possible conditions of aquatic life and extrapolate from there to what we can know about Europa. Thus, each science is wholly interrelated in terms of seeking out the truth about its phenomenon, but largely operates in limits with regard to its own region of study. Accordingly, it follows that for Brightman, 'the sciences, in this sense, are all abstract, while philosophy is concrete, in that it tries to unite and relate together what the special sciences have ultimately separated.'[20] Philosophy is, for Brightman, a way to unify the various parts studied by the natural sciences.

Every science has its own methods of observation. The logician observes differently than the biologist. The logical observes abstract terms and relations whereas the biologist may, for example, collect water samples along the Lake Erie shoreline or Georgia coast. Each subject has its own methods of observation and these methods differ depending on the phenomena in question. However, what cannot be denied is that in every case, 'science builds on observation of some sort of experience.'[21] The meaning of observation is quite wide for Brightman. According to Brightman, 'all sciences are attempts to explain what is *given* in experience…nothing else than *ways* of dealing with experience.'[22] In other words, observation includes not only making sense of external phenomenon, but also the irreducible contents that are given to the subject of experience and how the subject deals with those contents in relationship to others and the inter-subjectivity of the irreducible content.

Third, every science not only builds from observation of some sort of experience, but also tends to greater unity from those observations. In Brightman's words, 'all sciences aim at laws or generalizations on the basis of observations made.'[23] The end of any science is, thus, the formulation of laws. While the laws of physics deal with real relations in space-time, geometry, by contrast, deals with ideal space, and sociology tends to formulate and examine/discover the laws and generalizations of human societies. According to Brightman, these three criteria qualify any inquiry as either a descriptive or normative science. 'If ethics is to be a science at all, it must conform to these conditions.'[24]

Let us move onto distinguishing between normative and descriptive science.

4. Normative Science vs. Descriptive Science

I should say a little more about what a normative science is. Recall that descriptive sciences try to observe and discern some state of the affairs in the world. Biology aims at describing the processes of life; physics describe the real-time relations of particles; chemistry describes the chemical compositions of matter. For Brightman, every descriptive science builds its knowledge on the physical realm of what is *actual and necessary*. These scientific observations are the mere description of given facts about a causally deterministic world—what Heidegger would call 'regional ontologies.' While ethics must indeed presuppose some descriptive knowledge, e.g. the surgeon must know what's wrong with the patient before she can decide if she *ought* to operate or do another less invasive procedure, ethics goes beyond describing what is. The question of the surgeon is about what she ought to do. Such knowledge is not based in discerning causal structures of nature alone. Instead, moral knowledge is teleological; ethics asks, 'what purposes the facts serve and whether it be a worthy purpose or not.'[25]

Concerned with purpose, moral knowledge is about the purposes behind what facts serve. Let me give you an example. The surgeon certainly knows the science of anatomy and physiology. She knows how body parts function, but nothing in this knowledge tells the doctor that health is better than disease. Moreover, it's possible to conflate the fact that a descriptive science may study values with normativity itself. We might study why some surgeons value X over Y in their human experiences, yet that study is not itself an instance of a normative science. Normative science discriminates among our experiences and selects the best; explaining why a surgeon in all her years of experience selects to value X over Y (for instance, health is preferred over disease as the better state of affairs). In applying the definition of a normative science to ethics, we can see that 'the only ethics worth having would be one that would enable us to distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad, value and disvalue. To be more precise, it would give us principles by which we might confront the many conflicting value-claims of our daily experience.'[26] For Brightman, these moral principles would apply 'in all times and places.'[27]

Before ending this section, I want to make one final comment. Since ethics is '*the normative science of principles or laws of the best types of human conduct,*'

ethics must be 'progressive' like any other science. Progress does not mean what it usually means in contemporary politics. Instead, science is practically geared towards future investigation. In this way, ethics is like any other science; it has built into its practice the expectation of future investigation. New problems will inevitably arise, and like scientists, ethicists must be intellectually humble about the future possibility of increasing complexity in moral situations, especially given that some fields of applied ethics tend to increase in controversy the more our technological capacities introduce unexpected changes and innovations (e.g., bioethics and engineering ethics).

5. The Scope of Moral Principles

According to Brightman, the sought after moral principles are moral laws, and the moral laws are also the namesake of his magnum opus's title, *The Moral Laws* (1933). '[A] moral law is a universal principle to which the will ought to conform in its choices.'[28] The universality of a moral law encompasses the function of morality for Brightman. For something to qualify as moral, the chosen action must be an act freely chosen by the will. The choice of how to act is not like adhering to a social code or a societal convention. We may pretend that our willing is a choice of convention like choosing to drive on the right-side of the road in North America whereas I drive on the left-side of the road if I were to rent a car in the United Kingdom. Instead, I am concerned to not endanger others, and I obey what the rules prescribe for this reason. If the rules of driving endangered pedestrians mercilessly, then I should not obey those laws. Convention and codes can detract from morality as much as help us realize what ought to be, and this ultimately proves that religious and civil law ultimately depend on the moral law. 'If we did not know something about the good, there would be no criterion for just legislation and no basis for acknowledging a good God.'[29]

There are, of course, other types of sustained disagreements between various other domains of the law. Logical law cannot be judged morally, and, in fact, the moral law can only be said to be illogical as logic is not subjected to morality. Our moral laws, however, are subject to logical laws. The natural law and the moral law cannot conflict since the natural law is, after all, in a different sphere of descriptive sciences altogether from the normative sciences. Moral laws can conflict with religious laws, and often religious laws sometimes stand in need of revision. Jesus of Nazareth and Siddhartha Gautama are two religious geniuses that act as reformers of the religious law through the use of the moral law.

Evidence for moral laws, then, like any other science must be sought in moral experience. For Brightman, 'moral experience occurs wherever there is a feeling of obligation or a choice between what is felt to be better and what is felt to be worse.'[30] Moreover, this immediacy of feeling is not just a subjective report of what people believe. This is the heart of Brightman's ethical project: 'the systematization of moral experience [such] that moral laws can be discovered.'[31] It's at this point that we could call Brightman's position a rational empiricism, but perhaps it might be better to call it a moral phenomenology. 'Embedded in all human consciousness, as far as our knowledge goes, there have been universal principles and particular facts.'[32] Like Max Scheler, Brightman is building up ethics as a normative science based on discovering what the moral laws will be within moral experience.[33] Like the phenomenologist, Brightman is assuming the coherent intelligibility of experience itself. As he continues throughout *The Moral Laws,* Brightman appeals to this conception of moral experience as primary evidence for each moral law discovered. Like a geometric system, every *discovered* moral law reflects the growing complexity of the other moral laws. Each moral law reinforces the truth of other moral laws in his ethical system. As one moral law can seriously be abused, the fact that each moral law limits the others in terms of abusing them.

Brightman offers three categories of the moral law. First, there are the Formal Laws, and the various laws in this first set are the Logical Law and the Law of Autonomy. Next, there are the Axiological Laws, and in this second set, there exist the Axiological Law, the Law of Consequences, the Law of the Best Possible, and the Law of Specification. Finally, there are the Personalistic Laws. These include the Law of Individualism, the Law of Altruism, and the Law of the Ideal of Personality. The formal laws deal with the structure of the will. The axiological laws deal with what types of values we should choose, and the personalistic laws deal solely with the person and the person's relation to oneself, others, and the community.

Brightman's moral law system is different from prescriptive theories of Kantian ethics and utilitarianism. Though certainly not as common as the more traditional options between deontological systems and consequential systems, what it lacks in commonality it makes up for in creativity. Brightman offers a type of systematicity in ethics since philosophers have failed to make ethics scientific. In his own words, 'In a system of laws, every law is limited by the other laws. This we have found throughout our investigation of ethical science.'[34] A person's actions must conform to the various moral laws. In doing so, the person demonstrates and understands the interrelationship between all the moral laws, but the moral law does not prescribe stringently specific ways that we ought to act. Instead, for Brightman, *the moral laws are regulative ideals that give us the boundaries of what moral living requires.* Put another way, Brightman's ethics is prescriptive but in a manner less robust than other moral theories such as act utilitarianism and Kantian deontology. Brightman asks us to choose actions that attempt to cohere with the various moral laws, but Brightman is philosophically modest in

thinking that he would have the final say about how each moral law should be applied in the possibilities open to us. By analogy, logic gives us the various logical laws that should regulate our thinking, and the logical law should be applied to the possibilities before us since it gives us boundaries we should not cross given that it suggests the best types of reasoning just like ethics suggests the best types of conduct.

Let's focus on Brightman's last three Personalistic Laws. Since I do not have space to undertake an examination of the entire moral law system, I will explore the last three moral laws, and show how they presuppose and simultaneously build off each other. I call your attention to these moral laws since, as I glossed Brightman before, each law is a principle that explains how actions should conform to these ideal standards. Unlike utilitarianism that prescribes us moral guidance about what we ought to do precisely, Brightman's moral law system demands that persons ought to judge their actions mesh with his proposed moral laws. There's less exacting precision in Brightman's ethics than act utilitarianism. Moral truth is studied in relation to other living truths demanded by the context one is facing. In this way, the ethical 'truths function in living relation to other truths are understood and proved.'[35] According, all ethical truths exhibit unity and a relationship to other discourses. In this way, Brightman offers us a regulative system without asking us precisely what we ought to do in a particular circumstance. Instead, Brightman provides the form that moral living requires since it is 'a matter of individual creative imagination and aesthetic taste.'[36]

First, consider the Law of Individualism: *Each person ought to realize in his own experience the maximum value of which he is capable in harmony with the moral law*.[37] Living a moral life requires us to start with ourselves, but also preserve a vision of the interdependent social relations that constitute our own individuality. In this way, the moral law starts with ourselves is not to privilege a form of individual atomism. Instead, we realize that the individual has social relations that must be taken into consideration. This law meshes with the next one. Consider the Law of Altruism: *Each Person ought to respect all other persons as ends in themselves, and as far as possible, to co-operate with others in the production and enjoyment of shared values*.[38] This recognition is an invitation to co-operate with others in the production and enjoyment of shared values, but also presupposes that it is the individual person realizing the 'maximum of which he/she is capable in harmony with the moral law.' These two laws are presupposed in the Law of the Ideal Personality: *All persons ought to judge and guide all of their acts by their ideal conception (in harmony with the other laws) of what the whole personality ought to become both individually and socially*.[39]

This final law brings Brightman's whole system together. It states that any action a person imagines taking must be consistent with the moral laws, and if they have an ideal possibility consistent with the other laws, then that action should be the basis for creating and achieving a person's own ideal. We are responsible for our own moral becoming, and the personal experience of values calls for us to unify them to construct a social and cultural ideal for oneself and others. The basis for this call to be consistent reflects the underlying unity of our own self and the coherent intelligibility of the ideals taken together. Since the self is an experienced unity, we find that being led by 'a conception of life purpose' appeals and resonates with the cultural allure of finding purpose in one's life. There is an ideal and personality for many vocations— i.e., the loyal and courageous soldier, the compassionate and knowledgeable doctor charged with healing us, or maybe more poignantly, the steadfast dedication of the Saint to willingly sacrifice himself or herself for others.[40]

6. Moral Experience and the Adoption of Phenomenological Language

Brightman adopts phenomenological language to refer to the evidence of experience. For him, 'all sciences deal with objects either given in or implied by experience.'[41] It's here that the term *givenness* invokes intuitions that are given to the experiencer, or, to put it a little more differently, that intuitions can imply realities not present in experience. We may contemplate some moral situation and feel the givenness of values even though no such actual moral situation confronts us. Ever more like the phenomenologist, Brightman will narrow the scope of what he means by the term 'experience' For Brightman, experience means explicitly,

> …the whole field of consciousness, every process or state of awareness within it; not sensation alone, nor scientifically interpreted experience alone. It is not taken in contrast with reason or speculation, but, rather, in contrast with the absence of experience, or unconsciousness. It is *Erlebnis*, not the Kantian *Erfahrung* alone. Experience is always complex, ongoing conscious activity; thought and will belong to it as truly as do sensations and memory images…[E]xperience contains both what have been called empirical and what have been called transcendental (rational) factors.[42]

Without *experience*, we cannot have any ethical knowledge. Experience furnishes the very conditions that we encounter and relate to all the irreducible contents. These irreducible contents enter the field of consciousness and they are in part consciousness's access to those objects of experience that underlie its science—even ideal sciences of oughts. Just like Husserl, Brightman refers to the German *Erlebnis* to explain what he means by experience. *Erlebnis* is most often translated into English as 'lived-experience.' For Brightman, these irreducible contents can refer to acts

of voluntary choice, consciousness of value, consciousness of obligation and the moral law itself. All of these components of subjective and intersubjective awareness make up what Brightman means by 'experience.' It would not be wrong, I imagine, to think that Brightman's term 'experience' should be supplemented with the phenomenological elements of intentionality and method, if not identified with them. In fact, he comes close to identifying his method with phenomenology. Ten years after the *Moral Laws* was published Brightman wrote: 'The method pursued will be broadly empirical—a method closer to that of phenomenology than to traditional sensationalistic empiricism or to naturalistic empiricism of the instrumentalists.'[43]

Thus far, Brightman's ethics looks like a form of intuitionism as if 'the ethical scientist has only to 'read off' these intuitions to arrive at a knowledge of right and wrong' from a pre-existing reality.[44] However, Brightman thinks that intuitionism 'overlooks the fact that thinking is one of the most significant aspects of experience and that no intuition, whether moral or mathematical or sensory, can be trusted as leading to the truth of about conduct or fact.'[45] For Brightman, thinking refines intuitions in much the same way that phenomenological method claims to refine our contact with the world (and therefore experience) in the right type of way rather than falling to the dangers of the natural attitude becoming an uncritical assumption about the contents of experience. Intuitionism, like the danger of phenomenology, is when intuitionists (or phenomenologists) privilege the social authority of our present age in the very intuitions that are claimed to be self-evident. It's for this reason that the goal of ethics *qua* normative science is to give philosophical reasons why such intuitions should be elevated from merely accepting what we believe to be self-evident.[46] 'Moral laws, then, cannot be based on intuition, authority or desire alone.'[47] They must be seen as cohering in experience.

An appeal to reason must not also depart from experience. Reason cannot cut any ice if it is not grounded in the actual existence of reasonable persons, yet we should not be deceived by the same dangers of intuitionism either. A rationalist can abuse reason, call her propositions self-evident, and never look back. It's at this point that Brightman suggests his method for thinking that the moral laws are derived from total moral experience. Let me outline the claim in more detail. Brightman says,

> The first step, as in every science, is *observation*; in this case the experiences of value, obligation, and law as voluntarily chosen or controlled, and of experiences related to them. The next step is *generalization*, the formulation of such general likenesses or tendencies as they appear. But the generalizations of moral experience are certain to contain contradictions…the next step is *criticism*, with a view to eliminating these contradictions…there is a

final stage, which may be called *interpretation*; this consists of two phases, hypothesis and systematization…the hypothesis is tested by a twofold systematization; the practical system of living and the theoretical system of our most general and best established hypotheses, which we call laws.[48]

Brightman thinks every science tends to unity, but ethics must possess enough in common with the general category of science to satisfy calling it a normative science. In the above passage, the first step is observation, that is, the very datum of experience as it is given in the field of consciousness. Brightman draws upon reference to phenomenology to describe the first step of value-theory. 'The first step in value-theory is empirical, phenomenological observation of our own value-claims and of reports about the value-claims of others.'[49] Next, we attend to that datum of experience through generalization. We look for patterns, regularities, and likenesses in those observations—a way to unify the initial datum given in observation. After we generalize, we must criticize the datum and provide some logical consistency to the disparate collection of generalizations we have made about those patterns, regularities, and likenesses in the initial datum. Then, we interpret those generalizations. We must test the generalizations and infer as to which principles can be systematized to the other principles in a system—this is the work of ethical theory according to Brightman!

Ethics exhibits a unity about goods, values, and duties. If it didn't attempt to capture a 'rational account of moral experience,' then it would only consist of 'isolated propositions' rather than a 'connected whole.'[50] Put more practically for the ethical scientist, goodness (like any moral concept) is never understood in an isolated action. Instead, the whole unity of the person emerges in life *as a connected whole*. The good is not an aggregate as Aristotle defined it, nor is it an isolated proposition about a particular situation abstracted from the whole to which the action is connected. Every moral situation presupposes the very unity and analysis of those moral concepts (goods, values, and duties) as they emerge in an entire system, and it's for this reason that moral laws can be derived from experience. Capturing this unity is the goal of ethics *as a normative science.* What's more, Brightman engages in systematic descriptions of moral experience and derives every moral law in his system (see the attached Addendum to this essay) for every law. This paper has tried to explore why it is that he can derive moral laws from moral experience; Brightman can derive those moral laws from moral experience precisely because normative sciences are genuine endeavours.

7. Returning to the Argument from Science Conditions

We can still ask about those science conditions (Phenomenal-Limit Condition, Methodological Limit

Condition, and Unity of Explanation Condition): Is it truly the case that ethics studies its own phenomena as a normative science? The phenomenological evidence about moral experience seems plausible enough. Persons try to systematize their thoughts regarding ideals and possibilities apart from what is actual and necessary, yet this systematisation also pushes the argument back on its heels to premise (4). To remind the reader, (4) reads as 'Either ethics is a descriptive science in which inquirers formulate explanations what is the case through experimentation and discovery or a normative science in which inquirers formulate explanations about what ought to be the case.' This premise is where the real crux of the issue of Brightman's claim of ethics constituting a normative science fails or succeeds.

Persons experience a difference between *ought* and *is*. However, the skepticism rears its head when we ask: When we consider (4), we must ask whether or not there has been a collapse of facts and values. While the literature on the relationship to fact and values is extensively large, no matter the underlying nature of the connecting whole, the moral law seems true. Phenomenologically, the systematicity of the moral laws appears as such by the fact of its alleged coherence. Put another way, the oughts are *given* to us by the intentional relationship of the experient to the various givennesses we spelled out earlier: to acts of voluntary choice, consciousness of value, consciousness of obligation and the moral law itself. In their sheer givenness, persons find coherence of those ideals, and this systematicity – discovered in experience – points to the possibilities of a normative science in which the moral laws are discovered in their self-evident coherence.

Some questions arise in light of this alleged coherence. What happens when we abandon this belief in the coherent givenness between ought and is? Does it make a pragmatic difference? It does. For Brightman, there's an element not just of phenomenology in terms of method, but a spirit of pragmatic inquiry.[51] He accepts the descriptive and normative distinction. In accepting this distinction, morality is regarded exactly like logic. Both logic and morality are ideals that are largely (but not entirely) about content of not-yet possibilities. Moreover, the assumption of coherence generates the possibility of unity in the science conditions of premise (1) in which a normative science of not-yet possibilities can be expressed in a unified manner.

Because Brightman suggests that it doesn't matter what underlying reality values possess, the fact is one could invoke any possible solution for why there is an intelligibility unity in experience (e.g., a Jamesian neutral monism). Neutral monism is the view that there is one type of primal nonreductive stuff of experience, and also that there is no difference between how this primal nonreductive stuff is regarded as either thought or object, mental or physi-

cal. Neutral monism is, however, one possibility of something that provides this underlying coherence and unity. Of course, I admit this is only one speculation.

What is at least clear on a speculative level for the distinction to hold between Brightman's account of descriptive and normative sciences in (4) is that there is an experience of an immediate datum. This immediate datum is a pure intuitive givenness to which Brightman also thinks reason can evaluate and reflect upon whereas other approaches in phenomenology do not reflect upon the essences discerned through phenomenological description. For example, Scheler's phenomenological facts are given immediately and fully. In Scheler's phenomenological attitude, the entire person can experience immediate datum and be existentially invested as that content of intentional feeling and value-qualities fills out the experience of the whole person. These phenomenological facts reveal what's already there (the nonreductive content of ideal possibilities), the *essence* which all particulars and universals must assume. For Brightman, reason tests these given intuitions of immediate datum whereas for Scheler intuitions are more fundamental in revealing the underlying layers of discursive thinking. Discursive thinking finds these intuitions coherent, the nonreductive content expresses a living reality in relation to other ideal facts.

For Brightman, the pragmatic difference between *ought* and *is* has a bearing in experience and helps establishing the truth of (2): The three conditions of science obtain in ethics: (i) Ethics is limited by its own field of study in that it studies ideals and possibilities, (ii) Ethics employs its own methods to study how values are given in experience; and (iii) Ethics systematizes what it studies to formulate the best moral laws of conduct. Recall the phrases earlier that divide descriptive from the normative: normative sciences describe the 'ideal and possible' whereas descriptive sciences describe the 'actual and necessary.' When I consider what is 'ideal and possible,' I do not relate to the 'ideal and possible' *in the same way* as what is 'actual and necessary.' The 'actual and necessary' appears determinate to the subject in in the causal order of objects in the horizon of personal experience. In other words, our experience gives us *prima facie* evidence that there is a difference between the descriptive and normative. When asked if my wife Ashley and I ought to go to a movie on Saturday or Sunday, the physical fact of a cinema's existence and its location in Cleveland never enters into our deliberation at first. Instead, our deliberation is about what is only 'ideal and possible.' What is 'actual and necessary' limits what might be possible. If we are on the West side of Cleveland, then we will go to the AMC in Brooklyn, Ohio. If we are on the East side, then we must travel to Richmond Heights. The physical fact of distance limits which theatre we may pick amongst other factors. Persons, therefore, are beings that can apprehend the ideal and the possible such that they

seek to bring possibility into concretion with what is actual and necessary.

Now, this pragmatic spirit might not sate others philosophically, and this essay leaves many themes unanswered. How does Brightman's personalistic idealism undergird the distinction between the descriptive and the normative? How does this idealism operate in his system of moral laws? Indeed, Brightman is a Christian philosopher and God can be invoked as a solution to many problems. Yet, if the moral laws are derived from moral experience independently of whatever metaphysical view of the whole is true, then Brightman's system of moral law will be true independent of a different conception of theism or the Divine than Christian philosophy allows. Indeed, the Divine may even be closer to a process conception like Taoism, and while this claim may appear out of nowhere, I will be taking this claim up in a different essay.

Despite the lack of metaphysical grounding (or whether or not phenomenological grounding is enough) to establish a normative science, these questions are not answered directly by the *Moral Laws* though there are gestures made to these very questions within it. Clearly, an *ethics as a normative science* is only possible if there is a continuity and unity of the irreducible contents of the ideal and possible, and it's because of the manner in which we experience these irreducible contents that a normative science is possible. Put another way, the implication, I think, is that a moral phenomenology must express this unity and without the Divine as the source of that unified moral phenomenology, the case for a normative science cannot be made as strongly as Brightman insists. What is left unanswered for me is if some supradivine reality must be a personal or cosmic mind to establish the necessity of continuity and unity of irreducible contents from which the moral laws are derived in Brightman's moral law system?

8. Addendum: Brightman's System of Moral Laws

Since this article has dealt with the metaphysical underpinnings of value and whether or not its ideal contents can be understood as a unified normative science, I want to enumerate Brightman's various moral laws:

A. The Formal Laws 'have to do with the will alone, and state principles to which a reasonable will must conform irrespective of the ends (values to which it is trying to realize).'[52]

1. The Logical Law: *All persons ought to will logically; i.e., each person ought to will to be free from self-contradiction and to be consistent in his/her intentions.*[53]
2. The Law of Autonomy: *All persons ought to recognize themselves as obligated to choose in accordance with the ideals which they acknowledge; self-imposed ideals are imperative.*[54]

B. The Axiological Laws 'show the principles which the values that a good will is seeking to embody.'[55]

3. The Axiological Law: *All persons ought to choose values which are self-consistent, harmonious, and coherent, not values which are contradictory or incoherent with another.*[56]
4. The Law of Consequences: *All persons ought to consider, on the whole, approve the foreseeable consequences of each of their choices.*[57]
5. The Law of the Best Possible: *All persons ought to will the best possible values in every situation; hence, if possible, to improve every situation.*[58]
6. The Law of Specification: *All persons ought, in any given situation, to develop the value or values specifically relevant to that situation.*[59]
7. The Law of the Most Inclusive End: *All persons ought to choose a coherent life in which the widest possible range of value is realised.*[60]
8. The Law of Ideal Control: *All persons ought to control their empirical values by ideal values.*[61]

C. The Personalistic Laws 'show values is always an experience of persons.'[62]

9. The Law of Individualism: *Each person ought to realize in his/her experience the maximum value of which he/she is capable of in harmony with the moral law.*[63]
10. The Law of Altruism: *Each person ought to respect all other persons as ends in themselves, and, as far as possible, to co-operate with others in the production and enjoyment of shared values.*[64]
11. The Law of the Ideal of Personality: *All persons ought to judge and guide all of their acts by their ideal conception (in harmony with other Laws) of what the whole personality ought to become both individually and socially.*[65]

The Formal Laws are the principle form of subjective ethics. By subjective ethics, the faculty of the will must will itself consistently and freely choose what it seeks to realize.

Axiological Laws are the principles of content of objective ethics. In other words, these principles govern how persons ought to deliberate about which values to realize.

Personalistic Laws are the synthesis of subjective form of the will and objective content of ethics that persons ought to realize in relation to other persons.[66]

Brightman is thought to assume individualism without community, and Walter Muelder and L. Harold DeWolf added Laws of Ideal Community: the Law of Cooperation, Law of Social Devotion, and the Law of Ideal of Community. Paul Deats added the Laws of Praxis: the laws of conflict and reconciliation and law of fallibility and corrigibility.[67]

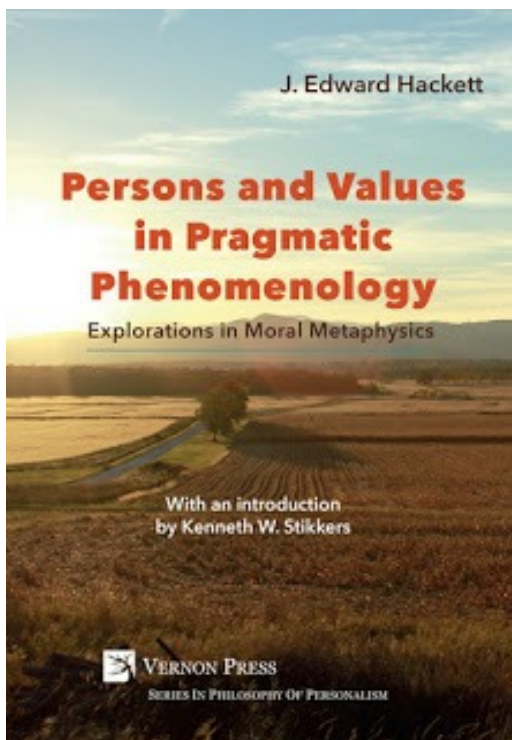*Savannah State University*
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Notes

1. A shortened version of this paper was given at Notre Dame College's Presidential Lecture in Spring 2017. I want to thank Ken Palko and Louise Prochaska for comments.

2. Edgar Sheffield Brightman, *Moral Laws* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1933),13.

3. Brightman will keep the term 'normative science' throughout his life. For instance, in 1940 – seven years after the *Moral Laws* are published, he will describe normative science in his *A Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1940). What I find interesting is that he includes more than simply ethics and logic, but also aesthetics and philosophy of religion (p. 20).

4. Edgar Sheffield Brightman, *Person and Reality* (New York: Ronald Press, 1958), p. 37. In Chapter 3 'Present and Absent,' Brightman tries to capture the continuity of personal experience, which informs his explication of method. For him this situated experience is an experienced interrelation, and in theorizing what he calls the 'shining present,' which is the same term he refers to in *A Philosophy of Religion* in a variety of several phrases: 'situation-experience,' 'situation-believed-in,' and 'datum self.' The datum self is important because it's the immediacy of feeling and non-reductive content that would inform both the Jamesian radical empiricist and the phenomenologist both. I may address how these themes fit together both for Brightman and myself in a later work.

5. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 286.

6. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* 13.

7. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 13 (italics mine)

8. Brightman, *Person and Reality*, p. 60.

9. Brightman, *Moral Laws*, p. 14.

10. Brightman, *Moral Laws*, p. 14.

11. Brightman, *Moral Laws*, p. 15.

12. Brightman, *Moral Laws*, p. 21.

13. Brightman, *Moral Laws*, p. 22.

14. Throughout this essay, the reader will note that I employ the term 'phenomenological' and while it's unclear in what sense I mean the term (as this essay is opening up that question for me), I am tending to think of phenomenology here as a cross between Husserl and Scheler—something tending toward a transcendental phenomenology. As I am also well aware, Brightman made gestures to phenomenology in his posthumously published *Person and Reality* in which he claims that phenomenology needs to clarify 'the shining present' [such work] 'needs to be done' (p. 45). If anything, then (perhaps) Brightman's work may be seen as its own form of contribution to phenomenology, but only after sustained attention to Bertocci's vision of the posthumous work of *Person and Reality* can be discerned. At this stage in my expertise, I can only provincially say that Brightman is more a synthesis of a pragmatic phenomenology than tending to Husserl.

15. Brightman, *Person and Reality*, p. 286

16. Brightman, *Moral Laws*, p. 91.

17. Brightman, *Moral Laws*, p. 24

18. Brightman, A Philosophy of Religion, p. 20.

19. Brightman, A Philosophy of Religion, p. 21.

20. Brightman, *Moral Laws*, p. 25.

21. Brightman, *Moral Laws*, p. 26.

22. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 55 (italics mine). It's at this point in the text that Brightman offers both the language of givenness and dealing with experience sounding like both a phenomenologist and a pragmatist.

23. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 26.

24. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 26.

25. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 27.

26. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 29.

27. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 30.

28. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 45.

29. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 51.

30. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 53

31. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 53

32. Brightman, *Moral Laws*, p. 81.

33. While I do not have the time to devote a comparison between Scheler and Brightman, Brightman distinguishes his approach from Scheler's methodology. For Brightman, Scheler's mistake is in an over reliance on intuition. 'Appeal to intuition, even when made by Max Scheler really reduces to appeal to the deep-rooted present convictions of the individual and society' (*Moral Laws,* p. 83). A Schelerian might raise the objection to Brightman that his appeal to givenness and moral experience requires a more coherent affective dimension that one might find in Scheler's affective intentionality.

34. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 220.

35. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 87.

36. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 250.

37. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 204.

38. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 223.

39. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 242.

40. It's important to note that Brightman's Law of Altruism forbids suicide, but not being a martyr.

41. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 55.

42. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 56.

43. Edgar Sheffield Brightman, 'Values, Ideals, Norms, and Existence' in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* vol. 4 no. 2 (December 1943): 219-224. Brightman, 'Values, Ideals, Norms, and Existence,' p. 219 cited here.

44. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 82.

45. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 83.

46. I will be exploring a possible synthesis with Brightman and Scheler at a later date. If one wants a sense to how ethical intuitionism might mesh with Scheler, see my 'Ross and Scheler on the Givenness and Commensurability of Values' in *Phenomenology for the Twenty-First Century,* Ed. J. Aaron Simmons and J. Edward Hackett (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

47. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 84.

48. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 86. Italics mine.

49. Brightman, 'Values, Ideals, Norms, and Existence,' p. 221.

50. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 86.

51. The only lengthy essay that bridges the pragmatic and phenomenological themes in Brightman is Seth Vannatta's 'Radical Empiricism and Husserlian Metaphysics' in *The Pluralist* vol. 2 no. 3 (Fall 2007): pp. 17-36.

52. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 90.

53. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 98.

54. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 106.

55. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 90.

56. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 125.

57. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 142.

58. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 156.

59. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 171.

60. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 183.

61. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 194.

62. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 90.

63. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 204.

64. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 223.

65. Brightman, *Moral Laws,* p. 242.

66. In these laws, there are no principles governing community, and this theoretical neglect requires supplement. For me, our shared vulnerability would be put front and centre as the central feature of moral life and communal living.

67. Rufus Burrows, Jr. God and Human Dignity: the Personalism, Theology and the Ethics of Martin Luther King, Jr. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2006), p. 198.

IN DEFENCE OF BASIC FACTS:
NEUROBIOLOGY AND THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF INTENDING

Simon Smith

Abstract: This article addresses a fundamental issue in both philosophy of mind and social ontology. It concerns John R. Searle's claim that the facts underlying human intentionality are neurobiological. Combining materialist reduction with a metaphysical isolationism that locates intentions inside the individual's head proves as disastrous to the analysis of a social or personal reality as it does to conceptions of human consciousness. Intentions, it is argued, occur, not inside agents, but in the transactions between agents them. Ignoring the fundamentally social structure of intentions disconnects agents from the co-operative activity that constitutes a social world, thereby eliminating the very thing Searle sought to explain.

Keywords: Action, Brain Processes, Farrer, Intentions, Intentionality, Neurobiology, Sandwiches, Searle

1. Introduction

The neurosciences play a significant role in many, if not all, accounts of consciousness and intentionality these days. This puts the neurosciences dead centre of an important philosophical programme: viz. social ontology. Social ontology itself is important because the world in which we live is, as most personalist thinkers would attest, not merely physical. It is, as John R. Searle argues in *Making the Social World* (2010),[1] constituted by social institutions. Moreover, Searle suggests that neurosciences are significant because the 'essence and ontology' of those social institutions lies in human co-operative behaviour (ix). According to Searle, at the root of human co-operative behaviour is collective intentionality: 'we-intentionality.' 'We-intentionality' is, in turn, underpinned by individual or 'I-intentionality' (47). Being what Searle calls 'intentionality-relative,' then, institutional reality is ultimately dependent upon neurobiological facts (17).

This paper challenges this claim for neurobiological dependence, both in its primary assumptions and its specific application to social ontology. Searle's assertion that 'all human intentionality exists only in individual human brains' (44) is, I suggest, mistaken.[2] Undeniably, brains have a part to play, but intentions do not exist in them. They exist, or rather *occur* in the patterns of activity which agents intend. Considering this, it seems that there are two main problems with Searle's analysis in *Making the Social World*. Firstly, locating intentionality in neural operations risks a physical reduction that makes a nonsense of his entire programme. Secondly, and perhaps more seriously, it underpins a philosophically problematic individualism that tends to isolate intending agents from one another, so misconstrues intentionality. In contrast, I suggest that intentions do not originate in 'the heads of individuals', as Searle claims (55), but in the transactions between individuals and their environment. Intentions are primarily, that is, essentially *inter*active. Pressing the point, intentional activity is *learned* from other agents and conducted in conjunction with them; agents both physical and, more importantly, personal.

Failing to recognise the primitively social or personal nature of intentionality is a serious flaw in Searle's analysis of 'I-' and 'we-intentionality'. This is unfortunate since his account of the relation between these two forms of intentionality is 'the essential prerequisite for understanding social ontology' (26). Crucially, it seems that Searle may simply lack the tools to reconnect individual intentions with the co-operative behaviour characterised by genuinely shared intentions. If he cannot reconnect individual intentions with co-operative behaviour, then the whole notion of social institutions could be fatally undermined.

Following Searle's example, this discussion will draw on the likes of J. L. Austin and P. F. Strawson. It will, in addition, provide an opportunity to bring one or two names into the current debate that are, perhaps, less well-known than they might be. In particular, I suggest that personalist thinkers such as Austin Farrer and Charles Conti have something vital to offer social ontology that cannot readily be found elsewhere in the philosophical marketplace. Like Austin and Strawson, they too remind us that crucial questions about the physical grounds of intentionality are far from settled, despite what recent discussions of the topic would have us believe. More importantly, however, Farrer and Conti's conception of persons, of the self, as a fundamentally social reality has wide-reaching moral, political, and metaphysical implications. It is, therefore, an essential component of any attempt to understand the world in which human beings actually live.

2. Equivocations and Experiments

As noted, Searle believes that 'consciousness and intentionality are caused by and realised in neurobiology' (25). His seemingly uncritical acceptance of neurobiological evidence is, perhaps, a common error. This is not to deny either the fundamental relation between consciousness and the physical apparatus in which it is expressed or the importance of neurobiology in exploring that relation. Philosophy must, after all, be scientifically enlightened if it is to make any progress. Accept the neurobiological account – that mind, and in this case, specifically, intentionality is to be found in the brain – without question, however, and we risk overlooking an important equivocation. When

talking about intentional consciousness, the philosopher and the neurobiologist are not obviously talking about the same thing. According to Searle, when philosophy speaks of intentionality, it speaks of 'that capacity of mind by which it is directed at, or about, objects and states of affairs in the world' (25), a capacity which manifests itself in and as a mode of activity. In contrast, as Farrer observes, neurobiology concerns itself with 'that part of the nervous system, upon the activation of which the occurrence of acts of consciousness is found to be (as it were causally) dependent' (1960: 24). On the one hand, then, we have the springs of personal action wherein the 'doingness' of what we do, as opposed to causal occurrence, can be found. On the other, we have just that causal occurrence. Such different objects of study surely require different methods of identification and explanation.

Those methods, the philosophical and the neurobiological, will no doubt have features in common. Observation alone, for example, will be of limited use to either. Philosophers might spend all day 'people-watching' without finding certain evidence of consciousness, as Descartes knew all too well. Likewise, observing neurological processes while their owner performs some specified task will certainly supply Hume's constant conjunction, but no reasonable grounds for asserting either logical or semantic connection will be discovered. The most sophisticated MRI scanners can only focus our attention, marking the spot for further investigation with a more or less precisely placed 'X'; they cannot reveal treasure supposedly buried there.

Observation and causal inference may not help us to discover what philosophers once called 'the seat of consciousness,' but controlled interference will. That is the neurobiologist's route. Having identified the appropriate areas of the brain, the neurobiologist may experiment on them, attempting to recreate the brain owner's experience of intentionality. This raises a different problem. Interference with brain-processes might stimulate a variety of sensations and experiences. What it cannot do is stimulate the agent's intending, for intending is something the agent *does*. Artificially creating the experience of acting purposefully is not the same as acting purposefully. Stimulating the right network of electrochemical processes may replicate with complete accuracy the sensation I have when intentionally lifting my arm. This, however, is no longer something that I have done; it is something that has been done to me. I am not intentionally lifting my arm; I am being made to lift my arm. The two phenomena may be related but they are neither metaphysically nor epistemically the same.

Logically speaking, intentions supply the conditions for distinguishing between what I do and what simply happens. They supply, as Searle is evidently aware, the 'directedness or aboutness of mental states' and, indeed, of all our activities (26). 'Directedness'

concerns what I do, it cannot be done to me or for me, for then the intention actualised is not mine but the neurobiologist's. We could, of course, operate similarly on the neurobiologist's brain while she operates on mine, but this would only actualise a second neurobiologist's intentions and so on *ad infinitum*. No one in this chain of experiments – except, possibly, the neurobiologist standing at its termination – would be able to distinguish between what they were doing and what was being done to them. Our object, then, would no longer be the 'directedness' of mental and physical activities, but rather the sensations accompanying certain mental and physical events resulting from the actions of the neurobiologist standing behind us. Under the circumstances, it seems we have two options: either abandon the search for intentionality or claim that the neurobiological enquirer is not, in fact, part of the system of events, activities, and intentions being explored. The one who wields the knife, that is, must somehow be ontologically different from the subject who lies under it.

3. Unintended Reductions

We cannot deny that much may be learned from interfering with physical processes. One thing, however, will not be learned, as Farrer reminds us: 'the normal capacity of the…[processes] to deliver the goods' (1960: 25). Indeed, we may not even be able to discover what sort of 'goods' those interfered with processes are supposed to deliver.

Philosophical descriptions of intentionality should be informed by neurobiological research, but they cannot simply or necessarily rely on them. Our descriptions must also be able to account for the phenomenological and psychological aspects, the 'doingness,' of intentionality. Leave that out and we face materialist reduction. The neurobiologist has access to sequences of electrochemical processes corresponding to bodily sensations and motions; he or she has the tools to monitor and, to some degree, control them. The 'doingness' of intentionality, however, appears to be accessible to the agent alone. What evidence can show that this experience is an experience of what the agent claims it to be? Why, indeed, bother to talk about intentionality – or consciousness for that matter – when all we have on our hands (as it were) is a physical system?

As problematic as this may prove to be for an account of intentionality, it is more damaging still to the social ontologist. The institutional reality with which Searle is concerned is a product of the 'status functions' human beings assign to objects and people. Status functions, Searle explains, are functions, the performance of which 'requires that there be a collectively recognised status that the person or object has, and it is only in virtue of that status that the person or object can perform the function in question' (7). That certain pieces of paper function as money and certain people (allegedly) function as presidents and prime

ministers is a consequence of the status collectively assigned to them. Crucially, however, status functions have little, if anything, to do with physical systems. Just as the people and objects designated 'cannot perform the functions solely in virtue of their physical structure' (7), neither can physical structures alone assign the status that function requires. Otherwise put, status functions are products of logical and semantic systems; they are governed by the meaning of the symbols in which the status is expressed: words, images, uniforms, etc. Physical systems, *quâ* physical, are not capable of meaningfully using of symbols and so cannot assign status functions. (Indeed, physical systems *quâ* physical are not capable of *doing* anything, properly speaking; their 'mutual collisions and mutual exploitations,' as Farrer dubs them, are governed by causal uniformities, not intentions (1972a: 188).) If no status functions are assigned, then no social institutions arise. It seems the very thing that Searle's analysis of intentionality hoped to explain has been eliminated.

Materialist reduction faces its own problems, however. Primarily, it must explain the process of enquiry itself, and the discourse of which it is a part, in terms of physical systems. It must, in short, explain the acquisition of knowledge without reference to the intentional agency that undertakes it. Knowledge of physical systems is, as suggested, acquired through controlled interference with them. Although physical systems impact on one other in accordance with causal uniformities, they cannot exercise control. Likewise, intentional agents do not act in accordance with causal uniformities. They deliberately interfere with those uniformities in search of significant, which is to say, useful, information.

Intentionality, moreover, is reflexive. It is (ordinarily) *about* some feature of the agent's environment; but it is also necessarily *about* the agent intending. Personal pronouns could not function otherwise. This is the heart of the physical reductivist's error. Abandon talk of intentionality (or consciousness) in favour of talk about physical systems and we must explain what the pronoun 'my' is doing in sentences such as '*my* neurological experiment.' This was P. F. Strawson's challenge to the 'no ownership doctrine of the self' (1959: 98).[3] That challenge is, furthermore, one that neurologically preoccupied philosophers have yet to meet. Whether the reduction is behaviourist or biological, the difficulty remains essentially the same: intentions, in order to be intentions, must be the intentions of some particular agent (or agents). They must be owned; and ownership that signifies nothing but the rather 'dubious sense of being causally dependent on the state of a particular body' will not do (Strawson, 1959: 96). Reduce the agent to one link in a causal chain and we lose the very thing we came looking for: the (experience of the) agent as the initiator and controller of intentional activities, both physical and mental. Consequently, the reduction of intentional action to physical causality cannot be stated intelligibly, as Strawson showed: denial of ownership 'is not coherent, in that one who holds it is forced to make use of that sense of possession of which he denies the existence, in presenting his case for the denial' (1959: 96). In arguing that certain acts or experiences are simply functions of a physical system, the reductivist is forced to make reference to intentions belonging to some agent. He must be prepared to say something like 'my intending is, in fact, one uniform physical component in a uniform physical process, the operation of which is determined by other uniform physical processes.' The use of 'my' here remains unexplained and, on such an account, unexplainable.

Ultimately, the reductivist allows intending no physical effect, transforming it into an epiphenomenon. This rebuts the exploratory programme from which it arises. Neurobiological experiments do not happen by accident or in accordance with natural uniformities. They are intended activities, something someone *meant* to do. The idea that intending is merely an epiphenomenon, however, 'counters the whole assumption of logical study, by denying that meaning governs the formation of discourse' (Farrer, 1960: 79). The construction of intelligible discourse – such as a description of the electrochemical processes of the brain – is no secondary quality produced by the exercise of a physical system. If it were, we would have no notion of conscious interaction. Pressing the point, the meaning of reductivist-*cum*-epiphenomenalist claims cannot be incidental to the sounds and symbols in which they are expressed. 'Anyone who holds that when we think or talk the meaning is a by-product, [Farrer argued] is maintaining a paradox' (1960: 79). They leave consciousness unable to explain itself or anything else.

4. Brain Processes and Cheese Sandwiches

Searle attempts to avoid the reductivist's trap by arguing that 'the higher level phenomena of mind and society are dependent on the lower level phenomena of physics and biology' (25). Clearly, no reduction is intended. Dependency-relations require a minimum of two terms; reduction defeats this. Furthermore, understanding how this dependency-relation works is, he insists, a 'basic requirement' of any credible social ontology (25). Given this, his immediate admission that no one actually knows how 'consciousness is caused by, and realised in, brain structures' (26) is, perhaps, unfortunate. For if no one knows *how* this causal process operates, what makes Searle (or anyone else) so sure *that* it does? So much for his first 'condition of adequacy' (3).

Searle does not address these questions directly, but his analysis does offer some clues. In particular, he claims that the brain's electrochemical processes have 'interesting logical properties' (42).

[N]atural brain processes, at a certain level of description, have logical semantic properties. They have conditions of satisfaction, such as truth conditions, and other logical relations; and these logical properties are as much a part of our natural biology as is the secretion of neurotransmitters into synaptic clefts (42).

This seems like an ideal solution: assign logical properties to biological processes and we avoid materialist reduction while simultaneously throwing a bridge across the notorious mind-body divide. If such claims seem odd, Searle insists, it is merely that 'we are not used to thinking of natural biological phenomena as intrinsically having logical properties' (42).

In the first place, it is worth noting another equivocation here: to say that something possesses a particular property intrinsically is one thing; to say that it possesses that property 'at a certain level of description' is another. It is also worth noting that Searle's claim regarding the unfamiliarity of such ideas is not entirely true. Logic and semantics are, after all, human constructs, products of conscious, personal activity. The application of such constructs to natural phenomena is hardly novel. Speaking historically, it is evident from anthropological studies as far back as Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890) that anthropomorphic projection has been central to both magical and religious conceptions of the world since the beginning. Speaking psychologically, on the other hand, Piaget's studies in the mental development of children demonstrate with equal clarity that these and other similar constructs play a role no less vital in the development of persons (1982).

Nevertheless, Searle's claims here may also seem odd because they do not really make sense. If biological phenomena intrinsically *have* logical and semantic properties, then replicating the phenomena in a laboratory ought to replicate the properties. We might, for example, produce electrochemical processes with the logical and semantic properties delineating the intention to make a cheese sandwich. We might do so, moreover, without ever involving the brain that is (allegedly) doing all the intentional work. We could then point to those processes and truthfully say 'that is the intention to make a cheese sandwich'. But this is surely nonsense, not least because it leaves us with a disembodied intention. More accurately, it leaves us with an orphaned one, since it is supposedly embodied in an electrochemical process. Evidently, however, an intention not actually intended *by* anyone is not an intention. Furthermore, apart from the sandwich-making act, we could not possibly know that this process was the intention we claimed it to be. However precisely we reproduce the processes observed in agents, those which fail to result in the action (and the sandwich) specified provide no grounds for any such claim.

We cannot reasonably ascribe such properties to a biological process governed by natural, causal uni-

formities. Logic and semantics are functions of symbol-systems; more properly, they are coefficients of *our use* of symbol-systems. They are, in other words, linguistic (in the broadest sense) and therefore psychological artefacts. Products of invention and convention, these symbol-systems indicate the ways in which words and other symbols might legitimately be used. Logic and semantics do not correlate with electrochemical processes any more than they correlate with flapping lips or the firing of ink droplets at paper. Furthermore, Searle's claim that 'you can have brain processes that are logically inconsistent with other brain processes' (42) is simply false. There is, as Farrer observes, 'no *not* in nature, no physical act… [or biological phenomenon] which consists in negating' (1960: 41). At the higher levels of conscious activity, there may exist *a sort* of rejection, as when some actions are enacted rather than others. This, however, is a wholly positive move; one ordinarily called 'choosing.' Choosing one word over another is not actualised in the negation of an alternative intention, but in the act of using the word chosen. At the level of brain function, electrochemical processes may cancel each other out, but that too is a positive business. There is no *logical* negation or contradiction between physical processes. There is only the nullifying of physical effects by other physical effects.

Assimilate causal uniformities to logical processes and we invite the very materialist reduction we hoped to avoid. We deny, in effect, that anything new occurs at the higher levels of conscious, personal activity. If nothing new occurs, and the logical and semantic properties characteristic of conscious activity are prefabricated in the lower levels of electrochemical process, then the supposedly 'higher level phenomena of mind and society,' not to mention personality, are not 'higher' at all. They are merely reconfigurations of what Searle calls the 'lower level phenomena of physics and biology' (25). Since physical and biological evidence is unlikely to bear out claims for logical and semantic properties in electrochemical processes, logic and semantics may be abandoned along with intentionality. Causal uniformities must replace them.

In the end, Farrer is right: 'no bridge…either mental or physical or neutral, is ever going to join the consciousness-story about us to the physiological story about us' (1960: 8). Not, at least, while the focus is on the results of neurobiological research.[4] Thus, Searle's claim that 'thinking is as natural as digesting' (43) may be true, but it is misleading. Intentionality evidently is a natural phenomenon, but not in the same sense that the operations of the digestive tract are. Such operations are essentially chemical, functioning in accordance with the causal uniformities governing the physical world *quâ* physical. Reduce consciousness and intentionality to causal uniformity and, once again, we eliminate the thing we were looking for.

To repeat, the point here is emphatically *not* to deny the relation between neuroscience and philoso-

phy. It is simply to show that this relation is not, indeed, cannot be, as simple as Searle assumes. This much is clear from the materialist reduction which results.

5. The Action Plant

Searle's 'respect for the basic facts of the structure of the universe' (4) is admirable but too narrow. He does not, for example, consider how we find out about intentionality. How do I know agents – including myself – have intentions? Not by experimenting on brains but by interacting with their owners. My intention to write this paper, to contribute to a discussion on intentionality and social ontology is, I hope, perfectly obvious. In short, the fundamental facts of intentionality are not found in electro-chemical processes, but in personal action, in my capacity to actualise those intentions by interacting with others.[5] Such facts are logically and psycho-logically basic.

Searle is, therefore, wrong to insist that '[t]here isn't any other place for intentionality to be except in human brains' (44). Intentions are actualised in actions (mental and physical). Indeed, his own analysis almost bears this out. Distinguishing between prior intentions (planning, deciding) and 'intentions-in-action,' Searle identifies the latter as 'a component of the action itself' (33). Furthermore, he notes, '[t]he closest English word to intention-in-action is 'trying' (34). Again, one wonders whether we could replicate the electrochemical process that constitutes 'trying' in a laboratory. And could we point to our replica, calling it 'trying to do this or that'? Do so, and we face the obvious question: '*Who* is trying to do this or that?' The answer must surely be 'no one': another instance of orphaned intentions.

The lesson is clear. 'Intentions-in-actions' are not actualised in the brain. When I am *trying* to make your sandwich, the *trying* does not occur in my head. It occurs in the kitchen, actualised in large-scale bodily activities such as buttering bread and arguing about who ate all the cheese. Locate the intentions in my brain, however, and there is nothing to prevent me from stretching out on the sofa and truthfully claiming that I am still trying to make you a sandwich.

Such claims are unlikely to be believed and rightly so. One needn't be a philosopher (just hungry) to realise that 'acts' minus intentions are simply causal events; likewise, intentions (especially 'intentions-in-actions') that fail to flower in activity are not intentions. With sandwiches, as with Christmas, the thought may be what counts but only if comes up with the goods. Charles Conti would make the philosophical point plain. Intentionality, he argues, requires a *modus operandi*: 'we [do not] "act" without a body, nor "mean" without a mind. Intending depends as much on the means as on the motive' (1995: 185).[6] That was the lesson of J. L. Austin's 'A Plea for Excuses'. We can and do take the

'machinery of action' apart, separating intentions, acts, and consequences (141). But the separation is logical or conceptual, not physical or metaphysical. We do it in order to assign and accept responsibility, to own our acts, and compel others to do likewise. That much is clear from the logic of the language of apology.[7]

Put simply, intending is something we do. It is not something that our brains do for us. The brain is a manifold of physical processes, not an agency capable of intending. Further, we do not, properly speaking, *do* anything with that manifold. The brain is not an operative organ as such; rather, Farrer observes, it is 'an instrument of organ-control' (1960: 28). The roots of intentions are deep in the processes of the brain, but intentions themselves extend throughout the body engaging the muscle and bone of lips and limbs. They come into focus – are actualised – at the operative point, where the agent strives to grasp word or world. In short, intentional consciousness is actualised in the talking mouth and the bread-buttering hand, not the electrochemically fizzing brain.

G. E. M. Anscombe and Stuart Hampshire were right to insist on identifying and explaining behaviour as a basic criterion for recognising intentionality. Hampshire, in particular, suggests that, for anything to count as intended, there must always be some possible answer to the question 'What are you doing?' (75).[8] Locate intentions solely in the brain, however, and this is no longer true. Evidently, at the moment I write this, brain processes are going on. But they are not what I am *doing*. Currently, I am trying to express an idea as clearly as I am able. Insist that what I am *really* doing is firing off electrochemical processes in my brain and moving the muscles in my arms and fingertips, however, and Hampshire is surely entitled to ask me *how* I am doing it. If I have no idea whatsoever of how I am doing something, then it is difficult to see why I would insist that I am, in fact, doing it. In principle, at least, it must always be possible to give some account of the procedures my activities involve if I am to claim them as mine.

The physical corollary of intention is not the brain process itself, but the large-scale pattern of bodily activity in which the intention is expressed. On the macroscopic level, there are the muscular extensions and contractions of bodily movement. On the microscopic level, Farrer describes 'an immensely tenuous, elongated plant, rooted in several different regions of the brain, passing its stem through the spinal column, and flowering into performance in the hand' (1960: 26). Crucially, it is not in the particular brain process that we find agents intending; the 'whole nerve-plant from brain to hand is the vehicle or instrument of the behaviour' (26).[9] This applies even when there is no explicit activity. Thinking or, perhaps more pertinently, prior intentions are actions.

More properly, thinking is the 'shadow of doing' and so 'must be interpreted by a full-blooded doing' (Farrer, 1960: 39). The analogy of bodily activity is the only clue we have; in this case, language-use: '[t]he best sort of characterisation of thinking is that it is a sort of talking to ourselves' (Farrer, 1960 29). Thus, the 'shadowy' action-patterns of thought are likely to be those of ordinary acts of talking: the activated 'nerve-plant' running from brain to lips, jaw, tongue, vocal chords and so on.[10] To be sure, when we think we (try, at least, to) talk silently to ourselves. The action-pattern is not fully enacted and the nerve-plant fails to flower in that 'full-blooded doing'. Thinking 'ghosts' the act of speaking as it were, stopping short of engaging the vocal apparatus. This much seems clear, not least because, as academics know very well, silent thought so easily and so frequently crosses unnoticed the boundary between talking silently to oneself and doing so out loud.

This alters the course of social ontology. Understanding intentionality, Farrer insists, means recognising that the 'characteristic act of mind is discourse' (1964: 63). Discourse, of course, is originally a social act. It is not dependent on biological facts *per se*, but on social ones: my capacity to recognise and respond to other agents like myself. Indeed, '[t]hought is the interiorisation of dialogue. We should not think at all, were we not mutually aware' (Farrer, 1967: 126). Acts of thought, such as prior intending, do not occur in my brain but in my mind. Like all activities, acts of mind are transacted *with* and, crucially, learned from, others.[11]

This overcomes the fundamental isolationism of Searle's analysis. For Searle, that is, human beings are distinct individuals, discrete units of intentionality. 'The only intentionality that can exist [he argues] is in the heads of individuals. There is no collective intentionality beyond what is in the head of each member of the collective' (55). How, then, can we make sense of social institutions and the co-operative behaviour that constitutes them? If all intentionality is really 'I-intentionality,' then genuinely shared intentions, full participation in those institutions, seems impossible. Searle's answer lies in the assumptions we make when engaged in group activities. In pursuing group goals, he argues, 'I am operating on the assumption that you will do your part, and you are operating on the assumption that I will do my part' (55). There is, then, no collective intentionality, only the 'operating assumptions' of individuals in groups. Exactly why Searle thinks this rebuts any reduction of 'we-intentionality' to 'I-intentionality' is unclear. Under his schema, co-operative action is just individual actions aggregated under the umbrella of shared assumptions. There is no participation in social institutions except on the individual level. Consequently, it would seem that there are no genuinely social institutions as such.

Contra Searle, collective activity sees individual intentional acts as intrinsically interconnected. Individual intentions are shaped by group intentions; they are active responses to the intentional acts of others in the pursuit of shared goals. This is a particular instance of a general truth about human thought and action: every intention demands participation. My intentional activities are, as Farrer put it, actualised *in pari materia* with other agents (1959: 235). They are primitively exercised and experienced as an ingredient in some interaction event.

Intentional action is controlled interference aimed at bringing about change in the agent's environment. There is no action *in vacuo*; the simplest movements require the relatively stable presence of something in relation to which they are movements, minimally the rest of my body. As Farrer points out, however, I am not 'swimming in a perfectly featureless medium'; there is considerably more to my environment than my own body. I am, in fact, 'walking the earth among all sorts of obstacles' (1959: 233). And it is those obstacles that instigate my actions: I act in response to other agencies insofar as they impact upon me, perhaps by impeding my progress or by providing the means to overcome some other impediment. If my intention is to flap my arms and fly to the moon, for example, then a whole universe of physical forces is against me. However, once I understand those forces and the ways in which they operate, I can manipulate them; I can (although, in my own case, admittedly only in principle) use the agencies they govern to build myself a rocket.[12] In this way, those agencies set the boundary conditions for action without, however, determining the limits of intention. Without them, I could not act at all. I could not walk without the ground beneath my feet providing friction or talk without the air I breathe and the other objects around me that reflect the sound. I could not even think; what would I think *about*? Nothing but the emptiest thoughts about thought itself and that can hardly be classed as thinking at all. Unable to act, neither could I intend, for one cannot intend what one is incapable of doing. Indeed, I would not know myself as an agent at all.[13] In isolation from my environment and its obstacles, what would I be? Not a walker, a talker, nor even a thinker; and almost certainly not a joker, a smoker, or a midnight toker (Curtis, Ertegün, and Miller, 1973). '[A]part from my experience of impinging upon, and being impinged upon by, other things or forces, I have no conceivable clue to physical existence, or physical force, or physical interaction' (Farrer, 1972b: 210).

A merely physical environment would not, of course, birth human consciousness. That takes a social one: '[m]entality as we know it is a social product' (Farrer, 1967 126). To be a person, I must be in a world *of* persons. The encounters that shape our lives, our identities, our capacities to think and act,

are encounters with other personal agents. Our intentions are formulated within the framework of their intentional behaviour. That framework is the cradle of consciousness: it is everything our parents do that promotes our survival, that makes our development as human beings possible, and we are born into it. It is where we learn to identify sounds and objects, to manipulate our environment, and, ultimately, to participate in the most basic and most important of social institutions: the home.[14] Hence, Farrer reminds us: 'From first infancy our elders loved us, played us, served us and talked us into knowing them' (1967: 129); and in knowing them, becoming ourselves. Fortunately, that process does not end with childhood (something easily forgotten until we encounter another, strikingly different, culture). Throughout our lives, others teach us to think and act. It is through this process of intelligent imitation that we develop a self and learn to enact it. That much, J. L. Austin reminds us, is also clear from the logic of the language of apology, language primarily affirmative of others, our relations to them, and impacts upon them.[15] Such interchanges are the logically and psychologically basic facts of human existence. Human beings are social creatures first, individuals only second.

Consider the most obvious and typical act of consciousness: communication. In such transactions, consciousness develops; dialogue supplies the tools with which we make of ourselves what we are. 'Personality is part of that common social and linguistic store we *share* with others' (Conti, 1983: 74). Not only '*share* with,' but also *learn from*. Others provide us with the intellectual artefacts, the language and learning, from which we construct our thoughts and actions. This is the 'social lore' (as Polanyi termed it) from which personality is constructed; it passes from generation to generation 'by a process of communication which flows from adults to young people' (1974: 207).

Conversation is, therefore, a prime example of co-operative behaviour. Logically speaking, my talk presupposes your involvement in the discourse, just as yours presupposes mine. But there is much more here than shared presuppositions. My intending is actualised in conjunction with the actualisation of yours: our intentions are necessarily, and intimately, interconnected. That is what it means to be a personal agent: 'to perform an act so that others recognise the twin of their own intentions' (Conti, 1983: 74). In acting, that is, we offer 'a mirror image, showing others to themselves, or *vice versa*' (Conti, 1983:74-5).

In conversation, we may explicitly share intentions. Striving to make our meaning clear, to say what we mean, we enter into what John Macmurray calls 'reciprocal communication with others;' sharing our experiences with one another, we 'constitute and participate in a common experience' (1961: 60). In doing so, we simultaneously inform and *in-form* one another's meaning. Actions express intentions so solicit a response in kind; responses elicit further intentions, participating in their formation. Exploring or elaborating your point, I co-opt your intentions as you co-opt mine. Each response we give provides ingredients for the next. Though many academics will no doubt be surprised to learn it, conversation is as much about listening and understanding as it is about talking. Whether we agree or disagree, we appropriate one another's intentions along with the ideas and experiences they express. In appropriating, we inevitably modify, interpreting and supplementing them, before returning them to the conversational pot. Moreover, since intelligent discourse tends to involve at least some logical progress, it consists not only in responding to what has been said, but also what is likely to follow. Hence, in being anticipated to some degree, each response is also a key ingredient in those that precede it. Our intentions are *in and as* the interplay of these contributions; consequently, the meaning we generate – to reach a compromise, perhaps, or simply clarify a question – is genuinely shared. This mutual adjusting and modifying of shared intentions is characteristic of co-operative action in general. It is, furthermore, constitutive of human intentionality and of all the shared experiences and institutions it generates.[16]

Ultimately, these are the logically basic and irreducible facts which Searle is yet to fully grasp. Indeed, this may be because they cannot be accommodated by 'physics, chemistry, by evolutionary biology, and the other natural sciences' (4). Nevertheless, I suggest, those facts provide a significantly better starting point for understanding human intentionality and the social reality it creates. What is more, they provide significantly better conditions of adequacy to govern that enquiry.

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Notes

1. All quotations from Searle are from here.
2. Elsewhere, we are told, Searle locates intentions-in-actions in the 'components of actions,' specifically 'the limb movements' which constitute physical action (McDowell, 2013: 4). Despite this, as we shall see, it appears that Searle has not appreciated the significance of that location.
3. See also Hampshire, 1983: 79.
4. Farrer was paraphrasing A. J. Ayer. Descartes' problem remains unsolved; hence, Farrer concedes: 'If…we know nothing of the link between matter and mind, it is because there is nothing to be known. Anyone who has reflected on what the expression of a mental state or act means, will see that there can be no further link between them, than…that of *de facto* concurrence' (1960: 8). For the parallel 'binding problem' in neuroscience, see Vacariu 2011: 28.
5. See Austin 1961: 126 on the dangers of talking about action while forgetting the personal agency involved.
6. Echoing the sentiments of J. R. Lucas, Conti reminded his students that, when the intention to write an essay fails to flower into activity, we have no grounds for claiming that an essay was ever intended. See also McDowell, 2013: 3.

7. See Farrer, 1960: 48 and 1967: 114; and Conti, 1995: 187. Cf. Searle's causal interpretation of intentionality 2010: 133.
8. Anscombe's question was 'why?' (1976: 9); Hampshire opted for the more basic 'what?' (1983: 93). Explaining *why* one does something presupposes an awareness and understanding of *what* one is doing. *Nota bene*: it is not necessary that one must be able to specify the fine detail of one's actions. As Michael Polanyi points out, knowing how to ride a bicycle does not require detailed knowledge of the distribution of physical forces involved (1974: 49-50).
9. According to Farrer, the 'action-plant' describes 'An area picked out by the action of consciousness, not by neural action as such' (1960: 54). The patterns of neurophysical operation are a continuous rhythm: 'a minute excitation, constantly weaving its natural channels.' On the microscopic level, these 'minute excitations' have no intrinsic unity: 'Seen from the level of neurophysical functioning, none of these patterns is a single whole.' On the microscopic level we can only discern elements of a larger pattern. Thus, neurophysical description identifies those smallest components of an action-pattern. 'Neurophysiology uses a microscopic scale; its unit of time is a moment which allows room for no more than the excitation of this part of this nerve, or that part of that. The whole system of movement is pulled together into one in being wielded by a single act of consciousness' (1960: 54).
10. See also Kosslyn's use of PET (Positron Emissions Tomography) scans to show that the areas of the brain involved in mentally picturing an object and the visual perception of an object are the same in *Image and Brain: The Resolution of the Imagery Debate*, 1993.
11. See Polanyi, 1974: 203-214.
12. Hence, both Farrer and Hampshire would designate touch as the basic sense, because it means access to a world of interacting agencies. See Farrer, 1959: 232 and Hampshire 1983: 48.
13. See Hampshire 1983: 47-53 and Farrer, 1959: 230-237 on the role of action in self-identification.
14. For a more detailed discussion of the personal – as opposed to the organic – foundations of consciousness, see Macmurray ch. 2 'Mother and Child,' 1961.
15. See also Farrer, 1970: 74: 'We learnt to talk, because they talked to us; and to like, because they smiled at us. Because we could first talk, we can now think; that is, we can talk silently to the images of the absent, or we can pretend to be our own twin, and talk to ourself.'
16. See Farrer, 1960: 300 and the postscript to the 2nd edition of Hampshire, 1983: 274-296.

WHY WE CAN'T (ALWAYS) REALLY SHARE INTENTIONS AND WHY IT DOESN'T (ALWAYS) MATTER

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Abstract: In John R. Searle's *The Construction of Social Reality* (1995), 'We-intentions' are proffered to account for the cooperative nature of human collective intentionality, which he argues cannot be secured by analyses that reduce group intentions to individuals' intentions. While Searle may be correct to argue that such reductionist analyses fail, his own account is ultimately untenable as well. His account cannot ensure that intentions really are shared (as opposed to merely presupposed as shared) and is excessively restrictive in what it can accommodate as a case of collective intention. I then examine J. David Velleman's "How To Share An Intention" (1997). Because the interest of this short paper lay in the relation of individual and collective intentions (as understood by Searle and others) to questions surrounding the epistemology and metaphysics of the social sciences, following Velleman, I extend the category of 'intention' from Searle's stance that intentions exist in heads to include *public* speech acts and written assertions. However, I suggest that Velleman's revisitation suffers from the same two difficulties as the Searlian program. Lastly, I turn to the idea that Searle's conceptual analysis does not serve us well in the project of explaining how and why ascriptions of collective intention figure in macro-level explanations advanced by the social sciences and why such ascriptions are not easily eliminable. When social scientists attempt to analyse, predict, or ascribe group intentions and behaviours, reference to the actual intentions of the members is not necessarily required. Reference to the intentions of members may even be misguided or inappropriate because looking for explanations at the micro-level alone can omit features that are common between social group types.

Key Words: social ontology; philosophy of social science; Searle; collective intentionality; collective agency

1. Introduction

In John R. Searle's *The Construction of Social Reality* (1995; herein, *CSR*), 'We-intentions' are proffered to account for the cooperative nature of human collective intentionality, which he argues cannot be secured by analyses that reduce group intentions to individuals' intentions (even when supplemented with an individual's beliefs about the intentions and beliefs of others). Searle may be correct to argue that such reductionist analyses fail, but his own account is ultimately untenable as well. This is because, (i) his account cannot ensure that intentions really are shared (as opposed to merely presupposed as shared);[1] and (ii) is excessively restrictive in what it can accommodate as a case of collective intention. Having illuminated both Searle's account and its difficulties, I then examine J. David Velleman's 'How To Share An Intention' (1997). Velleman's article is a revisitation and revamping of Searle's account of collective intentionality. Because the interest of this short paper lay in the relation of individual and collective intentions (as understood by Searle and others) to questions surrounding the epistemology and metaphysics of the social sciences, following Velleman, I extend the category of 'intention' from Searle's stance that intentions exist in heads to include *public* speech acts and written assertions. However, I suggest that Velleman's revisit suffers from the same difficulties as the Searlian program, namely problems (i) and (ii) as articulated above.

I then turn to the idea that Searle's conceptual analysis does not serve us well in the project of (i) explaining how and why ascriptions of collective intention figure in macro-level explanations advanced by the social sciences; and (ii) why such ascriptions are not easily eliminable. When social scientists attempt to analyse, predict, or ascribe group intentions and behaviours, reference to the actual intentions of the members is not necessarily required.[2] In some cases, reference to the intentions of members may even be misguided or inappropriate because looking for explanations at the micro-level alone can omit features that are common between social group types with differing supervenience bases, that is, between groups composed of different individuals with different individual and collective intentions. For elucidation, consider the following: The existence of some social kinds, properties, and institutions may be directly dependent on human attitudes (e.g. that Barack Obama was President of the United States in the year 2012, the existence of wives) while in other cases, their existence may be dependent on human attitudes, though the kind itself or tokens of the kind need not be represented as existing by some, all, or any human beings (e.g. economic recessions, racism; cf. Thomasson (2003), Searle (2010), Khalidi (2015)). The existence of an economic recession, for example, indirectly depends on social attitudes because whether or not its existence is recognized or represented as existing by anyone, its existence is dependent on other social kinds being explicitly represented as existing (e.g. *money*, *consumer goods*) (cf. Thomasson (2003), Searle (2010), Khalidi (2015)). Thus, some social kinds are mind-dependent,[3] but not concept-dependent. For an economic recession to exist, the concepts *money* or *capital* must be represented as existing, but *economic recession* itself need not be.

CSR is one of the earliest attempts by an analytic philosopher to say what social construction amounts to. As a social ontologist, Searle is interested in making clear the metaphysics of social kinds, categories, and phenomena (including collective action and social facts). In *CSR*, Searle's primary task is to identify the conditions of possibility of a social world. Otherwise put, *CSR* attempts to answer the following questions, namely 'How are institutional facts possible?' and 'What is the structure of such facts?'[4] Searle's response to those questions, which is to say his views concerning the ontology of social reality and the epistemology and metaphysics of collective intentionality (especially, his 'We-intentions'), are connected to his positions in the philosophy of mind, intentionality, and consciousness. His broad aim is to situate intentionality within what he calls a 'naturalist program,' that is, one consistent with 'the atomic theory of matter and the evolutionary theory of biology.'[5] While Searle does not think 'basic reality' (i.e. quarks, leptons, strings, whatever) can explain everything, including the totality of the goings on in social reality, he does think that any social ontological theory must be consistent with 'basic reality,' whatever that amounts to. *CSR* attempts to develop an account of the ontology of social facts and institutions where collective intentionality plays a leading role since it is an essential feature of any social fact.[6] Though ultimately physical, a Searlian world also contains irreducible properties, including intentional states. Explicit in his position that all mental states exist in brains,[7] the social world is manifest in a plurality of intentional states existing in brains and so, its facts are observer relative.[8]

Searle's account of observer relativity is compatible with the view that facts are relative to a *community* of observers. Indeed, for Searle, all social facts, institutions, and kinds are metaphysically and epistemically reliant on the basic form: 'We collectively accept that X counts as Y in C.' For instance, what explains the very existence of a Canadian five-dollar bill is one's acceptance that, collectively (or so one projects), in Canada (C), this material (X) counts as a five-dollar bill (Y). Interestingly, while this formula constructs a social world, Searle is adamant that any form of collective intentionality, including collective acceptance 'can make a purported reference to other members of a collective *independent of the question of whether or not there actually are such members*' (Searle 1992, 407). For Searle, it is the form of the intentional attribution (the second-person plural) that is necessary for any social facts or any social reality to get off the ground. It is therefore consistent with Searle's program that I am a brain in a vat that takes themselves to exist in a social reality just in case I hold second-person plural intentions and self-attributions that are of the first-person plural form.

Searlian collective intentionality is rooted in the intuition that collective intentional behaviour is distinct from individual intentional behaviour and that the former is not tantamount or reducible to the sum of the intentional behaviours of its members as individuals *qua* individuals. As Searle underscores, in one case, the behaviour of individuals might constitute a set of individual acts and in another, the very same movements might constitute a collective action.

> There is a big difference between two violinists playing in an orchestra... and discovering, while I am practicing my part, that someone in the next room is practicing her part, and thus discovering, by chance, we are playing the same piece in a synchronized fashion.[9]

The difficulty is in explaining in what this internal difference consists. With regard to individual intentional behaviour, convergence on goals and actions might be accidental and, in any case, the sum of the individual intentions 'does not add up to a *collectivity*.'[10] The category of Searlian collective intention encompasses various kinds of collectively intended activities, ranging from cases where the individual goals or behaviours of the members are identical to cases where they are only similar or related.

Consider, for elucidation, the following example to tease apart 'I-intentions' and 'We-intentions.' My mother and I intend to go to the 7 pm showing of the latest Hollywood blockbuster. In each of our brains, there exists a qualitatively identical 'We-intention', which is often implicit, of the form 'We intend to go to the movie.' Where the individuals' goals or behaviours are only similar or related, 'I-intends' are derivative from 'We-intends.' In these cases, though the actions of the members of a given group may be non-uniform, they sometimes possess a common goal – as Searle says, such cases occur where 'I am doing something only as part of *our* doing something.'[11] To connect this abstract account of these cases, I turn once more to the example of my mother and our intention to go to the movie. This intention or intended behaviour is at once a case of individuals with qualitatively identical intentions (i.e. each of us having in our brains the intention that 'We intend to go to the movie') and, once in action, also a case of 'I am doing something only as part of *our* doing something.' To achieve our goal, that is, to get to the movie, my mother has the 'I-intention' to drive to *us* to the movie and I have the 'I-intention' to set the alarm to make sure *we're* not late. My mother has the 'I-intention' to pay for *our* tickets and I have the 'I-intention' to pay for *our* popcorn. Here, *we* act together, though not identically, to get to the movie and do what movie-watching people tend to do. At the same time, our intentions and behaviours are qualitatively distinct (going to the movie together involves 'I-intends' on both our parts), though they combine to allow *us* to achieve our collective goal (*our* 'We-intention').

The robust and contentious claim in *CSR* is that *no* analysis of collective intentionality is possible in terms

of individual intentions, even if supplemented with beliefs ('I believe and I believe that you believe and I believe that you believe that I believe, and so on').[12] In a spirit typical of the analytic philosopher, Searle remarks that 'every attempt at reducing 'We intentionality' to 'I intentionality' that I have seen is subject to counterexamples.'[13] Within Searle's 1995 work, no counterexamples are provided.

A Searlian 'We-intention' is biologically primitive and depends for its existence on a perhaps equally vague notion, namely 'the Background.' The bare capacity for collective intentionality is what Searle calls a Background capacity. The capacity for collective intentionality is not itself intentional. This is to say that it is not itself characterized by any particular *aboutness* and it is not volitional. By 'biologically primitive,' Searle means that we (us and other animals) unconsciously follow rules that permit collective intentions (Searle 1999, 128-129).

> The key to understanding the causal relations between the structure of the Background and the structure of social institutions is to see that the Background can be causally sensitive to the specific forms of the constitutive rules of the institutions without actually containing any beliefs or desires or representations of those rules. (Searle 1995, 141)

The bearer of a 'We-intention' is an individual although it takes the form of the first-person plural. 'We-intentions' appeal to so-called 'Background abilities' (best elucidated in Searle's 'Collective Intentions and Actions' (1990)). The condition of possibility of collective intentionality presupposes

> a Background sense of the other as a candidate for cooperative agency; ... a sense of others as more than mere conscious agents, indeed as actual or potential members of a cooperative activity.[14]

'We-intentions' are different *in kind* from 'I-intentions'; they are a separate psychological mode. As Searle describes them: 'The real distinction between the singular and the collective case is in the type of intention involved, *not in the way that the elements in the conditions of satisfaction relate to each other*.'[15] Again, Searle admits that the possibility of error is special to a 'We-intention' since, according to Searle, 'collective intentionality in my head can make a purported reference to other members of a collective *independent of the question of whether or not there actually are such members*.'[16] I would add, the possibility of error is also special to a 'We-intention' in the following sense: What a given individual 'We-intender' believes is 'We-intended' by the collective is independent of whether the collective really does share any qualitatively identical or derivative 'We-intention'. Without this caveat, Searle would be left with no explanation for errors that occur when 'We-intentions' are only believed to be shared.

However, in *CSR*, this problem – that collective intentionality in my head can reference other members of a collective independent of whether or not there

actually are such members – runs much deeper than Searle seems to imagine.[17] Since one has no omniscience about the intentions of others (and, perhaps not even of their own intentions, though I bracket this problem herein), a group to which I belong might intend to do X without there being a corresponding 'We-intention' in my brain. There might very well be a 'We-intention' to not-X in my brain. It would seem that the existence of a single 'We-intention' in Jack's brain, for example, is not sufficient to ensure cooperation in the context of a very important collective intention. As so often sadly happens, let us say that Jack's brain contains the 'We-intention' that with respect to his girlfriend Jill, 'We (Jack and Jill)', Jack thinks to himself, 'intend to one day marry.' Unfortunately, because love is blind and Jack is naive, Jack is oblivious to the fact that Jill's brain has no such qualitatively identical or similar 'We-intention'. Jill's intention is just to fill in time with Jack until she meets a man she would like to marry.

This is to say that one may be mistaken in the supposition of a shared collective intention and in the supposition of a shared intention-in-action as well. Jill makes some future plans with Jack, perhaps they plan a vacation in the foreseeable future or she agrees to finally attend one of Jack's family's barbeques to avoid his nagging. Jack interprets this making of plans as their engaging in 'steps towards building a forever' and Jill interprets her making of plans with Jack simply as a means to avoid immediate conflict. Plausibly, intentions exist in individuals' heads, but it would seem that an implicit requirement, at least insofar as we are concerned with accounting for *bona fide* cases of cooperative activities and collective intendings is, *contra* Searle, that 'We-intentions' *must be shared*. More precisely, the content of the 'We-intentions' in separate individuals' brains must align in some manner. But there is nothing in my head that ensures any matching with the contents of *your* head. I cannot intend (and so ensure or cause), simply by there being a psychological state in my head, that you also have a 'We-intention' with content that matches mine. It is not within my power to settle.

In 'How To Share An Intention,' Velleman aims to show that it *is* possible to literally share an intention – that is, it is possible for an intention to 'be jointly framed and executed by multiple agents.'[18] Velleman remarks that collective intention, at least as it features in *CSR*, is not completely 'faithful to... [Searle's more general] conception of what an intention is' and that 'a more faithful application... yields the conclusion that talk of literally shared intentions is neither mysterious nor incoherent.'[19] For both Searle and Velleman, intentions are psychological states that resolve deliberative questions (at least those that are really are up to a person) both in reality and notionally.[20] According to Velleman, the suggestion that we can share an intention if we both intend that 'we are going to do it' is untenable because there are 'too many

cooks and too little broth' (if I settle it, there is no discretion left for you and vice versa).[21] Since mental representations exist in brains and brains belong to individuals, Searle regards intentions as belonging to individuals. However, Velleman argues that '[a]ll that's essential to intention... is [the fact that it is] a representation with a particular content and causal role.'[22] Further '[i]f I can commit myself to a course of action by speaking or writing, ...I am thereby making an oral or written decision; ... [hence,] there would seem to be a sense in which I can frame an oral or written intention'.[23]

The publicly asserted conditional willing that 'I am willing, if you are willing' (assuming both parties are honest and psychologically committed to action) has the proper causal role and so, will be 'everything that an intention is except mental.'[24] As Velleman suggests, saying 'I am willing if you are' does not 'purport to represent a fact that's independent of itself,' but still purports to articulate a truth and so, it is unlike a prediction or a report.[25] In the simple response to 'If you will, then I will,' the 'then' in 'then I will,' indicates that your intention is conditional on mine and vice versa *and* that *you also will* because the condition of your willing has already been met.[26] Here, two cases of individual discretion combine into one instance of collective discretion – each person's statement 'represents itself as determining it, only in conjunction with the other's statement', the causal powers of the statements are 'in fact interdependent', and their behaviour is mutually determined, and represented as such, by both individuals.[27] Yet, one might be suspicious about how often, given the strict criterion that Velleman outlines, we ever really do literally share an intention. The problem here is in the ineliminability of the sincerity of the speakers and the requirement of their psychological commitment to action. On Searle's account, and even in Velleman's reconstruction, cooperation's being satisfied is not a condition that can be fulfilled or known to be fulfilled internal to the individuals' brains, but rather is fulfilled or unfulfilled in the relation between them and so, in a certain sense, is external to, but dependent on, both of intenders. There is no way for me to know that you are sincere when you reply 'Then I will' in advance of you acting and hence, demonstrating your having had the willingness and the commitment to psychological action in your head. While Searle does not focus his attention on issues surrounding the pragmatic application of 'We-intentions,' one might say that an intention was veridical with the intention of another's because those who formulated it participate in an action that makes it veridical.[28] I do not believe Searle would disagree with this pragmatic point.

Both Searle's and Velleman's accounts are too restrictive in their scope to capture the complexity and variety of what may be considered collective intentions. Not all instances of an attribution of intention to collectives require that each member also possess the intention attributed to the collective. Consider a case of a group looting a store. An intention (whether in the form of a Searlian 'We-intention', an 'I-intention', or through the literally shared intention à la Velleman) to loot the store may not exist in the brains of each of the members of the group. Perhaps X has the intention to loot the store, but Y only has the intention to do whatever X does, Z cannot properly be said to have any intentions at all since Z is suffering from a psychotic episode, and so on.

In *On Social Facts* (1989), Margaret Gilbert accentuates another kind of difficulty in the analysis of collective intentionality with the following example. A reading group meets to discuss poetry and after some time, a preferred interpretation emerges, namely that the last line of some poem is very moving indeed.[29] While we might say or believe that the poetry reading group believes that the last line of the poem is moving, it is possible that not every individual (or indeed anyone at all) thinks this.[30] In *CSR*, Searle draws no distinction between collective intentions or beliefs; intentional states of the brain or of thought are collective just in case they are in the form of the first-person plural. Perhaps the group settled on the interpretation simply because 'they wished the session to end quickly or because they were afraid to speak out.'[31] An external account attributes a unanimous collective interpretation, while an internal version might have it that each individual feigned agreement in order to end the evening early without being rude (and so, each had the intentions to feign agreement, to avoid being rude, and to get on with the night). On this latter interpretation, the so-called collective interpretation is the result of the actual shared intention – to have the dull event end as quickly as possible. This points to a distinction that K. Brad Wray underscores in 'Collective Belief and Acceptance' (2001): 'Unlike proper beliefs, a collective belief is adopted by a group as a means to realizing the group's goals.'[32] Hence, the intentions that groups adopt and which Gilbert refers to as 'collective beliefs' 'are not a species of belief in an important and central sense [for the individuals involved], but rather a species of acceptance' (though they still fulfil the proper causal role as a collective intention or decision).[33] In other words, for an individual to accept something as the goal or intention *of the group* is for the individual to commit one's self to act with others *as if* it was one's personal goal or intention. Gilbert elucidates a few plausible reasons why individuals come to act *as if* in concert with others, namely to avoid conflict, to accomplish tasks more easily (some goods are only accessible by being part of a group), for a sense of community, etc.[34]

It is not entirely clear that intentions, on one hand, and beliefs and forms of acceptance, on the other, really are the same in terms of their causal roles. Some kinds of belief and acceptance play a causal role, but having a causal role is not obviously part of their general constitutive structure. In other words, beliefs

and intentions don't *have* to have a causal role of any kind. People might just accept that X is true without doing anything about it. It's not clear that an intention is an intention if it doesn't issue in *some* kind of action.[35] A failure to acknowledge this constitutive difference is perhaps a failure of *CSR*. That being so, I believe Searle would acknowledge that more fine-grained distinctions of the notions of intentions, forms of acceptance, and beliefs are beside the point given his goals in CSR. His aim is to focus on those forms of intentionality that have 'the right kind of causal role.'

To say that the attribution of collective intention is *a mere manner of speaking* is problematic and, I think, simply false. Related to explanatory concerns, in the case of a doctoral admissions committee, for instance, 'the reasons... to accept candidates are reasons *for* the group but not [necessarily] reasons for any individual.'[36] To use another example from Tollefsen, on one hand, the token event of the merger between Chrysler and Daimler can be explained by looking to the intentions and actions of the individual decision makers at Chrysler and Daimler, but social scientists are also interested in questions that concern 'social event types,' asking such questions as 'Why do firms or companies, in general, merge under certain economic situations?'[37] In investigating social event types, appeal to the intentional states of individuals may even be inappropriate: There may be very little or even nothing at all in common at the individual (or micro) level that can explain why groups act in the same way (there is no type-type reduction).[38] In this sense, as concerns the methodology and explanatory goals of the social sciences, there are good reasons to accept literally attributing intentions to collectives whether each member of the collective actually possesses (in any way) a relevant intention.

Given that much of the social world is presupposed by individuals (in our non-philosophical and even in our more theoretical or philosophical moods, the natural and social world seems always to have already been there), those who are living within it cannot be expected to give a completely exhaustive and accurate account of why they do what they are doing or even a good account of what they are doing. Though the social scientist or anthropologist is sometimes condemned for their removed and panoptic gaze, perhaps they have good metaphysical and epistemological reasons to gaze as they do. Because social kinds/events/properties are multiply realizable, depending on the situation, individuals' intentions may be explanatorily necessary in explaining group behaviour while in other cases, individuals' intentions may be unnecessary or simply irrelevant. There is also a sense in which individuals can, sometimes, only think, act, and understand as through a glass darkly. This is to say, in reducing collective intentionality to an analysis of the psychologies of individuals *qua* individuals, one cannot capture the whole picture. An external perspective is required to examine structural features of collectives in which individuals sometimes feature as mere placeholders. Further, an external perspective will also likely produce different accounts of the relations of groups *qua* groups with other groups. The groups' own accounts have blind spots and so too will a third party, though the blind spots will not be identical to the accounts produced by the groups themselves. Indeed, systemic features of collectives may not even be recognizable by the individuals who compose them.

As Tollefsen plausibly argues throughout 'Collective Intentionality and the Social Sciences' (2002), to say that the ascription of intentional states to groups is possible even in the ignorance of the actual intentional states of its members is analogous to the way in which we interact with other people every day. More specifically, as she cites Daniel Dennett in *The Intentional Stance* (1987), this perspectival difficulty is analogous to the way in which 'we all use folk psychology knowing next to nothing about what actually happens inside people's skulls.'[39] That is, our practice of ascribing intentions to collectives often happens without worrying about the particular intentions of its members. In our ascriptions of beliefs and intentions to other individual people and in our ascriptions of beliefs and intentions to groups, in general, our ability to predict their behaviour is fairly successful.[40] If our interests lay in ensuring cooperation with others, that is, in ensuring the actual sharing of intentions, this interest is naive for the simple reason that we cannot read others' minds – we cannot access others' intentions or read sincerity off of faces infallibly. Luckily, for pragmatic reasons, at least, a lack of infallibility is not wholly damning. Folk psychological ascriptions are not infallible, but they are often the best one can work with. Folk psychology does necessitate that an individual have beliefs about others' beliefs and intentions (this is consistent, at least, with Searle's view). Although analyses that reduce collective intention to 'I-intentions' (plus beliefs) cannot *ensure* cooperation, neither can 'We-intentions'. Lived experience does not offer a way out of this theoretical difficulty, though it may suggest that the theoretical worry expressed by Searle and Velleman is *just* that – a theoretical difficulty akin to so-called hard problems or unanswerable sceptical predicaments. Infallibility is not needed to ensure, in advance of action, cooperation. To put the point the best way I've heard or read it, 'We know and understand intentions *in action*, not apart from or independently of it.'[41]

This paper has argued that both Searle's and Velleman's accounts of collective intention fail, firstly, to draw out the implications of what happens when, at best, intentions can only be *presupposed as being shared* and secondly, are excessively limiting in cases they can accommodate as instances of collective intentionality. Since the ascription of intentions to collectives is possible in ignorance of the actual intentions of the individuals who compose the collec-

tive and since macro-level properties of groups (their intentions, goals, and so on) are multiply realizable, engaging in conceptual analysis in the spirit of Searle and Velleman seems not to be the most appropriate course of action for analysing collective intentionality as it plays out in areas of inquiry attended to by social scientists. Their conceptual analyses seem, moreover, to fail to capture how everyday people engage with others and evaluate others' intentions and sincerity. Pragmatically, we, as a species, are fairly good at navigating a world of people and their feigned versus 'real' intentions by means of watching others' intentions-in-action.

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Notes

1. Thank you to a reviewer for pointing out the following problem, namely how would we tell the difference between presupposed sharing and real sharing? Or, to put it another way, what kind of logic is at work in a claim about really shared intentions?' The quick answer, and the only answer I believe Searle's entire corpus of work (ranging from his views on the philosophy of language, to consciousness, to social ontology) is, we cannot. I do not believe that such an epistemological puzzle can be solved. Practically, and what Searle would, I believe, countenance is that we can see, *over time*, whether intentions were indeed shared or only presupposed as such. Examples in this paper, which follow, illuminate such a phenomenon. Nonetheless, the examples I expound still do not provide an adequate answer to the reviewer's questions. It is possible that at a given point in time, t^1, an intention was indeed shared (though, none of us could infallibly know this) and it is only by t^2, [6], or what have you, that intentions were no longer shared. The passage of time and the doing of actions are the only practical means by which any of us can determine, with varying levels of certainty (but never with certainty), whether any of us shares intentions.

2. The idea that social scientific inquiry can generate reliable predictions is controversial. Nonetheless, some social scientists, most notably economists, insist that the social sciences are capable of isolating projectible kinds and categories and, in turn, are able to generate statistical generalizations or predictions.

3. Gideon Rosen's 'Objectivity and Modern Idealism' (1994) convincingly shows that the idea of mind-dependence itself requires considerable clarification. Hence, invoking mind-dependence as explanatory in delineating the social from non-social is perhaps worrisome. I note this worry, but acknowledge that adequately addressing the issue far surpasses what I am capable of attending to within this paper.

4. John R. Searle. *The Construction of Social Reality*. p. 2.

5. Ibid. p. 6.

6. Ibid. p. 26.

7. Ibid. p. 6.

8. Ibid. p. 10.

9. Ibid. 25.

10. Ibid. p. 24.

11. Ibid. p. 23.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid. p. 24.

14. John R. Searle. 'Collective Intentions and Actions'. p. 414.

15. Ibid. p. 412. My italics added for emphasis.

16. Ibid. p. 407. My italics added for emphasis.

17. Ibid.

18. J. David Velleman. 'How To Share An Intention'. p. 29.

19. Ibid. p. 31.

20. Ibid. p. 32.

21. Ibid. p. 34.

22. Ibid. p. 37.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid. p. 39.

25. Ibid. p. 40.

26. Ibid. p. 45.

27. Ibid. p. 48.

28. Thank you to a reviewer for pressing me on this issue.

29. Margaret Gilbert. *On Social Facts*. p. 288-9.

30. Ibid.

31. Deborah Perron Tollefsen. 'Collective Intentionality and the Social Sciences'. p. 28.

32. K. Brad Wray. 'Collective Belief and Acceptance'319.

33. Ibid.

34. Gilbert. p. 283.

35. I thank a reviewer for highlighting this shortcoming of Searle's 1995 project.

36. Ibid. p. 38.

37. Ibid. p. 41.

38. Ibid. p. 40.

39. Daniel Dennett. *The Intentional Stance*. p. 48 as found in Tollefsen. p. 29.

40. Tollefsen. p. 29.

41. I borrow this thought from a reviewer and thank them for their ability to make succinct a thought I probably never could have.

THE PERSONALIST ETHICS OF W. R. SORLEY[1]

R. T. Allen

Abstract: William Ritchie Sorley introduced into British philosophy the new axiology of value, combined it with an ethics primarily of character and virtues and personal fulfilment as the aim and guide necessary for the proper conduct of life. In *The Ethics of Naturalism* exposed the errors of the Utilitarians' hedonist axiology. He presented his version of ethics of virtue in *The Moral Life and Moral Worth*, and developed it, in the context of a personalist epistemology and a metaphysics which does full justice to personal existence and its values and goal, in *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, which is then taken as the clue to a personalist and thus theist cosmology.

Keywords: Axiology, ethics, ethics of virtues, experience as basis of philosophy, metaphysics, person, personalist, personal fulfilment, Sorley W. R., value, value of person, virtue, virtues.

1. Introduction

It seems that contemporary Analytic philosophy often pays only a very selective attention to the history of philosophy, and may still be affected by the dismissal of all genuine and previous philosophy by the Logical Positivists and the Conceptual or Linguistic Analysts of 60 and more years ago, as shown by a tendency not to discus the things themselves and the real relations among them but propositions about them and their relations in terms of formal logic. If so, then it would be at least be somewhat impoverished by its neglect of the styles, methods and contents of an especially ignored group of British philosophers from the mid-19th century to the 1930s or later, who fit neither into the Empiricist-Naturalist-Positivist stream nor that of the dreaded Absolute Idealists. Among them was William Ritchie Sorley (1855-1935), Knightsbridge Professor of Philosophy at Cambridge (1900-33), primarily a moral philosopher who was among the first to tackle business ethics, and also wrote on political philosophy, and in his *Moral Values and the Idea of God*[2] (the Gifford Lectures, 1913-15), presented outlines and some more substantive parts not only of his ethics and philosophical theism but also of metaphysics generally and epistemology.

This essay is not a full study of his ethics but aims at showing that it is a fully personalist one, centred upon the person and his value. This may be thought to be almost a tautology, for what else could ethics be about? But many systems of ethics, in real life as well in theory, are focused upon other concerns such as the collectivity in the form of the tribe, nation or state, or some future Utopia, to which its members are ultimately subordinate and all others of only instrumental value to it,[3] and the same applies to all consequentialisms, in which the moral qualities of persons are of value only as bringing about some state of affairs external to, and independent of, them. Indeed, in an ethics solely or primarily of laws, still too often seen as the alternative to consequentialism, what is really of value and disvalue are, respectively, the types of action to be performed and those not to be performed, so that the value of the person is the balance of *what* he has done, left undone and should not have done, rather than *himself* in acting as he should.

But first I offer a few comments on the personalist character, not only in content but also in method, of Sorley's philosophy. The latter is equally important, because he is not engaged in the construction of some abstract scheme based on some seemingly simple and 'given' goal or law, as in Utilitarianism along with all consequentialisms, or Kant and any other supposedly comprehensive systems of laws, but looks to the actual moral experience of real persons and thus its history, developments and refinements, and seeks to articulate its inner logic and presuppositions, just as all philosophy should do, and as Sorley always did. He did not say the last word, but he worked on the right lines and with commendable results. Also, as far as I know, Sorley is the first British philosopher to begin examine the nature and types of moral value in the context of an outline of values in general.[4] Before then philosophers and theologians had used the doubly ambiguous noun 'good', as in 'my good' or 'the good for man', which can mean (1a), what is *valuable* for me or all humanity or, (1b), 'objective, end, goal or purpose', which, is taken to mean *good for*, might be very different from (1a); and (2) it also does not distinguish between values and the bearers of value, especially in the plural, so that 'goods' can mean different *types* of good of (1) such moral, aesthetic, scientific or technical, and also *things* which are good in one way or another. Sorley does not explicitly draw these distinctions but he has made an important break with 'good' as a noun, and thus uses 'values' and 'bearers of value' instead of it (see, for instance MVIG, pp. 116-7).

Sorley's personalism is shown also in the rest of his philosophy, in which he breaks with the domination of epistemology in distinctively modern philosophy:

> The problem of knowledge has been too much with us, and has tended sometimes to obscure our view of the realities which knowledge can reveal. We are occupied with the conditions which make it possible for a subject to cognise an object, and we come to think of the self as a mere subject of knowledge even as a sort of spectator set behind a

window, upon whom images of things impinge through the glass.... But it is not thus that the self is either experienced or known. It is never the mere subject of knowledge, but always active and acted upon, a participant in the course of reality, creative and created, fashioned by the force of circumstance, moulding things as it works its way through them, and feeling in its own life every emotion of the adventure. Not only have selves windows, therefore ; we may say that they have doors, through which they go out and in, in daily commerce with the things of nature. There is no such thing as a pure ego: it is simply an abstract conception of the centre of experience; and the centre is perpetually gathering new experience which expands the circumference. In perception, idea and science, as well as in emotion, desire and volition, it does not merely mirror the world; it adds also to its own life, and gives fulness and precision to the ego of experience (MVIG, pp. 220-1).

The whole person also matters in ethics, as we shall see. Also noteworthy in this context is the opening chapter of the same volume wherein he argues for the priority of experience in ethics as elsewhere (see also Ch. VI), and against that of merely metaphysical concepts and Hegel's dialectic, both of which invalidly derive value and obligation from what is wholly non-moral. Indeed, in Chap. II. 'Values', he argues that valuation precedes cognition: we seek to know what we value for practical purposes and that the valuing of knowledge *per se* is a late development of this. Human activity is a part of reality and therefore moral experience must be taken into account in metaphysics. Thus, we may add, the last also has a personal dimension.

Sorley wrote three principal books on moral philosophy, which I shall take in turn. In *The Ethics of Naturalism* he divided 19th C. philosophies into a 'naturalist' stream, which he reckoned to have replaced the 'materialist' one, and a group of 'idealist' streams, the former taking the concepts categories of physical science to apply to all reality, and the latter denying this.[5] Also in that book, he exposed some basic errors in the Utilitarians' hedonist axiology, notably its attempts to move from attending only to one's own pleasure to attending also to that of others, and showed that axiological hedonism, that pleasure is the only value, and psychological hedonism, that pleasure is the only aim of human effort, entail each other, and in effect, that if pleasure were the only value it would not be a value because we could not take pleasure in something because it is good. His own positive ethics is to be found in *The Moral Life and Moral Worth* and *Moral Values and the Idea of God*. The former presents an ethics of character and virtues, with some particularly interesting features, as in the following passage which contains several important points: the person as the real subject of ethics and basis of moral values; the emerging differentiation of morality from custom

and law; its 'internal' character in having to be personally appropriated; its effects on the whole of life; and also shows Sorley's attention to history:

> Morality is internal; it belongs to the inner life. And this is the mark which distinguishes it from the law of the land and the conventions of society. These affect a man from without, direct or limit his activity, and prescribe its sphere. Their operation is external; and they do not touch him at every point: beyond the range of the actions which they require or forbid there are wide tracts of conduct to which the laws are indifferent or which they are unable to cover. Further, they take account only of things done. There is an inner circle of personal life which a man claims as his own, and into which neither positive law nor social rule is able to penetrate. Morality is not limited in this way. It rests on a consciousness of the difference between good and evil; this consciousness influences the springs of action in a man's own nature; it works from within outwards, and is capable of affecting every part of his life (MLMW, pp. 8-9).

Few philosophers have ever faced the question of whether morality applies to the whole of life or just a part. 'Act utilitarianism' would make life an endless striving to realise whatever it holds to be of value or the objective of human life, while any ethics solely of laws and imperatives, and thus of duties and prohibitions, either requires more and more specific laws for all of life, like the Pharisees, or more likely, has some specific duties, a greater number of specific prohibitions, and leaves the rest to choice without moral considerations. In contrast, ethics of values has, or should have, the notion of a morally licit that is not simply morally neutral or indifferent, but has real value as good or right but is not in and by itself compulsory.[6] Also, an ethics of virtues and character, to which Sorley turns, includes the readiness of them to be shown at any time, as when at a party, by helping someone who falls ill or suffers an injury or by not joining in malicious gossip.[7]

Character, Sorley continues, is what we are born with, the result of experience and, above all, what we do with ourselves. It follows that morality is a matter of volition, choice and action upon it, and hence of virtues. But here Sorley, contrary to the vicious dichotomising of much contemporary Analytic philosophy, is aware that most, if not all, generally valuable traits of character, can be put to trivial and really evil causes, and thus require an end, a set of values or valuable objectives, i.e. an axiology, to and by which they should be directed.

> In true temperance the impulses are controlled by the conception of an end worthy of a man's desire; in true courage it is in pursuit of a high purpose that pain and danger are readily faced. The purpose or end, which, in this way, is involved in all virtuous character, cannot be formed without reason. Virtue—if we take the term to include all the characteristics which we call virtuous—is nothing

less than the realisation of goodness in human character ; and it implies some idea—though not necessarily a complete, or even a clear, idea—of the good to be realised. This is the element of truth in the Socratic paradox that virtue is knowledge (MLMW, pp. 20-1.)

Against 'essential asceticism' as distinct from a temporary discipline, and 'reformism' or 'altruism' as the sole meaning and scope of morality, though not in those explicit terms, Sorley rightly says, 'It is the moralisation not the annihilation of ambition and desire that is demanded, the finding of one's true self in others' good as well as one's own, and the bringing of one's sensuous nature into harmony with the realisation of a rational personality', (MLMW, p. 22). The one primary object of morality is therefore the moralisation of the whole self, and not just an isolated 'will' as for Kant, or an ability to calculate consequences or outward obedience to laws. Implicit in this is Augustine's idea of the 'ordo amoris', 'the order of loves', as what we fundamentally are and should become, an idea taken up by Pascal and in our own time by Max Scheler,[8] but first formulated by Plato in Books 4 and 9 of the *Republic*. The whole of the person is a fundamental value and goal, and so is his own fulfilment with and in that of other persons. This is implicitly bringing us near to a conception of personal fulfilment as both what we ought to be and what would satisfy us. Hence Sorley continues by distinguishing 'personal' virtues, primarily temperance, courage and wisdom, and 'social' virtues, primarily justice and benevolence, which necessarily have importance with regard to each other:

> We may therefore define the Personal virtues as those excellences of character which exhibit the due ordering and regulation of the lower by the higher nature, and the culture or development of this harmonious personality. Social Virtues, on the other hand, are those excellences of personal character which exhibit the individual in harmonious relation with other persons—respecting their rights and promoting the common welfare. And the two classes are interdependent: without the personal virtues social good is not likely to be rightly striven after; without the social virtues, the personal character is a monstrosity—seeking individual good in isolation from the community to which all qualities are due and in which all good must be realised (MLMW pp. 23-4).

He also discerned a third group of virtues,

> connected with our attitude not merely to personal and social ends, but to human life as a whole and its final meaning. These are apt to elude exact definition; for the object which determines their scope is not one object amongst others presented in experience. Yet it is this attitude which gives completeness to human character; and room must be found, under a third division, for virtues corresponding to what have been called Theological Virtues' (MLMW p. 24),

or religious ones as Sorley himself calls them, though perhaps 'cosmological' would be better as more comprehensive of the many world-and-life-views. I must pass over the intermediate chapters on the personal and social virtues and merely state that the final chapter, on 'Religion and the Moral Life' does not really answer the initial question of the need for a unifying end, a supreme virtue that differentiates itself into specific virtues, likewise a supreme value differentiating itself into specific values, and how these two are ultimately one, which he left to *Moral Values and the Idea of God*. But at least Sorley does raise here the fundamental question of what human life, and morality with it, is really *for*, one which, as far as I know, Analytic philosophy totally ignores.

Now I turn to Sorley's longest and finest book, *Moral Values and the Idea of God*. In Chapters II-IV he develops a general and a moral axiology, and defends the objectivity of the latter, within the outlines of an epistemology and metaphysics which give due prominence to our necessary personal involvement. In particular Sorley shows that values are essentially related to concrete reality and not abstract notions: as merely thought of, nothing is of value, but has value only as actually or assumed to be real. Nevertheless, universals are as necessary in a formal axiology as they are in a natural science.

In Chapter V he then relates value to personality. While in the natural sciences it is the universal features of things that matter, and thus value does not enter as a subject for study, in the human and thus historical sciences it is the individual person or group of persons that is the object of study, and with them the values that guide them.[9] Moreover, in human life individuality is itself of value and mere repetition of little or no value, as in the prospect of reliving one's life over again without any change. Even more so, persons feel devalued when regarded as just like someone else and, worse, as just the same as some others. Value 'attaches itself to uniqueness only because it is the individual that exists and the individual is unique' (MVIG, p. 116).[10]

What, then, are the bearers of value? Here he explicitly sets aside the intermediate zones of subpersonal life and focuses on the 'extremes' of the merely physical and the personal. Yet he also recognises that things can have similar values for animals although they are not explicitly aware of this. The physical realm has value only in relation to our purposes and thus is instrumental to them, although he admits difficulties over the beauty of natural objects. For, when all reference to a mind as producing them, is excluded, they *would* have aesthetic value only *if* they were works of a mind, and so their colours and forms would be only conditions for value. And the same applies to all judgments of value and disvalue upon the natural world, both as a whole and the particular things with in it. Moral

predicates are applicable only when it and they are not seen as merely physical, living or animate, but as personal or the work of persons. And so all values are ultimately those of or related to persons (MVIG, pp. 117-26).[11]

This leads Sorley to affirm that each race, period and generation, and each stage and moment in the individual's life has or may have its own 'intrinsic' value, and is never a means to the next, as opposed, we may add, to all 'immanentisations of the eschaton' as in Hegel, Marxism and all Utopianisms, which do make every previous age merely a means to the realisation of the final and perfect age. Indeed, continues Sorley, the category of means and end is inapplicable to personal existence. And thus the value and meaning of a particular moment of an individual's life depend upon his purpose. In turn, that is necessarily connected to others in a yet larger whole, not just instrumentally as cause and effect, but organically or systematically, of which institutions and communities are expressions, though all are fragmentary and imperfect. Persons are the real bearers of value, but no persons exist apart from living, or having lived, with others. And so each social grouping and the inclusive one, such as the modern state, has, in a sense, its own purposes, value, duties and rights, guided by its own ideals, and thus has the status of personality and its own moral value in the realisation of values that cannot be achieved by individuals separately. Yet it is not a distinct mind and is constituted primarily by the moral unity of its members rather than their psychical unity (MVIG, pp. 127-32).

Sorley is therefore what some would call a 'communitarian' personalist, but, as sometimes happens, if 'communitarian' is taken as the converse of 'individualist', and especially if all the talk is of '*the* community', we are straight back to the old collectivism and indeed totalitarianism, even if its supposed to be 'democratic'. 'Interpersonal' is a better term.

The social whole leads, via a treatment of 'relative and absolute value' in Chap. VI in which Sorley correctly distinguishes the necessary relevance to the person of, and participation of the person in making, judgments of value from their alleged lack objective reference because of that relevance and participation, to the question of the absolute value, or genuine whole of value, in which the specific values are interrelated and mutually adjusting, and thus 'organic' parts and not 'mechanical' ones, which, as by Bentham, can simply be added to or subtracted from, each other.

> Our first confident assertion of moral right or wrong has been found to lead beyond the immediate experience in order that its significance may be understood and its validity assured. The value of the particular case is determined by its conditions and its issues ; we cannot trust to the mere momentary appreciation as it stands, or may be supposed to stand, alone. When we passed from the particular to the universal, the absolute still eluded us. The axioms and abstract theorems of formal ethics owe their significance to their application to concrete realities. These are parts of the connected structure of reality as a whole; and the values of any portion of this whole may be affected by the relations in which it stands to other portions. Thus, in a system of ethics, our goal would be a whole in which all values are included; and, if this goal is called an absolute, it cannot be related in any external way to the absolute which has been sought along other lines of research. There cannot be two absolutes, one of which, and one of which only, is ethical. We can form a conception of an absolute only as an individual reality which contains harmoniously within itself both the actual order and the moral order (MVIG, p. 159).

The ensuring chapters on 'The Conservation of Value', 'Value and Reality', 'The Division of Reality' and 'The Unity of Reality' fill out the ways in which value and reality are necessarily linked, especially by personal existence and activity, the nature of which is also further developed. They provide the basis for the second part of the book in which Sorley, having examined other arguments for classical theism, then examines other world-and-life-views, finds them metaphysically and morally at fault, and outlines his own argument for philosophical theism based on his personalist ethics, which we cannot examine here and now.[12]

But two central questions about persons and moral value remain incompletely answered.

First, he clearly states that the thoroughly moralised person is both what he ought to be and what will truly fulfil him, and thus unites the realisation of the specifically or narrowly moral values with that of the wider ones or morally relevant ones, as here, even though, as we have seen, he also regards the latter as merely instrumental to, and not as ingredient in, the full realisation of personality:

> As free and rational, persons are also purposeful, seekers of ends. The law which the person recognises as valid for his life is that which tends to the end in which personality is conceived as reaching its true good. This is an ideal, and its attainment must be looked for in the gradual process by which character is built up and conduct brought into rational order. The moral agent is thus compelled to regard his true personality as consisting not in the actual features of the passing moment but in an *is to be*—in something to which he should attain and to which he can at least approximate. This ideal self is conceived as in harmony with the moral values which he recognises, and it is at the same time regarded as the complete realisation of that personality which, throughout life, is always in process of growth. (MVIG, p.191).

Yet to some extent Sorley does not draw the full conclusion from his own argument. As noted above, he takes the unity of values to be one of a whole of parts, albeit an 'organic' and not 'mechanical one, and in this passage from the final chapter he still regards the wider group as independent of the narrower one:

> The content of the moral ideal was not found to be an easy thing to define. A final definition, indeed, is not possible, for knowledge of the moral ideal grows in clearness and fulness as character approximates to it. As we have seen, it can be expressed best as a spirit or tendency in which the higher human capacities and the harmony of man with man triumph over sensual and selfish impulses. This is the characteristic of the good will, that it is guided by the highest and by the spirit of unity with others. But what the higher interests and capacities of man are this question may seem to have received a less distinct answer. Indeed, an answer cannot be given without reference to the other values of knowledge and beauty, for instance which we recognise as having a superior claim to that of the demands of comfortable living or the satisfaction of appetite and impulse. In the widest sense of the word, therefore, ethics might be used to signify the whole realm of values, while morality proper is restricted to the virtuous attitude towards them. Morality includes the will to these values, but the values themselves and their worth are independent (MVIG, p. 518).

Second, as already observed, he does not fully or explicitly grasp the real and *essential* uniqueness of the person which makes us irreplaceable, and is the basis of justice. For the ultimate value of the person lies not in his moral character, as might be supposed, however good that may be. Even the hardened and thoroughly malicious criminal retains some rights, as to a fair trial. Why? Because he is a radically unique person. In purely functional respects, one person can be rightly replaced by another, as when persons incompetent at a given task are removed and others appointed, but as unique value-essences none of us can be replaced.

Elsewhere,[13] I have suggested that the Socratic-Platonic doctrine unity of virtue provides the answer to both, when wisdom is replaced by love. For that is above and beyond any structure of whole-and-parts, and is a fully self-differentiating unity, wholly in each of its manifestation, as shown in the famous Chapter 13 of *I Corinthians*. So, too, are we each a unique stream or style of self-differentiating love, though imperfectly and intermittently at best in this life, where our 'order of loves' can be infected with apathy and, worse, hatred, envy and maliciousness.

In summary, this brief sampling is very inadequate, but I hope it is enough to show that, *sans la lettre*, Sorley was a thorough personalist in his ethics and also to suggest the same in his epistemology and metaphysics. His work is incomplete and at times did not fully overcome subpersonal categories and conceptions. But no one can say everything, let alone at the same time. He moved ethics on from the stale dichotomy of Utilitarianism and Kantian will and laws, still too much with us, even more than Green and Bradley, by looking to experience, the person and personal life, and the new axiology of value. Unfortunately, the later dominance of the anti-philosophies of Logical Positivism and then Linguistic or Conceptual Analysis, wrote him and similar philosophers of his time out of the history books, insofar as they paid any attention to the history of philosophy which was, for them, a mere catalogue of errors, and which still has its effects today. Yet much could be learned by reading him and continuing on the paths which he opened up.

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Notes

1. This article is a fuller version of a paper read at the British Personalist Forum's Conference, 'British Contributions to Personalist Philosophy', Oriel College, Oxford, March 18th-19th 2015.

2. Cambridge, C.U.P., 1918, 3rd ed. 1935: hereafter 'MVIG'. I shall also refer to *The Ethics of Naturalism*, William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1885, and *The Moral Life and Moral Worth*, Cambridge, C.U.P., 1911, hereafter 'MLMW'.

3. On the beginnings of morality in the primacy of the community (but perhaps just as an extended family or household, as well as the clan or tribe), see MVIG pp. 64-72. Too often people revert to such ideas.

4. The only others I know are J. Findlay, in *Values and Intentions* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1961), and, if I may say so, myself in *The Structure of Value* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 1993).

5. It is important to note that, at the time and among those who still study the philosophy of this period, 'idealism' is used in two senses: the narrow one which holds all reality to be spiritual or mental and denies the reality of physical existence or grants it a merely 'phenomenal' status; and the wide one which affirms the full reality and autonomy of spiritual or mental existence as well as that of physical reality. Also, there were several forms of each: monist and pluralist in theist (with sub-versions) or non-theist versions, of the former; and theist and secularist of the latter. In fact, some form of theism was the most common philosophical cosmology among British philosophers throughout this period.

6. Kant raised, but never answered, the question of whether there is such a category, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. M. Gregor, Cambridge, C.U.P., 1991, p. 49 (Royal Prussian Academy edition, pp. 222-3). Note that the right or good is not the same as the allegedly 'imperfect duties', that is duties much of the content of which, such as time, duration and frequency, is unspecified. For no duties are or can be perfectly specified, not even the sergeant's, 'Come here at the double!' because even the speed of the 'double' is variable with something of a lower limit. Moreover, the good and right are not duties in the first place, but wholly discretionary, though we have the very 'imperfect' duty to engage in at least some of such activities for some of the

time, or whatever is not definitely wrong is therefore not just innocent but really good in some way and to some degree and thus it right to engage in it for at least some of our time.

7. Bradley did raise and answer it in terms of character, *Ethical Studies*, pp. 216-7, though most of those who refer to the book seem to fail to get beyond 'My Station and its Duties' and to 'Ideal Morality'.

8. See 'Ordo Amoris' in *Max Scheler: Selected Philosophical Essays*, trans. D.R. Lacterman, Evanston, IL., Northwestern University Press, 1973.

9. Although he wrote on economics and ethics, he has forgotten that economics is the one abstract science of distinctively human life, although sociology has tried to be, and applied economics deals with individual economies, events, periods, and groups, while, conversely, the natural sciences of geology and physical geology also map the actual formations of the earth's surface and subsurfaces.

10. Here Sorley does not distinguish between 'accidental' and 'essential' uniqueness. The former is that of mass production. Any quality that distinguishes one teaspoon of the same size and design from another is purely 'accidental', in both the popular and philosophical meanings of the word, and just the same discoloration, chip or dent could happen to another one, whereas that of persons is 'essential', a radical uniqueness that is irreplaceable. Though philosophers such as Strawson have explicitly denied it (*Entity and Identity and Other Essays*, Oxford, O.U.P., 1997, pp. 3-4), and persist in thinking in sub-personal categories or the wholly abstract ones of formal logic, the poets and writers of popular songs know better: 'Only you' is their constant theme, or in Shakespeare's *Sonnet 84*:

> 'Who is it that says most? which can say more
> Than this rich praise,—that you alone are you?'

11. Sorley has hit on the truth that aesthetic, and other values, are such only for an intelligence that can recognise and attend to and dwell on them, but has not fully articulated it here. The natural object seen or heard has the potentiality for this which is thereby actualised. Therefore the work of a mind, is that actualisation which comes after and not before the existence of the natural object, in what

we do, usually tacitly, when attending *to* natural objects and by selecting and more fully noticing their features, which is itself an incipient work of art, and whose meaning an artist proper then proceeds fully to express in an articulate form such as poem, painting or piece of music.

But Sorley is hampered here by still taking to be exhaustive the ancient distinction between 'intrinsic' and 'instrumental' values, whereas aesthetic ones, plus also those of friendship, are 'ingredient' and are the very qualities of the objects in and for themselves, and colour and mould our experiences and are not distinct and separate events which 'cause' them. (See also, MVIG, p. 166, where 'intrinsic' values such as truth and beauty, are said to be found also to have 'instrumental value' in enhancing personal worth, but they are really 'ingredients' in it.) Conversely, the notion of 'intrinsic value' suggests G.E. Moore's and the 'intuitionists' somewhat naive view that we simply bring to mind, look or hear and thus grasp such values. But in fact we do so within the usually tacit framework of a specific activity such as those which are aesthetic, scientific, interpersonal, or the proper exercise of our self-responsibility, and of the standards which the relevant activity sets both for its performance and its appreciation. See further *The Structure of Value*, especially Chaps. 3-6.

12. In aim, outline and content it largely overlaps with A.E. Taylor's great work, *The Faith of A Moralist* (2 vols., London, Macmillan, 1930; 2nd ed. 1951, one-volume; also Gifford Lectures, 1926-8), especially Vol. I, 'The Theological Implications of Morality'. But whereas Sorley sets out his ethical and metaphysical principles at length in the first part, and then applies them in the second, Taylor takes his, similarly personalist principles, mostly for granted and applies them in far more detail in both volumes. Together they make an impressive treatment of the whole subject.

13. See my *Ethics as Scales of Forms* (Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars, 2014), Chaps. 8, 9, 12 and 13; 'The unity of the person', *The Pluralist*, Vol. 4. No. 1, Spring 2009, pp. 77-8; and 'Raymond Tallis and the alleged necessity of a body for personal identity', *Appraisal*, Vol. 7 No. 4, Oct. 2009, pp. 34-7.

Palgrave Macmillan presents:

Nietzsche and Suffered Social Histories
Genealogy and Convalescence
by
Jeffrey M. Jackson

This book presents a reading of Nietzsche as a thinker of the suffered social histories of subjectivity. It suggests that Nietzsche's concept of genealogy needs the concept of convalescence to be coherent. Genealogy is a form of reflection that traces the suffered scenes of which that reflection is symptomatic, whereas convalescence is the ordeal of reflection's coming to bear its limits within scenes of embodied suffering. This theme is developed by appeals to Freud's notion of mourning and the object relations theories of Melanie Klein and D.W. Winnicott, which insist on the primacy of suffered relationality in the genesis of subjectivity. Moreover, Adorno's notion of negative dialectics and its emphasis on the primacy of the object are suggested as an alternative context within which to read Nietzsche's writing, in contrast with dominant modes of criticism. The discussion will appeal to anyone interested in Nietzsche, critical theory and the relationship between psychoanalysis and philosophy.
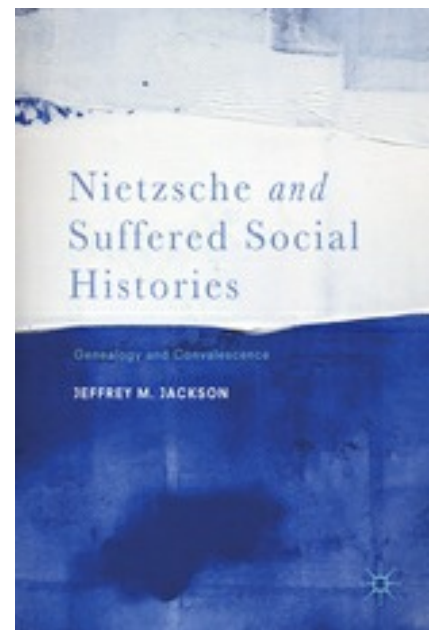
MODERNITY: NO PLACE FOR PERSONS

Alan Ford

Abstract: My aim is to show how the implicit metaphysical background to modernity, commencing with Descartes and still in play today, must make the articulation of the ethical, and value in general, highly problematic, providing at best a strangled voice for their expression. This strangled voice is clearly represented by Wittgenstein's attempt to articulate value, to say the unsayable, in his *Tractatus*, and I attempt to use this and other sources to sketch a 'metaphysics of modernity', which I see as a construct resulting from the key notions of subjectivity and objectivity on the one hand, and of form and contention the other. This creates four broad categories in which the notions of the 'transcendental' and the 'factic' (Sartre's term) play crucial roles. I argue that this must result in an entirely illogical, and unnecessary mystification of the notions of *value*, the *self* and *personhood*, since there is no coherent place for such logically essential notions in this hidden metaphysics, which has slipped surreptitiously into our thinking, making important aspects of it basically irrational. I argue for a radical change in logical priorities, with the ethical in pole position.

Keywords:

1. Introduction

In 1921 Ludwig Wittgenstein created a brilliant synthesis and presentation of the metaphysics that had begun with Descartes, and remain influential in one crucial aspect, until today. I am referring to the *Tractatus*. Of course, as he himself said, his real influences were Hume and Bertrand Russell. Yet these too, as well as virtually all philosophers up until then, including such widely divergent ones as Kant and Sartre, Nietzsche and Husserl, believed that Descartes' distinction in his *cogito* was somehow fundamental: that the self was necessarily a thinker. It had all the credentials, it seemed, of intellectual respectability in that it was *self-evident*: if I think, then I must exist. No matter that this split mind from body and persons from each other in the issue of 'other minds'. Self-evidence, like mathematics, must be true: and ever since, much of philosophy has accepted this premise as fundamental. OK, this is an exaggeration: since then PF Strawson and Wittgenstein himself (in the *Investigations*) and many Wittgensteinians have rejected much of this, but the arguments seem to me to be rather piecemeal. And because I have so little time I shall have to assume the above to be true, for the moment, look at the consequences in a limited instance (indicating that this distinction is irrational), and then, in a bit of philosophical fast-footwork, reveal a better model for the

self, which overcomes problems for the ethical and values generally and banishes the relativism which our culture, because of this implicit metaphysics, insists on sinking into.

Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* is essentially a description of what can be said and what can't. Yet, unlike the Logical Positivists, who thought Wittgenstein was one of them and had consigned ethics to nonsense, he was attempting to find a place for values, and this part of the book, that could not be written, was the more important part. This place was at the limits of the world and language and, for this reason; values (ethics and aesthetics) must be passed over in silence. Yet I argue that there is no need for ethic's strangled voice; and that ethics is necessarily of this world and has in fact *a logical priority over factual terms*. The *Tractatus* is a beautiful, eloquent and unnecessary mistake, based on modernity's fundamental subjectivism.

Cartesian dualism would split into subjectivism or idealism on one side and objectivism (aka realism, materialism and positivism) on the other, and a battle as to which was the essence of the real ensued. Was the world fundamentally ideas, sensations (with objects actually constructs of mind in which solipsism would be the logical consequence); or matter, with mind as its function: as in Identity Theory's 'the mind is identical to the brain'?

Another fundamental distinction, which exercised all, was the Fact-Value split, made much of by Hume and embraced by so many afterwards, and upon which so much was based in the *Tractatus* in the form of what could be said (facts and logical statements) and what could not (values, ethics and art).

I shall use the *Tractatus* as a template to describe the *implicit* metaphysics of modernity, which have subliminally channelled its thinking, and then, all too briefly, point out that these distinctions, so fundamental to modernity, are misconceived and (and that?) a better model for the self and value is available, necessarily based on ethical relations between persons. This, I argue, gives a priority, in an interesting way, to value over fact.

But first to my model of modernity, which I see as a function of the distinctions: subject-object: value-fact; both characterised by their radical and, *ex hypothesi*, lack of relation between their items - subject and object; value and fact. This generates the following, reflected in the structure of the *Tractatus*:The collapse mentioned in the Factic section is actually anticipated at 5.64 where he says, after the comments about 'metaphysical subject', above:

Here it can be seen that solipsism, when its implications are followed out strictly, coincides with pure

	Subject	Object

Value	The 'Metaphysical Subject', at the subjective 'limits of the world'. 'The subject does not belong to the world: rather it is a limit of the world' (5.633) Like the eye, it cannot see itself (but it makes seeing and knowing possible) This Self *shows* itself by its absence, as in the *cogito.* It is transcendental in this sense, not of the world. Value lies at this subjective limit of the pure Self. 'The sense of the world must lie outside the world … for all that happens and is the case is accidental' (6.41)
	
	    An expression of the Ideal or Transcendental Self.
		The Metaphysical Other, at the limits of logic, or language, in the form of the tautology and the contradiction. We don't examine the world to discover that the first is necessarily true and the second necessarily false. They *show* themselves to be so.
		
		    Note: Values (?) of both kinds, like these 'limits', also *show* themselves. It has nothing to do with the facts – these are accidental. But they lie beyond science and mere logic, so neither of these can capture it. We have, essentially, a kind of mysticism.
		
		    An expression of the Ideal or Transcendental Other.
		
		    Value is revealed when one does not want to change the facts and lives according to what is the case, then one 'will see the world aright' (6.54. But '[w]hat we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.

Fact	The 'Factic' Subject as a function of the world; the Psychological Self of conditioning. Its logical conclusion can be seen in Sartre's Nausea, a horrific world and self of total determinism. Wittgenstein's accidental, meaningless world, undistinguishable from the Factic Other.	The Factic Other, into which the Factic Self must collapse, for this is the world as seen by materialism, which has no distinction between self and other: all is one material fact – and 'accidental'. 'In the world everything is as it is, and everything happens as it does happen: in it no value exists …' (6.41)

realism. The self of solipsism shrinks to a point without extension, and there remains the reality co-ordinated with it.

Yet here we see that the collapse is general: the subjective flips into the object! In other words, within this subjectivist metaphysics, idealism (solipsism) collapses into its opposite – materialism, from its very start. This is hardly a basis for philosophy, but it's been implicit for centuries in the West.

The *Tractatus*, like modernity when these implications are followed through, has no room for persons: it is an alien, personless terrain. Yet persons are not essentially thinkers; they are *agents*, as John Macmurray argued all those years ago. Thinking is a *necessary* aspect of a person, but it is not *sufficient*. Macmurray's 'form of the personal' describes this:

1. The self is agent and *exists* only as agent. The self is subject but cannot exist as subject…
2. It can be subject only because it is agent…
3. The self is subject in and for the self as agent…
4. The self can be agent only by also being subject. (John Macmurray *The Self as* Agent, 100-102)

For Macmurray persons are essentially constituted in *relation* to other persons, where care is vital and things are done. I argue in addition that there is a logical priority of ethical relations over thought and logic itself, and that this is an implication of Macmurray's thought.

Macmurray challenges the notion that a self is essentially a thinker in his 'form of the personal', outlined above, which prioritises the person as agent over the self as thinker. This form shows that the agent is the 'positive' which makes sense of the thinker, the 'negative', which is necessary, but not sufficient. This form appears everywhere, e.g. in the notion of context, which makes sense of statements in isolation. In both cases the 'negative' enriches and aids the self as agent, but outside of selfhood in relation there is nothing to enrich.

This comes over in his *'rhythm of withdrawal and return'*. The person withdraws into thought when, a la Heidegger, there is a problem in action. (Of course theoretical physics and mathematics seem to be outside this: but they too have the whole *context* of their histories, which gives them sense and motivation). Yet s/he returns to test the thought in the *context* of the real world. The world can then be enriched and action honed.

I shall end with a brief illustration of this in the personal world. Eleven-month-old Jane has been loved

and feels secure. All seems well. Then Mum says 'Come on, Janey, let's see if you can walk' and places her on her feet. Jane panics: she feels love has been *withdrawn*. She thinks: 'Mum hates me, I hate her etc'. But when she either walks or falls the love is returned and she discovers that her paranoid thoughts are false and that *what goes on in her head* is not necessarily true. In this way she can distinguish between fantasy and reality according to the benchmark of *in her own experience*. This is an example of weaning, which seems to me to continue throughout life, as thought withdraws and returns to check itself with what is the case.

Yet to me this suggests that the context must be governed by the ethical if meaning is to be possible. If Jane's Mum neglects her, there is no real return, no real trust, no benchmark established. The scientist who fakes his results commits a sin against science's Holy Ghost. For thought to work it must have *trust* (would *'faith'* be too strong?) in a real world. The alternatives would seem to be the psychopathic 'I must get the boot in first', or schizoid collapse, as thought withdraws

into mere logical possibility. This suggests to me that thought and logic, both, are logically dependent on the ethical. It is the person in relation that stops the realm of logical possibility from collapsing into itself – and puts it to work. The flip stops there!

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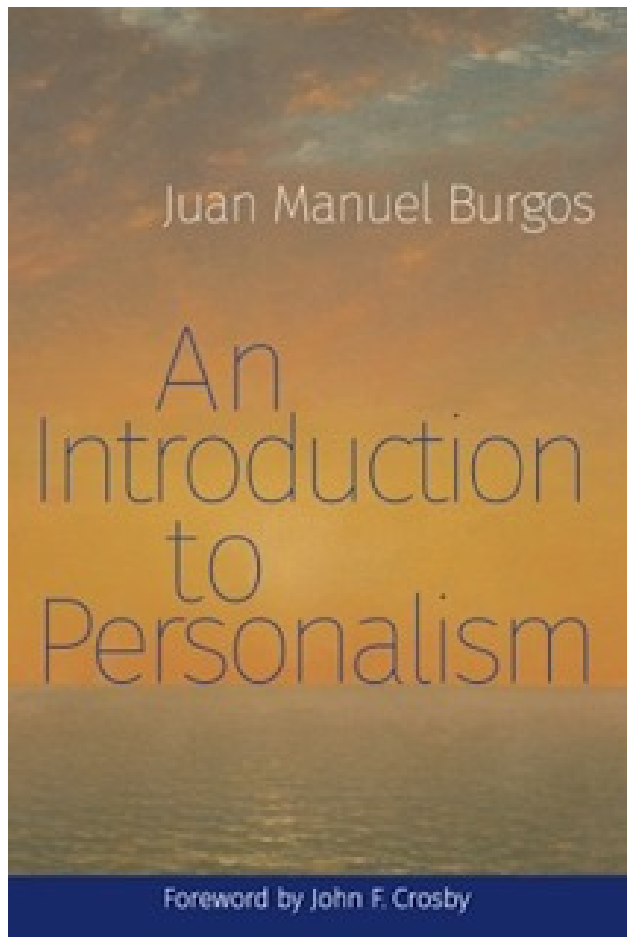
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An Introduction to Personalism

by

Juan Manuel Burgos

Much has been written about the great personalist philosophers of the 20th century – including Jacques Maritain and Emmanuel Mounier, Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas, Dietrich von Hildebrand and Edith Stein, Max Scheler and Karol Wojtyla but few books cover the personalist movement as a whole. *An Introduction to Personalism* fills that gap. Juan Manuel Burgos shows the reader how personalist philosophy was born in response to the tragedies of two World Wars, the Great Depression, and the totalitarian regimes of the 1930s. Through a revitalization of the concept of the person, an array of thinkers developed a philosophy both rooted in the best of the intellectual tradition and capable of dialoguing with contemporary concerns.

Our times are marked by numerous and often contradictory ideas about the human person. *An Introduction to Personalism* presents an engaging anthropological vision capable of taking the lead in the debate about the meaning of human existence and of winning hearts and minds for the cause of the dignity of every person in the 21st century and beyond.

JOHN MACMURRAY,
OBJECT RELATIONS THEORY AND CONTEMPORARY NEUROSCIENCE

James Beauregard

Abstract: Object Relations Theory had an under-appreciated impact on the work of Scottish philosopher John Macmurray. This paper seeks to highlight its influence and to suggest ways in which Macmurray's thought informs contemporary neuroscientific notions of 'person'. The (natural?) sciences in general, and contemporary neuroscience in particular, seek to define, rather than describe or recognize, what a person *is* in categories that cannot fully capture who we are as we live and act in an interpersonal world. Macmurray's Field of the Personal provides us with a conceptual architecture to examine contemporary neuroscience, to gain a clear vision of its strengths and limitations, and to develop a fuller notion of the person that takes into account the findings of contemporary science, while at the same time not being limited to these findings and the conceptual assumptions that undergird them.

This paper will argue that Macmurray's thought is particularly suited to addressing issues in contemporary neuroscientific debates including, but not limited to, our understanding of who/what a human person *is*, and also addressing specific neuroscientific and ethical issues such as free will and human autonomy, neuroscientific research, the ethical uses of neuroimaging technology, current debates around the use of neurologic criteria in brain death, the use of neuroscience in forensic settings, and national security concerns. Macmurray's insights into the nature of the human person provide a methodology and a vision that can address ethical issues in the domains of controversies surrounding what constitutes personhood, persons as agents, social justice, and political decision-making. His Field of the Personal, informed as it is by Object Relations thinking, offers us a way to recognise problematic issues in contemporary neuroscience related to personhood and to provide a constructive solution through a deeper and (broader) vision of the human person adequately conceived.

Key Words: Freud, John Macmurray, Object Relations Theory, Personalism, Ian Suttie, Neuroscience

1. Introduction

Personalist philosophy advances by means of dialogue and presents a vision of the human person unfettered by the limitations of contemporary materialist philosophies. It also encourages conversations across personalist traditions, as was evident, for instance, at the 2015 British Personalist Forum at Oxford, which brought together British, American and Continental Personalists to continue a conversation begun at the International Conference on Persons at the University of Lund, Sweden in 2012.

My purpose herein is to investigate another conversation, one that began in the context of British Personalism decades ago but has lain fallow. As is well-known, philosophy and psychology had a parting of ways towards the end of the 19th century, and psychology proceeded on empirical grounds as it moved forward into the 20th century, and now the 21st. This division disrupted a fruitful conversation about persons that was still in its early stages, one that I will argue is worth reconstituting and continuing.

Stated plainly, this was the conversation: John Macmurray engaged with the early 20th century development of a then novel tradition in psychology, namely Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory. I want to suggest, first, that Macmurray's conversation with? Object Relations thinking real and lasting fruit for Personalism, and second, that Object Relations Theory can (and should) continue to be a source for an ongoing interdisciplinary conversation between psychology and Personalism This paper is an exploration of that historical dialogue that concludes with some reflections on how that dialogue might be relevant for the future of Personalism.

2. Object Relations Theory

Already during Freud's lifetime, clinicians in the psychoanalytic tradition recognised that the retrospective method of considering childhood from the perspective of adult analysis needed to be fleshed out through direct clinical work with children understood in their lived relational world. These thinkers created a new thread in psychoanalytic tradition that came to be known as Object Relations Theory.

2.1 A Most Unfortunate Name

From a Personalist context, the word 'Object' is off-putting, suggesting as it does 'objectivity', 'objectifying', distance and separation rather than constructive relation, a split between subject and object that flies in the face of Personalist thinking. It is important, then, to consider carefully what the word 'object' means in the context of Object Relations thinking, and then to move forward to consider a conversation between Personalism and Object Relations Theory today.

I would like to begin with this preliminary definition: When considering Object Relations Theory, the meaning of the word 'Object' is in fact 'Person' as 'person' is understood in the Personalist philosophical tradition. This commonality in the concept of persons is precisely what makes this broad and varied clinical and theoretical tradition relevant to a contemporary conversation with Personalism.

2.2 The Freudian Matrix

Freudian theory is well-known and long-studied form many different perspectives. In what follows, I focus on some aspects of Freud's thinking and trace their transformation into Object Relations Theory.

When it comes to psychological theories and theories of personality, there are three factors that are essential in the constitution of a comprehensive theory. First, a theory must offer a model of normal development. Second, it must offer a model of psychopathology – that is, it must provide an account of what happens when normal development goes awry; and third, it must offer a theory of psychotherapy or remediation – when one has not developed normally, how does one return to normal living?

Freud offers a theory of normal development, expressed in his well-known psychosexual stages, namely oral (birth to one year); anal (2 to 3 years); phallic (3 to 5 years); latency (16 years); and genital (adolescence through adulthood). Each stage involves focus on a body region (the mouth, anus, genitals). It is in the third stage, the phallic stage, in which the Oedipus and Electra events are worked through more or less successfully. The male child is deeply attached to his mother, feels hostility towards his father (who becomes understood as a rival), and ultimately represses hostility, relinquishes the mother and identifies with the father. For a female child, (the Electra complex), there is also attachment to the mother, but feelings of inferiority, devaluation of the mother and, ultimately, identification with female behaviours that she believes the father will find appealing.[1]

Freud went on to develop and refine his structural model of the mind and in 1923, in *The Ego and the Id*, where he depicts the human mind as composed of interactive forces containing both conscious and unconscious content.[2] A critical factor here (referent?) is that, at base, Freud's theory grows out of a 19th century Newtonian model of physics– an energy model where balance between? must be maintained. Biological drives and instincts find their source of origin in the body, and physiological processes that manifest themselves in psychological operations drive our behaviour, seeking satisfaction, tension reduction, and when considered inappropriate, are to be repressed.[3] Pleasure, is the reduction of tension in a biological system seeking homoeostasis.

Instincts or drives are the phenomena in which we should first consider the concept of 'object'. Instincts, for Freud, have four characteristics: *Pressure*, how much force a biological drive impinges on the mind; *Aim*, the goal of a drive, being satisfaction or the reduction of tension; *Object*, typically a concrete, external thing that has the power to reduce tension or achieve satisfaction (for example, hunger is directed to the object of food, sexual arousal is directed toward another person, also referred to as an object); and

lastly, *Source*, that is, the neurobiological processes that arise in the body and impinge on consciousness, manifested in mental operations.[4] In these terms, that which is an 'object' can vary greatly, being either a thing or a person (maintaining a person/nonperson distinction common to most personalist thinkers); the model implies use of something external for the satisfaction of one's own internal needs. In the end, we are left with a model of biological determinism, where that which drives us outward towards other persons is due to the internal drive to satisfy a need. This is a long way from Macmurray's *Persons in Relation* (1961), though the journey there was already happening during Freud's lifetime.

Freud provides a model of psychosexual development. From this model, it was a short walk to a model of psychopathology. For Freud, mental illness has its origins in the psychosexual developmental stages. Pathology arises when there exists a developmental arrest in other words when someone got stuck in a particular stage. The purpose of psychotherapy is to help people get 'unstuck', that is, to continue along the developmental path and to cultivate healthy adult relationships.

2.3 After Freud: Two Strategies

Some of Freud's contemporaries recognised that his theorising, which relies on biological drives alone, was incomplete. The insight achieved through the clinical work of other early leading theorists who saw not only biological drives seeking tension reduction through external objects, but persons seeking relationships, meaning, and happiness. Responses to Freud's psychosexual stages of development and theory of psychopathology fell into two camps, those who maintained the notion of biological drives as central to? and those who did not (e.g. Melanie Klein, R. W. D. Fairbairn, D. W. Winnicott, Harry Guntrip, Margaret Mahler, Otto Kernberg, Edith Jacobson, and others). Within both camps, Freud's ideas were developed and altered to a greater or lesser extent. What the two traditions have in common is looking to earlier life, from birth to age three, as a critical period of development, rather than focusing on the phallic or Oedipal stage.

The first strategy was one of accommodating Freud and his drive theory. In this tradition drives are stretched and modified based on clinical experience, but biological? drives remain the central motivational force in the person. This tradition included theorists such as Alfred Adler (who placed more emphasis on the role of human interaction, the drive for power and mastery), Carl Jung, and Heinz Hartmann.[5] This work continues in contemporary writers such as Otto Kernberg.

The second strategy aimed at was the development of radical alternatives to the theory of biological drives, a new tradition that would become a source of reflection for Macmurray. A critical difference in this

more radical Object Relations tradition is that many of these early psychoanalysts worked, not with adults, but with children. Consequently, their clinical knowledge and theorising were based not on clinical work with adults looking back on childhood, but on direct clinical care of young children. This experience prompted a reworking of Freudian thinking. It is a living clinical tradition to this day and has had a broad impact both within the traditional psychoanalytic field and across psychotherapies. I will suggest that it also has a significant impact on Personalist philosophy.

This transition has three distinctive characteristics. First, and most importantly, it rejects the notion of biological drives as the primary source of human motivation. Instead, Object Relations theory begins with a recognition that it is more nuanced and full-fledged, developmentally appropriate relationships with other persons that are central to human development and lifelong well-being.

Second, as just mentioned, Object Relations theoretical model developed out of direct work with young children, so in the process of development, there is a psychopathology, and a psychotherapy was formulated from direct clinical experience with young children who were still a developmental 'work in progress'.

Third, rather than seeing the Oedipal stage as the critical juncture in psychological development, the focus of developmental thinking moved back toward the beginning of life. Object Relations focused on the first three years of life and understood this span of time as the most critical in the development of a healthy adult, that is, in the development of a person able to engage in healthy interpersonal relations. An important aspect of clinical work fuelled this insight; the Object Relations theorists mentioned above, in contrast to Freud, worked with individuals experiencing different forms of mental illness, including schizophrenia, and borderline and narcissistic personality disorders. While they reject drive theory, they maintain the idea that psychopathology is the result of a developmental arrest, but that more serious forms of psychopathology are the result of developmental arrests that take place in the first three years of life in the infant/young child's primary relationships. Hence, for these thinkers, healthy development means healthy relational development.[6]

While Object Relations thinkers consciously set themselves apart from traditional (instinctual/drive theory) psychoanalytic theory, there are some central common points between them. The idea of developmental stages that must be successfully negotiated in a normal process of development is maintained. There is, then, a theory of normal development which yields a theory of psychopathology (developmental arrest/relational arrest early in life), as well as a theory of psychotherapy which is, at its base, relational. If damage in interpersonal relations is the source of psychopathology, then a psychotherapeutic environment embodying a healthy relationship allows an individual to traverse their own relational developmental stages successfully as the way to healing. Psychotherapy therefore, foundationally, becomes a healing relationship where what is healed is developmental, interpersonal failures.[7] It is the relational interaction of psychotherapy, an exploration of the patient's relational world, and the actual emotional contact between the therapist and patient, rather than the bringing of unconscious conflict to consciousness, that heal. Psychotherapy is, simply put, the opportunity for a relational 'make over'.

There is one last point to mention before we examine some individual Psychoanalytic and Object Relations theorist, including those important to Macmurray. This is the notion that development is a process of *integration*. It begins with the simple notion that infants cannot see very well, but they can and do feel very deeply. Some feelings feel good, some don't, and it is a fundamental developmental task to integrate these disparate physical and emotional experiences into the recognition of a unified self, and unified others, which is a process that happens in a world of persons.

2.4 The Major Theorists
The next step is to take a brief look at some of the major theorists in this Object Relations tradition, including those explicitly mentioned by Macmurray.

2.4.1 Melanie Klein: Transitions
The key transitional figure in the journey from the drive model to the relational model is Melanie Klein (the first of the 'radical alternative' theorists). She first published in 1919, has been widely influential, and was the first to begin the shift away from a biological drive model toward a relational one?). Like many who proposed a radical alternative to the drive model, Klein worked directly with children. In this clinical work, she soon realised that the process of interpretation and free association, central to classical psychoanalysis, was of little to no use to young children who do not have sufficient intellectual development to engage in an essentially linguistic process that was quite abstract and complex. Thus, what she did –- what she created –- is what is still done today: therapy with children happens in the context of play.

Through observing, participating in, and discussing a child's play in an age-appropriate way\, that which causes conflict, that which marks a developmental arrest, and consequently, the path to healing is revealed. Practically speaking, the psychotherapy setting for Freud was a couch and the psychoanalyst's chair positioned out of sight. For Klein, the psychotherapy setting can be a doll's house or other similar environment.

Klein made several important contributions that were integrated into the tradition of Object Relations. Perhaps the most important was the notion of 'inter-

nal objects' and the role of 'fantasy'. For Freud, fantasy was a consequence of frustration–- an alternative to the direct satisfaction of the drive–- the internalisation of parental voices that ultimately become the superego. For Klein, the child's rich inner world involves mental images of others that are initially partial or fragmented, but that in time and in the context of healthy relationships, become integrated into the recognition of whole persons. In other words, a child comes to see a parent as someone with both good and bad features, as one who both satisfies and frustrates, and for Klein, the driving force in these interactions is love. Klein recognises that this integration of different images is a difficult process and those who do not attain it early in the development of the process could suffer from severe psychopathology as adults. Not surprisingly, she was a major contributor to early studies of mother-infant relationships.[8] She saw the infant is born into a web of relationships that are internalised and that our nature as persons is directed toward making connections with others.

2.4.2 Ian Suttie

Ian Suttie is a psychoanalyst explicitly mentioned by Macmurray. Suttie's thought informs Macmurray's book *Persons in Relation* (1961). Suttie is a lesser known figure as he published only one book, *The Origins of Love and Hate* (2014; first published in 1935) and died prematurely. He began his work in conscious reaction to Freud, questioning the legitimacy or Freud's psychosexual developmental stages and moving into a more relational model. He described an infant as having 'an innate need-for-companionship which is the infant's only way of self-preservation'.[9] From the perspective of this relational world, he criticises views that seek to understand infants from the perspective of animal models, focused as they are on biology, organism, and survival. Instead, he views the human infant as a person seeking relation. He writes that 'the need for a mother is primarily presented as a need for company and as a discomfort in isolation'.[10] The human infant 'is adapted to its nurtured role in life and is not a bundle of instinctive impulses'.[11] In Macmurray's terms, Suttie had made the conceptual move from the Field of the Biological to the Field of the Personal.

2.4.3 W. R. D. Fairbairn

Macmurray did not directly quote the work of fellow Scotsman W. R. D. Fairbairn, but these two names are often mentioned together? in context. Fairbairn too was influenced by the work of Suttie. Of the early twentieth century Object Relations theorists, Fairbairn is critically important for considerations today; in the 1940s, he was the first psychoanalytic writer to abandon Freud's drive/structure model altogether, and to develop a truly relational/structural model of persons, creating an intellectual consonance with Macmurray's work.[12]

For Fairbairn, 'human experience and behaviour derive fundamentally from the search for a maintenance of contact with others'.[13] His theory of development is one of relational development, with healthy development promoted by being born into a loving relational world, whereas the child that is not able to develop normal connections, whose patterns of connecting need repair, develops psychopathological relationships. For Fairbairn, relation, not biological drives, is primary. When a child develops in a healthy manner, she develops into an adult who has rich capacity for mutuality with other persons.[14] Separation and individuation are part of this developmental process, and the purpose of separating out is to establish healthy adult relationships. Like Klein, a process of integration with? is essential and relationship is a learning experience both for mother and infant.

In Fairbairn's analysis, in a relational world it is meaningless to speak of isolated persons or of purely intrapsychic processes. It is also nonsensical to speak about 'objects' that satisfy biological drives. To think about or talk about persons is to talk about a human's relational history. Psychotherapy, for Fairbairn, is also a relational process in which an individual enters into a healthy relational interaction with another human being – the therapist – and in this context, is able to move through the developmental process again in order to move towards a healthy maturity that is both mutual and interdependent.

For anyone who is a Personalist, this is familiar territory. Lastly, and vitally for today's often fragmented world, it is Fairbairn who explicitly expanded the notion of who could constitute the role of 'mother'. He understood this (see Fairbairn, An Object Relations Theory of the Personality. New York: Basic Books,1952) to mean any person who was an infant's primary caretaker, and all of those who provided the kind of environment that allowed the child to become a healthy child and, in turn, a healthy adult.

2.4.4 D. W. Winnicott

The last Object Relations writer I want to gloss before moving onto Macmurray is D. W. Winnicott, himself a paediatrician before becoming a psychiatrist. Like Fairbairn, Winnicott is a purely relational thinker who depicts the human infant starting life as a unity/fusion with the mother and who later enters into a process of separation for the purpose of reconnection to others in healthy adulthood. Normal development happens in a safe environment where a child can explore and relate and where the mother provides a mirror for the child, reflecting the child's own experiences, gestures, facial expressions and emotions.[15] Normal development happens in the context of loving relation, psychopathology results from disturbances in that early relation, and psychotherapy is a process of healthy re-parenting. It was he who gave us the psychotherapeutic term 'the holding environment' – the therapeutic replication of the mother's holding and interacting with her infant that is reliable, attentive,

responsive, and non-judgemental.[16]

3. John Macmurray and Object Relations

With this Object Relations Theory in mind, we can move to a consideration of Macmurray's work, to look at some similarities between Object Relations and Personalist philosophy, and then to the consider how these can address some problems in neuroscience that I will touch upon in conclusion.

3.1 Macmurray's Three 'Fields'

Macmurray's philosophical project involves an articulation of the nature of the Personal. In his description of the modern philosophical period (Macmurray, Interpreting the Universe, 1933), he highlights what he terms 'Forms' or 'Fields', which can be seen as a kind of conceptual architecture for talking about persons and in understanding what it means to be a person. He notes that our central philosophical questions change as a new age emerges, and that the central philosophical question today is that of the Personal.

3.1.1 The Field of the Material

Looking back at the scientific revolution and its consequences, Macmurray worked in chronological order (recognising that we do so, 'in fact, from the Field of the Personal'). He with a description of the Field of the Material, where mechanical analogy, building on Newtonian physics, became a way of thinking about persons. This is a world of determinism where no real freedom exists, leaving us with the Cartesian problem of how mind and body interact.[17]

3.1.2 The Field of the Organic/Biological

Macmurray notes that this epoch was followed by the Field of the Organic/Biological, growing out of nineteenth century science, particularly biology, and, later, evolutionary biology. Characteristic of this worldview and thinking about persons is the word 'organism.' Persons are talked about and understood in organic categories, employing organic analogies, and ultimately, animal categories that have been with us since ancient Greece.

The organic analogy also expanded in the history of thought to a societal analogy: society viewed as an organism engaged in the Darwinian struggle for survival. It was out of this intellectual matrix that Freud's thinking emerged, and the source of his energy model of intrapsychic conflict. Macmurray argues that, in the end, this organic vision is poor way of thinking and talking about persons.

It is here, in the Field of the Organic, that consciousness arises in the animal world. It is a world that continues to operate in an essentially deterministic mode. It is not one of matter in motion obeying Newtonian laws, but in the stimulus and response paradigm of all biological organisms and, by extension, communities in a process of adaption to environment. Looking ahead for a moment, this is where contemporary neuroscience came into being, and

where it continues to exist and operate.

3.1.3 The Field of the Personal

Macmurray recognised early on that mechanical and organic models are insufficient for talking about persons because they fail to take into account that which is specifically personal. In *Persons in Relation*, he describes the attempt to think of persons by these analogies as a 'categorical misconception', which is 'a misconception of one's own nature'.[18] To enter the field of the personal is to move from thought to action, to view the self as a free agent, to understand Person rather than the mechanical or organic as primary, and to understand that the previous Forms/Fields are included in the Field of the Personal, but are not reducible to those Fields. In Macmurray's view, it is only as persons, and through a process of abstraction and subtraction – by 'subtracting' the personal, we are left with the Field of the Organic, and by further subtracting the organic, we are left with the Field of the Mechanical– that we can understand Fields of the Organic and the Material, and that they are included in the Personal. In his words:

> The concept of 'a person' is inclusive of the concept of 'an organism', as the concept of 'an organism' is inclusive of that of 'a material body'. The included concepts can be derived from the concept of 'a person' by abstractions; by excluding from attention those characteristics which belong to the higher category alone.[19]

For Macmurray, we are free agents in relation. In order to make such a statement, he had to say something about how we got to that point, and it is here that he comes into conversation with Object Relations theory.

4. Philosophy and Object Relations, Object Relations and Philosophy

Science operates in an empirical mode of investigation, as it has since the beginning of the scientific revolution, and the field of psychology adopted that vision when it broke away from philosophy in the late 19th century. Psychology's departure from philosophy and its establishment as a separate discipline can be viewed in terms of psychoanalytic adolescent rebellion. In classical psychoanalytic theory, we cathect, that is, we invest energy in other objects, and in the process of adolescent separation, we 'decathect', that is, withdraw from our early relationships with our parents. However, the separation comes at a price – part of us gets left behind. If you picture a full moon and then a quarter moon, it gives a sense of what happens when an adolescent move away from the parental matrix. An adolescent has left part of its psyche behind and needs to refill that part with other relationships –- in this case, the peer group. What was whole and unified becomes fragmented, and other objects must fill the gap.

In this process of separation from philosophy and

the adoption of the empiricist methodology of the hard sciences, psychology left behind a holistic and comprehensive way of looking at persons and filled that gap with empiricism. This plays out in contemporary neuroscience, which repeatedly tries to provide a fixed, closed definition rather than a description of persons, a closed definition derived through empirical means, employing the forms of the mechanical and organic as its intellectual tools. This is, I suggest, a project doomed to failure.

4.1 A Conversation Begun and Lain Fallow

It is in the face of this failure, as I see it, that Macmurray's philosophy comes to the fore, where it engages with Object Relations Theory, and where it provides the far more holistic vision of person that I want to suggest can engage in a conversation with science, a conversation for which Murray provided the conceptual tools.

It is with this in mind that I want to turn specifically to Macmurray's book *Persons in Relation* wherein he specifically references the work of Suttie, and where, I suggest, Macmurray presents a clear and well-written chapter of developmental Object Relations Theory where the word 'object' gives way to 'person'.

4.2 Persons in Relation: Mother and Child

For both Macmurray and Object Relations Theory, we are born into a relational matrix. Everything that happens subsequently, for good or ill, stands on this foundational interaction.

4.2.1 An Object Relations Essay in Philosophy/A Philosophy of Object Relations

It is in the second chapter of *Persons in Relation* that Macmurray takes a psychoanalytic turn and develops a theory of normal human development. By implication, he develops a theory of psychopathology and of healing, three processes known to most persons over the course of their lifetime.

4.2.2 Becoming Persons

In this chapter, 'Mother and Child' (from *Persons in Relation*) Macmurray begins with explicit reference to Suttie's *The Origin of Love and Hate* in his criticism of the organic analogy. The fundamental error, Macmurray insists, is 'the attempt to understand the field of the personal on a biological analogy, and so through organic categories'.[20] For Macmurray,

> The general result of these convergent cultural activities–– the Romantic movement, the organic philosophies, idealist realist, and evolutionary science–– was that contemporary thought about human behaviour, individual and social, became saturated with biological metaphors, and moulded itself to the requirements of an organic analogy. It became the common idiom to talk of ourselves as organisms and of our societies as organic structures; to refer to the history of society as an evolutionary process and to account for all human action as an adaptation to environment.[21]

This, he insists, is largely useless in the attempt to understand human persons:

> It was assumed, and still is assumed in many quarters, that this way of conceiving human life is scientific and empirical and therefore the truth about us. It is in fact not empirical; it is a priori and analogical. Consequently it is not, in the strict sense, even scientific. For this concept, and the categories of understanding which go with it, were not discovered by a patient unbiased examination of the facts of human activity. They were discovered, at best, through an empirical and scientific study of the facts of plants and animal life. They were applied by analogy to the human field on the a priori assumption that human life must exhibit the same structure.[22]

But personal life doesn't do this. Macmurray insists that if we want to move into the Field of the Personal, to that which is unique to persons, to categories specific to persons, we must abandon categories that do not apply, specifically an exclusive use of the mechanical and the organic and look at the Personal itself. Macmurray takes us out of these inadequate analogies with a striking statement that the human 'infant has no instincts'.[23] By instinct, he means 'a specific adaptation to environment which does not require to be learned'.[24] What we have instead are habits that we slowly learn over time. Human infants, on Macmurray's view, are born in a state of near helplessness, instinct-free, in a situation complete dependence on other persons. We are, from the moment of birth, given one adaptation capacity. Born into a world of relations, the human infant is, in Macmurray's words,

> 'adapted' to speak paradoxically, to being unadapted, 'adapted' to a complete dependence upon an adult human being. He is made to be cared for. He is born into a love relationship which is inherently personal. Not merely his personal development, but is very survival depends on the maintaining of this relation; he depends for its existence, that is to say, upon intelligent understanding, upon rational foresight. He cannot think for himself, yet he cannot do without thinking; so someone else must think for him.[25]

Following Suttie, Macmurray's infant exists from the beginning in a world of relation, one in which biological thinking is insufficient to describe the interactions between a mother and infant. Macmurray states (*Persons in Relation*) that much that happens in the mother-infant relationship is not in fact essential for purely biological survival. There is much in a mother's taking care of an infant that is not biologically necessary for survival. In his words,

> It seems impossible to account for it except as an expression of satisfaction in the relation itself; in being touched caressingly, attended to and cared for

by the mother. This is evidence that the infant has a need which is not simply biological but personal, a need to be in touch with the mother, and in conscious perceptual relation with her. And it is astonishing at what an early age a baby cries not because of any physiological distress, but because he has noticed that he is alone, and is upset by his mother's absence. Then the mere appearance of the mother, or the sound of her voice, is enough to remove the distress and turn his cries into smiles of satisfaction.[26]

The child's play is different from play among animals. For animals, play is preparation for biological maturity, while for humans it is preparation for a life of personal maturity and interpersonal relations.[27] The ultimate purpose of play, and of the acquisition of the skills and habits that occur through it, is, for Macmurray, for the child 'to take his place as a member of a personal community, and not to fend for himself in natural surroundings.'[28]

Personal experience involves communication, not just learning to talk, but learning to understand, which is something that happens in relation with other persons. And it is here, concluding a discussion about speech, that Macmurray comes to his main point, the point of the personal, when he writes:

> Thus, human experience is, in principle, shared experience; human life, even in its most individual elements, is a common life; and human behaviour carries always, in its inherent structure, a reference to the personal Other. All this may be summed up by saying that the unit of personal existence is not the individual, but 2 persons in personal relations; and that we are persons not by individual right, but in virtue of our relation to one another. The personal is constituted by personal relatedness. The unit of the personal is not the 'I', but the 'You and I'.[29]

5. *Macmurray and Contemporary Neuroscience*
The final step is to look at Macmurray, philosopher and Object Relations theorist, as a way of expanding the generally accepted, physicalist neuroscientific vision of person and as a way to engage in that conversation.

5.1 The Neuroscientific Vision
Neuroscience is, first and foremost, science – that is, it operates from an empirical perspective and uses empirical methodology in its investigations of the human brain. But, like all relatively new endeavours (getting off the ground in the 1970s), it tends to overreach, that is to say, it tends to assert that it can provide a comprehensive definition of what it means to be a person. The extreme of this position has been termed neuroessentialism in which brain is equated with person, a fundamentally functionalist biological vision that makes it impossible to understand and describe persons fully, that is, it cannot encompass what is unique to persons, such as freedom, self-determination, and personal relation.[30]

5.2 Approaching Science from Macmurray's Perspective
Macmurray's thought provides a vital corrective to this problem of physicalist notions of person in his extensive development of the Field of the Personal and particularly, in his notion that when we think about the biological and material world, we do so as persons.

5.3 Beginning with the Personal
British Personalism knows that there is far more to science than the scientific method. Michael Polanyi was eloquent about all the things that happen outside of methodology in science, and he recognised that it is Persons who do science. Macmurray, I think, provides a further vocabulary to engage in real conversation with neuroscience. Neuroscience needs an expansion of its vision to include all aspects of persons, and a deeper knowledge of what neuroscience has to contribute, as well as the limits beyond which it cannot go. A critical aspect of this task is to approach persons in the correct order, beginning with the personal, and recognising how persons are constituted, which takes is well beyond the mechanical and the organic.

6. *Macmurray as Corrective*
We have John Macmurray's thought, informed as it is by Object Relations and the development of a relational vision of personhood, which can be a corrective to the physicalist (mechanical/materialist and organic) limitations of neuroscience.

6.1 Persons: Envisioning the Human
Many a British Personalist would, I think, say that human beings can be described, but not defined. Science is of its very nature open-ended, as it must remain open to new findings and to new data that may yield new interpretations. It operates, though, in a manner which can study discrete aspects of reality which lend themselves to closed definition, namely, the physical world. This is both a strength and a limitation. Its strength is a description of some aspects of the world, while its limit is that these aspects cannot fully capture who we are, despite its claims about what it means to be a person from a physical, organic, or functionalist perspective. Personalism comes much closer to a comprehensive vision, in its understanding of the relational world into which we are born, in which we develop and in which we live out our lives. Macmurray gives us a vision of personhood in relation that can, I think, push back against too reductionist a vision of ourselves. Polanyi wrote that a scientist who makes a discovery must communicate that discovery to other scientists and must do so to some extent in the current language of science, even when pushing science beyond its current limits. This, I want to suggest, is what Personalists need to do for neuroscience today. The power of neuroscientific thinking is pervasive in the press, and many of its excesses? remain believable to those who read a

media in which a broader understanding of persons is absent.

6.2 Persons and Neuroscience

How then can this be done? By bringing a Personalist perspective to the many issues that neuroscience attempts to take on, define, and about which it attempts to write the last word. Some of these areas include the nature of personhood itself, free will and human autonomy (on the neuroscientific view we don't have any of these). A Personalist perspective also allows for consideration of the related issues of our moral life and moral responsibility, the nature of human consciousness as agency, issues around neural enhancement through pharmacology and assistive technologies, neuroscience and justice (which also touches in the domain of moral and legal responsibility), the bioethical issues of autonomy and informed consent, questions of persons and the philosophy of technology, and ethical issues that arise at the intersection of neuroscience in the military, to name only a few.

In my view, it is by making a Personalist vision available to the wider culture that the harmful reductionist trends of materialism that have been with us since the beginning of the scientific revolution can be adequately countered, and this will only be to our good.[31]

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BOOK REVIEWS

Two Books by Bogumil Gacka:
European Personalism, Stowarzyszenie Naukowe Personalism, Warsaw, 2014, 235 pp;

Personalism in Economy, Stowarzyszenie Naukowe Personalism, Warsaw, 2012, 121 pp.

I was surprised not to see our friend Bogumil Gacka, Chairman of the Department of Christian Personalism at the Cardinal Wyszynski University in Warsaw and a stalwart of the Internal Conferences on Persons, at the 14th Conference held at Cosenza-Rende in Italy in May. But a student from his Department was there and gave me as a present from him copies of these two books. Each is in both English and Polish on facing pages.

In *European Personalism* two or three persons are selected to represent each of English, French, German, Polish, Russian and Italian Personalism, though the *Introduction* does mention some others. As only to be expected, in such a short work (60 pages in each language and a rather large font for the size of the pages) the treatment of each author is inevitably brief. I was somewhat surprised at the actual choices. For example, in the *Introduction*, as well as Newman, and Macmurray, who are selected for English Personalism, John Grote is rightly listed but also H. Wildon Carr (1857-1931) for his *The Unique Status of Man* (1928) and J.M.E. McTaggart. I vaguely remember Wildon Carr but not that book, and McTaggart, though a personal idealist in fact was never numbered among the others who dissented from Absolute Idealist, probably because his a priori and atemporal metaphysics was too divergent from them. A much more representative of that school would be its initiator and leading light, Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison. Some of us would also suggest Michael Polanyi or Austin Farrer. Again, Renouvier, Maritain and Mounier represent French Personalism, though Descartes, Maine de Biran, Ravaisson, Marcel and Bergson are also mentioned, of which Marcel should have been featured, and to which Nédoncelle and Ricoer could have been added. This does show that the author knows that not even French Personalism began with Mounier, let alone Personalism in general. German Personalism is represented by Scheiermacher, W. Stern and Max Scheler, but no one else, such as Dietrich von Hidlebrand and Edith Stein, is even mentioned. American Personalists, on which the author has already published a book (Lublin 1995), are listed in the *Introduction*, along with Juan Manuel Burgos as the leading Spanish Personalist.

It is easy to be critical of the selections in a short introductory book on such a theme, and for those who are unaware of the existence, let alone the extent, of personalist philosophy in Europe, this book does serve to make it and some of its notable contributors, more widely know.

As far as I know, economics has been rather neglected by personalists, and some who have dealt with it have make serious mistakes (see my article in *Appraisal* Vol. 9, No. 4). In *Personalism in Economy* the author identifies with personalist economics with Roman Catholic Social Teaching, and especially with John Paul II. This unfortunately excludes the work of such as Michael Polanyi, a undoubted personalist though not by name, who contributed significantly both to economic theory and economic policy. It is gratifying to see that John Paul II, when he denounced 'capitalism' as much as he did Marxism, use the word in its original Marxist meaning of the ideology of *laissez-faire*, almost wholly unregulated business and industry along with the dominance of those with capital, as experienced in the industrialisation of Britain in the early decades of the 19th C. It is very unfortunate that even the most ardent advocates of a free economy use this Marxist term. Roman Catholic Social Doctrine is quoted as explicitly recognising markets and free trade as the most efficient ways to generate resources, and that a centrally planned economy to be destructive and a denial of personal freedom. Thus by and large the principles and policies outlined in the book are genuinely well meant to smooth the inevitable ups and downs and disruptions of any economy, and to provide, as all economists have recognised, those public goods which a market cannot or should provide, though how they could be implemented does require some more specific examples, otherwise they could be interpreted as requiring serious over-regulation of the economy. There are, I suggest, serious worries about this that need to be addressed. Furthermore it is not enough these days simply to recognise the need for a free market and free trade, but also to defend them. Personalists, believing in the importance of personal freedom and self-responsibility, ought especially to master and promote the basic of economic theory and prime policies, such as supply-side policies and the Laffer curve, which shows how reducing and simplifying taxation generates more remove while raising taxes has the opposite result. Still, we can never everything at the same time, and this short book does make a real contribution to the serious consideration of economic policy which, along with that of economic theory, personalists urgently need to undertake.

Richard Allen

Lucian Blaga: Selected Philosophical Extracts, eds. Angela Botez, R.T. Allen, Henrietta Anisoara Serban. Delaware/Malaga: Vernon Press 2018, 192 pp.

In the space afforded by a relatively short book, less than 200 pages, the editors accomplish a great deal in selecting centrally important extracts from the complex, prolific and illuminating writings of Lucian Blaga (1895-1961), the son of a village priest in what is now Romania, and an influential and prominent philosopher between the two world wars. After WWII Soviet Russia imposed a communist regime upon Romania, and Blaga lost his university post and was forbidden to publish. Now all his works are published in Romania, which also include poetry, plays and a novel. This admirable selection focuses virtually all Blaga's major philosophical themes, in his own words, with a very useful introductory chapter by the editors, who also introduce each chapter on the specific themes dealt with therein.

In the Foreword, Calvin O. Schrag writes 'It has been said of Dostoyevsky that he was Russia's greatest metaphysician. With equal propriety is can be said of Lucian Blaga that he was Romania's greatest metaphysician'. This clearly indicates the weight attributed to him by those familiar with his works.

A polymath, Blaga assimilated and wrote about subjects as various as epistemology, metaphysics, aesthetics, philosophical anthropology, philosophy of history, philosophy of science, and philosophy of religion, and at the same time locating them all in his centrally important notion of culture, with all the implications for the profound differences in cultural *style*. Style is another important notion that relates to the whole of his epistemology with its illuminating, synoptic urges. For example, in Chapter Ten, where he writes about the importance of the *spatial horizon* in cultures, seen so variously in Russia, Egypt, Arabia, Greece, South America and his own beloved Romania. This is a subtle, complex and rewarding notion, linked to his idea of Mioritic Space, which embraces music, architecture and landscape of a particular culture, which he calls 'cultural morphology', but insists that the culture is more fundamentally founded on the deeper, unconscious notion of 'abyssal noology', where a deeper expression and outlook of a culture is found in, 'a well-structured and relatively self-sufficient psycho-spiritual reality' (p133) which all cultures have in common (and which it seems to me is what enables us to understand other cultures, if we are attentive). This 'deeper expression' is based in structures similar to Kant's categories. Consciousness (a feature of cultural morphology) can 'betray' style, the true expression of a culture at this deeper level, by its conditioned and too focussed interference. This resembles Anton Ehrenzweig's ideas about the creative relations between consciousness and the unconscious in individual creativity, seen in his *The Hidden Order of Art* (Paladin 1970), critical of, though based on

Freudian theory, but which it seems is also sympathetic to Blaga's more Jungian approach.

Some of his ideas can be seen to have features in common with such as Thomas Kuhn, Michael Polanyi, Merleau-Ponty, John Macmurray and, in child psychology, D. W. Winnicott. Although very far from identical all have illuminating things to say about the nature and necessity of culture, finding original ways of escaping from the Cartesian idea of the isolated self, which led to the shallows of scientism, materialism and positivism, with their pseudo-problems of mind-body, fact-value etc.

Yet Blaga has a large space for fruitful dilemmas and antinomies, especially those that he suggests *cannot* be resolved, like his example of the wave-corpuscular theory of light in quantum physics. We have to live with these and accept that knowledge cannot always dissolve the mystery of what is. The response of Kuhn, though, might be that we need to look at the problem with an entirely different paradigm. This is where Blaga's two notions of knowledge arise: Type 1, what he calls paradisiac knowledge, which applies to normal problem solving by logic, normal awareness of a world we take for granted, whose luminous example is science; and Type 2 knowledge, which he calls Luciferian knowledge, which deals with 'mystery', new realms of once un-comprehended and even incomprehensible reality, which he calls minus knowledge, which has no conscious presuppositions but allows the unconscious to offer 'solutions'. This might resemble what's been said about Kuhn, above, where these new forms of knowledge can totally reorient an approach to existence. But, having said that, Blaga insists there are logically irresolvable dilemmas that indicate the presence of what he calls The Great Anonym, which he is happy for people to call God if they wish. Within his metaphysics and meditations he concludes that the Great Anonym is the great creative force that created the universe, but in its infinite fecundity is able to continue self-creation *ad infinitum*, but who has to relinquish this creativity because there would then be lots of 'gods' who, through their creative and contradictory wills, would cause chaos and consequent destruction of the universe. Thus, the Great Anonym relinquishes his creativity for the good of his creation. Thus, a moral act underpins existence. But He, She, It is aware that humanity, through its burgeoning knowledge, could one day rival The Great Anonym and, through humanity's will, cause chaos and the destruction of existence. For this reason, knowledge for humanity is made to exist in impenetrable mystery, but out of this comes man's rich creativity, constantly trying to find absolute knowledge and constantly and necessarily failing, but creating wonderful approximations to it, in all the sciences, arts and religions. It seems all such notions are seen as heuristic. Now this, as we can see, is once more consonant with Kuhn, who

is quite aware that paradigms will never capture what is, without remainder.

These extracts take us on an adventure of ideas, at which a review can only hint, and although the language and some of the ideas might at first seem a little 'grandiose' for hardboiled westerners, they are worth persisting with. There are lots of insights, which open up other ways of seeing, other realms of meaning, which shine light on current and eternal philosophical issues.

The Introduction and the introductory passages at the start of each chapter are helpful and the Glossary, explaining each of the sometimes seemingly esoteric neologisms, which all link in an overall synoptic theory, helps in charting one's course. I believe the journey is very worthwhile for the reasons already given as we try to interrogate the mystery of existence.

As an introduction to Blaga, which goes beyond the superficial in some detail, this book is admirable, despite its compact format.

Alan Ford
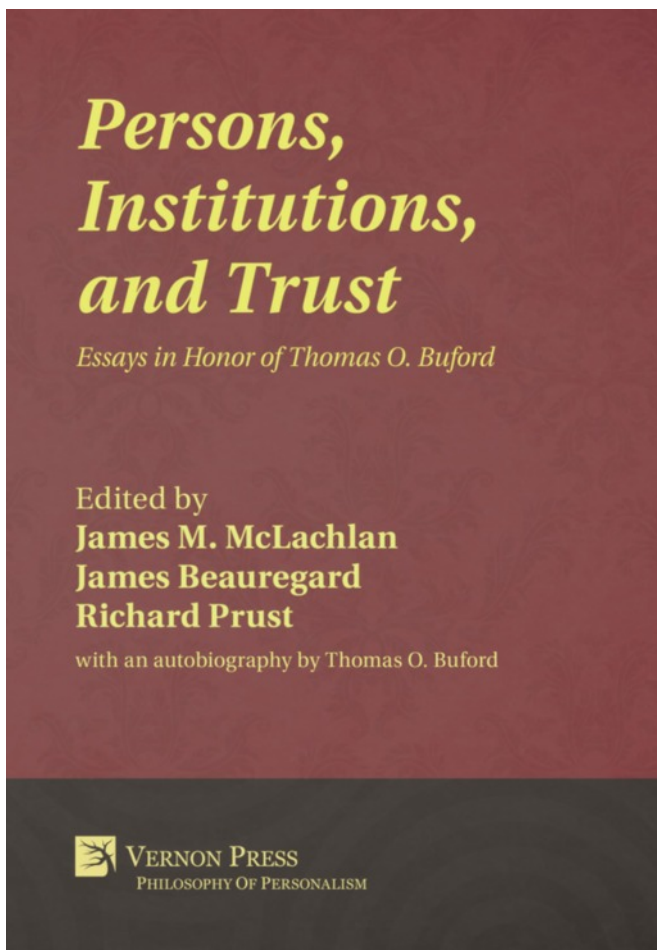
Vernon Press Presents

Persons, Institutions, and Trust
Essays in Honour of Thomas O. Buford

edited by

James M. McLachlan
James Beauregard
Richard Prust

The papers presented in this volume honour Thomas O. Buford. Buford is Professor Emeritus in Philosophy at Furman University where he taught for more than forty years. Several of the papers in this volume are from former students. But Professor Buford is also a pre-eminent voice of fourth generation Personalism, and Boston Personalism in particular. Personalism is a school of philosophical and theological thought which holds that the ideas of "person" and "personality" are indispensable to an adequate understanding of all metaphysical and epistemological problems, as well as are keys to an adequate theory of ethical and political human interaction. Most personalists assert that personality is an irreducible fact found in all existence, as well as in all interpretation of the meaning of existence and the truth about experience. Anything that seems to exist impersonally, such as inanimate matter, nevertheless can exist and have meaning only as related to some personal being. The Boston Personalist tradition was inaugurated by Borden Parker Bowne and continued by Edgar S. Brightman, Peter Bertocci, John Lavely, Carol Robb, and Martin Luther King, Jr.