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EDITORIAL

This issue

In this issue we publish three of the papers from our conference in April: the other two, by Tihamér Margitay and Jan Olof Bengtsson, will appear in the next issue, because there was insufficient space to include them in this.

In a wide-ranging paper Alan Ford shows how the self is divided and alternates between subjectivity and objectivity in modern visual art, the Logical Positivism of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, and Satre's Existentialism in both his philosophy and fiction. Unfortunately we could not reproduce the slides with which the paper was illustrated at the conference, and which both were illuminated by the intellectual framework of modernist philosophy and gave that framework empirical support, for it was not imposed upon them.

Bob Brownhill's paper takes up themes in Polanyi's project of overcoming this dichotomy of subjectivity and objectivity (subjectivism and objectivism) by replacing it with a personal conception of the knower, active in and responsible for his knowing, and in particular how scientists are to be understood in such a light.

Also concerned with Polanyi, Chris Goodman gives a critical exposition of Polanyi's rich and complex account language as *indwelt* by the speaker and compares and contrasts it with other contemporary accounts.

We also include an article by Richard Warren on human resources management (what used to be called personnel management) in which he argues for comprehending it within a Personalist perspective, and specifically that provided by the philosophy of John Macmurray, no stranger to these pages and the subject of a new biography reviewed here by Joan Crewdson.

2003 Conference

For next year's conference we are venturing on a modification of our format. On the Friday, we hope to start earlier and hold our usual round-table discussion of a variety of papers (with no special theme), and then, on the Saturday, hold what will be in effect a one-day conference on 'The Tacit Dimensions of Knowledge Management', aimed specifically at our colleagues in Business Schools and upon a theme of growing interest among them, as shown by *The Knowledge-Creating Company*, by Ikujiro Nonaka and Hirotaka Takeuchi (OUP 1995) in which they specifically refer to Polanyi, and *Enabling Knowledge Creation* by Georg von Krogh, Kazuo Ichijo, Ikujiro Nonaka (OUP, 2000).

By doing this we hope to explore with others the significance of Polanyi's philosophy for business, and other organizations, and thus enlarge our own knowledge of it and share it with them. It would be utterly foreign to the spirit of Polanyi's philosophy to keep it to ourselves.

Subscriptions

There are two more issues remaining for this Volume (Vol. 4). A year from now, it will be time to renew your subscription, and it will be necessary to increase subscriptions because of the increase in the costs of printing and postage. (Although the latter do not affect the e-mail version directly, some increase in the subscription to that will be necessary to share the burden of indexing and other complimentary copies, which fall disproportionately heavy on our small number of subscriptions for the printed version.) We have not increased subscriptions since we began six and a half years ago, and it looks as if the basic UK Individual subscription will have to go up to £13, possibly more.

Two years ago we were suffering from a lack of publishable articles. That is no longer a problem, for our conferences are now providing more than sufficient for one issue and we are receiving more unsolicited articles of a suitable content and standard. In addition there is still scope for groups of invited articles for our series of 'Reappraisals': the next subject will be the American Personalists, almost unknown on this side of the Atlantic. But if this supply of publishable material continues, we face the problem of coping with it. There is a physical limit on the number of pages that can be properly stapled (and we changed the format to comb-binding because the stapling for Vol. 3 No. 3 was very poor) and also to comb-binding with the present machine, or to the time it would take to punch and assemble a larger issue with a new machine for which there is no money anyway.

We could publish extra issues, for a corresponding additional increase in subscriptions, if we reverted to stapling (your Editor & Publisher does not have the time to assemble 3 issues per year). Please tell me what you would prefer.

THE DIVIDED SELF OF MODERNISM IN THE VISUAL ARTS

Alan Ford

1 The metaphysical form of modernism

There is so little space to describe what I want to say that I shall just plunge straight in and try to describe, in all too crude an outline, what I see as the structure of modernism, and then work out from this describing what I see as a problem not only for modernism but also for our culture in general. This is not an apocalyptic pronouncement, although the outcome of the theory I am criticizing does have what can be called 'anti-cultural' consequences. The metaphysical structure of modernism is just one consequence of the radically subjectivist orientation of modern philosophy devised by Descartes in his *cogito* where true knowledge was based on the indubitability of the subject's subjectivity. Although Descartes was immediately and constantly criticized his basic subjectivist orientation tended to incorporate itself in the philosophical subconscious, which nonetheless made itself evident in the problematic nature of e.g. the mind-body problem and the difficulties for ethics in the polarization of fact and value. Another consequence, almost entirely unnoticed, is found in the theory and consequent practice of art, where these subjectivist metaphysics have only become clearly problematic at the recent advent of postmodernism.

The problem I wish to explore is as a consequence of the mind-body, fact-value problems. Modernism is directly concerned with the difficulties for both the self and for value created by this particular metaphysics, but I shall argue it was attempting a resolution of certain problems with the wrong 'tools'. It was, in a way I shall explain, trying to resolve these important issues with the concepts which were in fact the cause of the problem and which therefore made resolution impossible.

I shall end with a sketch of what might contribute to the resolution of the paradoxes visited by radical subjectivism, but this would require a fuller treatment to even approach adequacy. For this I shall draw upon Lawrence Cahoon's notion of 'philosophical narcissism'¹, DW Winnicott's notion of the transitional object², and John Macmurray's seminal idea of the 'form of the personal'³. I believe the last of these has a crucial part to play in a treatment that could begin to approach adequacy.

The structure of modernism is, I believe, derived from two dualisms, both directly related to those

mentioned above (fact-value and mind-body), as would have to be the case if what is being argued were true. These are Form-Content and Subject-Object generating Table 1. The appellations to the left indicate that the forms are also related to the Idealist-Materialist dichotomy into which western philosophy itself tends to fall.

Why should modernism take this form? Because it was a means by which the notion of value could be included in a metaphysics whose logic resisted the very notion of value, including the ethical and the aesthetic, and thus the very notion of art itself. Macmurray makes the point that the Romantics offered what he calls the Form of the Organic as a supplement

		Subject	Object
Idealist/ Transcendental	Form	Fs	Fo
Materialist/ Factic	Content	Cs	Co

to the Form of the Mathematical-Material which had obtained to great scientific effect ever since Descartes, at the beginning of modern philosophy, and which gained its most telling form in Newton's mathematical-mechanical version of the universe. Romanticism offered the organic form to take account of what slipped through the coarse net of materialist form: change from one state to another and, especially, from one state to a different *qualitative* state. This is reflected in evolutionary notions that try to account for not only biological evolution but for the evolution of societies (Hegel and Marx) and, most germane to our subject, spirituality, (Romanticism generally and, in his idiosyncratic way, Nietzsche). I take modernism to be a species of this last, where contradictions intrinsic to the theory end in conceptual collapse.

One can enlarge on Table One as in Table Two:

a) Expressionist/Spiritual/Formal.

This category is formal and subjectivist. Kandinsky will serve as our example. A central theorist of early modernism, he insisted that his art was about conveying something spiritual from the artist's pure subjectivity, from the artist's 'inner necessity' or urge to depict what he called the 'inner sound' that could not be conveyed in concepts but would show itself to the sensitive viewer⁴. This is the spontaneous expression of the unconditioned self, what I shall call the 'metaphysical subject', which in this way can escape the facts of mere materialism and the language in which it is structured and in which most of us are caught up as fallen, conditioned, unspiritual creatures lost in the daily round. Kandinsky saw himself as the promoter of what he called the 'great abstraction',

where the ordinary world of representation, of 'getting and spending' was abandoned for pure, non-representational form, and from past art. The aim was for a new beginning into an era of spiritual evolution where art would lead the way with its visionary insight into the 'real' because it looked out

in the world from a pure, uncontaminated self. This art sees the 'metaphysical self' as being the best and sometimes the only vantage point from which to access the spiritual, the valuable and the truth and, because its vision was pure, it would, inevitably, enable one to see the essence of the world beyond the self. This is the category that is most clearly related to nineteenth century Romanticism, where the 'journey inwards' enabled one to find the essence which constituted both the pure (or transcendental) self and the pure (or transcendental) other. Or, as Wordsworth put it, that:

presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts ...
Of something far more deeply interfused ...
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. ⁵

It is indeed a species of that identity which Schelling unambiguously states exists between the subject and the object when seen correctly and which he puts in the simple and well known equation: 'Subjectivity = Objectivity' in an attempt to overcome the 'gap' between the ideal and the real, fact and value, mind and body. He also says, in his philosophy of art, that art embodies this identity, this 'presence', and through intuition reveals it to the viewer ⁶.

As with all modernist art, such art is revelatory, it shows its meaning through a direct, an immediate intuition, because it is trying to express value that, according to its thesis, cannot be expressed in the language of facts and ordinary language.

This identity, suggested in the passage from Wordsworth and spelled out by Schelling, this presence that 'rolls through all things', which for Schelling is the Absolute, provides a clear link with the next category.

b) Constructivist/Spiritual/Formal.

This is formal and 'objective'. (But objective, as we can and shall see, in only a very special way) Mondrian exemplifies this. He can be seen to be trying to paint

<i>Table Two</i>	
Fs Expressionist/Spiritual/Formal E.g. Kandinsky, Klee, Marc, Nolde; Abstract Expressionism: Rothko, Newman, Pollock et al.	Fo Constructivist/Spiritual/Formal E.g. Mondrian, Malevich, Reinhardt, Bloomsbury, Post-Painterly Abstraction. Modernist Architecture.
Cs Surrealist/Factic/Anti-Form E.g. Dali, Miro, Ernst, et al.	Co Dadaist/Factic/Anti-Form E.g. Duchamp, Picabia et al. Deconstructivist Post-modernism.

the essence of the Other, the presence which lurks in the objective world, the Other, which can be observed when seen from the correct, again pure point of view. Mondrian's career shows his reductivist approach in pursuit of the essentials of painting, and through it the essence of the Other, until he ends with the

pure white of his 'backgrounds' and the black of his strictly vertical and horizontal lines. It is important that we see these non-colours as the limits of colour, the 'contours' that frame the world of form and colour. Added to this are the three primary colours, red, blue and yellow that are the essence of all colours, the 'logical atoms' within whose parameters all colours have their being. Added to this we have man and woman symbolized by the vertical and the horizontal lines respectively and even the artist himself appears, in mystical fashion by his absent 'presence', in the choice of the rhythm of the lines and the disposition of the colours. What we have in essence is the whole world seen as a resolution of opposites in the harmony of this particular art. ⁷

Not only did Mondrian depict this in his work, but his followers in the school of which he was the leader, De Stijl, also attempted to realize this vision in the real world, in an attempt to use this mystical harmony to transform man and society spiritually and socially through design. Rietveld designed furniture and buildings, Oud designed whole towns according to these principles.

Modernist architecture in general can be seen under this heading also where, in the language of Adolf Loos, ornament is architectural crime ⁸, and the integrity and beauty of a building can be shown only in pure architecture whose vocabulary is essentially functional and all else, decoration, references to past architecture etc, is seen as mere rhetoric, cultural conditioning and lies. The architect must do what he can do, 'say' what can be 'said' architecturally, and then be silent. It is this silence that 'speaks', and in this the value of the work shows itself. Loos belonged to the group around Karl Kraus, which influenced the young Wittgenstein, whose aim was to purify all forms of 'language' and culture from the cultural decadence of *fin-de-siecle* Vienna ⁹.

This same integrity can be seen in a seemingly much less transcendental and more obviously formal way in the 'post-painterly abstraction' of Morris Louis. Louis

followed in the footsteps of that proto-modernist poet and theorist, Mallarmé, who said:

The pure work implies the disappearance of the poet as speaker, who hands over to the words, set in motion by the shock of their unevenness.¹⁰

In the same way Louis allowed the paint to be itself by letting it flow down the surface of the canvas as he tilted it. John Cage did the same in music when he said that he wanted to allow sounds to be themselves, and incorporated accidental sounds from the auditorium as 'music'. In all three instances it is the ego, the aspect of the person that is most 'of this world', concerned with getting and spending, ambition, facts and mundane survival, which is subverted. Here the emphasis is upon the transcendental Other, purified from the projections of the ego. But, as in the rhythm of Mondrian's lines, the pure self 'appears' by its absence, in the integrity and purity of the work. There are clear connections between this category and the first. The last two seem to be radically different.

c) Surrealist/Factic/Anti-Form

Here we examine the subjectivist-antiformal art of Surrealism, which seems to emphasize content at the expense of form but, as we shall see, this is a content of a very peculiar kind. Salvador Dali's work will serve to describe such art. In Dali we see the ego, or the 'phenomenal self', allowed and encouraged to free associate on the canvas with no concern for form or even art in the usual, aesthetic, sense. The aim is to reveal another reality, far distant from the bourgeois world of common sense and ordinary consciousness and, in this sense, is also a form of 'purity' where 'the world' and ordinary life are seen as a kind of contagion, and kept at bay through absurdist and shock tactics. Here the self again escapes the ego, but far from escaping from it in an aesthetic or spiritual detachment, it fuses with its processes, losing its identity in a stream of psychological phenomena in the form of free subconscious associations. We can see that such an art is no more of 'this world' than the formalist modes above. (This too applies to our last category). I think that this applies to all the varieties of surrealism, based as they are, on the release of unconscious flows. Magritte may seem to be an exception, but he too in his seemingly explicit and matter-of-fact style, (e.g. a man looking into a mirror and seeing the back of his head) fragments the surface meanings of both language and objects so that the unconscious can flow up in feelings of the uncanny, which disorientate and upset 'bourgeois consciousness', but for the surrealist reveal 'the marvellous', his version of 'presence'.

The same desire to overcome dualism in a mental monism and to go beyond the language of reason that prevents this is seen in the writings of Andre Breton, the acknowledged leader of the surrealists:

Everything suggests there exists a certain point of the mind at which life and death, the real and the imaginary, the past and the future, the communicable and the incommunicable, the heights and the depths, cease to be perceived contradictorily. Now it is in vain that one should seek any other motive for surrealist activity than the hope of determining this point¹¹

The following extract shows surrealism's desire to go beyond ordinary experience, even the aesthetic experience of art. Surrealism is:

Thought dictated in the absence of all control exerted by reason, and outside any aesthetic or moral pre-occupation.¹²

Its ambitions to transform existence and its tactics to this end are seen in:

It [surrealism] aims at the definitive ruin of all other psychic mechanisms and at its substitution for them in the resolution of the principle problems of life.¹³

This indicates the vast ambitions of Surrealism to transform the world and how we relate to it, which it had in common with modernism generally.

An interesting consequence of loss of identity of the self is that it then becomes impossible to distinguish it from the Other. The processes of the self become indistinguishable from those of the Other. This brings us to, and shows the connections with, our next category.

d) Dadaist/Factic/Anti-Form

This is the objectivist-antiformal art of Dada that extends into some types of postmodernism. I shall take Duchamp's 'Fountain', a urinal presented upside-down in an art gallery, as my example because I believe it takes this 'logic' of modernism to its logical and most radical conclusion. It is also the most famous example of an 'art' that wants to subvert art itself as being in essence a mere 'bourgeois' phenomenon. We have seen how this applies, to perhaps a lesser extent, to Surrealism.

Duchamp stated firmly that his 'ready-mades, ordinary objects such as the urinal in question, were chosen by him from the point of view of complete indifference, and he always became cross when people thought he was pointing to the unconsidered beauty of everyday items, as a Dutch still-life painter or an Impressionist might. In this instance it seems that the implications within Surrealism mentioned above become explicit. What are we to make of such objects, (snow shovels, bottle-dryers, bicycle-wheels are other examples) which, by being placed out of context in an art gallery, are robbed of their practical functions, upon which their meanings depend? But not only is their everyday meaning now absent, their significance as aesthetic objects, art works, is also refused. Surrealism collapses the self into the Other, Duchamp and Dada collapse the identity of the Other! What now is there

left of identity and meaning other than a puzzling, uncanny, non-object? Art now becomes a context that makes art itself, and all else, totally mysterious. It becomes a repository of provocative phenomena whose meanings have been subverted by being made referentially opaque, of truly 'dumb' objects that declare little more than their 'objectness', and this too is very precarious as we shall see. A radical kind of 'objectivity' where objects lose their identity in a free flow of phenomena! It is from here, I believe, that modernism flips suddenly into postmodernism: but this cannot be pursued in this paper.

2 Wittgenstein, Sartre and philosophical Narcissism

I believe the later, 'mystical' part of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* can be very helpful here. In fact one might see in its metaphysical orientation a model for modernism that is both congruent with what has been said so far and which can make explicit its strange implications. This is no mere accident for Wittgenstein was, like modernism, trying to find a place for value within a metaphysics which resisted the very notion of value, but which was so successful in its explanatory and predictive power in the material world, that it seemed impervious to challenge. Wittgenstein's family was at the heart of early modernism's struggle in turn-of-the-century Vienna. His father even paid for the construction of the Secession building.

The *Tractatus* states that the 'place' for value is to be found at the Limits of Language and the World, in some way outside the meanings which can be articulated by language and, since the world is constituted by facts and since language is involved in and necessary to the constitution of the facts, language makes sense only when it is dealing with facts or with logic and the meaning of words. Therefore, when we try to talk about religion, ethics, art, or in general terms, value, we necessarily talk nonsense. Yet, and this distinguishes Wittgenstein from the Logical Positivists, the most valuable aspects of existence are those very features that we cannot talk about. He even said that when he wrote the *Tractatus* there were two parts: the one he published and the one that could not be written¹⁴, and it was only the latter one that was of value. That is why he wrote:

6.54. My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them—as steps—to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.) He must transcend these propositions, and then he will see the world aright.

7. What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.'

It is therefore a mistake to confuse facts with values

and he consigns the world to the realm of facts that logically makes it valueless. This is spelled out at 6.41, which seems like giving to Caesar the world that is his:

The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything happens as it does happen: *in* it no value exists. If there is any value that does have value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of what happens and is the case. For all that happens and is the case is accidental.

Propositions cannot express what is 'higher', and ethics and aesthetics are part of this 'higher' realm that we cannot talk about. We are also told:

6.421. Ethics and aesthetics are one and the same.

The reason for this equation is spelled out in the *Notebooks* on 7.10.16 where he writes:

The work of art is the object seen *sub specie aeternitatis*, and the good life is the world seen *sub specie aeternitatis*. This is the connexion between ethics and aesthetics.'

Here we find the pervading influence of Schopenhauer in Wittgenstein's philosophy at this time and it describes a mystical detachment from the world, a world that is seen as constituted by desire and wanting. Desire and wanting also constitute time, the only medium in which we can either attain or fail to attain our heart's desire. We step outside time, and see the world from 'the point of view of eternity', when we see through all desire and the false aura that it gives to facts. This is essentially a contemplative vision that was at the centre of 'advanced' culture at this time (often influenced by e.g. Theosophy, Anthroposophy, Buddhism, Hinduism etc.). Once more we can see the importance of detachment from the ordinary, conditioned experience of life and the world and, in this instance, a notion of the nature of what it is that attaches us to it. Wittgenstein's Vienna was a hotbed of all this and virtually every early modernist was deeply influenced by it¹⁵.

So, where are these 'limits', and why are they so necessary to modernism's quest? For Wittgenstein they are a) the 'Metaphysical Subject'; b) the limits of logic as seen in the tautology and the contradiction. Both a) and b) show themselves in the sense that if one is seeing 'aright' they become self-evident: if one understands the nature of the tautology and the contradiction no further proof is needed nor can be given—the necessary truth or falsehood makes itself manifest. Wittgenstein uses the analogy of the eye to show the nature of the Metaphysical Self, which cannot be seen within its own visual field but is implicitly present in all seeing. (This is also Descartes' 'proof' for the existence of the self. It pops up everywhere):

5.632 The subject does not belong to the world: rather, it is a limit of the world.

5.633 Where in the world is the metaphysical subject to be found? You will say that this is exactly like the case of the eye and the visual field. But really you do not see the eye. And nothing in the visual field allows you to infer that it is seen by an eye.

Thus the right attitude to the world in this instance, the seeing it 'aright' is from the subjective 'limit', that of the metaphysical self, a self that is not of this world. It is not the ordinary, conditioned self, the self with which psychology deals, accumulating experience and being deformed by it. This latter is the self that sustains the delusion that the world and the facts have value. The correct attitude to the world is consequently that of aesthetic detachment where things are seen in formal terms. The content, the conceptual, the signifiers of language are emptied and the world is seen as void of the meanings which so attached us to it through desire and constant wanting. We now no longer want the world to be different, because it is a matter of indifference to us. We are now at the position of *ascetic* detachment, which is a generalization to everything of aesthetic detachment's detachment from the object. (See the quotation from *The Notebooks*, 7.10.16 above). *This* is the sense of the world that 'must lie outside the world'. It is also what enabled Clive Bell to say:

A good work of visual art carries a person who is capable of appreciating it out of life into ecstasy: to use art as a means to the emotions of life is to use a telescope for reading the news. You will notice that people who cannot feel pure aesthetic emotions remember pictures by their subjects; whereas people who can, as often as not, have no idea what the subject of a picture is.... They are concerned only with lines and colours, their relations and quantities and qualities; but from these they win an emotion more profound and far more sublime than any that can be given by the description of facts and ideas.¹⁶

To see the world in formal terms, as does Bell, is to release oneself from the 'emotions of life', the desires for the things of this world, in order to experience the 'ecstasy' of this release: which is 'out of life' and 'more profound and far more sublime' than the experience of mere facts and ideas.

This is a mystical vision, expressed by Wittgenstein at 6.44:

It is not *how* things are in the world [the world as seen through language/concepts; the world belonging strictly to science, but which we, through desire, confuse with value] that is mystical, but *that* it exists.

This 'that' is an existential, not a conceptual, 'that'. It acknowledges the existence of the facts but not their conceptual meaning. In short it is the 'that' of contemplation which is, in its detachment from ordinary language, essentially aesthetic. Yet most of modernism and Wittgenstein, though Bell *et al.* are willing to settle for the aesthetic experience, want to

say that it is more. They would like to say that the aesthetic is the door through which one passes to the ethical and, in the case of Kandinsky and many others, to the spiritual. We have in fact already been told that 'Ethics and aesthetics are one and the same' (6.421). In this way art becomes of the greatest importance.

I believe that the two limits of the world and language described above, the metaphysical self and the limit of logical form, provide, for obvious reasons, the theoretical 'space' for the Formal/Subjective and the Formal/Objective kinds of art respectively or, alternatively expressed, the Expressionist/Spiritual/Formal and the Constructivist/Spiritual/Formal already described. Its spirituality, in its world-rejection, in its view of the world being irredeemably fallen, has a clear relationship with Gnostic dualism. This is I think very interesting because there are two broad types of Gnostic dualism: what one can call a) the pure school, and b) the 'bohemian' school. The former is exemplified by the Cathars who flourished in France in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and who considered the world to be created by an evil demi-urge, and the Pope and Church its agent, Anti-Christ. The aim of the 'perfecti', those most committed to these ideals, was to detach from all the blandishments this world could offer, including and especially all forms of sexual intercourse, eating only that which had not been begotten from sexual creation and, after death remaining for ever with the actual god-head in the spiritual world, the reward for the refraining from the temptations of this fallen world. The 'bohemian' school on the other hand, and this is aptly named because this kind of dualism was practised extensively in Bohemia—among many other places in medieval Europe—is characterized by an orgiastic indulgence in the flesh and in other of the more fallen aspects of existence. Here salvation is found, so to speak, in fusion rather than in detachment from the world. In fact, what both have in common is a hatred of the world as constructed by ordinary language and its associated reality principle. Both escape from the world in either of the two ways a fly can escape from the swatter: the former by total distancing from the 'swatter', (in meditative silences), the latter by fusing with the 'swatter', by merging with the processes of the world, the unconscious mind, and treating language as such a material process, destroying its power to conceptualize and order the world so that it cannot be 'swatted' by the accountability that only language can formulate. The 'bohemians' were notorious for their lying, rapacity and even murder¹⁷.

It is now easy to see how Surrealism and Dada fall into this 'bohemian' mode, neither of them being concerned with form, but with an obsession with the formless. These twin 'factic' positions can be seen as a development from the formal two just discussed. The

latter can be seen as stripping art—and the world—of everything, narrative/language, ordinary meaning and even, in the case of abstraction, of objects themselves. Yet one thing remains—art itself, as a light unto the world. But with Surrealism and Dada even art and form disappear. When this happens, the world as we knew it does not reappear as facts, we are left with the mere formless and fragmented phenomena of existence, which are neither subjective nor objective but homogenized data—like sense-data. I believe this is the *Tractatus* view of the world, despite what Wittgenstein says about language and the facts. It is a strangely unpopulated and alien ‘territory’, where all is accidental (think of the surrealist love of the accident and chance) and meaningless, once science and logic have put language and the facts in their place. What happens to the substance, the existence of things once facts have been stripped from the thing and made strictly conceptual?

We are of course talking existentialism, and Sartre, the most famous of the existentialists, tells us precisely what happens in his chapter ‘Six O’Clock in the Evening’ in his novel *Nausea*¹⁸. The hero is sitting on a bench in the municipal park when this revelation arrives:

Words had disappeared, and with them the meaning of things, the methods of using them, the feeble landmarks which men have traced on their surface.¹⁹

And then, all of a sudden, there it was, as clear as day: existence had suddenly unveiled itself. It had lost its harmless appearance as an abstract category.... the diversity of things, their individuality, was only an appearance, a veneer. This veneer had melted, leaving soft, monstrous masses, in disorder—naked, with a frightening, obscene nakedness.²⁰

‘Absurdity’ is a word that comes to him to describe what he considers to be the true nature of existence that has just been revealed. But ‘absurdity’ is just a word:

I am struggling against words; over there I touched the thing.²¹

This is something as otherworldly as the transcendental experience described above, and it has its own, perhaps inverted, notion of the spiritual: that’s why one has to use the word ‘factic’, coined by Sartre, to denote this experience which is lost between the polarities of the absolute and the absurd:

I, a little while ago, experienced the absolute: the absolute or the absurd.²²

It is described as ‘a horrible ecstasy’²³. We are told that ‘Time had stopped’, both features in common with the two formal categories. Yet its homogenized nature, its non-transcendental factic oneness, dominates the

writing:

Did I dream it up, that huge presence? It was there, installed on the park, tumbled into the trees, all soft, gumming everything up, all thick, a jelly. And I was inside with the whole of the park.... I knew perfectly well that it was the World, the World in all its nakedness.²⁴

Dali’s paintings, where landscapes and objects lose their identities in factic fusions, Duchamp’s ready-mades where banal objects take on an impenetrable opacity, seem to be instantiations of this state.

The world of ordinary experience returns suddenly. He gets up and walks to the park gate, where he turns round:

Then the park smiled at me.... The smile of the trees, the clump of laurel bushes, *meant* something; that was the secret of existence...I regretfully felt that I had no means of understanding. No Means. Yet it was there, on the trunk of the chestnut tree ... it was *the* chestnut tree. You could have sworn that things were thoughts which stopped half way, which forgot themselves... with a funny little meaning that went beyond them.²⁵

This experience at the gate, that has suddenly precipitated from the ‘dark night of the soul’ experienced at the homogenized heart of the garden, clearly describes the formal/transcendental state, with its mystical but ineffable experience of meaning for which there are ‘no means of understanding’. This sudden transformation also shows, despite what might be seen as an oppositional state, their essential relationship. Form and content, like subject and object, can be seen as strictly oppositional but, when at the limits of language, as both are, this opposition becomes unstable and, in the realm of phenomena, hovers on the edge of, and unpredictably collapses into, identity.

It is easy to see this factic category in terms of alienation, and when one thinks of painters like Francis Bacon and writers such as Samuel Beckett one may see the connections. ‘Making strange’, as the Russian Formalists dubbed the function of art, and ‘making it new’, that quintessential modernist cry, are ways of describing the state beyond the world and language. Phrases, such as ‘presence’, ‘inner sound’ and ‘significant form’, attached as they are to the Formal/Transcendental realm, are much less intimidating, but all refer to the state of seeing the world from eternity or timelessness. Nonetheless, the one carries associations of purity, depth, spirituality, transcendence, presence, serenity, form, the ineffable, mysticism, silence; whilst the other is redolent of the lower depths, horror, the absurd, loss of identity, homogenization, fragmentation, anti-form. And yet, the Surrealists, unlike Sartre’s hero, described this state as ‘the marvellous’ and the ultimate aim of their endeavours. One man’s ‘horror’ might be another man’s ‘ecstasy’.

These qualities characterize the two broad types of modernist artist: the detached and aloof Apollonian dandy and the Dionysian bohemian, both resisting and subverting ordinary language and its world. Yet each quarrels incessantly with the other. But these are family quarrels, based on a common metaphysics that makes the quarrel possible. We must not forget, however, the spiritual visionary, the 'guru' within modernism. He too belongs conceptually to the dandy-esque / transcendental side, but whose attitude is spiritual engagement, not aesthetic detachment, and who will not settle for the merely formal purity of the dandy, but insists that e.g. the formal aesthetic ecstasy of Clive Bell's 'significant form' is, when 'seen aright', a spiritual ecstasy that can transform existence and is therefore an art for life's sake, rather than the mere art for art's sake of dandyism proper.

It is probably fair to say that the bohemian side too is devoted to art for life's sake. It can be so in the form of the frank onslaught upon and subversion of the bourgeoisie by Dada and Surrealism. Surrealism tried to throw in its lot with communism at one point, and its pursuit of 'the marvellous' in the unconscious mind is clearly in the cause of self and life-transformation. Under the influence of Nietzsche such art could even take the form of a kind of spirituality of a non-transcendental kind in which one not merely faces the absurdity of existence, as in Sartre's vision in the garden, but celebrates it, and in so doing turns it into a joy, which is not mere happiness within the parameters of pleasure and pain, but which welcomes the world as it is, pain, pleasure, boredom, whatever and effects a transfiguration which turns facticity into ecstasy, the 'base metal' of absurdity into a kind of spiritual 'gold'. Thus Nietzsche from Part IV of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*:

What does joy not want! Joy is thirstier, heartier, hungrier, more terrible, more secret than all woe, ... joy wants love, hate; infinitely rich, joy gives, throws away, begs that someone take, thanks the taker, would like to be hated; so rich is joy that it thirsts for sorrow, for hell, for hate, for shame, for the crippled, for the world—and this world!²⁶

We have, of course, *yet again*, returned via the opposite route to Wittgenstein's recommended attitude for seeing the world 'aright', an acceptance of the facts as they are, but in the Nietzschean case the facts have to undergo homogenization, a breaking down into facticity in a manner identical to that prescribed by alchemy—and as seen in Sartre's garden. This should not come as a complete surprise because we have already remarked how unlike the world, as normally perceived, is the alien *Tractatus* world. If language can really be used meaningfully only to constitute facts which are in fact meaningless, then we are either locked into solipsistic, merely formal, selves or absorbed into a world of formless facticity where

identity is impossible. Modernism seems to have traced the implications of our subjectivist metaphysics and presented them in art, but with a determined effort to rescue something from these fragments: postmodernism seems to have accepted this *reductio ad absurdum* as being the nature of what is the case in a spirit of a relaxed and even cheerful despair, or an esoteric investigation into the flow of signifiers in Derrida's deconstructivism which seems to me to be a more complex variation of the same metaphysics, not a break from them.

We hear in modernism the same strangled voice heard in the *Tractatus* where each side tries to 'say' the unsayable, to express the ineffable. The quarrel seems to be about to how to reveal 'the real': in a formal/spiritual or a factic/anti-formal revelation. Yet the problem for both seems to centre on the fact/value, idealist/materialist, ultimately mind/body split consequent upon Descartes' move to put science on a foundation of certitude.²⁷ It is a measure of the greatness of much modernism that it did so much within so narrow confines and gave a voice, however strangled, to express the human condition in search of a notion of value within the flattened world of dualism. Modernism's heroism lies in its resistance to the displacement of values by facts in a fight that, within this metaphysics, it was bound to lose.

The dualism in culture is seen in the hoary example of C.P. Snow's *Two Cultures*²⁸. It is a 'hoary' example because the resistance of modernism no longer exists. Why is this so? On a simple level it is because the 'facts' side has won. Materialism, pragmatism (in Macmurray's sense²⁹), and rampant capitalism monopolize our culture, and artists, following Andy Warhol, have become, in his phrase, 'business artists'. On a less obvious, though related, level the resistance has collapsed because modernism's own metaphysical presuppositions insist that it should, because it has absorbed the subjectivist dualism of that which it would resist. Indeed, it was its ability to find a place for value and yet be logically congruent, as is demonstrated in the *Tractatus*, with science and materialism, our most powerful means for finding the truth, that made it so credible amongst thinking people. I believe I have shown implicitly how the 'logic' of modernism ends in deconstructionist postmodernism, which in fact betrays the ideals of modernism and ends in a position that the modernists did not intend. I shall use Lawrence Cahoon's notion of 'philosophical narcissism', in his book, *The Dilemma of Modernity*, to try to show this 'flip' from modernism to postmodernism more explicitly³⁰.

This had been implicit in my work before this book was published. I'd often remarked to myself how Idealism and Materialism in philosophy seemed to slip and flip into each other, despite everyone's insistence that they were direct and irreconcilable opposites, and

how Logical Positivism wanted to be strictly materialist despite basing itself upon sense-data, which seem to be totally mind-dependent.

Cahoone drew my attention to a passage in the *Tractatus* where this ‘flip’ is spelled out. At 5.64 Wittgenstein writes:

Here it can be seen that solipsism [radical idealism], when its implications are followed out strictly, coincides with pure realism. The self of solipsism shrinks to a point without extension, and there remains the reality [materialism] co-ordinated with it.

This is clearly the nature of Wittgenstein’s ‘metaphysical self’, a self which is either everything (solipsism) or nothing (‘realism/materialism’), not Macmurray’s ‘self as agent’ which is embodied in the world, but is not identical to it.

The *Tractatus* world, the world that has been absorbed into our metaphysical outlook, can be graphically described as in Tables Three and Four. In Realism

The self of solipsism shrinks to a point without extension, and there remains the reality co-ordinated with it. (5.64)

In Solipsism, The ‘world’ of realism shrinks to an extensionless point and there remains the subjectivity co-ordinated with it.

It all seems like breathing out and breathing in! A practical model could be made using two chambers, a balloon, a valve and an air-pump! What is missing from this model is what it cannot depict, the dimension of *culture*, which in fact not only keeps self and other apart, but as I shall argue, makes their very constitution possible. Without it the self, like Narcissus, has no way to separate from the other, as the diagrams show: the ‘I’ is a non-entity. This implication is seen in the *Tractatus*, when Wittgenstein writes:

If I were to write a book called *The World as I Found It*, I should have to include a report on my body, and should have to say which parts were subordinate to my will, and which were not etc., this being a method of isolating the subject, or rather of showing that in an important sense there is no subject; for it alone could not be mentioned in that book. (5.631). (My emphasis)

Solipsism, (radicalized subjectivism), has no way of

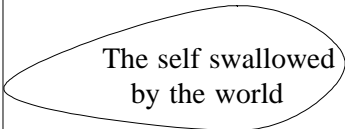
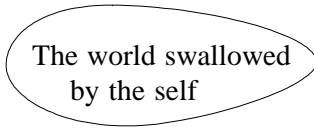
retaining independent existential integrity, since it is everything, nor can it be related to anything else—because it is everything. Yet, as we have just seen, it can be everything and nothing! This applies *a fortiori* to materialism. Yet philosophers continued to divide into camps and took a preferred side (perhaps according to temperament, according to Fichte), and tried to absorb the opposition into itself in an ‘All Mind/All Matter’ stand-off. Yet when the one side lost its existential integrity/identity by being absorbed into the other, the one that ‘won’ lost its identity because it could not have a relationship with the other: just like Narcissus who could not relate to the other, because (in the solipsism of narcissism) he was aware only of himself, and thus, like Echo he too lost his identity in the Other, because in his instance he could not

recognize himself in the mirror of the pool. (Here Narcissus is the ‘All Self’ side, and Echo is the ‘All Other’).

Now, if modernism lived in the world as described by its metaphysics, it would, in its mode of transcendental/formal modernism, lose its existential integrity because, like Narcissus, it would be detached from and unrelated to the other, and factic/anti-formal modernism, like Echo, would lose its identity,

fused as it would be with everything. Philosophical narcissism reduces the existential integrity and relatedness of the subject and object, art and its objects to phenomena, the fragments that are left when integrity/ identity has departed. But, fortunately, art does not exist in such a world, as we shall see.

Sense-data are a good example of phenomena. Note the name ‘phenomenalism’ in Logical Positivism. Logical Positivists believed that ‘physical objects are logical constructs from sense-data’. But sense-data can’t be ‘knitted’ together to make a physical object: physical objects live in a different logical realm from sense-data, one in which relationships between entities with existential integrity are possible. Hume, who is an acknowledged influence on the *Tractatus*, was precipitated into scepticism because of this same logic of phenomena. Here the self is seen as just a bundle of sense-data, mere perceptions and sensations; and causation was just the way sense-data ‘behaved’. Values were also a constant problem because they were

Table Three		
	Subject	Object
Realism	‘I’	The self swallowed by the world 
		All Other
Table Four		
	Subject	Object
Solipsism	The world swallowed by the self 	‘I’
	All Self	

not facts and did not know how to 'behave': they just seemed to matter a great deal. The latest version of this is, I believe, to be found in Deconstructivism, where phenomena take on the guise of the free flow of 'signifiers' which flow through the semi-consciousness of the deconstructivist, signifying nothing - unless they are related to 'the world' which they seem to want to repudiate.³¹

There is another, but related, split in philosophical narcissism that is seen clearly in pathological narcissism. (Please note that one is not saying that the philosophers and artists who slip into philosophical narcissism are narcissists in the pathological sense).

This is between the ideal and the worthless, the 'good' and the 'bad'. In the *Tractatus* value is found only at the limits of the world and the world itself is consigned to the valueless: see Table Five

Table Five			
	Subject	Object	
Good/Value/Ideal	Fs	Fo	Value in the <i>Tractatus</i> . At the gate in <i>Nausea</i> .
Bad/Fact/Worthless	Cs	Co	The World in the <i>Tractatus</i> . In the garden in <i>Nausea</i> .

This table follows the format established already and the same

slippage and flippage continues. A characteristic of some modernism, (and even Romanticism), is its identification with the 'Devil's Party', to quote Blake, (see the lower row in the table), who sometimes want to redeem this fallen category and sometimes want to celebrate and revel in it: e.g. Blake, Francis Bacon, Dada, Surrealism, and some postmodernism. Sometimes there is sympathy for, even an identity with, 'hell' in modernism. The Marquis de Sade, a hero of Surrealism, and the posturings of Nietzsche in his Dionysian mode, seem to want to celebrate this, and the latter, like many a romantic, wants to redeem 'hell' through a joy beyond good and evil. Now this desire to redeem might seem like the opposite of splitting, but its mode of achieving this, once more, almost invariably, follows the route of homogenization rather than of discrimination.

There is another distinction to be made, between surface function/reality testing and deeper emotional experience. Pathological narcissism has profound difficulties in feeling emotion for, and in giving itself to, the Other and in relating the two. Postmodernism is famous for the dictum 'what you see is what you see' with its emphasis on the surface and the repudiation of modernist 'depth'. Macmurray has much of importance to say about this relationship in his book, *Reason and Emotion*³² where he provides a sustained argument showing how reason and emotion are indissolubly related, that there are reasonable as well as

unreasonable emotions, and that emotion is necessary for the very existence of reason.

3 Conclusion: the form of the personal

I would like to end, for brevity's sake, by drawing upon a similar argument from Macmurray's book *Persons in Relation* and also upon D.W. Winnicott's notion of the transitional object in order to sketch an alternative to modernism's metaphysics³³. Both emphasize the importance of 'the world' that was much abused by modernism in the way described, yet both, explicitly in the case of Macmurray and implicitly in the case of Winnicott, give a logical priority to the

ethical and see it as the necessary basis for identity, a sense of the real and for logic itself to come into being. If this is right, the metaphysics underpinning modernism has 'got it all the wrong way round' and, as a consequence of this recognition, art might therefore be released from the false prison of

postmodernism. (There are other theorists e.g. Charles Taylor³⁴, Martha Nussbaum³⁵, Jurgen Habermass³⁶, who can be seen to be thinking along similar lines). What follows is a mere sketch and a hint at what I believe could be made into a more adequate theory.

Let us begin at the heart of ethics. Macmurray argues that being loved is essential for making the necessary distinction between fantasy and reality. He cites the mother-child relationship and describes it in terms of 'the rhythm of withdrawal and return', in which 'withdrawal' is the inevitable and necessary stage of separation. This separation may be calculated, as when the mother takes away her support when encouraging her child to walk, but it is more likely to be based on the fact that the 'good enough mother'³⁷ cannot be with the child at all times and anticipate his every need. The child may perceive this 'withdrawal' as a withdrawal of love, which must always be to some degree painful. In such circumstances the child will respond with feelings of fear of the circumstances and hatred for the mother. But when she and the love returns e.g. she stops the child falling over and he sees Mum as still loving him and not having abandoned him, the child sees that his fantasies of being abandoned and Mum's consequent 'wickedness' were indeed fantasies, and so he learns that there is always a possible distinction to be made between what he thinks, and what is in fact the case. He finds that there is an objective world totally separate from the thoughts in

his head and that the latter can be mistaken. The omnipotence of thought has to give way to something bigger than and independent of it. In this way he is introduced to such crucial notions as 'the truth', 'objectivity' and 'the real', distinctions that would be impossible if he was not in fact loved, for if he was indeed systematically neglected and unloved, his fantasies would be confirmed with no possibility of the 'benchmark' of consistent love with which to introduce 'the real' against which to measure and disperse the paranoia to which we are all prey. This suggests that love, the foundation of the ethical relationship, is logically prior to reason. For without this ethical core of love, concepts are a total prey to fantasy. Indeed, to have a world of facts in which we can have at least some measure of confidence may, after all, be logically dependent on values. And similarly logic can make the distinctions that are necessary to its existence only in a world in which it too has such a logical dependency on the ethical. The 'clear thinking' psychopath seems an obvious counter-example, but he is parasitic for his success on a world where truth telling is the norm, a world from which he is, to an unfortunate degree, excluded by his tragic incomprehension which dooms him to fantasy and isolation.

Winnicott, like Macmurray, shows the importance of love and trust in becoming a person and also concentrates on the early infant-mother relationship. Such trust enables the creation of an identity separate from the mother by forming a symbol of their relationship in the guise of what Winnicott calls a 'transitional object', the teddy bear being the most typical of these. It is worth repeating that it stands for neither the mother nor the child, but is a *symbol* of their relationship. This shows the importance of relationship, and relationship is not possible in the world of the *Tractatus*, which was the world with which modernism had to contend, a world consisting, it seems to me, of isolated selves and insignificant facts—at its best. The transitional object enables the child to feel secure, crucially when the mother is absent. This symbolic object is the foundation of both language and culture, in what Winnicott calls a 'third space'.

The other two areas are inner or personal psychic reality [Subject] and the actual world [Object] with the individual living in it³⁸.

This 'third space', is created by the transitional object, in a space of separation and yet at the same time the necessary space of relationship in which persons are constituted and out of which culture arises:

... at the place where it can be said that continuity is giving place to contiguity.³⁹

Up until this stage the child has felt continuous with the universe, necessarily a solipsist and a primary

narcissist, the very concepts I have been using to characterize the dualist metaphysics of modernism, but now there is a space created, which is not available in modernism's metaphysics, in which distinctions between self and other are possible and crucial and in which, if all goes well, the distinctions, mentioned above, between fantasy and reality, truth and falsehood can be made—all logically dependent on the ethical relationship of love. The child is now contiguous, not one with the mother/Other, and can now relate because he is separate.

Winnicott continues, in his paper 'The Location of Cultural Experience', to spell out how the mother and child relationship, located in the transitional object and originating in play:

expands into creative living and into the whole cultural life of man⁴⁰.

It is trust that creates this 'third area', that enables a world to come into being, and it is not 'the world' of the *Tractatus*. Winnicott continues:

The potential space between baby and mother, between child and family, between individual and society or the world, depends on experience which leads to trust. It can be looked upon as sacred to the individual in that it is here that the individual experiences creative living.⁴¹

It is also sacred to society because this becomes culture, the space in which mediation between persons can take place, the space of language, ordinary and extraordinary—and of art, now fully public, not solipsistic.

What makes identity possible is the space, literally and metaphorically, which culture makes possible in which the self can relate to the Other, and find itself reflected in the personal Other of other persons and, crucially, with itself. Without this all we have is the unmediated presence of the Other in 'relation' to which, like the mirror of Narcissus, no reflection is possible because the necessary separation is confused. For this reason, in both philosophical and in pathological narcissism, the World/Other is seen as having no value or, at best, the notion of value is impossible to grasp—in the same way that the psychopath cannot conceive of the ethical.⁴²

But the fact seems to be that neither subject nor object could come into being outside a relationship where love was not to some extent present. Nor could logic or identity exist without, in some important sense, an ethical foundation. Therefore it could be argued, relationship (the 'third space') is logically prior to subject and object, and value, (love surely being the primary value), is not the irrational and nonsensical phenomenon that philosophers from Hume to A.J. Ayer have thought, but the necessary condition for and foundation of all reason and sense. If this is so, the mind/body problem is a false problem. Minds and

bodies, subjects and objects, facts and values, are not eternally sundered, but necessary though not sufficient aspects, of the world that the dualist metaphysics of modernism made so problematic. They are not sufficient because they can exist only in this real world, dependent as it is upon ethical relationships and which makes possible a culture within which we can realize it evermore fully—in which art can take its necessary and fundamental place singing a song less strangled.

Winnicott says that this ‘third area’, which is what Macmurray’s Form of the Personal describes in greater detail, has had insufficient attention paid to it by psychoanalysis. I would suggest that this applies *a fortiori* to modernism—and to the philosophies from which it has drawn its inspiration.

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Notes

- 1 Lawrence Cahoon, *The Dilemma of Modernity*, State University of New York Press, 1988.
- 2 D.W. Winnicott *Playing and Reality*, Penguin Books, 1974, esp. Chap. 1, ‘Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena’, pp. 1-30.
- 3 John Macmurray, *The Self as Agent*, Faber & Faber, 1957;
Persons in Relation, Faber & Faber, 1961;
(Parts 1 & 2 of the Gifford Lectures for 1953-54, under the title *The Form of the Personal*.)
- 4 Wassily Kandinsky, *On the Problem of Form*, 1912, in Herschel B. Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art*, University of California Press, 1973. pp. 155-170.
- 5 William Wordsworth. ‘Tintern Abbey’ in *Selections from the Poems of William Wordsworth*, Ed. A. Hamilton Thompson, Cambridge University Press, 1926.
- 6 See Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy: Book Three*, Volume VII, Image Books, 1985 pp. 105-125.
- 7 Mildred Friedman, (Ed) *De Stijl 1917-1931: Visions of Utopia*, Phaidon, 1982.
- 8 Adolf Loos, *Ornament and Crime*, in Kenneth Frampton (Ed) *The Architecture of Adolf Loos*, Arts Council.
- 9 See Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin *Wittgenstein’s Vienna*, Touchstone, 1973; and Carl E. Schorske *Fin-De-Siecle Vienna*, Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- 10 Keith Bosley trans., Mallarmé: *The Poems*, Penguin, 1977
- 11 In Tony Richardson and Nikos Stangos (Eds), *Concepts of Modern Art*, Penguin, 1974, esp. the Chapter, ‘Dada and Surrealism’, p. 133.
- 12 Ibid p. 123.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Letter from Wittgenstein to L. von Ficker in Brian McGuiness, *Wittgenstein A Life: Young Ludwig, 1889-1921*, Penguin, 1990, p. 288.
- 15 See Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein’s Vienna*, Touchstone, 1973, and James Webb, *The Occult Underground*, Open Court, 1974.
- 16 Clive Bell, ‘The Aesthetic Hypothesis’ in Harrison and Frascina, *Modern Art and Modernism*, Harper Row, 1982 pp. 67-74.
- 17 Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, Paladin, 1970.
- 18 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*, Penguin, 1965 pp. 182-193.
- 19 Ibid p. 182.
- 20 Ibid p. 183.
- 21 Ibid p. 185.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Ibid 188.
- 24 Ibid p. 192.
- 25 Ibid p. 193.
- 26 From Morse Peckham, *Beyond the Tragic Vision*, Cambridge University Press, 1962, p. 366.
- 27 See Susan Bordo, ‘The Cartesian Masculinization of Thought’, in Lawrence Cahoon (Ed), *From Modernism to Postmodernism*, Blackwell, 1996 pp. 638-664.
- 28 C.P. Snow, *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*, Cambridge University Press, 1959.
- 29 John Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, Humanities Press, 1961, esp. Chapter 5 pp. 106-126.
- 30 Lawrence Cahoon, *The Dilemma of Modernity*.
- 31 See Anton Ehrenzweig, *The Hidden Order of Art*, Paladin, 1970, where the notion of ‘de-differentiation’, a kind of fragmentation, is an essential part in the creative process, and seems to use this notion more creatively.
- 32 John Macmurray, op. cit., 1961.
- 33 D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, Penguin, 1985.
- 34 Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, Harvard University Press, 1992.
- 35 Martha Nussbaum, *Love’s Knowledge*, Oxford University Press, 1990.
- 36 Jurgen Habermass, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, MIT Press, 1987.
- 37 Winnicott’s phrase for the normal, adequate but imperfect mother.
- 38 D.W. Winnicott, op cit, 1985 p. 121.
- 39 Ibid p. 119.
- 40 Ibid p. 121.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 See Alexander Lowen, *Narcissism: Denial of the True Self*, Collier Books, 1985, where the relationship of psychopathy to narcissism is established, in that psychopathy is seen as being an extreme form of narcissism.

LUTHERAN FREEDOM: THE MATURE SCIENTIST AS AN IDEAL INDIVIDUAL

R. J. Brownhill

In this paper I shall look at part of Polanyi's concept of freedom as applied to an individual scientist within the scientific community. I will then consider how far this idea of a scientist can be extrapolated to an individual existing within Polanyi's ideal society. This is possible because Polanyi uses his idea of the scientific community as a prototype for the study of other intellectual communities and ultimately for society as a whole.

The community of scientists is a special type of community whose membership is restricted to scientists who meet certain requirements. A scientist to be accepted as a member must have gone through an apprenticeship and made his/her own contact with reality. His contact with reality will be recognised by other scientists when his/her work shows originality by providing additions to accepted knowledge.

The evidence a scientist can produce as a demonstration of his originality is limited to evidence which expands in some way this knowledge. We can say that membership of the community is gained when a scientist by his/her originality shows that he/she has become a master in his/her particular field of research, and when this mastery is recognised by all the other members of the community. A scientist then to be a scientist must be recognised by other members of the community, and the fact that he/she may or may not be recognised by the public is irrelevant.

1 Two freedoms: Utilitarian freedom and Lutheran freedom

It is a special type of community because all its members participate in the joint task of apprehending and revealing an external reality, and each share in a joint faith, for all believe in the existence of this reality, and that it is possible to apprehend and reveal it. The individual scientist's method of discovery by the process of indwelling, and the community's method of checking discoveries has an interesting effect on the structure of the community. It means that freedom has to be allowed for the individual scientist to conduct his/her research but at the same time an authority based on traditional beliefs is needed to exercise control over the results of the research. Polanyi in fact claims that there are two sorts of freedom found in the community of scientists.¹ An English utilitarian form of liberty, where the individual is free from external restraints but limits are put on this freedom by other people's right to freedom, and a Lutheran type of freedom where the individual can gain freedom from personal ends by submission to impersonal obligations. The former achieves its ends through individual initiatives, and the

latter by moving outside individual selfishness by devotion to universal ideals. These two type of freedoms are apparently contradictory, as the former has selfish and perhaps uninspiring overtones, while the latter, although perhaps inspiring, restricts the individual in any attempt to pursue his own salvation in his own way. Polanyi claims that these two types of freedom are interwoven in the Republic of Science, and that their contradiction is resolved. In the 'Foundation of academic freedom' he argues that the two liberal values taken together help to create the most efficient way of organising science, and that this fact explains why it is possible to resolve their apparent conflict. However, this does not seem to be the case for the fact that they are instrumental in leading to the most efficient form of organisation cannot provide an explanation why they are resolved, although it may provide an explanation as to why the two freedoms are accepted. The fact that they are resolved within the Republic seems to be because the two freedoms do not in fact exist within the Republic. It seems that there is only one freedom operating in the Republic of Science. The freedom which Polanyi calls Lutheran freedom. It is true that Polanyi when arguing outside the context of the scientific community, is arguing for the existence of these two freedoms in the hope perhaps that utilitarian freedom will lead to Lutheran freedom but in the case of the Republic of Science it is extremely questionable whether these two freedoms exist. In the context of the Republic of Science the scientist, in order to be a member of the community, must share the faith and task of the other scientists. As a member of the Republic he/she has not the freedom to do nothing. He/she is not really free from external pressures, and there is a considerable amount of pressure on him/her to undertake research and produce results. If in fact he/she does not do this then very soon he/she would cease to be a member of the Republic of Science, as he/she would be showing no originality, and would cease to be a master in his/her particular area of science. Certainly he/she is free in the sense that there is no pressure from the outside the scientific community or inside it to follow a particular line of research. He/she can choose his/her own research but this is really covered by the Lutheran freedom which Polanyi writes about.

2 Lutheran freedom: mature scientists and their obligations.

In the 'Foundation of academic freedom' he argued that Luther is the prototype person who gains freedom from personal ends by submission to impersonal

obligations. In the same way the scientist submits him/herself to the ideals of science: ideals which declare that a scientist must struggle to achieve the truth, and present it to his/her colleagues for recognition. Luther declares that every Christian should be a priest, and like the Lutheran priest Polanyi's scientist is bound by his/her own conscience without reliance on anyone else to declare that which his/her conscience indicates. Yet, nevertheless, this conscience remains bound by the traditions of the community or, as we have seen, he/she cannot remain a member of the community. The values which his/her conscience exhibit cannot move too far from the values of the scientific community as a whole. They must lie within a certain range or be rejected. (Every new theory in one sense can be considered as a new value either to be accepted or rejected by the community.) By following the traditions and standards of science the scientist is acting on individual initiative and submitting to the obligations of the community but this does not constitute two freedoms. By acting on his own initiative in choosing his/her research and eventually producing his/her discovery he/she is accepting the obligations of the community. The exercise of individual initiative is not a separate freedom but part of the submission to impersonal obligations, as only by acting on individual initiative can one fulfil one's obligations to apprehend and reveal reality. An obligation which it is necessary to accept if one is to remain a member of the community. A utilitarian freedom may exist before one enters the scientific community, as it could be argued that one is free to choose one's career but as soon as one enters the community one accepts the obligations that go with the Lutheran type of freedom. Under a similar argument to Polanyi's argument for freedom in science we could say that before a true submission to the ideals of science could take place one must be free in the sense of being free from external restraints and pressures to make the choice. In other words utilitarian freedom provides the base Lutheran freedom. However as true in this sense seems to refer to the strength of the conviction behind the submission it would appear that the argument is that freedom from external restraint is necessary in a choice before a strong commitment to the choice can arise, and that this does not seem to be the case. A person who has had no choice in choosing his/her religion can still be absolutely convinced of its truth and as fanatical in following its doctrines as one who has had a choice.²

The authoritative element in the community is necessary in order to control the excesses in the speculations of individual scientists. This is really an additional check on his/her speculations as his/her conscience has already provided a check. In this sense the conscience has acted on behalf the community by deciding on the truth of a new theory. The further

check is necessary as the emotional element in the development of personal knowledge needs a further control than that provided by conscience, because a conscience by its very nature cannot be an impersonal conscience and provide a certain check on excesses.³ This is interesting for it is a recognition that in spite of Polanyi's terminology the individual scientist is not infallible, and therefore needs to work in a community with a decision procedure. If a scientist were infallible there would really no need for the community at all but just for a group of people with an interest in science who would expand science always along the right path.

Another reason for the importance of authority within the scientific community is the nature of science itself. Science is a systematic body of knowledge which it is the task of scientists to expand, and before they can expand it each scientist must accept and understand a large part of the system. In order to be in the position to provide an expansion a scientist must become adept at scientific techniques, and accepted knowledge. He/she has to accept the authority of a large areas of science as interpreted by his/her colleagues in the scientific community. They derive their own authority from the fact that they are recognised as master interpreters of science, and acting together with the discovering scientist form the decision procedure of the scientific community.

We can say then that before a scientist can attempt to expand the systematic ideas of science he/she must accept a large part of accepted scientific belief. He/she must, for instance, accept the regularity of reality, and also because science is a developing system of ideas, a system which is continually being built on, he/she must accept a large part of it as given. He/she cannot recreate all science again from first principles,. This then is the authority of accepted beliefs.

We must also in order to be a scientist, and we have already stated to be a scientist he/she must be already recognised as such by other scientists, be a member of the community of scientists and accept the results of their decision procedure, which in this case is the spontaneous development of an opinion about a new theory. This is important for it means that to be a scientist at all he/she must accept the decision procedure of the community. If he/she does not he/she runs the risk of being forced out of the community not only because to be a member of a community really entails an acceptance of the community's decision procedure but because he/she courts with the risk of being considered a crank or a charlatan, that is no longer a scientist. As individual scientists are not infallible, and there is no test of the truth or falsehood of their theories it is necessary for their beliefs to develop under the authority of the scientific community. Yet, as we have seen progress in science can only come through individual initiative, so the authoritative element, and the necessity for individual

initiative can create situations of dispute between an individual scientist and the community, and occasionally these disputes can develop into conflict situations.

A scientist expands science by developing intimations of future discoveries into full discoveries. In other words already within the systematic ideas of science there is the potentiality for future discovery. A scientist when producing a new theory has to show how it fits into these systematic ideas. His/her theory will be rejected if he/she cannot show how it fits in, and this would arise if he/she could not show to the satisfaction of colleagues the development of the intimations, or that the intimations really exist. This could be because the theory will in any case will never fit into the systematic ideas of science (this we cannot know), or that at the present time it does not appear to fit in. The dispute arises because of the discovering scientist's commitment to the theory. He/she is certain that it does fit in and that enough evidence has been produced to indicate that it does. A rejection generally will lead to an attempt provide more evidence, that is more links with the accepted systematic ideas of science. It can lead to a conflict situation where the discovering scientist will act as if the theory has been accepted: for instance, he/she will teach the theory, and continue to develop it. The rejected scientist would in effect be setting up a rival community to that of the community of scientists. This conflict situation is more liable to arise if a scientist concentrates so much on one particular theory and does not produce others to confirm his/her membership of the community. The failure to produce other theories means that in any case the scientist is gradually slipping out of the community. The question arises as to why this situation of conflict does not arise more often.

It does not arise more often because a rejected theory is concerned with only a small area of science, and the discovering scientist is still prepared to accept the main body of science. In the case of Velikovsky, ⁴ for instance his theories challenged the whole structure so he had to set up a rival community. But also because membership of the community is necessary in order to be recognised as a scientist. At the same time the scientist recognises that the authoritative structure of science is necessary for the development of science, and that his/her colleagues are as much obliged to declare what they consider to be the truth as he/she is.

This interlocking system of obligations is for Polanyi a major factor in ensuring the community's continued existence, for it is the system of obligations which holds the community together. As a scientist who has arrived at a discovery, has passed through a passionate immersion in research, and has been committed to each stage of discovery, the scientist arrives at the position of being absolutely committed to the theory that he/she puts forward for the community's acceptance. The

commitment forces him/her to declare truthfully that which has been found out about external reality. The norm of morality is to declare a correct knowledge of reality (right reason). That is a feeling which the scientist is certain is indicating a correct knowledge of reality, yet, as we have seen, it is possible to be mistaken. The scientist may have used an incorrect interpretative framework and this the scientist cannot know. Nevertheless the scientist has to declare that which he/she believes to be the case. The scientist's conscience, which is bound to the truth, obliges him/her to declare that which he/she believes is true even if it is an erroneous conscience.

This view of morality, which Polanyi expresses is and has to be an extreme personal conception of the moral law. It has to be because it is not possible to estimate from the outside the morality of an individual scientist. Morality depends on whether or not the scientist has revealed truthfully the knowledge which has been gained about external reality, and this we cannot know. The obligation is not to the vision or the theory but to reality itself. The scientist would be breaking this obligation to reality if he/she lied about the vision that had been received or if, as a theory, it was put before the community before the scientist had confirmed to the best of his/her ability that it was the truth. The obligation of the individual scientist then is to reality and it is this obligation which forces him/her to declare the truth as conscience dictates.

Two other obligations exist which are subsidiary to the primary obligation to reality: an obligation to him/herself as a scientist, and an obligation to other scientists. To him/herself as he/she would be denying his/her own task if he/she did other than declare what he/she thought was true, to the community, and to the other members of the community, who because of the process of discovery, rely very much on the honesty of its members. Taken together these two subsidiary obligations can be considered as an obligation to work in the community, and accept its decisions. They are subsidiary to the primary obligation as they are derived from it. An individual enters the scientific community and therefore accepts an obligation to reality, if the scientist later acts against this obligation the original agreement is being contradicted and really acting irrationally ⁵. The task the scientist has chosen is to apprehend and reveal reality, if this is not done then the original choice is being denied and the prospective career as a scientist is forfeited. His/her obligation to him/herself as a scientist then creates an obligation to declare that which is believed to be true. The obligation to reality also leads to an obligation to other scientists, and thence to the community itself for the structure of the community is necessary for reality to be revealed. It is also the medium of revelation, and provides a check on new theories which attempt to become part of the revelation. Theories have to be accepted by the

community to become part of revealed reality, science, so the scientist's obligation to reality obliges him/her to accept the community's existence and authority, without the scientist's obligation to the community, science could not exist as a systematic body of ideas controlled by the joint authority of mature scientists.

3 Lutheran freedom and the political community

A number of questions now arise: how can we expand Polanyi's discussion of morality in the scientific community to society as a whole and how does this fit in to a concept of a political community? Quite clearly there are certain essential differences between the structure of the scientific community and the political community, although there are some similarities.

The scientific community has a restricted membership, as it is restricted to those people who have passed through a master/apprenticeship relationship, and eventually gained their own contact with reality. These mature scientist share authority within the community, and taken together form the decision procedure of the community. In the wider political sphere there is no restriction on membership as virtually everyone within a particular geographical area is a member of that community. Not everyone shares authority and not everyone participates in the decision procedure. It cannot get rid of people who continually flout the rules and it cannot get rid of the intellectually inferior. This is not the case with the scientific community for we have seen it can get rid of a person who continually disobeys the rules merely by no longer recognising them as mature scientists. As their membership and authority is based on this recognition a withdrawal of it destroys their authority, and prevents them influencing the decisions of the community.

Polanyi approaches the political community in the same way as he approaches other communities by using the concept of personal knowledge controlled by interpersonal knowledge. A person is free to choose the action he/she wishes but the choice will be restricted by traditional concepts of freedom of choice.

In developing his argument he makes the assumption that human beings search for the truth. He derives this assumption from his evolutionary theory that humans have within themselves an 'active centre'⁶ which is striving for achievement and eventual consummation with reality. Yet our experience tells us that humans often are not concerned with the truth, and may be far more concerned with searching for a life of pleasure or idleness. All Polanyi can in fact argue is that if such an 'active centre' exists then humans should have a tendency to search for the truth.⁷ A further complication is that we can never be certain we have obtained the truth but only believe that we have, and that this belief may not be shared by others. We have

seen that in the intellectual sphere communities are developed in the hope that communal beliefs will prove more certain than individual beliefs but can this also apply to non intellectual communities and it be argued that individual beliefs will be judged by the interpersonal knowledge of those communities? Polanyi argues it can, and that a large degree of freedom must be allowed so that the truth may be obtained but it must be controlled freedom or anarchy will reign. It is restricted by the interpersonal knowledge of the community.

Polanyi believes that a free society will be one which fosters a search for freedom, and that recognises that an individual has an obligation to do so. He states:

The free society—of which a free scientific community naturally forms a part—can be defended only by expressly recognising the characteristic beliefs which are held in common by such in society and professions that these beliefs are true. The principal belief—or should I rather say the main truth—underlying a free society, is that man is amenable to reason and susceptible to the claims of his conscience. By reason are meant here such things as the ordinary practices of objectivity in establishing facts and fairness in passing judgements in individual cases, The citizens of a free society believe that by such methods they will be able to resolve jointly—to the sufficient satisfaction of all—whatever discussion may exist among them today or may arise in the future. They see an inexhaustible scope for the better adjustment of social institutions and are resolved to achieve this peacefully by agreement.⁸

It can be seen that Polanyi is using a number of traditional liberal arguments to support his claim to freedom and strengthening them by his evolutionary theory. His liberal argument develops as follows. Human beings are rational agents, and have obligations to search for the truth, if these are denied by a failure to give freedom then we are failing to recognise this agency and also failing to recognise the claims of their consciences to control them in such a pursuit. Polanyi then moves away from strict liberalism by arguing that if we are to avoid intellectual anarchy we must work within a community. We should be free to pursue the truth in our own way but if claims to the truth are to be accepted by others then the community must make an affirmative decision. This does not mean an individual then has to give up a claim to the truth, as this would be telling him/her to give up claims to follow his/her conscience but it would be that the right of the community to make the decision should be recognised. In the community as a whole we would say that a rational person should undertake reasonable actions but that if an action is to be considered reasonable it needs to be accepted as such by others. In a free society people will undertake free reasonable actions controlled by a traditional concept as to what constitutes a reasonable action. Of course not all people are reasonable or rational so because of this the

tradition of interpersonal knowledge will have to be backed by the law and ultimately force. Again this does not mean conscience has to be disobeyed as long as it works within the framework of the law. In fact the law will reflect the interpersonal knowledge of the community Polanyi states:

The ideal of a free society is in the first place to be a *good* society: a body of men who respect the truth, desire justice and love their fellows. It is only because these aspirations coincide with the claims of our own conscience, that the institutions which secure their pursuit as safeguards of our freedom. It is misleading to describe a society thus constituted, which is an instrument of our consciences, as established for the sake of our individual selves; for it protects our consciences from our own greed, ambitions etc. Morally, we have to live by what they sacrifice to their conscience; therefore the citizen of a free society, much of whose moral life is organised through his civic contacts, largely depends on society for his moral existence. His social responsibilities give him occasion to a moral life from which men not living in freedom are debarred. That is why the free society is a true end in itself, which may rightly demand the service of its members in upholding the institutions and defending them.⁹

as in such a society the laws and institutions will reflect the consciences of its members, their shared values, there can be no conflict between the state and the individual for the 'institutions which secure their pursuit are recognised by us as safeguards of our freedom'. The law of such a society brings to our attention obligations which we have forgotten: 'it protects our conscience from our own greed'. The law as they are derived from our consciences supplement its attempt to control any failure to recognise our obligations.

The free society then becomes the just and moral society where excesses in individual initiative are controlled by the operation of the community's conscience through the law and through the process of socialisation. The law becomes not opposed to humanity's morality, as some liberals¹⁰ suggest but derived from it, and acts to remind us of, and stimulate our obligations. Polanyi is in fact putting forward the argument for constitutional freedom with the proviso that the law and the institutions should mirror the shared values of the community.

He is also introducing a specific theory of political obligation with the statement,

It is only because these aspirations coincide with the claims of our own conscience, that the institutions which ensure their pursuit are recognised by us as safeguards of our freedom.

The ideal society for Polanyi is where individuals and intellectual communities recognise their task of searching for the truth, and where the political institutions reflect this intention, and allow its pursuit

under the control of communal traditions. Yet only rarely does such a society exist. It is an ideal because it coincides with the claims of our consciences at the peak of their development. In this way the concept of Lutheran freedom becomes part of the freedom exhibited in the ideal society.

Polanyi also believes that, although it may not be possible for a community's tradition—the communal way of life—to become systematised in the way he has found with intellectual communities, it is possible that the tradition can show coherence and therefore in a non arbitrary manner be used as a basis to judge individual initiatives, and in fact a government which rejects such a tradition. It could therefore be used as a basis for the withdrawal of political obligation from a pathological regime¹¹, a government which constantly flouts the traditions, shared values of a community. He states;

A country in which questions of conscience are generally regarded as real, and where people are on the whole prepared to admit them as legitimate motives and even to put up with considerable inconvenience or hardship caused by others acting on such motives—such a country is a free country¹².

These contacts with transcendent obligations may reach high levels of creativity. They may inspire prophetic announcements or other great innovations. In some fields—as in science, in scholarship or the administration of the law—this will contribute to the development of an intellectual system. In this case we can observe a process of self co-ordination. But all contacts with spiritual reality have a measure of coherence. A free people among whom many are on the alert for calls on their conscience, will show a spontaneous coherence of this kind. They may feel it comes from being rooted in the same national tradition but this tradition may well be merely a national variant of a universal human tradition. For a similar coherence will be found between different nations when each follow a national tradition of this type. They will form a community of free people. They may argue and quarrel yet will always settle each new difficulty in the end firmly rooted in the same transcendent ground.¹³

4 A critique of Polanyi's argument

A problem arises when Polanyi attempts to combine utilitarian freedom and Lutheran freedom for utilitarian freedom is really putting forward the argument that if you leave people alone then you will get benefits, whereas Lutheran freedom is stating that submitting to transcendental obligations is a good thing.

Polanyi sets out the benefits of a free science: (a) a free science is more efficient if left alone from outside interference; (b) a scientist who chooses his/her own research will produce better work than one who does not, both these are factual statements and therefore can be checked against the facts. The conclusion must be that sometimes a free science does lead to greater

efficiency but sometimes not, it will depend on the circumstances; and sometimes a scientist who chooses his/her own research produces better work but sometimes not.

Why is Lutheran freedom a good thing? Presumably because it is more moral to submit to a transcendental obligation, i.e., the truth, rather than just follow one's immediate whim that gives one pleasure. Nevertheless it is part of Polanyi's argument that a moral science which is committed to the truth will be more efficient than one committed to utilitarian benefits. The argument is apparently that the former is concerned with expanding knowledge but the latter, which is technology, is tied to the market place. Behind that is really the claim that pure science is a better pursuit than technology, and the further point that if technology is concentrated upon then pure science will be unlikely to expand. If this is accepted, then it follows that a free science is more efficient at expanding pure science than technology and will therefore bring benefits as a pure science than technology, which can only produce technological benefits. He is in fact arguing that a science based on technology will not produce advances in pure science. This argument, however, is itself a utilitarian argument as it leads to consequences of which Polanyi approves.

The same argument applies in the wider society. Lutheran freedom is admired and advocated as it leads to good consequences: it brings about the good society, i.e., love of truth, justice, etc. But also the laissez-faire economy is approved of on utilitarian grounds: it is more efficient at producing goods we want than a command economy. This again is a factual argument which can be checked against the facts with the probable result that it sometimes does but sometimes does not.

Polanyi seems to slide between two moral stances: a deontological one (a theory of obligations), and a utilitarian one (consequentialist). They are not always compatible, although it appears that Polanyi prefers the deontological position.

Honesty is of fundamental importance for the operation of the scientific community. In fact it could not exist without it. Science is concerned with going beyond the appearance of things to the essence of things. This means that the theories formulated cannot be conclusively tested by sense experience and therefore the only check on truth claims is honesty amongst members of the community. The individual scientists have to reveal what he/she believes to be true, and this is checked against what colleagues believe to be true. Commitment to the truth of what is put forward for acceptance arises because of the long process of indwelling in arriving at a discovery and that the discovering scientist has done all that can be done to confirm its truth. However, commitment alone cannot provide philosophical certainty. Thus the need

for the communal check on truth claims. However, again this provides, if a discovery is accepted, a further psychological certainty, confidence in numbers. The theory could still be wrong. Commitment is tied in to the obligation to reveal that which the conscience dictates and the scientific conscience is bound to the truth.

By the word truth Polanyi means in accordance with reality. However, we cannot know we have achieved it, although there are strong pointers: for example, it has systematic relevance, i.e., it is recognised by other scientists as being important, it fits in with other theories, and leads to further discoveries—really it has obvious potentiality, as we cannot know that it will lead to further discoveries—so it has the feel that in fact it will, and, it triggers off the creative imagination. In *Science, Faith and Society* this intuition was described as a telepathic contact with reality and led to further discoveries, in a sense, a strategic intuition. In Polanyi's later work it becomes a component of the tacit dimension—a workaday skill that through the process of indwelling and commitment leads the scientist to recognise the connecting links between the different levels of reality, so that knowledge can gradually increase. Beauty is also a major component of truth, as it tells the scientist that it is more likely to be true than a more cumbersome theory.

Polanyi's notion of truth in politics is part of his support for the liberal position allied to his fundamental belief in progress to a higher state. For instance, the notion that politics is concerned with the truth can be found in J.S. Mill's *Liberty* with the idea that truth is fragmented but can be put together like a broken vase in the public political debate. Mill like Polanyi has the idea that the ideal political community is similar to an academic community, where the voices of the community can be heard, and that all are concerned with the truth. The conservative political philosopher, Michael Oakeshott, argues that politics is not concerned with the truth but with keeping the conversation going, with keeping the ship of state afloat with no port to go and no destiny in sight. Thus Dorothy Emmet argued for the importance of casuistry in politics as well as in religion. The political theorist Bernard Crich argued for the importance of compromise in politics, in order to prevent conflict. There is, of course, no room for compromise in science, although there is for complex rational debate. The French political writer Bertrand de Jouvenel writes of there being no solutions in politics, only temporary agreements which arise out of actual situations but may well break down in a different time and circumstances. Hegel, like Polanyi, has the notion of the absolute ideal in politics, the final truth and likewise the notion of an evolutionary progression to the ultimate society. Popper's political work actually attacks the idea that there is a truth to be achieved. He argues claims to the

truth may well be mistaken and have no relevance for future generations, and many lives can be destroyed by politicians declaring that they have seen the truth, and desire to lead the country to it, for instance, Stalin and Hitler. He fears the closed society where it is claimed the truth has been achieved, and points to Plato, Hegel and Marx as laying the theoretical grounds for such beliefs.

However, it is clear that in spite of his emphasis on commitment to the truth one believes in, Polanyi did not believe that truth was manifest: it was not completely clear or certain. The truth-seeker could be mistaken. This recognition of fallibility led to a sense of toleration. A point of view was not to be forced down the throat of opponents but rationally and gently argued, and this reflected Polanyi's notion of respect for persons and democracy. Polanyi's approach to politics and its related topic of action can be seen in his complex but nevertheless critical approach to Zionism¹⁴, an approach very different from the fanaticism of Hitler or Stalin, or even the approach of Plato that unbelievers should be put to death. It can also be argued that when Polanyi writes of truth in politics he is really making reference to a background of political culture, so in a free society a claim to political truth could never lead down the pathway to totalitarianism.¹⁵

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Notes:

1. Polanyi, M. (1947) *The Foundations of Academic*

Freedom, Occasional Pamphlet, Society for Freedom in Science; LL Chap. 3.

2. For instance, St. Theresa of Avila.

3. This is apparently opposed to Kant's notion of the categorical imperative, which is considered impersonal.

4. De Grazia (1966) *The Velikovsky Affair*, London.

5. A similar argument to Hobbes in *The Leviathan*: if you disobeyed the sovereign after your original agreement to disobey him you would be acting irrationally.

6. See PK p. 404.

7. Polanyi is expressing the liberal idea of progress, and also J. S. Mill's idea that the ideal political community is searching for the truth. A notion which would be rejected by some conservative philosophers, e.g. M. Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics*, London, 1962. See also R. Brownhill and P. Smart, *Political Education*, Routledge, London, 1989.

8. Polanyi, M., LL, p. 29.

9. Ibid. p.30.

10. For instance, T.H. Green in his *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*. See J.D. Mabbott in *The State and the Citizen*, London, 1958.

11. J.R. Lucas in *The Principles of Politics*, Oxford, 1966, uses the phrase, and he also has a notion of shared values in his ideal political community.

12. LL p. 46.

13. Ibid.

14. See Polanyi's paper 'Jewish Problems' in R.T. Allen (Editor), 1997, *Society, Economics and Philosophy: Selected Papers by Michael Polanyi*, Transaction Publishers, London.

15. Point made by Richard Allen at the 2002 Appraisal Conference, Nottingham University.

C.P. Goodman

1 Introduction

I begin with a brief historical survey of some of the positions that have been taken by those who have reflected upon the nature of language. The early Wittgenstein is used as an example of those who claim that language can be reduced into rules. The *Tractatus* asserts that languages become meaningful when we tacitly adhere to the rules of logic. The later Wittgenstein claims that the languages become meaningful when we rely upon the tacit context supplied by a social practice. Polanyi denies that languages can be wholly captured by rules. Language is a toolbox for deploying our tacit awareness. But not only do we know more than we can say, we also say more than we can know. No standpoint exists from which we can securely demarcate sense from nonsense. To rely upon a language is to make a commitment. Language enriches our awareness, but the boundary of language is not the boundary of the world. A representationalist account seeks to reduce what it is to be a mind into a Turing machine. But the symbols processed by a Turing machine derive their meaning from agents who use them to designate their awareness. A meaning is the product of an embodied consciousness. Although Polanyi denies that all meaning is linguistic, he seeks to draw our attention to the role that language plays in the formation of what it is to be a mind. Language enables us to reflect abstractly upon our experience. This is not a product of an innate language of thought; it is a consequence of indwelling within a natural language.

Fossil evidence indicates that our primate ancestors lived in Africa. Genetic evidence tells us that about 8 million years ago we shared a common ancestor with gibbons and orang-utans. This same evidence tells us that approximately 4 million years ago we shared a common ancestor with chimpanzees and gorillas; and that the branch from which every living human being is descended evolved in Africa about 150,000 years ago. Why we evolved as we did is controversial. What is clear is that in line with mammalian evolution there has been an increase in relative brain size in the human branch of the primate family. A chimpanzee has a cranial capacity of about 400 cubic centimetres. A human cranial capacity is about 1400 cubic centimetres. The single most important transformation that this increase in brain size has brought about has been the emergence of linguistic abilities. Language not only enables us to describe our experience of the world, it also facilitates the accumulation of new ways of comprehending that experience. This empowerment of our imagination exposes us to new sorts of error.¹

But our use of language also enables to reflect upon the adequacy of our descriptions. Plato in his *Cratylus* dialogue has Socrates discussing the correctness of names. Hermogenes claims that the relationship between words and meanings is conventional.² *Cratylus* asserts that there is a resemblance between words and the objects that they are used to designate. Socrates defends the notion that words depict realities.

Plato assumes that making sense of words requires us to comprehend the reality from which they derive their meaning. A word derives its meaning from the reality it designates.³ While Plato has Socrates contemplating the possibility that words have a mimetic origin, Aristotle declares that words are linguistic conventions that give common names to the same thoughts in different minds.⁴ Language fascinated the Stoics. In their etymological investigations they sought to identify the true meaning of a word, usually by postulating an onomatopoeic origin. They also studied comparative phonetics and grammar. The major linguistic debate was between analogists, who claimed that grammar is essentially regular, and anomalists, who claimed that grammar is irregular. Aristotle was an analogist, while the Stoics were anomalists. Dionysus Thrax is credited with compiling the first Greek grammar, and Apollonius Dyscolus supplied additional insights. Their writings were so influential that they served as a model for the Roman grammarians Priscian and Donatus, whose work became a paradigm for medieval speculative grammarians. Speculative derives from the Latin for mirror, and in this context it designates the assumption that linguistic structure corresponds with the structure of the world. Nominalists however rejected the assumption that language mirrors reality, and sought instead to defend the assumption that all objects have in common with each other is our decision to apply the same name to them.

Increased awareness of ancient and contemporary languages in the Renaissance exposed how reliant the medieval speculative grammarians had been upon the structure of Latin. Following the attack made by Bacon in his *Novum Organum* upon the 'Idols of the Marketplace', in which an interest in words rather than the realities that words describe is identified as a source of confusion within the sciences, a number of Seventeenth Century philosophers were inspired by symbolic innovations in algebra and analytic geometry to advocate the need for an ideal language; in which the simple ideas from which thoughts are compounded could be ordered like a mathematical system. It was claimed that abandoning natural languages, and expressing thoughts in a precise universal language, would generate intellectual clarity.⁵ In his *Essay*

Concerning Human Understanding Locke emphasises the need for clear definitions for words. Although he defends the assumption that words designate ideas, Locke, unlike Leibniz, gave them a psychological interpretation by tracing their origin back to sensations.⁶ On empiricist grounds Berkeley asserts that any reform of philosophy ought to start with a critique of language.⁷ The assumption that words derive their meaning from private experiences, in combination with the claim that words can be combined in ways that do not correspond with realities, undermined support for those who sought a universal grammar.⁸ Locke observed that an examination of similar words in different languages reveals differences.⁹ Philosophers began to focus upon linguistic distinctiveness.¹⁰ Condillac follows Locke in declaring that language that is not derived from experience is idle and frivolous. But he amends Locke by arguing that words are the origin of our mental life, and are a product of our natural tendency to react to expressions of emotion.¹¹ Herder develops this into the claim that meanings take place within the languages that accompany our thoughts about the world. If we wish to comprehend a meaning we have to situate it within the context of its use.¹² Humboldt asserts that languages are not simply a diversity of sounds and signs; they are also a diversity of worldviews:

Men do not understand one another by relying on signs for things, nor by causing one another to produce exactly the same concepts, but by touching the same link in each others spiritual instrument.¹³

In 1786 Sir William Jones, while serving as a judge in India, discovered similarities between Sanskrit and Greek and Latin. Schlegel argued that a comparative grammar of different languages would reveal their genetic relationships. Extending this insight Schleicher set out languages in family trees. Inspired by Darwinism he claimed that phonetic changes exhibit predictable patterns. His aim was to establish linguistics as a science with general laws. He believed this task would be achieved by empirical inquiry.

Frege, however, claims to have identified a universal structure underlying the possibility of all meaningful representation. He declares that words become meaningful within the context of sentences that assert something. Every meaningful element has a sense and a reference. The thought that a particular sentence expresses is defined by its truth conditions.¹⁴ In his posthumously published lectures on linguistics Saussure asserts that words are an arbitrary system of signs, whose meaning is derived from their relations with other signs. According to Saussure, in addition to diachronic studies mapping linguistic change, the task of the linguist is to provide synchronic accounts of the underlying structure of a language. This underlying structure, its langue, should be isolated from its

outward structure, its parole.¹⁵ Both Frege and Saussure end up directing our attention away from the represented, towards the structures that language imposes upon our experience in order that it may become meaningful.¹⁶ Wittgenstein claims that understanding how words become meaningful enables us to draw a boundary between sense and nonsense. He envisages philosophy as a clarification of thought via a critique of language. He does not claim that what we cannot talk about is unimportant. In a letter he asserts that what we cannot talk about is that which is most important.¹⁷ Because he claims that language involves more than we can say—in the *Tractatus*¹⁸ he declares that it is possible to show but not state how language can represent the world, and in the *Philosophical Investigations*¹⁹ linguistic meaning is situated within the context of tacit practices—Wittgenstein has been linked with Polanyi.²⁰

2 Wittgenstein on meaning

In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein claims that it is language that enables us to have thoughts about the world. Our thoughts become meaningful when they picture states of affairs in the world. A proposition is able to picture a state of affairs in the world when there is a correspondence between the structure of its elements, and the structure of the elements of a state of affairs in the world. That which a picture represents is its sense. The correspondence or disagreement of a sense with a state of affairs in the world determines its truth or falsity. Every assertion about a state of affairs has a logical structure. Logic is able to function as scaffolding for all possible meaning because its truths exist prior to every possible experience. But if the only meaningful thoughts are about possible states of affairs in the world, what is the status of the logical conditions that underlie the possibility of a link between language and the world? Wittgenstein declares that the truths of logic, like ethical and aesthetic responses, cannot be stated they can only be shown. Although the *Tractatus* makes various philosophical assumptions, for example it assumes the validity of solipsism and an atomistic ontology,²¹ Wittgenstein denies that we can speak about such matters. Once we comprehend that language is only meaningful when we limit ourselves to factual statements, all other questions vanish, because neither the question nor any answer can be put into words. In its own terms the *Tractatus* shows us that which transcends the limits of language, and that which we cannot talk about ought to be passed over in silence.²²

In his preface to the *Tractatus* Russell declares that if we create a language that expresses the logical truths that underlie any possible object language, we can avoid the mysticism of asserting that what determines propositional meaning can be shown but not stated.²³ But if it is only fact stating language that has sense,

then logical truths must be inexpressible. In the *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein abandons some of the claims made in the *Tractatus*.²⁴ While he maintains his conviction that philosophy is a critique of language, and that meaning relies upon a context that lies beyond description; instead of viewing philosophical perplexity as the product of failing to understand the logic which underlies our everyday language, he claims that the ‘bumps’ our thought receives when it runs up against the ‘limits of our language’ can be avoided by situating language within the context of a practice. To comprehend the meaning of a word it has to be situated within the context of its use within a social practice. He rejects the assumption that words gain their meaning by being correlated with objects. Such a connection is supposed to take place via a process of ostensive definition i.e. indicating an object and then uttering its name. But in order to comprehend that an object is being named, we have to be already familiar with the practice of naming. Wittgenstein calls these practices ‘language games’²⁵ and he situates them within ‘forms of life’.²⁶ He denies that we can talk in absolute terms about parts of an object, because parts are only recognised as such within the context of a practice.

Can such practices be described using rules? Using the example of a game he declares that the practice that underlies what it is to be a game lacks any common property:

Don’t say ‘There must be something in common, or they would not be called games’—but look and see whether there is anything in common to all—For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to all.²⁷

All we find is what he describes as a ‘family resemblance’. In response to the objection that in the absence of explicit rules meanings would become arbitrary, and thus impossible, he observes that although it is the case that we cannot define what it is to be a game:

It is not everywhere circumscribed by rules; but no more are there rules for how high one throws the ball in tennis, or how hard; yet tennis is a game for all that and has rules too.’²⁸ But how is it possible to know something, such as what it is to be a game, and yet not be able to describe it? He declares that if you are surprised that you can know something and yet not put it into words this is because you are thinking of cases such as ‘How many feet high is Mont Blanc?’ rather than questions such as ‘How does a clarinet sound?’²⁹

3 Rule-following

If all meaningful thought is determined by rules, this implies the need for rules to determine the application of rules:

But then how does an explanation help me understand, if

after all it is not the final one? In that case the explanation is never completed; so I don’t understand what he means, and never shall!—As though an explanation as it were hung in the air unless supported by another one.³⁰

Wittgenstein denies that intentional states are wholly private affairs. Our thoughts about the world derive their meaning from the way in which words are used within a linguistic practice. Meaning is not something that can be reduced to a process going on inside our heads. What determines the content of an intentional state is the context within which it takes place. The ‘criteria’ that determine when languages are meaningful are derived from linguistic practices. What grounds a linguistic practice is a form of life:

If I have exhausted the justification I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say, this is simply what I do.³¹

All thought about the world take place within a language, and all linguistic understanding is rooted in an intransitive understanding that cannot be captured by rules.³²

In support of the claim that language can be formalised, some claim that language obeys rules that are hardwired into our nervous system. Chomsky postulates the existence of a ‘language organ’ whose ‘transformational rules’ determine the ‘deep structure’ of all natural languages. Knowing a language is not a skill it is a competence.³³ On the grounds that a competence does not count as knowledge, he uses the term ‘cognize’:

Cognizing is tacit or implicit knowledge...[it]...has the structure and character of knowledge, but may be, and in interesting cases is, inaccessible to consciousness.³⁴

While accepting that knowing how to do something is not the same as knowing how to explain it, Fodor denies that this undermines the attempt to provide a formal account of knowing:

[I]f X is something an organism knows how to do but is unable to explain how to do, and if S is some sequence of operations, the specification of which would constitute an answer to the question ‘How do you X’...then the organism tacitly knows the answer to the question ‘How do you X’ and S is a formulation of the organism’s tacit knowledge.³⁵

When we use a language we manifest dispositions the causal neurological structure of which corresponds with expressions that can be derived from a set of meaning delivering axioms.³⁶

Wittgenstein rejects any attempt to derive linguistic meanings from unconscious psychological mechanisms:

Nothing would be more confusing here to use the words ‘conscious’ and ‘unconscious’ for the contrast between states of consciousness and dispositions. For this pair of terms covers up a grammatical difference.³⁷

The grammatical difference ignored by a dispositional analysis is the normative character of rules.³⁸ All rule following relies upon interpretative practices. In Part II of the *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein discusses the phenomena of changing aspects. When presented with a triangle, not only can we view it as a geometrical figure, we can also view it as a mountain or an arrow. How we see the world is rooted in practices:

It is only if someone can do, has learnt, is master of, such-and-such, that it makes sense to say he has had this experience.³⁹

The practices that we adopt serve to change the way in which we interpret our experience. In *On Certainty*⁴⁰ Wittgenstein situates our comprehension of the world within an inherited context:

I did not get my picture of the world by satisfying myself of its correctness; nor do I have it because I am satisfied of its correctness. No, it is the inherited background against which I distinguish between true and false.⁴¹

Doubting only makes sense by relying upon a background that is not itself subject to doubt. The banks of our 'stream of life' are not fixed; they are formed by ever changing practices:

Am I not getting closer and closer to saying that in the end logic cannot be described? You must look at the practice of language, then you will see it.⁴²

But what happens when practices conflict? Wittgenstein uses the example of a conversion:

At the end of reasons comes persuasion. Think of what happens when missionaries convert natives.⁴³

But to what are we appealing if the words we use are only meaningful within the context of a local practice?

4 Polanyi on Language

In *Personal Knowledge* Polanyi attributes our intellectual superiority over other animals almost entirely to our capacity for language.⁴⁴ In the absence of language, our experience of the world is similar to other primates. Language empowers our capacity for reflection:

The enormous increase of mental powers derived from the acquisition of formal instruments of thought stands...in a peculiar contrast with the facts collected in the first part of the book, which demonstrates the pervasive participation of the knowing person in the act of knowing by virtue of an act which is essentially inarticulate. The two conflicting aspects...may be reconciled by assuming that articulation always remains incomplete.⁴⁵

Language for Polanyi is a toolbox for deploying our tacit awareness.⁴⁶ All formalisation of meaning relies upon unformalized meaning. When we supply a word

with a meaning we rely upon more than we can say. A word in itself is just a noise or a squiggle. It is a speaker or listener who supplies it with a meaning. Polanyi is not attempting to reduce meaning to intention. The content of an assertion exceeds the intentions of the agent who makes it.⁴⁷ A description implies more than the person who uses it knows if it is to mean anything at all.⁴⁸ Not only are we unable to say all we know, we also say more than we know.⁴⁹ We accept the risks of semantic indeterminacy because only words with an indeterminate meaning can have a bearing upon the real.⁵⁰

In order to use a language we need to be able to contrive symbols, observe their fitness, and interpret unfamiliar situations. Polanyi links these with three sorts of animal intelligence:

Type A Trick Learning—Contriving e.g. pressing a lever to escape;

Type B Sign Learning—Recognising e.g. that a green light indicates food;

Type C Latent Learning—Interpreting e.g. finding your way around a maze.

While all higher animals possess these abilities, Polanyi notes that within the human brain they are exceptionally integrated.⁵¹ The acquisition of a language also enriches our tacit awareness:

We may say that when we learn to use language, or probe, or a tool, and thus make ourselves aware of these things as we are of our body, we interiorise these things and make ourselves dwell in them...our whole education operates in this way; as each of us interiorise our cultural heritage, he grows into a person seeing the world and experiencing life in terms of this outlook.⁵²

To rely upon linguistic tools is to indwell within the idiom of a specific cultural inheritance.

Polanyi claims that the ability to use a language is reliant upon two key operational principles

1) **Law of Poverty**—To be manageable languages must be finite enough to allow the same words to be used a number of times.

2) **Law of Grammar**—In order to cope with complexity our words must be ordered by grammatical rules.

Although the more the scale of a map approaches unity, the greater the accuracy, if it were to approach unity it would become useless. Language enhances our intellectual powers only to the extent to which they facilitate the contemplation of that which they denote.⁵³

The Laws of Poverty and Grammar relate to words, but words only function as such if they are distinctive and used consistently. Polanyi thus adds two further principles

3) **Law of Iteration.**

4) **Law of Consistency.**

The distinctiveness of a word is bound up with an identifiable form. Since the world never repeats itself exactly, consistency is sustained by identifying common features in different situations:

First, we must decide what variations of our experience are irrelevant to the identification of this recurrent feature, as forming no part of it i.e. we must discriminate against its random background. Secondly, we must decide what variations should be accepted as normal changes in the appearance of this identifiable feature, or should be taken, on the contrary, to discredit this feature altogether as a recurrent element of experience.⁵⁴

Each time we use a word we accredit an act of generalisation. This generates a theory of the universe.⁵⁵ Language not only states facts, it can also be used to appeal to others, and express feelings.⁵⁶ Polanyi cites Buhler, but he could have developed this point by referring to Austin, who following the later Wittgenstein rejects the claim that the only function of language is description, and notes that some utterances qualify as actions. He called these performatives, as opposed to utterances that convey information, which he called constatives.⁵⁷ Searle claims that the propositional content of 'Speech Acts' is determined by rules, but all such rules have to be situated within the context of a practice.⁵⁸ On the grounds that the words we use become meaningful by relying upon a framework of linguistic rules and practices, some philosophers assert that we ought to abandon the quest to comprehend the world as it is independently of language.

5 Linguistic Idealism

Polanyi like Wittgenstein seeks to draw our attention to the tacit context of linguistic meaning:

Listen to the following formulation of this attempt by Charles Morris: 'The sign vehicle itself is simply one object, and its denotation of other objects resides solely in the fact that here are rules of usage which correlate the two sets of objects.' This is to convert words into mere sounds and then to subject them to the operation of rules corresponding to the meanings they possessed before. But this does not work. Any rules that will operate on meaningless sounds endowing them with such powers as they would possess if they had a meaning will be found to include actions—like pointing at something—which introduces the very kind of meaningful integration which the operation was to eliminate.⁵⁹

But Polanyi asserts that Wittgenstein neglects the role that realities play within meanings:

Grammar is precisely the total of linguistic rules which can be observed by using a language without attending to the things referred.⁶⁰

It is not the case that usages that go against existing linguistic practices are *ipso facto* undesirable. The boundaries of our language are not the boundaries of the world. That which a language user relies upon when generating a meaning has a reality beyond language.

We grant words an authority over ourselves when we believe they can help us comprehend realities:

When heavy hydrogen (deuterium) was discovered by Urey in 1932, it was described by him as a new isotope of hydrogen. At a discussion held by the Royal Society in 1934 the discoverer of isotopy, Frederic Soddy, objected to this on the grounds that he had originally defined the isotopes of an element as chemically inseparable from each other, and heavy hydrogen was chemically separable from light hydrogen. No attention was paid to this protest.⁶¹

An existing linguistic usage was changed by adopting a new way of understanding its meaning. Polanyi claims that the 'language game' concept relies upon Nominalist assumptions.⁶² Niquet responds by noting that 'language games' rely upon the background provided by different 'forms of life'.⁶³ Daley denies that Wittgenstein is a conventionalist:

Wittgenstein's doctrine is the antithesis of conventionalism. Its whole purport is the same as Polanyi's, to prove that the restrictive theories of language and of meaning advanced by logicians of a positivist persuasion are inadequate to the facts of language as an ongoing activity.⁶⁴

But Wittgenstein in his later writings is seeking to undermine the assumption that words become meaningful when they are used to represent objects or mental processes. He advocates dissolving philosophical problems by returning words back to their use within a linguistic practice, on the grounds that words derive their meaning from the way in which they are used. Polanyi declares that when using a descriptive term, such as 'frog', its meaning is not reducible to its role within a practice; we are seeking to comprehend an independent reality.⁶⁵ Polanyi identifies three levels of intentionality

- 1) Specifiable, although not wholly formalizable e.g. frog.
- 2) Knowable, but not readily specifiable e.g. living.
- 3) An indeterminate range of properties e.g. real.

In both his early and his later philosophy Wittgenstein retains the assumption that the task of philosophy is to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate uses of language. Polanyi seeks to shift our attention away from linguistic structures, towards that which we use language to denote. If a claim is described as meaningless, this is an interpretative act, and as such it is accompanied by all the risks of a heuristic decision.⁶⁶ In response to the assertion that when using a language we draw upon an unconscious knowledge of rules, Polanyi claims that our awareness of grammatical rules is subsidiary:

To say that we are subsidiarily aware of a thing or action is to attribute to it a particular function, namely a bearing on its meaning, which is at the focus of our attention. The level of consciousness at which we are aware of a subsidiary particular may vary over the whole range of

possible levels.⁶⁷

Polanyi accounts for how infants can know complex linguistic rules, known as such only to a few experts, by using the example of how we learn how to keep our balance when riding a bicycle.⁶⁸ This skill is not acquired by following innate rules. It is an achievement rendered possible by our subsidiary reliance upon skills accumulated during our early efforts. The assumption that underlying linguistic diversity there is a universal structure is a persistent one within philosophy. Comparative studies of human languages have not confirmed it, although recent research in genetics has supported those who have sought to place linguistic structures within the context of a cultural evolution. By comparing genes within human populations around the world, a family tree has been mapped out whose branches correspond with family trees proposed by linguists.⁶⁹

Polanyi declares that when we contribute towards vocabulary growth, and develop grammatical rules, we rely upon intuition and imagination in pursuit of communicative precision:

The manifest parallelism of this conception to the heuristics of science and technology is clear. To apply it more closely, we may note that pure science discovering meaning in nature is a pursuit of sense-reading, while technical invention which makes things into instruments for a set purpose is a sense-giving.⁷⁰

Just as cyclists modify their skills in new terrains, so language users change existing usages. Polanyi identifies three types of linguistic re-interpretation:⁷¹

- 1) When a language is acquired
- 2) When poets, scholars, and scientists propose linguistic innovations and
- 3) When linguistic transformations occur without a conscious attempt to innovate.⁷²

Changes in the way in which we use language can transform the way in which we interpret our experience.⁷³ But Polanyi rejects the claim that disagreements about realities are reducible to disagreements about the use of words. Asserting that words are no more than conventions is as misleading as declaring that a heliocentric model of planetary orbits is nothing more than a useful theory. It leaves the question of why it is useful unanswered. Deciding if justice is 'the will of God' or 'the command of the sovereign' is not going to be settled by investigating the different usages of the word justice.⁷⁴

6 *Trans-natural integrations*

Polanyi notes that when we take something to be real we expect it to manifest itself in unpredictable ways in the future. But do the meanings we discern in a work of art exist in our absence?

The meanings—the coherent entities—which we know as Michelangelo's Moses, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the virtue of justice, and the Christian God are not only intangibles; they are regarded by contemporary men as free human creations—not subject to correction by nature.⁷⁵

In *Meaning*, put together by Harry Prosch, Polanyi investigates what he describes as **trans-natural integrations**.⁷⁶ When subsidiaries (S) bear upon (→) their focal meaning (F) this generates a meaning:

$$S \rightarrow F$$

When items direct us to the integration upon which they bear, they function as subsidiary indicators. Within a simple indication it is the focal object that has intrinsic interest:

$$\begin{array}{l} -ii \ +ii \\ S \rightarrow F \end{array}$$

Polanyi calls this a **self-centred integration**, because they are made from the self (which includes all the subsidiary clues in which we dwell) to the object of our focal attention. But what about meanings where it is the subsidiary clues that possess the intrinsic interest?

When we look at a country's flag on a solemn occasion, this otherwise meaningless piece of cloth becomes for us a moving spectacle, and to some people even a sacred object.⁷⁷

The structure of symbolisation is therefore

$$\begin{array}{l} +ii \ -ii \\ S \rightarrow F \end{array}$$

Polanyi claims that symbolisation is a process of self-giving. Instead of subsidiaries bearing upon a focal object, in a **self-giving integration** we are 'carried away' by a focal object:

That is, the symbol, as an object of our focal awareness, is not merely established by an integration of subsidiary clues directed from the self to a focal object; it is also established by surrendering the diffuse memories and experiences of the self into this object, thus giving them a visible embodiment.⁷⁸

When a symbol is intrinsically interesting, Polanyi describes this integration as a metaphor:

$$\begin{array}{l} +ii \ +ii \\ S \rightarrow F \end{array}$$

Polanyi claims that metaphors, unlike other meanings, fuse incompatible elements into new coherences. In works of art metaphors are situated within the context of an artificial frame:

This is how we can watch a murder in a play...without either jumping up to rescue the victim, or feeling the action on the stage—the pretence of a murder—to be nonsensical. We accept the clues which the play offers to the imagination for sharing it's meaning, and we live in this meaning rather than the meaning these events would have for us in our ordinary 'interested' lives. This is something of what Kant meant when he defined the aesthetic appreciation of art as a disinterested pleasure.⁷⁹

Polanyi asserts that the claim, which he attributes to Coleridge, that art requires us to suspend our disbelief is mistaken.⁸⁰ A work of art succeeds when it evokes real experiences.⁸¹

A poet uses metaphors that disturb the transparency of our everyday language in order to summon our tacit awareness. Polanyi claims that religions also rely upon metaphors.⁸² Hall responds that it is unacceptable to comprehend religion in aesthetic terms:

There is a certain drift here that seems to head in the direction of the old positivistic assumptions concerning the relation of the sciences and the arts, assumptions Polanyi so wanted to defeat.⁸³

Haddox reminds us that use is made of symbols and metaphors in inquiries about realities:

Metaphors and symbols can be and are used to indicate aspects of the world. They are not simply art objects.⁸⁴

Prosch replies by noting that for Polanyi the natural sciences, mathematics, and art and religion, are all concerned with realities. He makes a distinction however between the natural sciences, whose reality exists independently of our symbol systems, and domains such as mathematics, art, and religion, whose reality exists within symbol systems.⁸⁵

Polanyi claims that to be religious is to indwell within a way of looking at the world:

[God] exists in the sense that He is to be obeyed, but not otherwise; not as a fact—any more than truth, beauty or justice exist as facts. All these, like God, are things which can only be appreciated by serving them.⁸⁶

Can religions survive their demise as factual accounts? Prosch recalls trying to convince Polanyi:

[T]hat no religion could be founded without its including somewhere in its lore the notion of its own real supernatural origin...I was never able to succeed in getting him to admit this. He really had a difficult time understanding a belief in the factual reality of the religiously supernatural as anything much more than magic or superstition.⁸⁷

It is incorrect to say that Polanyi ignores the role that metaphor plays in the natural sciences. What he claims is that when artists create a metaphor, we are required to exercise our imagination each time we experience it, but the role of the imagination in science decreases as the metaphors that theorists create are transformed into

literal realities.⁸⁸

7 Semantic engines

A Turing machine is an abstract model of any process that can be reduced into a finite series of discrete steps.⁸⁹ In 1948 Polanyi encouraged Turing, who was a friend and colleague at Manchester University, to address the question whether or not a Turing machine could reproduce a human mind.⁹⁰ Turing declared that one way of judging the success of any such attempt would be to find out if an interrogator could detect any difference between a human subject and a machine if their only link with them was via a Teletype.⁹¹ Polanyi responds that if this were our test of whether or not something is in a mental state, believing something to be in pain would be all that is required for it to be in pain.⁹² But reproducing pain behaviour is not the same thing as suffering pain. At the seminar at which Turing first suggested his test, Polanyi declared that algorithms cannot reproduce mental states.⁹³ A Turing machine cannot even reproduce a formal system.⁹⁴

- 1) Accepting an undefined term implies that we know its proper use. This knowledge is not formally described.
- 2) To accept a statement as an axiom is to express the unformalized belief that we know what does and does not satisfy it.
- 3) Performing actions on symbols in accordance with the rules of a formal proof requires us to accredit these operations as a proof.

The informal dimension supplementing the operations of the formal system that is instantiated by a Turing machine is provided by the mind that operates and understands the system:

To believe that I understand and correctly operate a formal system implies that I know how to operate its unformalized functions. Since a formal system will always require supplementation by unformalized operations, it follows that none can ever function without a person who performs these operations.⁹⁵

Godel demonstrates that within any deductive system that is able to generate arithmetic claims, it is possible to construct formulae that are demonstrably undecidable in that system. We can eliminate this problem by increasing the number of axioms, but the consistency of this wider system will always remain undecidable. Polanyi puts forward the argument that the Godel theorem tells us that the mind that uses a logical inference machine can know more than such a machine can demonstrate.⁹⁶ Lucas, and more recently Penrose, both defend the claim that the Godel theorem shows us that computers, which are instantiation of formal systems, fail to capture what it is to be a mind.⁹⁷ Good attempts to solve this problem by declaring that an infinite hierarchy of machines is possible, each proving that which is left unformalized by a lower

level system.⁹⁸

Rejecting the behaviourist injunction against speculating about the internal workings of the mind, advocates of a representational account claim that mental properties are reducible to symbol processing. Fodor asserts that the property of being about something derives from a tacit language of thought, to which he gives the name *mentalese*, which processes innate representations in accordance with rules.⁹⁹ Pylyshyn claims that semantics can be reduced to syntax i.e. that physical symbols can have formal properties that correspond with states of affairs in the world.¹⁰⁰ These properties are independent of any physical realisation. Polanyi claims that symbols derive their meaning from the point of view that uses them.¹⁰¹ They are used by a point of view to designate a state of awareness. Manipulating a symbol in accordance with rules does not render it meaningful:

To a disembodied intellect, entirely incapable of lust, pain or comfort, most of our vocabulary would be incomprehensible.¹⁰²

Meanings are a product of conscious states. To be in a conscious state is to rely upon a body. Thinking is both intentional and embodied.¹⁰³ Turing machines are disembodied, rule-following devices that process symbols.¹⁰⁴ Conscious states play no role in its implementation. Nor does intentionality. A Turing machine does not have mental states.¹⁰⁵

In order to demonstrate that a Turing machine borrows meanings, Searle uses the example of a person sealed up in a room who by following instructions in a manual is able to supply answers in Chinese to questions in Chinese without knowing any Chinese.¹⁰⁶ Critics respond that it is the Turing machine as a whole, not any particular part of it, which supplies the meaning.¹⁰⁷ An intentional state is described in terms of third-person descriptions not first-person experiences. Searle claims that words become meaningful when they are used by a consciousness to represent an intentional state. On the grounds that rules determining the conditions of satisfaction of what it is to be a linguistic meaning are reliant upon a context, Searle places intentional states within a non-representational and non-intentional background; which he separates into a deep background of biological capacities, and a local background of acquired cultural practices.¹⁰⁸ Searle rejects the argument, which he attributes to Polanyi, that acquiring a skill is a process of internalising explicit rules. A background is not a set of rules.¹¹⁰ But Polanyi does not claim that acquiring a skill requires us to internalise explicit rules.¹¹¹ Searle follows Dreyfus when he assumes that Polanyi asserts that all skill is rule-following,¹¹² and he makes the additional assumption that all tacit awareness is unconscious. Polanyi neither claims that skills are

reducible to rules, nor declares that our tacit awareness is unconscious. His account does however seek to undermine any attempt to separate rules that determine meaning from the context of their use.¹¹³

8 Embodied cognition

Advocates of embodied cognition seek to replace representations with embodied interactions with the world. Dreyfus notes that a key problem with a representational model of mental functioning is that vast amounts of background information have to be programmed into a computer before it can successfully mimic human behaviour. This is called the *frame problem*.¹¹⁴ An embodied account however offloads processing demands onto the external world by linking perception and action without the need for any representation. This avoids the need for an exhaustive set of representations of the world. Instead of seeking to separate perception from sense data, Gibson claims that organisms are already structured to detect possibilities of action in their environment i.e. *affordances*.¹¹⁵ Maturana and Varela claim that organisms relate to their environment not via internal models, but via non-representational dynamic coupling between systemic structures.¹¹⁶ Brooks describes cognitive states not as internal representations of an external reality, but as emergent behaviours arising from interactions with a local environment.¹¹⁷ The strategy however neglects the role that language plays in the formation of a mind.¹¹⁸ Polanyi claims that abstract reflection is a consequence of indwelling within a language. What it is to be a mind comes into being when we add an articulate framework to our bodies.¹¹⁹ Meaning is not wholly reducible to an *Umwelt* of wholly local concerns.¹²⁰ By facilitating our capacity to abstract from our experience, language renders possible an orientation to transcendent ideals.

Dreyfus rejects a representationalist model of what it is to be a mind on the grounds of an appeal to the phenomenology of our everyday experience. In his phenomenology Husserl attempts to explicate the pre-understanding that exists prior to empirical inquiry.¹²¹ Heidegger situates this pre-understanding within the context of practices. When we use a hammer we are not a detached mind contemplating an object with a collection of abstract properties: we rely upon it as a tool. Prior to rational reflection is *being-in-the-world*. Both Husserl and Heidegger ignore the role played by the body.¹²² To support his claim that cognition is embodied, Dreyfus cites the work of Merleau-Ponty.¹²³ Merleau-Ponty asserts that minds are embodied and interact rather than represent the world. Polanyi read Merleau-Ponty in the early Sixties and although he praises him as full of insights; but he notes that he does not elucidate the structure of tacit knowing, or explain how levels of being are possible.¹²⁴ Dreyfus claims that

Polanyi declares that all skills follow rules,¹²⁵ and in collaboration with his brother he supplies an alternative account, in which there are five levels of skill acquisition, the lowest level being rule following, and the highest level the intuitive expertise that accompanies embodied practices.¹²⁶ For Polanyi however, the central issue is not what skills a rule following device can replicate, but the gap between rule-following and conscious agency.¹²⁷ The problems that accompany attempts to formalise skills are symptomatic of the differences between rule-following and embodied conscious agency. Johnson and Lakoff¹²⁸ declare that Second Generation cognitive semantics relies upon three major assumptions:

- 1) The mind is inherently embodied.
- 2) Thought is mostly unconscious.
- 3) Abstract concepts are largely metaphorical.

Embodied points of view categorize their experience. An antelope for example can distinguish between lions and zebras. This categorization is pre-linguistic. It uses prototypes that rely upon experiential gestalts. When we make sense of the world we rely upon bodily processes that operate below our conscious awareness. Metaphor, by linking one domain (the vehicle) with another domain (the tenor), renders our abstract reflections meaningful by relating them to our embodied awareness. Metaphor pervades our abstract comprehension of the world. The claim that metaphor has no cognitive role is a product of assuming that reality is wholly external to the way in which we conceptualise it. Johnson and Lakoff claim that meaning generation takes place within embodied points of view. Like Polanyi they seek to transcend objectivism and subjectivism by situating our comprehension of the world within the context of our embodied interactions with it, enriched by the interpretations that language renders possible.¹²⁹

9 Conclusion

In 'Sense Giving and Sense Reading' Polanyi claims that endowing our utterances [sense-giving] or others utterances [sense-reading] with a meaning has a characteristic pattern. A focus of attention is generated which is the joint meaning of the particulars that make up a subsidiary awareness:

A meaningful relation of a subsidiary to a focal is formed by the action of a person who integrates one to the other, and the relation persists by the fact that the person keeps up this integration. We may say, in slightly more general terms, that the triad of tacit knowing consists in subsidiary things (B) bearing on a focus (C) by virtue of an integration performed by person (A); we may say also that in tacit knowing we attend from one or more subsidiaries to a focus on which the subsidiaries are brought to bear.¹³⁰

It is not the case that all meaning is linguistic. Polanyi divides meaning into:

- 1) **Existential Meaning**—in which an experience becomes meaningful for a point of view within a specific context, and
- 2) **Representative Meaning**—which occur when items denote existential meanings.¹³¹

Meanings are generated by centres of subjective interest. A point of view identifies patterns in their experience. Language is used to denote these patterns. The meanings that are generated will depend upon the content of its awareness. Polanyi claims that meanings perplex those who seek to formalise them for the same reason that universals puzzled earlier philosophers.¹³² Attempting to define meanings in terms of rules generates a semantic version of the 'Third Man' problem raised by Plato in the *Parmenides* i.e. how are universals applied to an endless variety of different instances. If universals are taken to be nothing more than artefacts of language, the problem becomes even more acute. Polanyi accounts for how a plurality of encounters can bear upon a general conception by taking particulars to be clues within a tacit integration:

Our conception of a tree for example...arises by the tacit integration of countless experiences of different trees and pictures and reports of still others: deciduous and evergreen, straight and crooked, bare and leafy. All these encounters are included in forming the conception of a tree; they are all used subsidiarily with a bearing on the conception of a tree, which is what we mean by the word tree.¹³³

Words are supplied with meanings by conscious agents, who use them as tools for deploying a tacit awareness. There is a continuous transition between words denoting objects and words denoting concepts.¹³⁴ Minds are generated when the feeling and willing that accompany states of consciousness are supplemented by linguistic descriptions.

By 'feeling' I mean having sensations, emotions, and desires. By willing I mean having intentions, and making decisions. The second order beliefs and desires that language renders possible enables us to contemplate new realities. If we ask if something is true, rather than simply finding it useful, this creates a new kind of consciousness:

While the first rise of living individuals overcame the meaninglessness of the universe by establishing in it centres of subjective interests, the rise of human thought in its turn overcame these subjective interests by universal intent.¹³⁵

According to Fodor it is language that generates the productive and systematic properties of thought, and language is rendered possible by a language of thought that is hardwired into our nervous system. Polanyi agrees that what it is to be a mind is made possible by language. But mind does not come into existence because of an innate language of thought; it is a product of indwelling within the framework supplied by a natural language.¹³⁶ The semantic properties of

thought are not a product of symbols being manipulated in accordance with rules, but a consequence of embodied points of view using items to designate a focal awareness.¹³⁷ In order to comprehend how there can be such a thing as an embodied point of view, Polanyi defends an emergent ontology.

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Key Terms:

Existential Meaning—When something becomes meaningful to a point of view.

Law of Consistency—The persistent use of a word that accredits an act of generalisation.

Law of Grammar—The rules that determine the way in which words are combined within a language.

Law of Iteration—To facilitate identification words must be distinctive.

Law of Poverty—To be manageable languages must be finite enough to allow the same words to be used a number of times.

Representative Meaning—When something is used to denote an existential meaning.

Self-Centred Integration—When an awareness becomes meaningful by being integrated into a focal object.

Self-Giving Integration—When an object becomes meaningful by symbolising a tacit awareness.

Trans-natural Integration—An integration whose meaning is not intended to be a naturalistic description.

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- (1660).
- 9 Locke (1977) p. 226.
- 10 Cassirer p. 141.
- 11 Condillac (2001).
- 12 See Taylor (1995) pp. 79-99.
- 13 Quoted by Cassirer (1955) p. 153.
- 14 Frege (1960) p. 59.
- 15 Saussure (1983).
- 16 Rejecting the claim that reference is determined by sense Putnam (1984) asserts that meaning is not simply mental. Kripke (1980) declares that gold is a reality—identified by rigid designators—which has a reality independent of our thoughts about it. All such identifications however rely upon judgements made by points of view.
- 17 Engelmann (1967) pp. 143-44. For the background see Janik, A. and Toulmin, S. (1973).
- 18 Wittgenstein (1961).
- 19 Wittgenstein (1953).
- 20 See Daly (1968) pp. 136-68, Innis (1979) pp. xiii-iv, and Gill (1981) pp. 185-91.
- 21 In a 1930 list of those who had exerted a major influence upon him Wittgenstein mentions Schopenhauer, who in *The World as Will and Representation* claims that an aesthetic experience transcends Will and contemplate reality from the standpoint of eternity. He asserts that the world is my representation, with the subject itself not represented. In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein follows a similar line of thought:
- 'The subject does not belong to the world: rather it is the limit of the world. Where in the world is a metaphysical subject to be found? You will say this is exactly like the case of the eye and the visual field. But really you do not see the eye.' Ibid 5:623-5:633.
- As far as solipsism is concerned Wittgenstein claims: 'We cannot think what we cannot think; so what we cannot think we cannot say either. This remark provides the key to the problem, how much truth there is in solipsism. For what the solipsist means is quite correct, only it cannot be said, but makes itself manifest.' Ibid 5:61.

Notes:

- 1 Polanyi (1975) p. 121.
- 2 Plato (1926) 384.
- 3 In his *Seventh Letter* however Plato makes it clear that he does not believe that language can ever wholly capture the essentially real. See Plato (1973) pp. 111-50.
- 4 Aristotle (1963) I.
- 5 See Descartes (1991) p. 13. See also Leibniz (1973) pp. 10-17.
- 6 See Locke (1977) pp. 205-57.
- 7 Berkeley (1988) pp. 37-51.
- 8 Such as can be found in the Port-Royal Grammar
- 22 Ibid Preface.
- 23 Ibid p. xxii.
- 24 Wittgenstein (1953) p. viii.
- 25 Ibid Paragraph 7.

- 26 Ibid 23.
 27 Ibid 66.
 28 Ibid 68.
 29 Ibid 78.
 30 Ibid 87.
 31 Ibid 217.
 32 Wittgenstein describes the way in which we understand a picture or a melody as intransitive (1974 p. 79) and this term helps us to understand what he means when he claims that 'When I obey a rule I obey it blindly' (1953) Paragraph 219. Our interpretation of a rule is not arbitrary; it is rooted in an intransitive tacit awareness. See Bell (1987).
 33 Chomsky (1980) p. 102.
 34 Ibid pp. 69-70.
 35 Fodor (1968) p. 638.
 36 Evans (1981) p. 24.
 37 Wittgenstein (1953) Paragraph 149.
 38 Ibid 220.
 39 Ibid II xi (209e).
 40 Wittgenstein (1969).
 41 Ibid p. 15.
 42 Ibid p. 66.
 43 Ibid p. 81.
 44 Polanyi (1958) p. 70.
 45 Ibid p. 70.
 46 Polanyi (1959) p. 25.
 47 Polanyi unlike Grice (1957) denies that linguistic meaning is reducible to the intentions of the utterer.
 48 Polanyi (1958) p. 252.
 49 Ibid p. 95.
 50 Polanyi (1958) p. 251. When our language exceeds our tacit awareness we have to decide which of the two we are going to rely upon 'The mind which entrusts itself to the operation of symbols acquires an intellectual tool of boundless power; but its use makes the mind liable to perils the range of which seem also unlimited. The gap between the tacit and the articulate tends to produce everywhere a cleavage between sound common sense and dubious sophistication, from which the animal is quite free.' Ibid p. 94.
 51 Ibid p. 82.
 52 Polanyi (1969) p. 148.
 53 Polanyi (1958) p. 81. Polanyi notes that in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* Book III Chapter 3 Section 2-4 Locke seeks to explain our use of universal terms by using a similar argument. Ibid p. 78.
 54 Ibid p. 80.
 55 Ibid p. 80.
 56 Ibid p. 77.
 57 Austin (1961).
 58 Searle (1969).
 59 Polanyi (1969) p. 192.
 60 Ibid p. 114.
 61 Ibid p. 111.
 62 Ibid p. 113.
 63 Niquet (1992) p. 73.
 64 Daly (1968) p. 148.
 65 Polanyi agrees with Aristotle that it is natural to seek to identify universal features in our experience. Grene points out however that 'Aristotelian universals are safely housed in a limited Aristotelian world of individual substances and kinds of substances with their eternal, explicitly definable essential attributes. Polanyian general conceptions are concretions out of a world of flux. They are moments in history, claiming universal validity, eternal rightness, yet always in danger of error, of the need for correction, because they are the achievements of living individuals within a world that is radically engaged in change.' Grene (1966) p. 61.
 66 Polanyi (1958) p. 110.
 67 Polanyi (1969) p. 200.
 68 Polanyi (1969) pp. 200-1.
 69 See Cavalli-Sforza (2001).
 70 Polanyi (1969) p. 205.
 71 Polanyi (1958) p. 105.
 72 Ibid p. 208.
 73 Ibid p. 103.
 74 Ibid p. 114.
 75 Polanyi & Prosch (1975) p. 67.
 76 Ibid p. 125.
 77 Ibid p. 72.
 78 Ibid pp. 74-5.
 79 Polanyi & Prosch (1975) p. 87.
 80 Scott (1985) pp. 166-77 argues that it would be more accurate to describe Coleridge as defending a very similar conception of art to Polanyi i.e. poetry as trans-natural integrations which evoke our tacit awareness.
 81 A work of art, qua work of art, does not entertain or instruct, important as these are, but evoke disinterested emotions—it uses trans-natural integrations to confront us with the reality of what it feels like to be a human being.
 82 Polanyi & Prosch p. 153.
 83 Hall (1982) pp. 14-15.
 84 Haddox p. 21.
 85 Prosch (1982) pp. 41-8.
 86 Polanyi (1958) p. 279.
 87 Prosch (1982) p. 46.
 88 Polanyi (1975) p. 150.
 89 Turing (1936).
 90 Hodge (1983) pp. 414-5.
 91 Turing (1950).
 92 Polanyi (1964) pp. 85-6.
 93 See Mays (2000).
 94 Polanyi (1958) pp. 257-8.
 95 Polanyi (1998) p. 313.
 96 Polanyi (1958) p. 261.
 97 See Lucas (1961) and Penrose (1989).
 98 Good (1967).
 99 Fodor (1975).
 100 Pylyshyn (1980) p. 113.

- 101 Polanyi (1998) p. 313.
- 102 Polanyi (1958) p. 99.
- 103 Polanyi (1966) p. x.
- 104 'The Cartesian idea of a disembodied mind may well have been the source, by the middle of the twentieth century, for the metaphor of mind as a software program...There may be some Cartesian disembodiment also behind the thinking of neuroscientists who insist that the mind can be fully explained solely in terms of brain events, leaving by the wayside the rest of the organism and the surrounding physical and social environment.' Damasio (1995) p. 250.
- 105 Hall (1968) p. 67.
- 106 See Searle (1980).
- 107 Searle anticipating this objection notes that even if the occupant of the room memorised all the rules in their rulebook, Chinese symbols would still be meaningless for them.
- 108 Searle (1983) pp. 143-4.
- 109 Ibid p. 150. 110 Searle (1992) p. 193.
- 111 'If I know how to ride a bicycle or how to swim, this does not mean that I can tell how I manage to keep my balance on a bicycle or keep afloat when swimming. I may not have the slightest idea how I do this or even an entirely wrong or grossly imperfect idea of how I do this, and yet I go on cycling or swimming merrily.' Polanyi (1969) p. 145.
- 112 'Polanyi, like Plato, fails to distinguish between performance and competence, between explanation and understanding, between the rule one is following and the rule which can be used to describe what is happening.' Dreyfus (1992) pp. 300-1.
- 113 Johnson like Polanyi is hostile to any attempt to detach conditions of satisfaction for meaning generating intentional states from non-intentional background skills and bodily capacities 'I am claiming that the so-called Background is merely that part of meaning that is not focused on in a given intentional act. It is that which is presupposed and is unquestioned as part of the context in which we grasp and express what we mean. It is background, relative to the foreground on which we are now focusing; but it is still part of the web of connections that constitute meaning.' Johnson (1987) pp. 189.
- 114 'Ceteris paribus conditions and incompleteness are not merely annoyances...these problems point to something taken for granted: namely a shared, human background that alone makes possible all rule-like activity.' Dreyfus & Dreyfus (1986) p. 81.
- 115 Gibson (1979).
- 116 Maturana & Varela (1980).
- 117 Brooks (1993).
- 118 Merlin identifies three key cognitive stages in the formation of the distinctively human 1) Mimetic Skills 2) Speech Systems 3) External Symbolic Storage 'The essential cognitive adaptation underlying each of the three great cognitive transitions in human evolution is a new system of memory representation.' Merlin (1991) p. 366.
- 119 Hall (1968) p. 67.
- 120 Von Uexkull (1934).
- 121 Husserl, like Polanyi, takes meaning generation to be an act of consciousness. See Innis (1974) p. 49. But Husserl unlike Polanyi seeks to reduce language to a purely formal grammar i.e. into collections of formal rules (Husserl 1970).
- 122 Heidegger views being-in-the-world not as embodied awareness, but as unreflective coping structured by time.
- 123 Dreyfus (1992) pp. 252-3.
- 124 Polanyi (1969) p. 222.
- 125 The evidence for this interpretation is a sentence (1958 p. 49) in which Polanyi notes that it is well known that skilful performances are the product of rules not known as such to the person who follows them. It is quite a leap, however, from this observation to the assertion that all skills are reducible to rules. Since *Personal Knowledge* is largely dedicated to showing that science is a practice that is not reducible to rules, his assertion that Polanyi seeks to reduce all skills to rule following is as puzzling as his assertion that the claim that computers require bodies in order to be intelligent is contained in *Being and Time*.
- 126 Dreyfus & Dreyfus (1986) pp. 16-51.
- 127 As Weizenbaum points out, although Dreyfus rejects the assumption that what it is to be a human being is reducible to a Turing machine, he limits his argument to the technical question of what computers can and cannot do, neglecting the consequences that comprehending man as a Turing machine has upon our moral character as human beings. Weizenbaum (1976) p. 12.
- 128 Lakoff and Johnson (1999) p. 3.
- 129 Lakoff and Johnson (1979) pp. 183-94.
- 130 Polanyi (1969) p. 182.
- 131 Polanyi (1958) p. 58.
- 132 Polanyi (1969) pp. 163-7.
- 133 Ibid p. 191.
- 134 Ibid p. 190.
- 135 Polanyi (1958) p. 389.
- 136 Polanyi (1969) p. 148. 137 Doede points out that 'Polanyi is careful to point out that subsidiary and focal items are not "linked together" of [their] own accord (Polanyi 1968 p. 30). That is, meaning is not causally, but intentionally instantiated. So linguistic meaning comes into being and persists only by virtue of persons attending from linguistic tokens to their focal import. The personal agent is ineliminable from Polanyi's construal of semantics 'nothing...can ever mean anything in itself'. All semantic operations, he submits, 'are the tacit operations of a person' (Polanyi 1958 p. 22). Doede (1993-4) p. 39.

R. C. Warren

Abstract

The philosophy of personalism provides useful moral concepts against which the practices of human resources management (HRM) and employment sub-contracting can be judged and the degree of moral progress or regression evaluated. Three concepts of the person which underpin human resources management are identified: individualistic, collectivist and personalist. Contemporary HRM tends towards the individualistic conception of the person; many of its critics are informed by a collectivist perspective; and the personalist view has been largely ignored in today's discourse. Recent survey evidence shows that many elements of HRM practice are welcomed by employees but that some practices are having a detrimental impact on character and community. It is argued that a personalist approach to HRM could create resourceful organizations.

1 Introduction

This paper will outline a philosophical resource that can be drawn upon by human resource managers to construct a balanced approach to employees as persons in organizations. The line of thought that can be used to underpin this position is called 'Personalism'; it is not a new philosophy, but it has undergone many transformations over the years. The notion of trying to find a 'middle way' between the individual and the collective was the theme of the personalist movement in the 1930s, and in many ways this movement represents the forerunner of the communitarian movement that has come to prominence in the 1990's. This exposition aims to connect these two lines of thought which together can provide a moral compass to guide the development of HRM practice in today's organizations. First, the concepts which underpin the notion of the person in contemporary human resources management (HRM) will be explored. Richard Sennett has recently accused HRM of lacking the necessary respect for persons, thereby creating a new malaise in employment (Sennett, 1998). The problem with HRM seems to be that its values and practices are reflections of the ideological climate in which it developed; the individualistic enterprise ideology of the 1980s in both the USA and the UK. In reaction to this climate of opinion, critics of this prevailing ideology have stressed the importance of collectivism as a possible counter balance to the dehumanizing tendencies they perceive to exist in HRM. It is possible, however, in HRM discourse to build a 'third way', to use this now over worked phrase. This is the personalist approach to HRM practice that tries to preserve the employee's dignity and bestow upon them social honour without treating them in either a collectivist or a purely contractual fashion.

2 The philosophy of personalism

Personalism can be defined as the attempt to place persons and personal relationships at the center of

theory and practice, and to explore the significance of personal categories across a variety of ways of life. On a very broad view it is difficult to say where the philosophy of personalism begins. It may be best to think of personalism as a philosophical approach with roots in 19th-century thought that reaches its most systematic expression in the 20th century. In 1830, John Henry Newman spoke of the 'method of personation', and the Cambridge philosopher, John Grote called his metaphysical approach 'personalism'. The personalist tradition in Germany was advanced by the phenomenologist Max Scheler (1874-1928). This phenomenological approach to personalism influenced a number of French philosophers, as well as the thought of Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II). In France, Charles Renouvier published *Le Personalisme* in 1903. But, the central figures of French personalism are Emmanuel Mounier who wrote a personalist manifesto in 1938, and Jacques Maritain who published a series of works throughout the 1940s. (Mounier, 1950; Maritain, 1947) Mounier claimed that the personalist movement originated in the crisis which began with the Wall Street crash in 1929. *Esprit*, his journal of personalism, grew out of a movement, of conferences and discussions in every part of France around spirituality and faith in relation to analyses of the social problems and burning controversies of the time.

The leading Catholic intellectual involved in the personalist movement was the renowned philosopher Jacques Maritain, whose book *The Rights of Man* is a classic statement of the personalist political philosophy. (Maritain, 1944) Maritain's conception of society is personalist because it considers society to be a whole composed of persons whose dignity is prior to society and yet the person needs to live in community that shares a conception of the common good that is superior to that of the individual. Both Mounier and Maritain were concerned that in post-war France the ideas of personalism should inform the political reconstruction which they saw as having been caused by the crisis of meaning and truth with deep roots in

modern life. In Maritain's view, the rights of the working person should be as follows: the right freely to choose his work; the right to form trade unions; the right of the worker to be considered socially as an adult; the right of trade unions to freedom and autonomy; the right to a just wage; the right to work; the right to joint ownership and joint management of the enterprise; and the right to social security and a fair share of the common goods of civilization.

Personalism is not, however, a system: it is a movement that unites a wide range of theistic (Catholic, Protestant and Jewish) and secular thinkers across Europe and in the USA. The Viennese born, Jewish philosopher Martin Buber has been very influential in both continents with his notion of 'I and Thou' and the need to embrace a third way between individualism and collectivism. In Britain, the personalist movement was led by the Scottish moral philosopher John Macmurray (1891-1976), who, against the background of logical positivism and linguistic analysis then current in philosophy, tried, with missionary zeal, to analyze the crisis of the personal which he felt was assailing his society at the time. His most significant statement was made in his Gifford Lectures in 1959 and published in two volumes with the collective title *The Form of the Personal*. (Macmurray, 1957, 1961) It presents a profound critique of Cartesian thought, and whilst not well received at the time, is now beginning to meet with widespread acceptance towards the end of the twentieth century. His analysis of the role of justice in the maintenance of personal relationships and of the nature of persons in relation is an important insight we can make use of today in the discourse about HRM.

Personalism puts primacy on the ethical or moral realm. In dealing with economic issues, for example, personalist morality and what we owe to others takes precedence to questions of utility. In political contexts, persons and their lifeworlds take precedence to systems or structures. Personalism is thus an attempt, in an age of increasing depersonalization, to defend both the concept and the reality of persons. If there is consensus among personalists concerning the primacy and importance of the person, there is no dogma or unified doctrine that further constitutes a personalist ideology. Although the majority of personalists have been theists, there is no unified theology, or even a requirement that to be a personalist one must believe in God. There are no agreements about methods or definitions; indeed, even the definition of 'personhood' remains an open question. But because personalism opens up the middle ground between individualism and collectivism its contribution can no longer be ignored and is already in several ways being restored to prominence by strands of the communitarian movement.

Many of the Anglo-American communitarians are motivated by the negative social and psychological

effects (unbridled greed, loneliness, urban crime, high divorce rates, suicides, alienation from politics, etc.) related to the atomistic tendencies that they see in their societies. (Etzioni, 1995; Sacks, 1997) This movement has sought to emphasize the importance of social responsibility, and the need for all citizens to prevent the erosion of community in an increasingly fragmented world. Libertarians claim they may be setting out on the slippery slope to authoritarianism, but most communitarians are, like the personalists, merely trying to steer a middle way between rampant individualism and oppressive collectivism. How might this philosophy of the person help to shape our discourse about the development of HRM?

3 The person in human resource management

The term 'person' although rather vague and difficult to define has been an important concept in Western philosophy and theology since the Greeks. It is richer in meaning than the notion of the 'individual' and implies a more textured character with a clear sense of selfhood, connection and context. It is often noted that certain kinds of institution produce certain types of character or persons. The notion of the person is often the connecting point between the individual and the organization; the very term person (persona) suggesting the taking on of a role that has as moral obligations within a wider moral order. There is undoubtedly freedom for the individual to decide how the role is to be played out, but the very notion of socialization into a role in a moral order implies that there will be a degree of self-acceptance of the expectations of others, helping to form a distinct personality or character. Consequently, it needs to be acknowledged that various theories of management contain a moral metaphysics with implications for the person whether formally acknowledged or not.

When reading the HRM literature what often appears to be missing is a clear articulation of the notion of the person presumed by the prescription under consideration. This gap may be due to the failure of advocates to think about these issues, or perhaps, because they have absorbed the post-modern view that the moral category of the person does not seem to exist any more, it having been deconstructed. It is contended, that to make informed judgments about the ethics of HRM we need to assess the implications of various management strategies and practices on the character of persons. This analysis however, is a task fraught with difficulties, nevertheless it is important to find some way of proceeding. Different philosophies of management result in different conceptions of the person to be managed, different types of employment relationship, and different psychological contracts between employer and employee. The following

analysis owes something to the example of Douglas McGregor and his identification of assumptions about human nature in theories of organization labelled Theory X and Theory Y (McGregor, 1960). Three conceptions of the person will now be described as ideal types (without reference to their philosophical foundations) against which the philosophy of HRM can be compared.

The first conception is labelled 'individualistic'. The individual person is constituted as a person in himself, independently of their relations with other persons. Relationships are external to the person and therefore society is not an essential aspect of personhood. Society is formed as if by contract and is considered to be nothing more than a collection of atomistic individuals. Individuality is fundamental, and personal choice and responsibility are primary characteristics of the person. The individual self needs and will respond favourably to freedom and opportunity. Motivation and effort are stimulated by reciprocal exchanges between individuals in which perceptions of fairness are crucial. Individual persons are entitled to profit by their own efforts and are free to enjoy their own property as long as it has been justly acquired. Selfishness is to be checked however, by the need to behave charitably and in the interests of enlightened self-interest. The individual engages in society through formal and informal contracts that are upheld on the basis of the voluntary nature of such agreements and the terms thereby agreed between the parties. Few, if any moral obligations or rights exist beyond the individual's nexus of contracts. The ideal goal of personal development for the individual is a state of independent autonomy and liberty. The person is a self-sufficient choice-maker whose good lies in the concatenation of rationalistic choices. The eventual consequence of this view is that individuals come to see themselves as owners of their own person as 'possessive individuals'. The person is unconstrained and any sort of imposed constraint is to be resisted as a threat to liberty. Consequently many social institutions do not fair very well: the family is often broken and abandoned, the trade union is just an instrumental group, and the community is fragmented. In fact no institution grounded in obligation or deep or unchosen connections can be taken seriously: commitment is therefore very light and uncertain.

The second is labelled collectivist. The person is thought of a part of the collective with the state as the representative institution of a society. Individual purposes and motives are reflections of the social whole, and cannot be understood apart from their context in society. Equality, and fraternity are primary features of social life and liberty is secondary to the requirements of society. The good of the individual is to be achieved through the social good and duties and obligations are derived from the social needs of society

rather than the individual ego. Property and possessions beyond those relating to the immediate interests of the individual are to be held in common and managed on the basis of common benefits. The state has, therefore, the right to exercise considerable powers to bring recalcitrant individuals into line and a responsibility to steer associations for the good of all citizens. The bonds between people are covenantal rather than simply contractual and cannot be easily broken or terminated. Achievement and success are to be related to talents and contribution but are judged on the basis of serving the common good rather than individual purposes. Solidarity is an imperative and commitments are deep and serious.

The third is labelled personalist. The person is conceived as being in relation to others. But the good of all persons is achieved by the good of their individuality. The individual's good cannot be had independently of the community but nor can the good of the community be achieved independently of the individual. Personal relations are constituted by the values of freedom, equality and fraternity. Justice is an important property of any society but he aim is the increase and development of friendship. The state exists as an institution to foster justice in and between communities and to protect the sanctity of the individual from the dangers of collectivism. Hence the importance in a personalist state of the institution of democracy, but in a form that also protects the notion of individual worth and sacredness. There are areas of life outside the control of the state which ought to allow a personal life to flourish. And yet, the development of an individualism that does not recognize that the person is constituted by its relations with others is to be avoided. Persons are bound to each other in a richer sense than through contract; they have duties towards the other and consequently, a moral bond that has to be recognized as well. The personalist community should include democracy as an essential but subordinate dimension. But the person's freedom should not be totally over ridden by the concern to establish equality and fraternity, a balance has to be struck. Justice is the first requirement in a personalist community but the second goal is the emergence of friendship as a spontaneous property of persons in relation allowing the full realization of human potential.

If we take these three ideal types and compare them with statements and prescriptions about HRM then we can begin to classify and criticize, albeit that some versions of HRM involve contradictory views of the person. It will be contended that in general terms HRM tends towards the individualistic conception of the person; that many of its critics are informed by a collectivist perspective; and that the personalist view is largely neglected and out of fashion in today's discourse. This broad judgment about the prevailing

notions of the person that characterize the HRM debate will now be explained.

4 Individualism in HRM discourse

The discourse about HRM in the 1980's slowly undermined the orthodox discourse of personnel management despite the fact that HRM was itself an illusive concept, difficult to identify and elucidate. (Torrington, 1989) A variety of terms have been put forward to describe the meaning of HRM: that it involves policies which are adopted towards the management of employees which are written down and provide guides to action; that it involves practices which are informal processes or norms which also tend to guide behaviour; and that it involves HR strategy which is a set of ideas, policies and practices which managements adopt in order to achieve their strategic and people-management objectives. Policies, practices and strategies are all woven together as the HRM approach designed to achieve integration of strategy and performance through employee flexibility, commitment, and quality consciousness. (Noon, 1992)

David Guest has provided a valuable commentary on the possible meanings of HRM and an analysis of the concept involving two distinctive dimensions—a 'hard' efficiency focus, and a 'soft' cultural management focus (Guest, 1987). HRM strategies can be classified according to the degree of emphasis placed upon efficiency (hard) or culture change (soft): many are, of course, attempting to achieve both elements at the same time. The environmental antecedents behind the movement from personnel management to HRM are identified by some commentators to be the crisis of confidence in the USA about how to respond to Japanese competition, and in particular the need to engage employee initiative in the firm's competitive strategy. (Guest, 1990; Beaumont, 1993) The HRM approach that originated in the USA was then enthusiastically exported to the UK by business schools and consultancies where the need to improve competitiveness was also considered to be urgent.

In its 'hard' form, HRM is often considered to be just another method of asserting managerial prerogatives and increasing control over the work process by initiating a drive for efficiency and by putting in place strategies to getting more out of the labour input. The stress is not on the 'human', but on the 'resource' management aspects of the management process. Some critics point out that the new HRM is the age-old process of labour intensification and capitalist exploitation reasserting itself once again despite resistance from trades unions and pockets of complacency in some levels of management (Blyton & Turnbull, 1992). Employees are, the critics claim, being treated as mere means towards the capitalists' ends. In HRM's 'soft' form, employees are afforded greater recognition as individuals than as resources but are encouraged to commit themselves mentally and

emotionally to the mission of the firm. The objective of HRM strategy is to generate this greater commitment by the creation of an appropriate culture in the organization that has a clear focus upon improving the competitive performance of the firm. Various cultural levers (missions, rituals, empowerment, performance management etc.) are fashioned to foster greater individual employee commitment and hopefully improved individual and team performance (Anthony, 1994). A harmony of interests in the organization is often assumed, and a new unitary culture is engineered to encourage the appropriate behavioural responses from employees. The deployment of HRM strategies leads organizations either in the direction of paternalism or sophisticated psychological contractualism in the employment relationship (Herriot & Pemberton, 1995; Warren, 1999). A philosophy of HRM, has not to my knowledge, ever been fully enunciated by its proponents, but most commentators have noted its strong individualistic orientation and tendency to embody a unitarist view of organizations. (Legge, 1995)

In the early days of the HRM debate researchers also noted that despite the eager establishment of HRM as the new orthodoxy in business school teaching its actual implementation and impact upon practice in UK organizations was limited, tending to be confined to some of the larger, often foreign owned firms (Storey & Sissons, 1993). During the 1990's, however, the strategies of many firms in the face of intensified competitive pressures became focused upon productivity and service improvement and cost reduction through reducing the size of their organizations and engaging in more market based forms of contracting and sub-contracting to reduce costs and increase flexibility (Brewster, Mayne, Tregaskis, 1997; Cully, 1998). Chronic job insecurity and the end of careers for many employees are now advocated as a new ideology of progress by many consultants and management gurus strengthening the trend towards the individualistic view of the employment relationship still further (Handy, 1994; Reich, 1991).

5 Collectivist discourse in HRM

HRM's philosophy of individualism has mainly been criticized by advocates of the collectivist conception of the person (Legge, 1995; Blyton & Turnbull, 1992). Most of their commentary has largely been focused upon the rhetorical and exploitative implications of the HRM prescriptions for the quality of working life in organizations (Mabey, Skinner, Clark, 1998). Some critics are now addressing the new ideology of casualisation, this will be considered in the second part of this section (Sennett, 1998).

Critics of HRM, as Guest has recently noted, tend to focus less upon the 'hard' version of HRM and concentrate their attention on the 'soft' version. (Guest,

1999) In his view, two contradictory criticisms are often made about the 'soft' version of HRM: that it is a rhetorical approach to management that floats upon the surface of a harsher reality of employee experiences and so will eventually be seen for what it is; or, that it is too successful and so constitutes a powerful weapon of manipulation which is creating a working environment that is totalitarian and detrimental to pluralism and freedom. Guest notes that empirical research about workers' reactions to HRM is often absent from this debate, and that many of the criticisms levelled against HRM are made on the basis of collectivist speculation, or on the basis of a few anecdotes from case-study investigations, and sometimes, he claims, with a lofty disdain of the value of all empirical evidence. In order to move the debate forward, Guest has sought to provide an answer to the question: what do the workers think of HRM? He is contemptuous of the collectivist view that one cannot take the workers' point of view seriously because they are likely, on the whole, to be falsely conscious. His recent survey work and the similar supporting evidence that can be drawn from the WERS surveys make for uncomfortable reading in the camp of HRM's collectivist critics (Cully, 1998). His conclusions are clear:

The verdict is surprisingly positive. A large proportion of the UK work-force has been on the receiving end of the kind of practices commonly associated with HRM. Furthermore, they like them. (Guest, 1999:22)

The hypothesis tested in Guest's survey was whether the greater the number of HRM practices deployed in a firm would lead to a greater impact on the employees and increase their satisfaction in work. This proposition was substantially affirmed by the findings of his survey and puts into the shade many of the collectivist criticisms levelled against HRM. These findings regarding the success of HRM cannot be lightly dismissed as anomalous, or simple condemned as the outcome of a totality of oppression. Any critique of HRM must acknowledge its areas of success and praise its manifest improvements in the conditions of the worker as well as point out its weaknesses and shortcomings. This is not to say that a critical engagement with HRM is to be abandoned however, as Guest notes, there are other options besides an individualistic, unitary HRM that acknowledge the interests of other stakeholders and are in greater touch with the pluralist reality of the employment relationship. Indeed, if HRM has, in fact, now become the new orthodoxy in the management of people then it is important that critical scrutiny is maintained in regard to the philosophy of the person it institutionalizes.

Guest has also recently suggested that one of the new dangers is that HRM itself could be left behind in

favour of a new 'contract culture' and a system of extreme individual flexibility in the labour market (Guest, 1998). He identifies two aspects to this process: the notion of flexibility has negative as well as positive consequences for society and for competitiveness; the other is that of psychological contracting. This latter approach to employment gives attention to the employee's fears about job insecurity but is not, in his view, able to move beyond an individualistic and narrow view of the employment relationship, effectively ignoring its economic and social context. Its emphasis is upon managing down or revising employees' expectations of their employment by ignoring the inequalities of power in the relationship. Guest's feeling is that this move to employment relationships based upon 'contracts is a backwards step' (Guest, 1998:48). But to make this criticism stand up he needs to show why this is a backward step. The moral hazards of the contractual approach to employment need to be carefully explored.

The casualisation of the work-force is a step towards the extreme end of the individualistic conception of the person and the atomistic society. Several management gurus have also acknowledged the limitations of the contractual view of the company (Handy, 1997; Ghoshal & Bartlett, 1998). Ghoshal and Bartlett note that many people even if they are in a position to hire themselves out, as a brand, and charge a good fee, may still yearn for a sense of belonging and participation that comes from employee status in an organization. They go on to explore the new 'moral' contract that may be more acceptable in their book *The Individualized Corporation*. The individual under this contract has to agree to work and maintain his performance at its best, and take advantage of the learning opportunities being offered to him by his employer. In return, the employer undertakes to support the employee's employability rather than offer him job security. This requires the provision of training, variety of assignments, and a stimulating company environment. Paternalism, is rejected, as well as the notion of lifetime job security; employment is to be at the will of the market which no one can predict or influence. The best stance for both employer and employee is to be ready to respond to the opportunities thrown up by the market juggernaut. Under this 'moral' contract the employees, and perhaps soon to be ex-employees, are required to have the courage and confidence to abandoned the stability of lifetime employment and embrace living on the edge of uncertainty. In Ghoshal and Bartlett's view, employees should enthusiastically embrace the notion of continuous learning and personal development, accept that security only comes from performance, and that a few good years are better than many mediocre ones as a wage slave. Like the Maoists who were taught to accept the need for continuous revolution, the new

worker has to be taught to accept continuous rationalisation:

If assets can be reduced, employees closest to the operations must do it; if expenses are out of line; it is their responsibility to cut them; and if all the work can be done with fewer people, the decision to increase productivity or reduce head count is also theirs. (Ghoshal & Bartlett, 1998:287)

In return, the firm is to keep on investing in its employees in the full knowledge that they will be leaving soon simply because it's their duty to do so, but the employer should not be sentimental about loyalty or benevolence.

However, the philosophy of the person embodied in this view is still strongly individualistic. This has a strong appeal to the young and talented, but might be less acceptable to the old and less talented. Half of the population is below average intelligence by definition and we will all grow old. The prescription Ghoshal and Bartlett are offering is a world fit only for the McKinsey elite, not one applicable for the common man and women. The revolt of the elite that Christopher Lash described in the USA in relation to civic life, has now dawned in the work-place: the management elite are now abandoning their own employees and they don't want to feel any sort of bad conscience about this. The employee has to learn to take it on the chin and embrace an inevitable fate: after all, we are all individuals now. Ghoshal and Bartlett's prescription would have more plausibility if it did not rely upon the employers' acceptance of responsibility to invest heavily in the employees' training and education prior to their contract termination. The record on training investment by UK employers leaves much ground to be covered if the new 'moral' contract is to become a reality (Marks, 1996).

Our understanding of the individualistic contract culture and the moral hazards to which it is prone are highlighted in the book, *The Corrosion of Character* by Richard Sennett (Sennett, 1998). After bumping into Rico, the son of a janitor whom Sennett had interviewed for a previous book on class at work, he learnt that Rico had bettered himself and had become a computer consultant. But, in contrast to the father, who had spent his life cleaning toilets and mopping floors in an office block and had a sense of gradual family improvement, Rico's life, whilst more elevated and rewarding, was characterized by perplexity and disillusionment in terms of his personal social relations. Sennett observed that in short-term capitalism, Rico could not develop durable relationships with his fellow workers, neighbours and family. He was experiencing life as episodes and fragments, where trust, loyalty and commitment had little place and his sense of self was corroded.

One of the most interesting parts of the book deals with work-place flexibilities and the fashion of team-

working. Sennett thinks this has taken employees into the domain of a demeaning and shared superficiality which keeps people together by avoiding conflict and difficult personal relationships. The absence of clear lines of authority in the modern work-place, in his view, frees management to shift, adapt, and rationalize without the need to justify their actions. Team-working is another form of managerial manipulation, which avoids responsibility and allows for little resistance and deflects confrontation. At the end of this insightful analysis of the experience of modern employment Sennett is rather thin on remedies. He claims to have come to rest uneasily in the no-man's-land where words count for more than deeds. But he concludes somewhat prophetically, 'A regime which provides human beings no deep reasons to care about one another cannot long preserve its legitimacy' (Sennett, 1998:148).

If there are elements in HRM strategies that are detrimental to the person we need to examine the ethics of the individualistic conception of the person that lies behind this approach. A new perspective from which to understand and criticize HRM is clearly needed. The implicit underpinning of many psychological contracts is a utilitarian bond of self-interest uniting employer and employee, delivering efficiency in return for training. However, Emile Durkheim pointed out long ago in *The Division of Labour*, that a cohesive organization cannot exist on the basis of individual interests alone, least of all individual material interests, and that material interests cannot on their own operate as an effective driving force of successful co-operation (Durkheim, 1984). As he noted, in the case of contracts of employment, if the laws underpinning the system of individualized exchange were to be effective, the law itself had to be supplemented by a vast body of customary rules, beliefs and sentiments. In short, the individualistic conception of the person is not up to the task of maintaining the moral basis of the employment relationship. This is where our third perspective on the conception of the person might be brought back into play. Personalism provides a useful set of moral concepts against which the practice of HRM and sub-contracting can be judged and the degree of moral progress or regression evaluated. The questions posed by this philosophy are what kinds of characters will be developed in the organization, and what is the contribution of the firm towards the common good? If there is to be a new orthodoxy in HRM, it needs to be based upon a philosophy of partnership that recognizes both the individualistic and the community aspects of the employment relationship. Partnerships can only be created and sustained on the basis of justice and fellowship. The practice of HRM therefore needs to be underpinned by a set of moral principles, which will mark out boundaries and guide the selection of initiatives in the drive towards efficiency. In short, we

need to put personalism back into HRM. As Richard Sennett wrote recently,

Most of us are destined to be employees, which means we will need to depend on organizations and, within them, upon people with more power. This reality is fundamentally out of joint with the culture of social honor that pervades modern capitalism. And it is for this reason that I believe the fundamental task of social reform today lies in re-establishing the dignity of men and women as workers (Sennett, 1999:27).

6 Personalist discourse in HRM

A personalist philosophy of personnel management was set out with great insight and clarity by C. H. Northcott in 1945, in one of the first textbooks for personnel managers (Northcott, 1945). Its relevance to the HRM debate today should not be ignored; it could be of the utmost importance in providing a ethical framework for its development and practice. What follows is a brief restatement of Northcott's philosophy and principles of practice.

Business has an instrumental purpose requiring technical efficiency in the production of goods and services. Its personalist aspect is concerned with achieving the fullest degree of collaboration in the business enterprise. However, collaboration cannot be coerced: it is a product of human wills and so recognition of the independence of human wills and of their purposes has to be acknowledged. Technical efficiency will only be approached if it is pursued by an organization that is based upon moral principles. These moral principles are justice, personality, democracy and co-operation. Few organizations can flourish unless justice is attended to in its variety of manifestations. Much of the practice of HRM should be concerned to ensure that justice is served according to criteria of fairness in remuneration, promotion, discipline and selection. It is in the field of recognition of personality that modern HRM practice has much to relearn. The development of the person and his character is a part of the common good of society. It is the duty of all institutions in society to foster the fullest development of personality, including those engaged in business. To foster personality is to bring about the growth of the whole person, which in turn requires conditions of justice, freedom and opportunity for recognition.

Employment is not just an instrumental activity: it is also an important component in the development of the person: it presents them with opportunities for fellowship, and a sense of purpose, gives opportunities to gain physical and social satisfaction, as well as the material rewards of employment. In this respect job security and continuity are important values to be preserved as far as possible in the employment relationship. The contribution of HRM must also be

judged on the effect it has on personality in the organization as well as its contribution to technical efficiency. There is, therefore, something of a balancing act to be maintained, and the temptation for HRM professionals to take either a paternalistic, or a purely contractual approach, cannot be ignored. Hence, the importance of democracy and co-operation as principles that will help to place limits on the prerogative of management and to help include the voice of the employees in the management process. Management have to be encouraged to accept the extension of democracy into corporate governance mechanisms to ensure that there will be joint responsibility for leadership and decision-making. To make this a practical proposition requires the collective organization of the employees to give their concerns a representative voice and the involvement of these collective organizations in the decision-making structures of the firm: in works councils, collective bargaining, and the boardroom. The development of collaborative arrangements requires the development and maintenance of trust relations largely fostered by sharing information, open channels of communication, rational decision-making and processes of accountability. When these principles are used to evaluate the various strategies and procedures proffered in HRM the boundaries of acceptability or rejection can be drawn.

It should be acknowledged that in many areas of work today, HRM strategies have improved practice and helped to recognize the employees needs for satisfaction and recognition at the level of the task, if the results of Guest's survey and the WERS survey are representative. But HRM needs to be supported by a philosophy that has more to it than the psychological contract of the self-interested individual or the all-encompassing company community. It needs to be based upon a philosophy of the person that recognizes both the individualism and the community aspects of the employment relationship, and that job security and loyalty are honourable aspirations on the part of both parties. An inspiring example of a company that is moving in the direction of a more personalist approach to its HRM policy is Tesco, Britain's largest and most successful supermarket chain (Allen, 1998). Tesco's partnership agreement with the shopworker's union, USDAW, recognizes that the union adds value to the company and to employees, especially in helping to bring in change and in representing the employees' voice in the decision-making process. Its new agreement with the union aims: to secure high-quality representation for employees; to allow USDAW to understand and promote Tesco's business goals; to guarantee co-operation; to enable USDAW to challenge Tesco management when necessary; and to allow Tesco to remain flexible enough to maintain its leading market position. The deal has led to the

establishment of 586 consultative forums at Tesco stores, open to union and non-union members alike. In many respects, this deal represents a personalist approach to HRM because it tries to reconcile strategic HR imperatives with established, but reformed collective bargaining institutions and procedures: a bridging of the gap between the individualist and the collectivist conception of the person. Tesco want employees to identify with and commit themselves to the company, but see the union as a legitimate and effective channel for cultivating and reinforcing employee involvement.

However, Tesco is more the exception than the rule, in many firms at the moment, HRM strategies are designed to 'deinstitutionalisation' industrial relations and move away from collective bargaining (Millward, 1994; Scott, 1994). If empowerment initiatives are good enough at the task level surely this logic should also be applied to involving employees at the higher levels of the organization. Many employees are being denied effective trade union representation and involvement in collective bargaining and works councils; as well as the right to participate in the corporate governance processes of the firm. The individualistic approach to HRM ignores or downplays this agenda. A personalist approach to HRM demands that attention be paid to employee involvement at both at the lower and at the higher levels of decision-making, and calls for the development of the virtues of self-government and deliberation amongst everyone in the firm. Philosophical resources could help to improve human resources.

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BOOK REVIEWS

John Macmurray: A Biography

John E. Costello

Floris Books, Edinburgh, 2002. ISBN -86315-361-5
£20

John Macmurray, undoubtedly a thinker for the twenty-first century though not widely recognised as such, died in 1976. We have waited a long time for this impressive biography, which would have done credit to someone who knew Macmurray intimately. But Costello, who is a Jesuit, did not know him personally and had to rely a good deal on the recollection of friends, colleagues, ex-students and family, many of whom produced valuable correspondence and lecture notes, of which Costello made good use. The result is a highly illuminating account of Macmurray's life and thought, enabling us to follow the development and maturing of his ideas, which came to fruition in a highly original philosophy of action, or, to use Macmurray's description, a 'philosophy of the personal'.

Macmurray came from a Scottish, Presbyterian background and went to Glasgow University, where he read Classics. His experience as a soldier in the first world war, followed by a career as writer and lecturer at the universities of Oxford, London and Edinburgh, provide the background for his intellectual journey. He himself tried to discourage would-be biographers, saying that anything of interest about him would be found in his writings rather than in what he regarded as a very ordinary life. But Costello manages to weave together a fascinating double story, in which Macmurray's life and relationships provide the stimulus for the development of revolutionary new philosophical insights enabling him to articulate a genuinely rational basis for viewing personal being as the ultimate, all-inclusive reality of existence. I have tried, in this review article, both for my own benefit and to help newcomers to Macmurray's thought, to draw out the main principles, outlined by Costello, which structure Macmurray's remarkable personalist metaphysic.

Costello speaks of Macmurray as a post-modern thinker, who was aware of modern philosophy's inability to unite contradictory elements in personal life, such as thought and action, individual and community, theory and practice, objective and subjective. Macmurray himself summed up the philosophical thesis underlying his vision of what personal life is about in a sentence, well-known to those familiar with his writings: All meaningful knowledge is for the sake of action and all meaningful action is for the sake of friendship.

Macmurray was at Balliol College, Oxford, when war broke out and he immediately joined the Royal Army Medical Corps. Costello's chapter on the war

years is full of extracts from articles, poems and letters, particularly those exchanged with Betty, his fiancée, and Helen, his sister. He writes of getting to know and like the men who served under him in a way that would have been impossible at home in peacetime. Half-way through the war, he was commissioned and spent much time in the trenches, where death was a stark, ever-present fact. This experience helped him to formulate some of his deepest convictions about the nature of religion and its reality. Real religion, he writes, is not a matter of beliefs, which are derivative. Real religion lies in the depth of one's being and is at one with being genuinely human. It is a development of personality itself. There is no split in life. All personal experience is open to a religious interpretation. It became part of Macmurray's life-work to teach this as a basic truth of Christianity.

Costello quotes from published and unpublished materials from the war years, showing how Macmurray's future mind set developed. Macmurray believed that the first and second world wars were the result of a deep sickness in the Western soul. While on leave he had the experience of preaching to congregations, who resented being told to prepare for the work of reconciliation after the war. He himself was eventually invalided out of the army. He won the Military Cross for solicitous leadership of his men and for bravery under fire. While finishing his philosophical studies at Oxford, he dedicated his life-work to exploring the means of achieving genuine justice and peace in a sick society. He was convinced that modern categories of thinking were responsible for many of society's deepest problems and that there were massive contradictions to be healed in the European soul.

To eliminate war became, for Macmurray, the underlying purpose of all his philosophizing. By the end of the war, he had become deeply disenchanted with the institutions and leadership of his society. He refused to join a religious organisation as a protest against what seemed to him a spurious Christianity. He remained, however, a committed Christian and in later life joined the Quaker movement. Many of his contemporaries identified religion with the churches and gave up religion altogether. Macmurray did not, because he was able to identify Christianity with being human. Religion, he believed, was fundamental to human life and to create community was the essence of true religion. He believed the religious issue to be the most important of all issues and that Christianity needed to be rediscovered. He contributes to this quest in some of his books.

Macmurray's whole life was a search for reality, guided by certain governing principles. One of these was a conviction about the unity of knowledge. Macmurray held that 'Idealism' failed to provide the

terms for genuine unity of knowledge. Modern thinking had become largely dominated by a mechanical concept of unity arising out of the dominance of experimental physics. The alternative was to regard the science of living things and their biological relations as providing the normative way of achieving unity. But biological categories were also inadequate for understanding the human reality. Macmurray's life-work had to do with taking these two inadequate conceptions of unity and incorporating them into a more inclusive conception that could do justice to the full reality of the personal. For Macmurray, the logical form of the personal governed his search for a fully rational view of the universe.

Macmurray's vision of the interconnectedness of all things led him to recognise that the purest and fullest form of knowing depends on an aesthetic intuition and creative imagination. This relies as much on feeling as on intellect and observation. Feeling, he insists, is a form of knowing. A human being is not just a detached observer of reality from outside but a participant, who comes to knowledge only from within. This makes him, not a mere thinker, but an agent, who knows, not just by contemplating the world in detachment, but by acting in it.

Macmurray was aware of the significant differences at work in differing conceptions of unity. In each case, a different logic operates. The mechanical viewpoint, defined by mathematics requires a logic that is mainly formal. The organic conception involves the need for a dialectical logic, whose expression reached its greatest refinement in Hegel's thought. Hegel had rejected the mechanical conception of mind, but had succumbed to an organic model of categorizing being. His move to dialectical logic was truer to life than formal logic, but he was still unable to represent human beings in their spiritual distinctiveness—i.e. in their constitution as persons through relationship with other persons.

Macmurray realized that these two models, the mechanical and the organic, had come effectively to rule European thinking and practices since the nineteenth century. They offered a view of individuals, institutions, religions and nations in a progressively unfolding universe, moving towards completion by way of competitive struggle and conflict. We are only potentially what we can and should become. On the organic model, human beings are not free agents except in the sense of being able to choose 'Necessity'. Macmurray stands out amongst twentieth century philosophers as a thinker who understands better than almost all his contemporary professionals the need for a logic that does justice to what we are—responsible, moral and spiritual persons, a logic that is fundamentally open and teleological.

Costello shows how Macmurray finally arrived at a clear and reasonable logic enabling us to see persons as relational, interactive, individual-social beings, whose

freedoms and determinisms function creatively, yet predictably, in ways that correspond to our experience. In the course of his battle to arrive at the needed unity of knowledge, Macmurray explored the major philosophical contributions of European thought and came to one of his most significant philosophical conclusions—that action, not thinking, is the primary and most inclusive domain of human reason in its expression. He was helped by Kant, who had already questioned the primacy of the theoretical, but had been unable to relate the theoretical and practical coherently.

Macmurray argues that action is *conceptually* prior to thinking, because theory arises from action and receives its verification in action. For the first time, says Costello, Europe has produced a philosopher who refuses to follow the Greeks in making contemplation conceptually more foundational than action. In Macmurray we have at last a thinker who presents a coherent view of how action relates to theory. We can move away from radical dualism and recognise mechanical and organic elements in behaviour as constitutive dimensions of free, intentional and deliberate acts.

By accepting the primacy of action, Macmurray initiated what he later called this 'Third Revolution' in scientific philosophy and social thinking. He had no illusions about the difficulty involved in working it out effectively. As early as 1925 he had abandoned the attempt to argue the truth of religion from a foundation of pure idealism. This led him to conclude, as he stated in a letter to a friend, that '...if the world is to be comprehended it must be in terms of personality'. He goes on to say that we can only know persons by acquaintance and,

until we can be acquainted with a particular person and say of him that his personality is the revelation of God's personality we can have no knowledge of God, and therefore no knowledge at all that is well grounded.

In this same letter he speaks of the idea of God as empty and negative, apart from a recognition by faith of the divinity of the man Christ Jesus. But, he says, if the world is to be comprehended, this has to be in terms of personality and God becomes a necessary hypothesis. Faith, he says, is not a matter of the will to believe, but of the will to Be—to feel, to act and know. 'My philosophy', he concludes, 'apart from the revelation of God in Christ, which is my faith—would be frankly pessimistic and sceptical'. (Costello, pp. 138/9)

Macmurray was convinced that twentieth century philosophy needed to focus on the problem of personality. He used this term to mean a fuller mode of being than a merely material object or organism. He applied it to God only analogously, as being the best category we have available for exploring the meaning of God. He justified it by saying that immanence and

self-transcendence are simultaneously operative, not only in God, but in any personal being. Immanence and transcendence do not exclude each other. They are reciprocal, just as the individual and the universal are reciprocal. It expresses the fundamental nature of personality. There are, he says, degrees of self-transcendence, or objectivity. Self-transcendence is easily recognised in the idea of responsibility, which goes with personal individuality. Personal being is both individual and social. We both transcend what is other and participate in it. It is part of the rationality and logic of personal being to be able to overcome the contradictions of opposites.

Costello helps us to understand Macmurray's religious position by showing how he systematically builds up his case for belief in the reality and rationality of religion in general and of Christianity in particular. He is concerned to establish the objective truth of religion, meaning that it has to be seen to be grounded in reality. He places the existence of objectivity in religion within a spectrum of faith and reasonableness, along with all other human ways of knowing and acting. There is only one truth. Religion must include the truth of science, of morality and of art. It must unify these in a conception of personality.

Macmurray postulates Jesus as the incarnation of the divine, meaning that he regards Jesus as giving divinity a flesh and blood foothold in particularity. How should we know this if we met him? We should know him to be a revelation of God, says Macmurray, by his power to focus and unify in his own personality the variety of human effort and achievement to make life one, to make all mankind one family, to establish the Kingdom of Heaven in our world. 'Either Christ is the man whom the knowledge of God demands, or there is none.' (Quoted from an article published in a student magazine, 1928; see Costello, p 146).

Costello's analysis of Macmurray's epistemology is very perceptive. Faith is central to it, and this applies to science as well as to religion. Science depends on faith in the intelligibility of the universe and on the power of the mind to overcome error. Macmurray understands faith as a practical attitude of the will that is needed in doing science as much as in embracing religion. Religious faith is not knowledge about doctrines but an attitude of trust in the goodness of God, and therefore in the goodness and meaningfulness of the world. Macmurray offers criteria for validating the reasonableness of this hypothesis. For example, it leads to the promotion of holiness and goodness in the human order. Macmurray regards Christianity at its best to be the faith of Jesus. In an important essay, entitled 'Objectivity in Religion' he develops the case for the 'logic' he finds at work in personal action. He follows up two avenues of thought. In the first place, personality provides the potential for achieving a unitary understanding of the impersonal within the

fuller domain of the personal. Secondly, it provides a category in which the being of God can be appropriately addressed.

Costello calls Macmurray a religious philosopher, because he seeks to reconstruct the whole philosophical field from the standpoint, not of the mechanical or the organic, but of the personal. He is also a prophet, who sees the spirit of Christ as a force for the personalization of the world. To this extent, he sees Christianity itself as in need of 'Christianizing'.

Already in the 1920s Macmurray was wrestling with the term 'personality' and all that he understood by it. It is, he held, essentially mysterious, free, imaginative, disciplined, creative, purposive and open to transformation. It is the form and substance of love in all human relationships; it is the integrating home of the impersonal within the personal and much more. It has to do with the specific vocation of Christianity in the world and with making the world more personal. Macmurray saw other religions as imperfect lights, groping after the truth as it is in Christ. He found the spirit of Christ to be what was unique in Christianity. Its effect was to impel human beings to seek openness in truth, freedom in action, equality in relationship and full community for all people. It represents a self-conscious intention towards universal community.

In the early thirties, about the time he was giving his BBC lectures, Macmurray began to use the term 'rational' to speak about religion, involving a deepening and widening of the application of 'reason' as a term to define what was unique in human existence, including everything in personal action that contributes to a true and appropriate relationship to God and the world. This came to be what Macmurray meant by the rationality of religion. He was expanding the term 'objective' to the full scope of the 'real', and refusing to let it be determined by mechanical and organic categories only. Macmurray's aim was to extend the meaning of the 'real' and the 'rational' to include all the powers in the human person that allow us to relate as fully as possible to 'the real'. For many years his essential work had been that of conceptualising the logical form of the personal. Now his self-imposed project was to persuade people that no civilization could survive, except one whose mechanical and organic structures had been put at the service of personal life, whose meaning and essence is friendship. To revert to the biological model, based largely on competition, war and violence would be wholly disastrous.

In an important chapter, entitled 'Seeking the Logic of Friendship', Costello shows how Macmurray restates deep Christian truths in simple human terms. In the gospels, Macmurray finds clues for the logic of personal action. In recognising that friendship and freedom are presented as *necessary* correlatives in personal relationships, he discovers a logic that seems

to accomplish two apparently opposing goals at once: preserving and enhancing both individuality and relationship. When love is given over to the risks of freedom, and when freedom is given over to the risks of loving, both seem to defy their very natures and both flourish through a necessary interdependence. Love creates togetherness, and the exercise of freedom-in-love reveals and enhances individuality. This is the personal life, whose logic Macmurray spent a lifetime exploring. The gospels express it in the familiar words, 'the one who would find his life must lose it'. As Macmurray puts it, the deepest immanence is achieved in the deepest act of freely given self-transcendence. By affirming action as the characteristic mode of unity that constitutes personality, Macmurray provided the rational foundation he considered necessary for philosophy in the post-modern period.

Macmurray's working life was located in three main places. From the new year of 1923 until the summer of 1928 he was Fellow and Tutor at his old college, Balliol, where he worked hard at the philosophical ideas that were taking clearer shape in him with every passing day. In September, 1928, he moved to London University, to become Department Head of the Philosophical Faculty at University College. His last post before retirement was the Chair in Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh, where he was from October, 1944 to the summer of 1958.

Macmurray was saddened by the fact that his philosophical approach never gained wide recognition, but this is perhaps not surprising, since during his lifetime, philosophers were largely divided into antiquarians and linguistic analysts and he fitted neither category. However he was enormously popular as a lecturer and teacher and his classes at Edinburgh were the largest in the country. His Gifford Lectures brought to fullest articulation his philosophical reflections and contain both the origins and stages along the way of his intellectual, emotional and spiritual journey. They have never been out of print.

He regarded his efforts to conceive the logic and form of the personal, not as a finished product, but as a pioneering work. He always hoped for criticism, but usually rejected it when it came, because it always seemed to be based on misunderstanding. He never moved from his early vision of friendship as the true nature and goal of personal existence, a goal that ultimately needs to be fulfilled in the achievement of a world community living in positive personal relations in a world free from violence and war.

Some of us, who admire Macmurray and are grateful for the way he brings religion and philosophy together, think that the world is in even greater need of his message and philosophical outlook today than it was during his lifetime. Macmurray is an academic and a professional philosopher, whose style of writing, though lucid and perceptive, is not simple. But at its

heart, his message is clear, always relevant to what Christianity is about, which, as he understood, is the need for human beings to discover the way of personal fulfilment through living in relationship with God and one another, in true community. Macmurray's academic lectures are not for everyone, but some of his shorter and earlier writings, such as 'Ye are My Friends', could not provide a more effective comment on the teaching of Christ. All this is illuminated by Costello's outstanding biography. I would, I confess, have appreciated the provision of a better index, and I was aware of one or two factual errors. For example, I do not think that Bishop Gore was ever Archbishop of Canterbury. But the biography as a whole is to be highly recommended as a valuable introduction to Macmurray's life and thought and I sincerely hope it may encourage the next generation of philosophical students in our global society to give serious consideration to the possibility that a philosophy of the personal may provide the rational guidelines our world needs for building a world based on peace and friendship.

Joan Crewdson.

Understanding Emotions: Minds and Morals
ed. Peter Goldie;

Ashgate, 2002; 146 pp.; ISBN 0 7546 0364 4 (Pbk), £15.99.

As 'Eve' says in Adam Morton's dialogue,

Emotions are a lot more than feelings. The whole thrust of the study of the emotions in analytic philosophy in the past thirty years has been to free us from this identification. (p. 60)

In fact, the change dates from 1963 when Kenny's *Action, Emotion and Will* was published. This collection aims to take the study of emotions yet further, but properly to do so analytic philosophy would have to go well beyond itself, whereas these essays, though mostly aiming in the right directions, stay too much within its limits. What was significant about Kenny's little book was its Thomism, and, though some the contributors to the present volume go back further to Aristotle, they have yet fully to catch up with Brentano's revival and extension of Scholasticism's 'intentionality', still less with Phenomenology's developments of and beyond Brentano, above all by Scheler and Strasser in respect of emotion, and with the independent treatments of emotion by Polanyi and Macmurray.

For example, in the first paper ('Emotions and other minds', Bill Brewer) has yet to overcome the preoccupation with external, 'third-person' perspectives and the dichotomy of 'I' and 'he', in favour of the primacy of 'I and You' which is where the infant begins, as shown in some of the empirical studies cited

in the following paper by Daniel Hutto. Brewer seeks to resolve the problem that ascribing an emotion to, or recognising an emotion in, another person and in oneself are radically different procedures, by arguing that, experiences of fear, for example, are ones which present objects in a frightening light, that is, as eliciting a certain pattern of behaviour in the subject. But to my mind this only moves the problem back to that of how we can recognise the object as *eliciting* fear and the behaviour (which? paralysis, cowering, hiding, fleeing, counter-attack or pre-emptive strike?) as a *response* to it, for that cannot be yet more mere behaviour. He mentions the behaviour as *expressive* of fear, but gives no attention to expression as something radically other than the merely causal and casual categories with which analytic philosophy mostly operates.

Hutto rightly thinks that the reference to expressive behaviour is a move in the right direction and that more attention should be given to the interpersonal context in which we learn concepts, i.e. a move from 'I-He' to 'I-You, You-I'. In particular, he cites studies of responses to others' expressions. With Gordon and Wittgenstein, he rightly rejects any account in terms of 'simulation' as reasoning by analogy but with the latter can leave it only as a 'primitive' capacity (readers of *Appraisal* may think that Polanyi on 'indwelling' via tacit integration is the step to be taken next). Hutto also rightly endorses Bermúdez and others on the infant's development of a self-awareness and that in a non-conceptual manner. Thus, he thinks, the problem of other minds is dissipated. So it is, *if* we have a proper understanding of what expression is, i.e. as the outward and visible *meaning* of what is inner and invisible, and thus of the unique category of *intrinsic* meaning which cannot be reduced to association or causation.

'Eve' and 'Adam', in Adam Morton's dialogue fail fully to agree on the relation between emotions and virtues, and of both to the 'stories' which we take or make up as the context of our lives, because they fail to understand the simple point that an emotion must be felt whereas virtues and vices are traits of character for which feeling is neither sufficient nor even necessary (feeling brave doesn't make one brave, and being brave may be accompanied by feeling very afraid). Hence they go only so far in overcoming the old dichotomy of 'emotion versus reason'.

Again, Michael Stoker's brief forays ('Some ways to value emotions') into the constitutive importance of emotion in human life, especially as revealing values and in intellectual and moral life, would have reached further had he broken out of the Analytic framework, not just to Aristotle and psycho-analysis, but to Phenomenology, Macmurray and Polanyi.

Simon Blackburn ('How emotional is the virtuous person?') tackles the issue of expressivism and rationalism in respect of desire: Do we desire objects because they are good, or see or say that they are good

because we desire them? He opts for the former and thus rejects reductivist 'bald' naturalism for one that includes a cosmic order of reason. But he does not develop it and instead argues that the expressivist cannot be a thorough 'minimalist' precisely because he has to accommodate the *meanings*, if not the truth, of what we say about what we desire. As for emotions, he rightly states that 'rationalist' distrust of them is based on false generalisation from a limited range of examples, and virtuous persons differ, not in having or not having emotions, in the directions of the emotions that they have—a remark that cries out for expansion along the lines of Augustine's, Pascal's and Scheler's *ordo amoris*.

Peter Goldie ('Emotion, personality and simulation') argues that individual differences in 'characterization' (i.e. character and temperament) cause difficulties for understanding others both via empathy and simulation (imagining how one would feel in his place), and that in many situations estimates of characterizations are sufficient and both empathy and simulation are redundant or inappropriate.

Barry C. Smith ('Keeping emotions in mind') argues that the 'orthodox philosophy of mind' is wrong to explain our ability to understand others only in terms of their desires and beliefs and not also of their emotions., so that grasping another's emotion can lead us to the beliefs and judgments giving rise to it (rather, at its core): i.e. we see that someone is upset and then look for what has upset him. He amends Goldie's account (in the previous essay) to allow for the role of understanding from our own emotions the link between the perceived situation and the appropriate response, and, when the latter is inappropriate, to work out what the other is likely to be thinking about his situation.

On the one hand it is encouraging that analytic philosophy is making progress in the study of emotion, but on the other it is saddening to see that the authors still have both to labour away at old errors and to catch up with what had already been accomplished elsewhere when it first began to take emotion seriously.

R.T. Allen

Equality in Liberty and Justice

Antony Flew

New Brunswick, New Jersey, Transaction Publishers, 2001.

This book was originally published in 1989 by Routledge. This edition has a new introduction by the author. Antony Flew is an interesting phenomena, for he is a Lockean liberal who by his writings scandalises people who nowadays claim to be liberal but in fact are socialists who wear the cloak of liberalism to attempt to hide their own paternalism and the anti-liberal nature of their political claims. In developing his argument Flew attacks many of the icons of the post-war

intellectual debates. For instance he criticises Berlin for claiming there are two concepts of liberty: one negative, the other positive, by arguing there is only one, and that is the freedom to be left alone to do your own thing. He argues that the debate is often developed by making a distinction between the arguments for liberty of John Locke in his *Two Treatises of Government* and J. J. Rousseau in his *Social Contract*. Following J.L. Talmon in his *Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* Flew argues that Rousseau's concept of liberty is not liberalism at all but a way of putting over his own concept for authoritarian control. He also attacks the behaviourist psychologist, B.F. Skinner for arguing that everything is in reality determined and that we have no real freedom and that a scientific psychology can be developed which is value free and not tainted with any belief in free human choice. This also allows him to take a side swipe at the social pathologist, Barbara Wootton, who undermines the legal doctrine of *mens rea* and advocates a doctrine of strict liability. Flew points out that the development of Rousseau's notion of the general will and modern notions of social determinism destroy the idea that what you do is your own responsibility, and replace it by the belief that to be different indicates that you are not mentally healthy and therefore should be treated so that you will conform to conventional practice. Flew's objection is to notions like 'the general will', 'the national spirit', and Lenin's 'proletarian conscience' as a denial of your actual will to be replaced by your real will which is in conformity with the powers that be or Lenin's vanguard of the proletariat. Flew then develops a conclusive refutation of John Rawls' *Theory of Justice* indicating that it is not really a theory of justice at all as it does not mention a real justice of deserts and entitlements but uses a persuasive definition, or rather a turgid rhetoric, to attempt to replace it by a forward looking description of how society should be developed in accordance with his

own notion of social justice. Flew points out how nonsensical it is for Rawls to develop his concept of the 'original position' of the members of his proposed society behind a 'veil of ignorance', thus rejecting reality and actual deserts and entitlements, and developing a fanciful notion of equality which would, according to Rawls, appeal to common sense. Flew also points out that the original position is also confined to the people who have made the agreement and does not make a claim to universality, and does not apply to future generations, who have developed presumably their own deserts and entitlements through their own actions and inheritance from their parents, or are they educated, or programmed to study and believe Rawls' *Theory of Justice*? Flew at the end of the book also playfully criticises Hayek for stating that Rawls' theory of justice is very like his own. Flew excuses Hayek by stating that he must have recoiled from reading a virtually unreadable six hundred pages in the mistaken belief that Rawls was arguing what he had argued in early articles on the theme of justice as fairness, rather than developing a thesis directly contrary to Hayek's own position.

The book, like Flew's own anecdotes, is wittily presented with amusing references. It is a minor modern classic criticising much modern 'scholarship', and putting over a modern Lockean liberal position by a contemporary analytical philosopher, which is very much concerned with the real meaning of terms and the 'logical geography' of arguments. Flew has been accused of being a fanatical right-winger who probably was a racist and a fascist. Indeed, I chaired a meeting over ten years ago when he was disgracefully shouted down by people who later became professors at his own University of Reading. This book clearly and with subtlety demonstrates Flew's clear thinking, and that he is far more liberal than his critics can appreciate or even understand.

Bob Brownhill

Continued from p. 92

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