

APPRAISAL

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CONTENTS

This issue's new contributors	161
Editorial	162
<i>Richard Gelwick and Richard Allen</i>	
Tributes to Joan Crewdson	163
Papers from the 2005 Annual Conference:	
<i>R. J. Brownhill</i>	
Communal morality: an analysis based on Michael Polanyi's concept of interpersonal knowledge	164
<i>Paul Tyson</i>	
Western culture and 'the hypothesis of God'	169
Other article	
<i>Tomas Tatransky</i>	
A dialogic constitution of the person and its ontological relevance	178
Discussions	
<i>Richard Prust and Benjamin Huff</i>	
On being responsible for acting irresponsibly	181
<i>Giorgio Baruchello and Colin D. Pearce</i>	
Cruelty and Nietzsche's drive to distinction	187
Book Reviews	
William T. Scott and Martin X. Moleski: <i>Michael Polanyi: Scientist and Philosopher</i> - R.T. Allen	190
Struan Jacobs and R.T. Allen (eds.): <i>Emotion, Reason and Tradition: Essays on the Social, Political and Economic Thought of Michael Polanyi</i> - Tihamer Margitay	192
Zoltan Balazs and Francis Dunlop (eds.): <i>Exploring the World of Human Practice: Readings in and about the Philosophy of Aurel Kolnai</i> - Struan Jacobs	194
Raymond Tallis: <i>I Am: An Inquiry into First-Person Being</i> - C. P. Goodman	195
SPCPS Annual Conference, 2006, & Conference Reports	196
Continuations	199
Journals received	201
Index to Volume 5	202

Notes on new and not so recent contributors:

Paul Tyson is a PhD student in Sociology (critique of secular reason in global economics) at Queensland U. of Technology. His current research interests revolve around Radical Orthodoxy, starting from John Milbank's *Theology and Social Theory*; and his interest in Polanyi comes from his interest in the nature of truth via Kierkegaard and Kuhn. He has taught and been a chaplain in a secondary school.

Tomas Tatransky graduated at Charles University in Prague and is currently pursuing his PhD studies on French personalist philosophy at the Graduate School for Social Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw. His publications include a book on Emmanuel Levinas's metaphysics (Trinitas, Czech Republic 2004), and several articles.

Richard Prust teaches at St Andrew's Presbyterian College in North Carolina and has done so since 1967. His interests are in applying a Polanyi-inspired narrative understanding of personality to issues in theology and the philosophy of law. Last year Rodopi Press published his book, *Wholeness: the Character Logic of Christian Belief*.

Benjamin Huff is currently a PhD Candidate in Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. His primary research areas are in ethical theory and the history of ethics, with additional interests in ancient philosophy, the philosophy of religion, and Nietzsche. His dissertation develops a conception of happiness suited to a eudaimonist ethics on which happiness consists in virtuous action, arguing in particular that action and hence happiness are shared when persons act in concord.

EDITORIAL

1 Joan Crewdson

Two years ago (Vol. 5 No. 1) we paid tribute to Drusilla Scott and Robin Hodgkin, both of whom died in 2003. In this issue we pay tribute to Joan Crewdson, the third member of that group who knew Michael Polanyi personally and worked to promote his ideas in Britain. Joan died in May, at the age of 88. She had been unwell, suffering from depression and some loss of memory, for the previous two years, and had had to give up her house in Oxford and move into a nursing home. She will be greatly missed.

2 New feature

In this issue we include a new section, 'Conference Reports', with brief accounts of two recent conferences that I have attended.

I would appreciate similar reports of conferences attended by our readers which they think likely to be of interest to other readers. So, if you intend to go to such a conference please let me know and send me a report upon your return.

3 Requests to intending previous contributors

1 Can I please ask all intending contributors to submit their items in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Style Sheet on the website, and obtainable from me for those who do have access to the internet.

My time is very limited, and so are our funds. Hence I have to prepare the whole of each issue, and the more work I am spared in relaying what is sent to be, the better will be the final result.

It is especially important that **endnotes** (*not* footnotes) **and their indices** are composed, or rewritten as **ordinary text**, and not by the special method available on the toolbar. This is important because *Appraisal* is printed on A4 paper (the simplest and most economical method), and, to avoid large blank spaces on the last page of many articles, endnotes (and sometimes the main text) are carried over to a continuations page, which forms a separate document. It is impossible to do this with specially formatted endnotes.

2 *Appraisal* has not, after all, been indexed in *The Philosopher's Index*, but will be from now onwards, and back issues will be added. To assist the compilers, can all contributors please add an Abstract of up to 100 words and a list of Key Terms.

I would be very grateful if those of you have contributed previous articles could please provide me with Abstracts and lists of Key Words for them.

4. Subscriptions for Vol. 6, 2006-7

These are now due, and you will find a renewal form enclosed with the printed version or sent with the files for the electronic version.

Although we are likely to have made a small loss on Vol. 5 (discounting a donation), it was agreed at the SPCPS in April that subscription rates would remain the same.

5. Annual Conference, April 2006

Elsewhere in this issue, on p. 196, and on a separate leaflet, you will find details of our Annual Conference, on April 7th and 8th, 2006, at Nottingham. There will be another change of accommodation, to Florence Nightingale Hall, where the meeting room will be larger than that at this year's conference.

Please apply as early as you can, and especially if you have a paper to offer.

We would like to increase the attendance. More forms, and a poster, are available if you know of others who may be interested in coming.

JOAN CREWDSON

In the Autumn of 1974, I wrote to Richard Gelwick, whose unpublished thesis on Polanyi I had just read on microfiche, and he kindly replied and suggested that I contact Joan Crewdson, of whom I had not heard, nor indeed of anyone else interested in Polanyi over here. I did so, and she also replied immediately and mentioned a conference on Polanyi about to be held at Cumberland Lodge in Windsor Great Park.

I quickly applied to the organiser, Walter James (formerly editor of the *Times Educational Supplement*), and off I duly went, and met Joan, along with Drusilla Scott, Robin Hodgkin, Bob Brownhill, John Brennan, Pat Smart and others. At the end of the conference, some of those present decided to form some sort of British Polanyi Society, which later adopted the title of *Convivium*. I managed successfully to propose myself for the committee, and that is how I came to know Joan, not just as a fellow enthusiast for Polanyi, but also as a friend.

At that time Joan was still teaching Religious Studies at Ormskirk College of Education in Lancashire, and had a cottage in the Lake District where (I think) she was born and grew up. About three years later, she retired and moved to a house in Oxford (Cunliffe Close, in Somerton, on the Banbury Road).

When, in 1979, the original Committee broke up, Joan carried on by herself, with some occasional help, to edit and publish *Convivium*, which by then had become a journal rather than a brief Newsletter.

In 1988 she felt it necessary to give up that task. A new Committee was formed, which always met at her house, until it too dissolved in 1994.

She had taken a BD at Oxford (only the second woman to do so) c. 1960, with a study of the personalist theology of John Oman. And this personalist interest led her to devote her retirement to writing her 'big book', published in 1993 as *Christian Doctrine In The Light of Michael Polanyi's Theory of Personal Knowledge, A Personalist Theology*. She then planned to write a shorter and more popular version, but other activities, evidenced by a mass of books and papers about her house, perhaps got in the way.

Her personalism also led her to the John Macmurray Fellowship, on whose Committee she served for many years, and to act as hostess to the meetings of its Oxford Branch.

Among other activities, she was a member of the Council for Christians and Jews and attended the local meetings in Oxford.

One of her particular intellectual interests, in which the work of Polanyi played a great part, was

the relationship between science and theology.

During the years that I knew her, she was always a source of encouragement and suggestions. Even in her last two years, when she had lost much of her liveliness, she was still interested in what others were doing. To Joan, along with Drusilla and Robin, all of us here who are interested in Polanyi, owe an immense debt. They were the vital link between Polanyi and those of us who never had the chance to meet him.

Richard Allen

As the editor for *The Polanyi Society News Bulletin* and next *Tradition & Discovery* until 1991, I worked by mail with Joan Crewdson during her years as editor of *Convivium*. She was a diligent and thoughtful Polanyi scholar. If you read the issues of *Convivium* during her time as editor and also the many articles reprinted in *Tradition and Discovery*, you will see that she reviewed well many of the articles selected and wrote excellent reviews of book pertinent to Polanyi.

I especially remember her review of the collection of essays edited by T. Torrance, *Belief in Science and Christian Faith*, and her critique of Prosch's view of reality. She also wrote one of the few books on Polanyi and theology, *Christian Doctrine In The Light of Michael Polanyi's Theory of Personal Knowledge, A Personalist Theology* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1993). She said:

...my purpose in writing is to show that Polanyi's theory of personal knowledge, which is also a theory of personal being gives us the kind of personalist metaphysic we need to make a theistic view of reality credible.

She knew Polanyi well and was often in conversation with him in Oxford.

She turned to theology when she was 40 years of age, and she did her theological degree at Oxford with eminent advisors such as David Jenkins, Basil Mitchell, Rowan Williams, and John Macquarrie. At the Kent State Centennial Conference, she gave a paper on 'Polanyi's Contribution to Paradigm Analysis in Theology' (*From Polanyi to the 21st Century*, University of New England, USA, 1997, pp. 537-545) in which she responded to the 1988 Tubigen Symposium on Paradigm led by Hans Kung.

For her leadership of *Convivium*, her exploring theological implications of Polanyi, and her concern for a more humane and just world, we can all be grateful for her life and work.

Richard Gelwick

COMMUNAL MORALITY: AN ANALYSIS BASED ON MICHAEL POLANYI'S CONCEPT OF INTERPERSONAL KNOWLEDGE

R. J. Brownhill

1 Systematising society's approach to the 'truth'.

Michael Polanyi tries to demonstrate that progress in science, history and law are basically of the same nature. Science is controlled by the community of scientists who judge innovations in science by reference to the knowledge and practices they collectively hold.¹ Likewise in the case of history,² we have schools of history which are controlled by communities of historians who judge new interpretations on their ability to fit in with the traditional interpretations of their own schools.³ Judges continually refer to the whole body of written law, case histories, and precedents in coming to decisions, and one of the legal profession's occupation is to attempt to make sure that new law fits in with old law.⁴ It is an attempt to make the whole system consistent. There are certainly differences in these communities but their major similarity lies in their attempt to develop consistent, systematic ideas, and that each community is controlled by the knowledge and traditional practices of their members, by their interpersonal knowledge. Polanyi is attempting to form the basis for a general analysis of a society by examining that which makes up the tradition of that society. The word 'tradition' for Polanyi can, in fact, have three different meanings: the tradition of the sub-community, for instance, the scientific community, the tradition of society as a whole, which means the traditions of the different sub-communities combined,⁵ and finally the tradition the different sub-communities have in common. He is therefore assuming that society is made up of different sub-communities and are controlled by their own members with reference to the interpersonal knowledge they have in common. It is a notion of indwelling within their own tradition. In this sense, we have a *laissez faire* society, which, nevertheless, is controlled by tradition. Of particular interest for our purpose is the notion of the core tradition. We have seen that the different communities (sub-communities) have certain things in common in that they are controlled by their own members who judge innovations by reference to their own interpersonal knowledge, but this seems a slim base to build a general notion of tradition on. Polanyi realises this, and introduces another similarity which applies to all the sub-communities, and is far more fundamental in that it refers to their task. All these communities are attempting to reveal the truth.⁶ The problem

that the 'truth' for science, law, and history would seem different. Polanyi tries to avoid this in his ontology. All knowledge is revealing an independent reality,⁷ and although there are different disciplines, these disciplines are revealing different aspects of the same reality.⁸ It is really a notion of the truth for them and is arrived at by indwelling within their own disciplines. In fact, the manoeuvre he makes he has already made by tying the disciplines together. It does seem rather cavalier for where the truth in science and history are tied to the facts as known, it is more difficult to see to what the truth in law corresponds. He does seem to take up something like a natural law position where law is independent to mankind but as in the other disciplines revealed by the practitioners immersing themselves in the subject matter of their discipline. There are three key factors here for he is arguing that the intellectual disciplines are systematic, and perhaps can only be properly understood by their practitioners who indwell within them. It is also these practitioners who move the disciplines forward by picking up clues which give intimations of further development. It is this fact of indwelling within the traditions that emphasises the personal nature of the understanding achieved. However, there are problems in looking at society in this way. For instance the tradition of a society is made up of something more than the total of the traditions of the disciplines that operate within it. He attempts to cope with this difficulty by arguing that there are also exist other communities that do not pursue intellectual disciplines, and because of this do not have the systematic ideas of the disciplines which it is the task of the practitioner to expand, and judge innovations by reference to their systematic ideas. Nevertheless he argues that they do have coherent ideas⁹ by which they can judge innovations. This in practice allows Polanyi to continue his analysis under his themes of personal and interpersonal knowledge, and indwelling within systematic or coherent ideas. He also argues that the non-intellectual communities, in their own way are also pursuing the truth, and backs it up with his theory of evolution which looks at mankind as achievers who have a desire to achieve the truth, the real meaning of things.¹⁰ A further question is concerned with the difficulty of expanding his analysis of the non-intellectual community which is the most important for his consideration of society as a whole, under his

threefold analysis based on personal, interpersonal knowledge and indwelling. This community is the moral community which unlike the intellectual communities is society wide.¹¹

2 The reconciliation of personal knowledge and interpersonal knowledge in the scientific community

In developing his examination of the scientific community Polanyi puts great stress on the initiative and personal knowledge¹² of the individual scientist but at the same time he argues that it is controlled by the interpersonal knowledge of its members. There is a built-in potential area of conflict between the discovering scientist and the community of scientists. This potential area of conflict is further highlighted by his multifaceted analysis of truth. There is apparently three different sources for truth claims, the personal knowledge of the discovering scientist, the interpersonal knowledge of the scientific community, which he sometimes compares with Rousseau's General Will,¹³ which has connotations of infallibility, and finally external reality itself, which we can only access through personal and interpersonal knowledge but not know directly. This analysis causes some difficulty but for Polanyi is sorted out by an argument which states that personal knowledge is really a belief the discovering scientist is absolutely committed to but it may be wrong, and that the interpersonal, the General Will, of the scientific community, may also be wrong. Neither personal knowledge, nor interpersonal knowledge, in practice, then have infallible connotations, and that the actual truth is that which is in accordance with external reality but we cannot really access it directly. In this way he is able to explain why a discovering scientist's discovery is sometimes rejected but at a later date accepted and vice versa.¹⁴ However, he is not so flexible when he considers morality in this set up, a moral act is to act in accordance to one's beliefs, one is bound to declare what one thinks is the truth. His emphasis is entirely on the element of personal knowledge in moral decision making, and, of course, he has a long line of predecessors taking a similar view. However, it appears to be the case that if he is going to provide anything like an adequate theory of tradition he must provide an analysis of morality based on his theory of interpersonal knowledge. He must show how the decision of an individual and that of the community fit together, and if he does not do so he will find it extremely difficult to develop his notion of a political tradition, and society's development in accordance with it. Indeed his rather truncated analysis of the political tradition and political community which provides the completion of his philosophical system arises because of his failure to provide a formal analysis of this vital non-intellectual community, the

moral community. The moral community and interpersonal knowledge In this section I intend to demonstrate how such an analysis in accordance with Polanyi's analysis of other communities could be made. There are, of course, differences between a moral law and a scientific law, as there is between the scientific community and the moral community. As long as we will a moral law to control our actions it can, but we cannot will a scientific law to control nature, and we cannot will a controlling element in nature to control nature as both are beyond our willing. In the case of the scientific community, science is controlled by a tightly knit community of experts, where morality is not. Scientific knowledge is really knowledge that has been accepted by the community of scientists as knowledge; a community which is made up of peers or near peers. The moral community is not of the same sort, and, it can be argued, that there is no community of moral agents as such but a number of such communities. Under an analysis based on the concept of interpersonal knowledge it can be argued that, although we need to speak of communities of moral agents rather than the moral community, the internal structure of these communities will be similar to that of the scientific community. A moral rule to be a moral rule would have to be accepted by more than oneself, and a claim to moral knowledge would have to be judged by at least one's own particular community. As in the scientific community, a claim to universal knowledge can only be accepted if it is recognised by other people. Moral knowledge like scientific knowledge cannot be purely subjective knowledge¹⁵ but must be public knowledge, or rather interpersonal knowledge. In Polanyi's terminology we would say that it was a belief that had reached the status of personal knowledge by being accepted by other people as universal knowledge. The attempt is to make universal one's proposed action is there but there can be no certainty that one has successfully done so until other people agree. that one has. When we claim a moral rule or action is right we are claiming that it is also right for others. If our claim to have undertaken a moral act is not accepted by others, despite our supporting reasons, the action cannot be said to be morally justifiable.¹⁶ It is not justifiable either because we have failed to relate the action correctly to an accepted principle of morality, or the principle we have followed is not acceptable as a moral principle by others. Its claim to universal validity is accepted by no one but ourselves. In such a case we may not give up our claim to be acting morally, indeed our commitment to the claim will make it unlikely that we will give up our claim lightly, but we may attempt to provide further reasons as to why the principle we followed or the action we undertook was morally justified, and then attempt to persuade other people to accept our

reasoning. However, as long as our reasoning is not accepted we will not be acting morally in undertaking the action or following the claimed universal principle. We will only be claiming that they are backed by our own commitment and reasoning.¹⁷ To a certain extent we will be bound by the traditional morality of our own sub-community, and we will have internalised its values. Our moral code will therefore be similar to other members of our community but it will most probably be not exactly the same as we may all have interpreted the norms differently, we may have internalised norms from other sub-communities we belong to which are in conflict, and we may have added norms of our own. Our moral code will therefore be similar to other members of our community but nevertheless will be our own, and because it is our own we have accepted it and, on reflection, if we so willed, rejected parts of it. We are therefore responsible for it and responsible to it; it is our own personal morality, at least it is our claim that its contents can be called moral. There are obvious difficulties in such an analysis for, as we have seen, there is no moral community in the sense that there is a scientific community. There are a number of such communities which have different codes of morality. Under the argument I have used I have to argue that a moral rule is only a moral rule if it is accepted by other people, that to be a moral rule it must be accepted by somebody other than the claimant. As there is not a moral community as such but only loose sub-communities with no clearly defined limits, it appears we have to argue that it can be a moral rule if one other person accepts it. We may claim universal validity for it, but it does not have to be universally accepted to reach the status of a moral rule. I cannot then have a personal morality unless it is accepted by others but only a claim to personal morality. We have seen then that a morality to be accepted as a morality must be accepted by more than one person. Let us examine a theoretical situation.

3 A theoretical moral situation

A person claims that the action he proposes is moral. That in the particular circumstances he is operating in he is obeying a moral rule, which he claims has universal validity, and therefore should be applied in all circumstances that are the same. His action will be judged by the moral sub-community of which he is a member, for its consistency, for instance, whether or not it is consistent with the principle he claims he is following; for its applicability, that is, whether or not the principle he is applying is the right one to apply in the circumstances; for its justifiability, whether or not the principle itself is itself justifiable in terms of the moral code of his sub-community. If all these requirements are met then the action will be accepted as a moral

action. If a requirement is not met then different possibilities emerge. If he fails to meet the requirement of consistency, that his proposed action is not in accordance with the principle he claims he is following, then either his claim is fraudulent or mistaken. If it is fraudulent then he would be acting immorally, but if his claim was mistaken he would not be acting immorally but neither would he be acting morally, but perhaps he could be persuaded to see his mistake. If the requirement of applicability was not met it would mean that either the principle had no application to the action he proposed, or that the principle was not ranked in accordance with a hierarchy of principles that was acceptable to the sub-community – that although it could be considered in examining the proposed action other principles overruled. the proposed course of action, in this case would not be immoral, because in applying the requirement of applicability the assumption is already being made that such a principle is already acceptable to the sub-community. It would not, however, be moral. Again as a member of the sub-community it should be possible to persuade him of his mistake. The final requirement of justifiability requires that the principle as a principle should be acceptable to the sub-community. A justification would consist of showing that the principle was part of the moral knowledge of the sub-community, or that it should be accepted as part of that knowledge. A complete justification would show that the principle used was acceptable to the sub-community, that it was the right one to apply in the circumstances, and that the proposed action was consistent with the principle. In practice the situation is far more complicated. A sub-community may be very small, and it may be interlocked with other sub-communities. A moral sub-community may have a core of morality in common with other sub-communities but certain principles which are peculiar to itself. The case may arise where a person belongs to more than one sub-community, and at the same time the principles of these sub-communities may conflict. In such a case, according to this analysis, that an action based on such conflicting principles would be immoral for one such sub-community but moral for another. However, from a more general point of view we would say his action was moral if it was acceptable to one of the sub-communities. This is based on the recognition that morality is based on principles concerning human conduct to others which are considered to be the right ones to apply in the circumstances, that is, correct moral knowledge.

4 Creating a coherent society

It does seem possible that to a certain extent we can overcome such complications by bringing the sub-communities together. Society as a whole will be made up of a series of sub-communities and we can

expect there to be a large number of commonly held moral principles: a sort of equilibrium range of principles.¹⁸ The peripheral principles held by different sub-communities but not held by all, will be continually put forward for common acceptance, as a moral principle always has a claim to universal validity, and as in the intellectual communities there will be a body of knowledge by which to judge these claims, a body of commonly held values and principles with which innovations have to show consistency. However, it is not possible to take this comparison with intellectual communities too far. If we take the moral community to include all sub-communities, and develop a notion of an equilibrium core of values, then we have included the whole of society. In this case, unlike intellectual communities, its membership is not restricted to people with certain formal attainments. Everybody is a member of the moral community.¹⁹ Nevertheless, it can be argued that it is a community, for it has a certain informal decision procedure by way of consensus, and it has sanctions at its command, as it can criticise and even ostracise. What it cannot do is force members outside its own limits for it contains everyone. For instance, even a mass murderer remains within the moral community, though no doubt he will be heavily criticised and perhaps ostracised. It is possible for a person to be shoved out of a smaller sub-community but he cannot be shoved out of the wider community, unless executed. Even so, the essential similarity with other communities which Polanyi considers is the commitment of the knower to his beliefs, his commitment to their truth, and that moral knowledge is decided on by the interpersonal knowledge of the community or sub-communities, and that it is not a purely personal belief (subjective belief). In fact this argument is even stronger than that which can be made in the case of the scientific community, for with science, whereas we can argue that knowledge can be knowledge only if it is in accordance with reality whatever the scientific community may say. (This is the case if we are, like Polanyi, a realist but we have no means of actually knowing except by our own and by the community's beliefs, which in either case may be mistaken.) We cannot use the same argument in the case of morality for we bring morality into existence,²⁰ and, although we can argue that the criterion of their validity is their claim to be universal, we have to accept that the only possible test for this are from two alternatives. Either we state that we decide that our decision is correct, that our own committed belief provides sufficient degree of justification and certainty, or that the agreement of our fellow beings is necessary to provide a sufficient degree of justification and certainty. It is, of course, the argument of the theory of interpersonal knowledge that the

consensus of a community provides a greater degree of certainty than the beliefs of an individual agent, and therefore provide a greater justification for a claim to knowledge than an individual belief no matter how strong. Yet, it is not possible to argue that it is irrational to continue to argue an action is moral despite of everyone else's rejection of our claim, as we have accepted the decision procedure of the moral community, although a similar argument could be used more effectively in the case of the scientific community and intellectual communities.²¹ We certainly have not explicitly accepted such authority, although there is a good deal of experiential evidence which suggests that we do tacitly accept membership of a moral community, and take note of its reactions to our claim to morality. We have argued that it is possible to conceive that the moral community has an equilibrium range of morality, that is, a hard core of values and principles that can certainly change over a period time but is fairly stable, and can be used to judge innovations. However, in a period of rapidly changing morality, where the outer layer of the core is in a state of flux, the decisions of the community would certainly be more arbitrary than Polanyi would allow in the case of the scientific community's judgement of scientific theory. As the core gets smaller the possibility of a consensus of a common opinion arising gets less, and there is an increased likelihood of a proliferation of moral sub-communities. Yet, as this also happens in certain intellectual communities this does not make the moral community unique. It is reminiscent of, for instance, Kuhn's revolutionary periods in science,²² and also possible in the field of religion. I have explained this sort of happening in church history with reference to a similar analysis of religious communities:

Polanyi's model of a community bound together by faith can be quite well used as a model of church history: the unitary church, the breakaway movement, further breakaway movements Yet, as church history continues and doctrine is revised and altered, there again appears the possibility that an earlier breakaway movement can be accepted once more into the main movement, since the doctrine of the breakaway movement may now be acceptable to the mother church.²³

However, as the structure of the moral community and moral sub-communities are informal, it is theoretically much easier for a new consensus to arise when a period of rapid change ends. What sort of criticism can be made of such a conventional theory of morality? It can be said that it does not recommend what we ought to do but provides a description of the activity of the moral community. It then is a sort of study of the sociology of knowledge in the moral community, and not an ethical theory. The

conventional theory would also rule out certain actions which would be generally accepted as moral actions as immoral, or at least non moral, for example, a claim by a member of a cannibal tribe that eating people was immoral. Allied to this criticism is the objection already suggested, that the actions of the moral community would be arbitrary, and therefore not justifiable., as they are dependent on a fluctuating and unstable set of beliefs. It is true that such an approach does provide a Weberian idealised model of ethical activity, and in that sense does not provide a recommendation for a particular course of action but is concerned with the sociology of knowledge. However, it can be claimed that it is also concerned with meta-ethics, and thereby maintains its status as an ethical theory, as it states what can be claimed as moral knowledge and what cannot. For instance, in the example given it does not rule out a generally acceptable action as immoral or non moral, but provides a basis for deciding whether or not a particular statement or action can be categorised as exhibiting moral knowledge or not. We would say that the cannibal was making a statement concerned with moral activity, which he claimed was indicating moral knowledge but no one else in his community would accept his claim. As in the case of the scientific community, a statement concerned with scientific activity cannot be classed as scientific knowledge until it is accepted as such by the scientific community. It is then given the status of scientific knowledge. Yet, it should be noted that in producing such an explanation a peculiar manoeuvre is also being made with the word 'knowledge'. It has become an ascriptive term, and has the quality of defeasibility, i.e., the word can be given or withdrawn depending on whether or not certain criteria are being satisfied. For instance, scientific theory is given the status of scientific knowledge if it is accepted by the scientific community; it is accepted by the scientific community if it is consistent with other theories that have been accepted, and that there is good evidence to suppose it is true. Likewise a moral claim is given the status of moral knowledge if it is accepted by the moral community to which the actor belongs, and meets the criteria we have already discussed.

The word 'knowledge' in this sense, does not mean a true belief or a statement in accordance with the facts, it could refer to neither of these. It means that a theory or interpretation has satisfied certain criteria, and because of this has been given the status of knowledge. These criteria are optional alternatives which theoretically can be argued about, for instance, in the case of scientific theory Polanyi gives beauty, systematic relevance, and consistency as some of the criteria to be used in deciding on whether or not we can consider a theory to be part of scientific knowledge, Yet it could be argued, for

example, that beauty was irrelevant: that beauty was an optional alternative that we need not accept. The word 'knowledge' then appears as a badge that we stick on to a theory when certain criteria , which we have decided on, have been met.

It is certainly the case that the decisions of the community cannot be justified if they are dependent on a fluctuating and unstable set of beliefs. However, the notion of a core morality suggests that there is a body of moral beliefs that are fairly stable, and, although it is the case that these beliefs may change, they do not all change at the same time, and therefore can be used to judge new beliefs. Nevertheless, in so far as it can be shown that the core is unstable, the criticism would appear to be valid.

Although, of course, such an analysis of morality based on the concept of interpersonal knowledge, is of interest in itself, it should be of especial interest for Polanyi scholars, for man , for Polanyi, was essentially a moral creature searching for the truth. Our analysis then hopes to provide s more adequate base for the study of the political community under the notion of interpersonal knowledge by providing the grounds for a formal analysis of the political tradition of society,²⁴ a task which Polanyi, although formulating, did not achieve.

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Notes:

1. PK 160-71.
2. SOM 78-9.
3. See R.J. Brownhill, 'The Philosophy of Michael Polanyi as a Political Philosophy', unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. University of Surrey, England, 1973.
4. LL 162-3.
5. See Tony Clark, 'Polanyi Among the Theologians', *Appraisal*, Volume 5, Number 2, October 2004. He points out that Polanyi 'is a systematiser' but also that he failed to apply his systematic approach to theology, as I believe he also failed to do in the case of morality.
6. Polanyi argues this in PK, but other writers take up a similar position, for instance, J.S. Mill in 'On Liberty'.
7. See PK 64, 104.
8. See R.J. Brownhill, 'Michael Polanyi and the Problem of Personal Knowledge', *Journal of Religion*, April, 1968.
9. Polanyi states 'All contacts with spiritual reality have a measure of coherence.', LL, p.46.
10. PK Ch. 13, esp. p. 404.
11. See R.J. Brownhill, 'Scientific Ethics and the Community', *Inquiry*, Summer, 1968.
12. He distinguishes between a belief and personal knowledge in PK, p.103.
13. See the new introduction to SFS, Chicago, 1964.
14. He discusses this problem in M. Polanyi, 'The Potential Theory of Adsorption', *Science*, Volume 141, Number 3585, September, 1963.

Continued on p. 199

WESTERN CULTURE AND THE 'HYPOTHESIS OF GOD'

Paul Tyson

Introduction

Does God exist? Does it make sense to believe in a God who is the creator and 'Grand Organising Director' of the physical cosmos?¹ Do cultural relativism and religious pluralism discount the supposed truths that religious believers claim to know? Are the speculations of theoretical physicists about the apparent intelligence underlying the structure of physical reality more likely to be true than the claims of religious believers?

These are the kinds of hypothetical questions that rise naturally from the assumed philosophy of religion underpinning modern Western culture. In our culture, it is natural for us to play with 'God' as an abstract hypothetical idea tied back to scientific theories about the origin and order of the physical cosmos.² Further, if we do not find this tie back to a physical cosmology rationally or empirically convincing, then naturally enough, we tend not to find it reasonable to believe in God. But, if we did not have the assumed philosophy of religion that we do, the very questions that we typically ask about 'God' and the type of approaches we naturally take to answering those questions may well make no sense at all.

Western culture has not always had the assumed philosophy of religion that we now have. According to Paul Tillich, we experienced a seismic culturo-conceptual shift in the 13th century, and the dominant philosophy of religion that emerged in Christendom after that time underpins some of the most basic assumptions and behavioural patterns of the modern Western life form to this day.³ So now, when our way of life is arguably taking serious buffets on many fronts, the substrata of our assumptions about ultimate meaning may also be exposed and up for serious re-examination. Insightful observers of our times have persuasively argued that: the modern and Western way of thinking is being intellectually corroded by postmodernism;⁴ the modern and Western way of living is being physically corroded by the enormous power of our instrumental rationality;⁵ the modern and Western way of believing is being spiritually corroded by an implicit ontological nihilism;⁶ and traditional Western ways of moral relating are being communally corroded by the growing inequalities and fears inherent in our politically imposed materialistic and agonistic success values.⁷ In the light of these problems, those who feel these

corrosive effects most keenly are trying to perform some very deep adjustments regarding what the basis of our understanding of meaning in Western culture is and should be.

I confess to being discontented with what I read as the nihilistic and agonistic trajectories of contemporary Western culture. Hence, in this essay I attempt to explore what I regard as the most basic conceptual structure about ultimate meaning underpinning any given culture – its assumed philosophy of religion – in order to envision a conceptual reformulation for our culture grounded in beliefs that do not lead to nihilism and agonism.⁸ In this attempt I will seek to tie in the theological ontology of Paul Tillich with Polanyian personalist epistemology and with the current post-secular interest in Augustine and Aquinas associated with Radical Orthodoxy.

It is important to note from the outset that the scholarly foundation of this paper is Paul Tillich's understanding of the archetypal belief-paradigms in the philosophy of religion that he believes so powerfully to shape Western cultural history. The sketches of Augustine and Aquinas that are central to the case I put forward are drawn directly from Paul Tillich's work; they are pictures of how I understand Tillich to see Augustine and Aquinas.⁹ Tillich was a great Latin scholar with an intense interest in the theology of the Middle Ages, as he saw it as foundational to the deepest structures of belief that underpin contemporary Western culture. However, whether Tillich was right or not about a fundamental tension between Augustine and Aquinas is a question I do not explore in this paper, although it is a question that I believe warrants very close examination.

It is also important to note that I am reading Tillich's Augustinian philosophy of religion in a personalist manner. Personalism is a philosophical movement that has, I believe, some real epistemological answers to what it is that is conceptually mistaken about post/modern Western culture. Yet in this essay I will contend that personalism that is only clear on questions of knowledge, but that is indecisive on questions of being, is still inadequate. In this essay I will put forward the notion that a fully personalist philosophy is both epistemologically and ontologically personalistic, as in Augustine; I will endeavour to describe some of the intellectual strengths of Augustinian personalism; and I will

suggest that Augustinian personalism is a viable contemporary alternative to the prevailing impersonalism in Western culture. I will also query the extent to which Aquinas is useful in challenging the norms of modernist truth and secular reason. This query is my Tillichian attempt to ping a little critical pebble over the bows of what I consider to be the most fascinating theological movement of our times, Radical Orthodoxy.¹⁰

We commence by examining the difference between personalism in epistemology and personalism in ontology.

1 Two types of personalism

Personalist epistemology sees the human knower as an interested being whose mode of existence and whose every belief is essentially interpersonally situated. As no knowledge exists except as had by a personal knower, no knowledge is impersonal and no knowledge is finally independent of the matrix of relationships and beliefs in which our personhood, language and cultural heritage is essentially embedded.¹¹

Personalist ontology, however, is not necessarily adhered to by personalist epistemologists. In personalist ontology – as in Augustine – reality itself, not just the human knower, is seen as personally embedded. This is an intrinsically theistic ontology, which is why there is no meaningful distinction between theology and philosophy in Augustine.¹² Though Augustine may seem to be buried a long way down in the history of Western culture, one can still find impressive recent advocates of his personalist ontology. Václav Havel captures this type of outlook well in his famous essay ‘Politics and Conscience’.¹³

Yet ontological personalism, though it has its contemporary advocates, is a cultural anomaly. An impersonalist and unconsciously atheistic ontology is now deeply embedded in the *Weltanschauung* typically accepted in contemporary Western culture. This being the case, what is taken as obvious by Augustine – particularly our personal and immediate participation in God – seems axiomatically absurd to the normal operational assumptions of our cultural life form. We are accustomed to seeing God as discrete from our being and as a cosmological hypothesis that is both functionally and theoretically extraneous to our daily lives. But in Augustine, God is the immediate and ever present ground of our very being as persons in the world, and the grounds of all reality. God, in Augustinian ontological personalism, cannot be a cosmological hypothesis.

Impersonalist epistemology ignores the personal realities in which knowledge is embedded, as if we have an autonomous faculty of reason, and as if our sensory faculties autonomously present basically reliable objective data to our autonomous thinking

‘I’. Impersonalist ontology assumes that reality is not grounded intimately in the very being of God, but that reality is ‘objective’, essentially impersonal, and ‘out there’ discrete from our consciousness of it. What Tillich sees as the assumed ‘cosmological philosophy of religion’ indigenous to nominalist grounded Western culture, implies impersonalism in both epistemology and ontology. Conversely what Tillich calls the Augustinian ‘ontological philosophy of religion’ implies personalism in both epistemology and ontology.

A personalist reading of Tillich opens up the idea that it is our ‘cosmological philosophy of religion’ that underpins the deep seated and simply assumed impersonalist norms of Western culture. This ‘cosmological philosophy of religion’ must be exposed as wanting if the very categories of Augustinian personalism are to be even comprehensible to us. Tillich, as an Augustinian Lutheran, has sought to critically expose the ‘cosmological philosophy of religion’ assumed in modern Western culture, and if one finds his argument convincing, Tillich’s work in this area is of great cultural importance.

2 Two types of philosophy of religion, and Western culture

In 1946 Paul Tillich wrote an essay titled ‘The Two Types of Philosophy of Religion’ wherein he distinguishes between ontological and cosmological philosophies of religion.¹⁴

According to Tillich, an ontological philosophy of religion understands God as someone from whom one is estranged, but from whom one ‘never has been and never can be separated’.¹⁵ Tillich locates Augustine as the great exponent of this ontological philosophy of religion in Western culture. Here, our very existence as human persons is at all times totally dependent on God, in whose Personhood and Being we participate. Hence we are known by God, and can know God, with greater immediacy than we know any sensory perception or rational truth, and God’s reality is more basic to our own being than even our self and relational awareness. To Augustine, this is true whether we like it or recognise or not. The realism of the Middle Ages – where God is understood as the grounds of all reality, and where all that is not good, beautiful and true is perversely estranged from God – is steeped in this philosophy of religion.

Metaphysics grounded in an ontological philosophy of religion is not about seeing through the mirage of appearance and superstition with abstract reason or scientific thoroughness, in order to find the cold, hard truth about objective reality. Rather, metaphysics is the insight of true wisdom known only by participation in divine truth; metaphysics is true theology. True theological

knowledge is attained by the personal reception of the grace of God (who is the ground of reality) revealing His essentially personal and intrinsically meaningful self directly to us via our unavoidable participation in reality as persons. This revelation enables us to understand the true meaning of all reality. There is no nature and supernature as such in Augustinian metaphysics, for all nature is essentially transcendently grounded.

In contrast, Tillich maintains that the cosmological philosophy of religion views, in a nominalist manner, both human and divine persons as autonomous individual entities. To this outlook all persons, including God, exist as essentially self-contained beings who can only know each other indirectly through reason and the senses (apart from the participatory internal relations of the Trinity). The nominalists rejected the immediate participatory dependence of human being on the divine Being of God and set about mapping the cosmos in terms of what could be known by autonomous human reason and perception, as complimented by a separate category of divinely revealed truths that must be blindly and unquestioningly believed. Thus deference to the authority of the church to tell us truths about God we could know no other way becomes the knowledge of faith, and thus the knowledge of faith and the knowledge of reason are methodologically and ontologically delineated. This is the beginning of secular reason. Yet, at this birth of secular reason the nominalists expected that there would be a neat coalescence between the super-rational authority of the church and the rational and empirical authority of our 'natural' epistemological powers.

As significant as nominalists like William of Ockham and Duns Scotus were in dislodging Augustinian personalist ontology from its place of eminence in Western culture, Tillich notes how important Aquinas' Aristotelian epistemology is in furthering the cosmological philosophy of religion. Whilst Aquinas did not reject Augustinian ontology in doctrine (see *Summa Theologica* I,8,1), Tillich maintains that Aquinas did reject any significant and any ordinary role for Augustinian personalist epistemology in the realm of *sapientia*.¹⁶ To Augustine, true knowledge of reality can be known, and can only be known, via personally immediate divine illumination, as received by those who in faith and humility are open to God.¹⁷ And this relational faith and this humble participation in the mind of God is the essence of the knowledge of truth and the very mode of our participation in reason; faith is here in no way separate from or partnered to 'natural' reason, and reason here is not seen as some power or faculty of the autonomous human mind. Aquinas, in contrast, allows our natural sensory faculties to point towards (but never

attains) the knowledge of God via the mediacy of human perception and logic, as we seek to probe God's effects, though we do not directly know His Person by natural revelation. Aquinas is not limited to the knowledge of natural revelation however, and he applies his powerful mind to the tools of Aristotelian logic in order to reasonably understand the 'special' revealed truths handed to him by the supernatural and unquestionable authority of the church. Aquinas holds that the content of special revelation is beyond, but never contradicted by, the feeble scope of what our logic and the senses can know.

Tillich maintains that Aquinas' application of Aristotelian epistemology to natural revelation and his application of Aristotelian logic to special revelation covers all categories of knowledge and reason in a way that excludes the direct personal knowledge of the Divine Grounds of our being, which is the only true ground of all knowledge, belief and reason in Augustine. Hence it is Aquinas who 'cuts the nerve of the ontological approach'.¹⁸ After the 13th century, nominalist impersonalism and Aquinian epistemological and logical categories worked together to replace almost completely the Augustinian ontological philosophy of religion with the cosmological philosophy of religion characteristically implicit in modern Western culture to this day.

Metaphysics grounded in this cosmological philosophy of religion that emerged after Aquinas is all about the creation of a logically necessary conceptual map – a cosmology – of what can be known to the thinking substance of the individual human mind about universal verities within the natural world, and via the authority of special revelation, of logically necessary features of supernatural reality beyond the apparent world. Moving forward from the thirteenth century, this cosmological philosophy of religion and its ideas of metaphysics, the nature of the individual and the impossibility of direct participatory knowledge of God,¹⁹ settled down deep into the conceptual assumptions of Western culture. In the 17th Century, for example, Descartes took the autonomy of human consciousness as given and the methods of valid natural knowledge as only indirect (reason and senses) in a manner foundationally shaped by this cosmological philosophy of religion. Hence modern Western culture, with its science, its concept of society, freedom, knowledge and power, and its concept of self and God, arises from the Western cosmological tradition of the philosophy of religion. It seems that theology deeply shapes culture.²⁰

The question of the existence of God cannot seriously arise within an ontological philosophy of religion – for it is simply a meaningless question. To ask whether God exists or not is to assume that

meaninglessness is an ontological possibility, which is contradicted by our asking an ontological question at all and by the reality which grounds our very existence as persons and makes it possible for us to participate in meaning and reason. Further, within an ontological philosophy of religion the means of knowing God is not mediated by reason or the senses but is immediately apprehended by the personal essence of my being. In sharp contrast, for the cosmological approach what is knowable about God becomes an object of my reasoning (a construct of my mind) and this idea can be tested against my merely probable sensory apprehension of the cosmos. Where I believe that my autonomous mind is the final authority for the credibility of all knowledge (for I have no direct contact with anything else), and its categories of judging the truth or falsity of any idea presented to it are purely rational and empirical, then any reason I have for believing in the existence of any ratio-empirically intangible entity, such as God – but also personhood, the human spirit, love, beauty, goodness and meaning itself – becomes inherently flimsy. Hence, it is Tillich's contention that since the thirteenth century the cosmological philosophy of religion has made 'atheism not only possible, but almost unavoidable' in Western culture.²¹

One of the most vivid utterances expressing the atheistic end point of the Western cosmological philosophy of religion is attributed to the great French mathematician Laplace. Napoleon in quizzing Laplace about his understanding of the origins and stabilising forces of the physical cosmos, asked him whether his cosmology should have a place for God. Laplace replied simply that he had 'no need of that hypothesis'.²² Enlightenment physical cosmology, the logical end point of the Western cosmological philosophy of religion, pursues knowledge and understanding from a set of criteria that cannot directly know God. Further, understanding the cosmos only in terms of what Enlightenment physical cosmology supposedly can rationally and empirically know, such an outlook does not need any super cosmological entity to start reality, to give reality its rationality, to give us meaning, or to grasp or even point to anything beyond or beneath our knowledge of the empirical and the rational.

Philosophy of religion is the most primary building material of any cultural edifice, for it is the foundation upon which all our beliefs about meaning and ultimate concern are built.²³ Given the assumed cosmological philosophy of religion underlying both the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, an assumed impersonalist nominalist concept of the self, and an assumed impersonalist Aristotelian concept of valid thought and knowledge is implied. Hence, God's place in our belief system

becomes a cosmological hypothesis, and, in that place, He also becomes a logically and empirically extraneous cosmological hypothesis. This outlook makes atheism, secular reason and public indeterminacy about ultimate concern seem eminently reasonable to us. Theism premised on this cosmology becomes an act of voluntarist free belief, and the extraneousness of this hypothetical cosmological God is assumed by such theism. However, apologetics premised on a theistic cosmological philosophy of religion often seeks to persuade people that the cosmological hypothesis of God, though not provable by the categories of reason or empirical knowledge alone, is even so *not* extraneous, for both subjective psychological reasons and for objective cosmological reasons. Somehow, just believing in the existence of God (and of the Christian God specifically) in the face of His extraneousness, as if mental assent to the theistic cosmological model is the crux of faith, is an underlying concern in modern religious apologetic appeals to Secular Man. So deeply embedded is the cosmological philosophy of religion in contemporary Western culture that epistemological and ontological impersonalism are often as firmly assumed in modern Western Christianity as they are in modern Western agnosticism and atheism.

But the picture is more complex than this. Whilst impersonalist epistemology and impersonalist ontology combine to form the dominant mode of modern Western cosmological thinking, three other combinations in personalism and impersonalism in ontology and epistemology are open to us. It seems to me that as we have tried to work our way out of the failures of modernism, we have not yet come to embrace the only finally credible alternative to the double impersonalism in both epistemology and ontology that underpins our culture; we have not yet embraced personalism in both epistemology and ontology.

3 Four onto-epistemological outlooks

1 Impersonalism in both epistemology and ontology

Descartes, the father of the modern scientific method, was an impersonalist in both epistemology and ontology.²⁴ Whilst he needed God as a metaphysical insurance policy for the connection of his solipsistic rationalism with objective physical reality, the atheism of Laplace traces its roots directly from the notion of truth implicit in the cultural history of mathematics and empirical investigation that Descartes initiates. With Tillich, I believe impersonalism in both epistemology and ontology implies at least agnosticism, and makes atheism a rational faith very much at home in our intellectual culture. Yet with Polanyi, I maintain that

impersonalist epistemology is intellectually untenable. Further, I maintain that impersonalist ontology without a grounding in the notion of truth upheld by impersonalist epistemology is an entirely arbitrary belief position with no innate or objective justification. So to the other three options.

2 Personalism in epistemology with no explicit personalist ontology

Michael Polanyi makes up all the ground Descartes leaves out in terms of how we know anything, and scientific things in particular. Yet his political liberalism and the vibrant truth seeking side of Polanyi's philosophy of science also carries him down the road of Enlightenment secularism, which in practice tends to bracket off questions of ultimate meaning from public knowledge.²⁵ Further, so ontologically inadequate is most modern Western religious doctrine – as it needs to be in order to fit comfortably with the frame of Enlightenment secularism – that Polanyi may have had little exposure to a vibrant Christian ontological personalism.²⁶ For whatever reason, Polanyi cannot bring himself to be decisive about ontology.²⁷ This causes his thought some serious difficulties. Polanyi is committed to the process of knowledge being culturally encapsulated, and so Jacobs can demonstrate very effectively that Polanyi is a tacit cognitive relativist; yet Polanyi maintains that he is committed to absolute and unitary truth.²⁸ In Augustinian terms, it seems reasonable to believe that culturally encapsulated personalistic knowledge can be true in a manner that transcends culture, provided culture and nature are both ontologically grounded in a personal and knowable Ground of Reality. But Polanyi cannot link the relativist implications of his epistemological work to any specific ontological anchor in which all culture is embedded that would enable all 'language games' to be interconnected and universally undergirded by the ontology of meaning itself (i.e. *Logos*).²⁹ Polanyi wants truth to remain culturally encapsulated and yet be released from fundamental cultural relativism, but, out of theological shyness, he cannot bring himself to be committed to any specific theological ontology capable of doing this. In this area, Polanyi's work is subject to serious incoherence. And if Tillich's wonderful insight that 'every epistemology contains and implicit ontology' is accepted,³⁰ then Polanyi's failure to uphold a decisive personalist ontology leaves serious holes in his otherwise profound and wide ranging work.

3 Personalism in ontology and impersonalism in epistemology³¹

Aquinas in seeking to synthesise Platonic Augustinianism with his own Christian Aristotelianism endeavours to keep the theological ontology of Augustine whilst marrying it to a more

natural-revelation-friendly Aristotelian epistemology. It is Tillich's contention that the marriage does not work and critical ordinary features of Augustinian unmediated ontological knowledge are lost by Aquinas in this process. Aquinas tries to overcome the Platonic 'dualism' of Augustine where personal spiritual knowledge, *sapientia*, and impersonal natural knowledge, *scientia*, are in important regards discontinuous.³² The effect as Tillich sees it is that all knowledge in Aquinas is characterised in Aristotelian terms and is divided into natural revelation, the rational theology of special revelation, or as super-rational mystical experience. *Sapientia* as Augustine understands it is now mediated to the believer (rather than immediately personally known) through the church in the theological categories of *scientia*. In Augustine's 'mystical realism'³³ there is a direct though exclusively grace enabled 'theonomous character to the immediate world'.³⁴ To Augustine all that is real, as seen by the eyes of faith, is an intelligently mystical revelation of the very person of God. This immediacy, height and saturation of revelation for the believer is absent from Aquinas, and so the unmediated knowledge of God through all things in the ontological philosophy of religion is dogmatically retained but existentially lost.

Tillich maintains that Aquinas' ontology is undermined by his Aristotelian epistemology as his synthesis of Plato and Aristotle fails to join Platonic revelation with Aristotelian science, to the detriment of the immediate, personal, ordinary and intelligent existential knowledge of the divine Person speaking to us and holding us through all things. This puts Aquinas in a strangely similar but inverted position to Polanyi, where Aquinas is committed to ontological personalism, but his epistemology and his understanding of ecclesial authority cannot coherently allow it.

4 Personalism in both epistemology and ontology

Augustine unifies epistemology with ontology by assuming an isomorphic relationship between the ontology of reality in which our being participates, and our epistemological powers, that participate in the knowledge of reality in a manner derived from our being in reality. Being is prior to knowing in this outlook. If we take our personal being as primary to knowledge, as seems reasonable enough from an epistemological personalist stance, we have no grounds to doubt the priority of ontology over epistemology that Augustine holds to. It is just that Augustine has more theological courage than us moderns in finding God to be the Personal centre of all human being, knowing, saying and relating. Augustine can be situated within the same epistemological trajectory as Polanyi, yet culture is never simply the product of historically situated

human personal beliefs to Augustine, but all culture is grounded in the power of being in which human persons exist, the uncreated power that transcends humanity and nature. Hence, the belief, culture, history and relationship context of all personal knowing (and there is no impersonal knowing) is fully embraced by Augustine, yet ultimately real truth is not bounded by the limitations and relativities of human culture as Polanyi's lack of explicit transcendent ontological grounding to human knowledge implies.³⁵

4 Augustinian personalism and contemporary Western culture

Contemporary Western culture seems to be in something of a crisis of meaning. There is no communal coherence underlying the plethora of individual belief assumptions about the nature of who we are and what is reasonable to believe regarding truth, beauty and the good. Hence, we cannot see how the very notion of ultimate meaning can play any culturally unifying role in, for example, civic morality. We are a people without a shared vision of wisdom as we have no public language in which we can reasonably debate what ends are intrinsically important in life. We only have the appearance of cultural unity in the pragmatic technologies of means – only instrumental rationality constitutes public and shared knowledge.

Our deeply culturally embedded assumed philosophy of religion – a philosophy that is inherently cosmological, nominalist and secular – leads us to this crisis of meaning which is the absence of the very language and political structures of communal wisdom. And it is the 'God' of our cultural philosophy of religion, whether believed in or not believed in, that sustains the very soul of the life form of late secular Western culture.³⁶ The intellectual paradigm of this culture assumes what Milbank insightfully describes as 'methodological atheism',³⁷ and such a paradigm allows God to be a hypothesis for those irrationalists who wish to privately 'believe in (the existence of) God' as a sheer voluntarist act, but under the law of secular reason, all real scholarship for the public domain is methodologically atheistic no matter what a scholar's personal beliefs might be.

But there is hope. What if this hypothetical God does not exist? More to the point, what if the hypothetical God of any cosmological philosophy of religion is unavoidably a perverse and hubristic idol of the intellect? The clear cultural trend to reject both belief and disbelief in the idea of God implied by the assumptions of modern Western culture could easily turn into a radical post-secular shift away from the philosophy of religion that grounds our cultural atheism. It is worth noting *what* idea of God we no longer believe in.

Personalist epistemology is a critical component in answering the profoundly significant epistemological failures of modernism. However, without a personalist ontology, personalist epistemology cannot escape cultural relativism which provides it with no clear intellectual advantage over impersonalism, which is equally a cultural construct. Hence, it seems apparent that Augustinian personalism, which is both epistemologically and ontologically personalistic, can provide the grounding for a constructive ethical and metaphysical alternative to modernism. In our meaning starved and socially atomised cultural environment, the living vision of who God is and how we are related to Him and one another in Augustinian personalism may well have a cultural appeal and believability that the nearly dead cosmological God cannot compete with.

Appendix

Plato and Aristotle are the philosophical giants of Classical Western culture, and their most profound Christian transformers, Augustine and Aquinas, are the theological giants of Western Christendom. Together, these four are peerless in their philosophical/theological influence on Western culture. Respecting this reality, I have no desire to deride that great doctor of the Catholic church, Saint Thomas. Tillich also had a profound respect for Aquinas. However, Tillich does see Aquinas' attempt to synthesise the idealistic and practical streams of Western thought as a glorious failure of the highest intellectual calibre which unfortunately had some devastating consequences down the track for Western culture.

Below is my understanding of Tillich's stance.

Aquinas in seeking to synthesise Platonic Augustinianism with his own Christian Aristotelianism runs into a difficult problem. Augustine, in the manner of Plato, leans in a dualistic direction wherein the transitory and the contingent gain what meaning and reality they have from their participation in the eternal and the unconditioned. This is not a dualism of the natural and the supernatural, considered as autonomous spheres, and it is not a 'Greek' dualism where mind is good and body is evil; rather it is a 'dualism' where the tangible (e.g. matter) is derived from and totally dependent on the intangible (e.g. Divine Word), and so truth about the tangible can only be had by reference to that intangible reality on which the tangible depends, and not the other way around, and certainly not by reference only to the criteria of tangible knowledge. In Augustine, in the manner of Plato, revelation directly apprehended by the personal and imperishable spirit of a human being, is basic to any genuinely true knowledge. Contemplating the *transcendentalia* is hence basic

to anyone's spiritual, moral and intellectual health, and *scientia* uniformed by *sapientia* is knowledge only of meaningless means without any divinely illuminated knowledge of meaningful ends.

Aristotle and Aquinas are not as sceptical as Plato and Augustine about what can be truly learned in the realm of contingent, conditioned tangible perception and abstract logic. Aquinas seeks to overcome Augustine's 'dualism', elevating nature, as perceived by both those with faith and those with no faith, to the realm of revelation so that the knowledge of *scientia* is continuous with the knowledge of *sapientia* making knowledge a seamless unity of spirit and body.

Whilst a theologically framed overcoming of Augustinian 'dualism' is Aquinas' intention, his thought opened up two avenues of thinking about knowledge that were not open under a more Augustinian and Platonic 'dualism'. Firstly, *scientia* is given a sort of autonomous legitimacy regarding practical truths, independent of *sapientia*. That is, natural truths, in their own knowledge terms, are now thought to disclose wisdom in a way not compatible with Plato and Augustine's basic scepticism of the *sapientia* blindness of our merely ratio-epistemological powers. Secondly, given the legitimacy of *scientia* autonomously conceived, the criteria of *scientia* can be applied to the categories of *sapientia*, and theology can become systematised in the categories of science where its objects of observation and logical analysis are not rocks and trees but the texts of divine revelation; theology is now the science of God. So Aquinas' thought undermines Augustine's high and unmediated understanding of the way we receive the knowledge of eternal truth, and it can reduce the Augustinian non-contingent and essentially revealed knowledge of *sapientia* to merely ratio-empirical terms of *scientia* as applied to the special revelations held by the church.

Aquinas seeks to keep the theological ontology of Augustine whilst rejecting the primacy Augustine gives to the unmediated personalistic epistemology of *sapientia*. But this does not really work as Aquinas ends up holding personalistic ontological beliefs that can be savagely critiqued by his epistemological method. Such critique was not performed in Aquinas' day because ecclesial authority in the form of 'special revelation' was culturally beyond doubt. But when doubt came back to the West with the Renaissance, the super-rational category of special revelation could no longer be distinguished from merely irrational authority, and the political expression of the Church's beliefs could not be distinguished from the merely tyrannical exercise of power. Couple this with the emphasis of individualism and sovereignty in the late Middle Ages arising from the nominalists, and

special revelation and sheer ecclesial power move to shut down newly liberated individual unbelief, and the Augustinian understanding of the souls immediate access to divine revelation as carried by the Lutherans, clashes catastrophically with the framework of knowledge and authority set up in Catholicism after Aquinas.

In attempting to overcoming Augustinian 'dualism' where the knowledge of *scientia* is subservient to the knowledge of *sapientia*, Aquinas creates a new epistemological 'dualism' where natural revelation is subservient to special revelation. We now have the knowledge of Aristotelian *scientia* with its natural philosophy and theology – using the categories of logic and perception – and special knowledge of God mediated to the believer by the church. Aquinas hence justifies an unquestionable authority for the centralised administration of the Western church, and promotes an Aristotelian epistemology of *scientia* regarding truth and meaning mediated to us through nature.

The culturally Roman concept of centralised ecclesial authority in which Aquinas sits, though it had its roots from before the time of Augustine, has proved a great obstacle in dealings between Eastern and Western Christianity, was one of the key drivers of the Reformation, and was one of the key notions reacted against in the concepts of political and religious freedom to emerge out of the Enlightenment. In Aquinas, ecclesial authority, faith and reason are demarcated and yet interlocked in a manner that is quite foreign to the way Augustine understood them.

The Aquinian concept of natural knowledge is impersonalist in that knowledge presented to the senses and subjected to the criteria of logic is held to give revelation about God in a manner that is valid in the terms of impersonally understood (objective) categories of the natural powers of the thinking subject. That is, through natural revelation I know *about* God's necessary existence, and I can know *what* natural moral, logical and scientific truths are, but I know this *within* my own intellect, and I know it in a coldly propositional (objective) manner without relationally and immediately knowing God. In contrast Augustine's knowledge of revelation is inherently personal and participatory, and Augustine's understanding of all so called 'knowledge' that is not divinely relationally embedded, is that it is inherently uncertain.

So Aquinas was never a nominalist, and was always a great admirer and deeply intelligent reader of Augustine, and yet his Aristotelian epistemology and his model of ecclesial authority is taken up by nominalists and secularists in a way that decisively ends the Augustinian ontological philosophy of religion that had underpinned Western culture since

Notes:

1. The 'Grand Organizing Directorate' is an internet 'fuzzy logic' hypothesis – see www.cs.bris.ac.uk/Research/MachineLearning/IntelligentSystems/ISSMartin.pdf.
2. Davies, P., *The Mind of God*, Penguin, London, 1993.
3. Tillich, P., *A History of Christian Thought*, SCM Press, London, 1968, pp. 198-201.
4. Lyotard, J-F., *The Postmodern Condition*, Manchester University Press, 1984.
5. Mason, C., *The 2030 Spike*, Earthscan, UK, 2003.
6. Casey, M.A., *Meaninglessness*, Freedom Publishing House, North Melbourne, 2001.
7. Pusey, M., *The Experience of Middle Australia*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 2003.
8. My essay is an attempt to re-contextualised and re-tell Paul Tillich's essay 'Two Types of Philosophy of Religion' (see footnote 14) in which the idea that philosophy of religion is the bed rock of our conceptualisation of meaning in culture is implicit. More recently John Milbank in his *Theology and Social Theory* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1990) also strongly argues a tight genealogical case for the primacy of theology (alas, mostly bad theology) in the pivotal political, intellectual, artistic and scientific developments of Western culture.
9. Tillich, P., *Theology of Culture*, Oxford University Press, 1964; *A History of Christian Thought*, SCM Press, London, 1968; *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1., James Nisbet & Co., London, 1968.
10. I agree entirely with the basic premise of Radical Orthodoxy which is that Western culture is in a state of malaise as a result of underlying weaknesses in its unconscious theological beliefs. Digging down into the primary theological minds that have constructively inspired Western culture (Augustine and Aquinas) in the context of the contemporary postmodern rejection of modernist truth and Enlightenment secularism, Radical Orthodoxy seeks to forge a theologically viable way forward for Western culture. Hence, Tracey Rowland, for example, puts forward the notion of 'postmodern Augustinian Thomism' (Rowland, T., *Culture and the Thomist Tradition*, Routledge, London, 2003) as providing us with a theological meta-narrative capable of revitalising Western culture at its spiritual heart. In line with Tillich's argument, I am not yet convinced that Aquinas and indeed Aristotle are not in the end deeply formative of the thought structures that became modernist truth and Enlightenment secularism. Hence, as deep and profound a theological thinker as Aquinas is, I think Radical Orthodoxy would more powerfully criticise modernist truth and Enlightenment secularism if the differences rather than the similarities in Augustine and Aquinas were more deeply explored, and if Augustine was given primacy over Aquinas in those differences.
11. Polanyi, M., *Personal Knowledge*, University of Chicago Press, 1962.
12. See also the great Thomistic Jesuit, Copleston, F., *Medieval Philosophy, A History of Philosophy*, Vol II, Continuum, London, 2003, pp. 47-8: '[Augustine's] mingling of theological and philosophical themes may appear odd and unmethodical to us today, used as we are to clear distinctions between the provinces of dogmatic theology and philosophy; but one must remember that Augustine, in common with other Fathers and early Christian writers, made no such clear distinction'.
13. Havel, V., (ed. Wilson, P.) 'Politics and Conscience' (1984), *Open Letters*, Vintage Books, USA, 1992, pp. 249-71.
14. Tillich, P., 'Two Types of Philosophy of Religion', *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, I, 4, May, 1946. This essay is reproduced in a collection of Tillich essays titled *Theology of Culture* (Oxford University Press, 1964, pp. 10-29) from which I quote.
15. Tillich, P., *Theology of Culture*, p. 10.
16. In Augustine, *sapientia* is wisdom, knowledge of true ends, and is known via divine illumination as one encounters God, unmediated, in the grounds of one's own being.
17. Nash, R.H., *The Light of the Mind: St Augustine's Theory of Knowledge*, The University Press of Kentucky, 1969.
18. Tillich, P., *Theology of Culture*, Oxford University Press, 1964, p. 17.
19. Nominalist thought allowed for participatory knowledge of God, but only as discretely found in the religious domain, and as mediated to the believer by those endowed with the authority of the church, in the Eucharist. Ordinary and holistic participatory love/knowledge of God in daily life – something the early fathers like Origin, and also Augustine, knew as the grounds of all other love/knowledge in all spheres of life – is just not consciously there anymore in the thought structures of Western culture by the time of Descartes.
20. Again, see Milbank, J., *Theology and Social Theory*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1990, for a strong genealogical argument supporting this idea.
21. Tillich, P., *Theology of Culture*, p. 18.
22. See webpage by Cabillon, J.G., 'Laplace, Napoleon, God', <http://mathforum.org/epigone/math-history-list/terdquergan>.
23. I maintain that religion itself is more primary than our thoughts about religion to meaning in culture, and that God is more primary than our religion. But in terms of how we construct culture in giving conceptual content to our most basic beliefs, the way we think about religion, and the way we believe in or disbelieve in God, is basic to all other meanings about ultimate concern and the meaningful ends of our culturally specific way of life.
24. Cottingham, Stoothoff, Murdoch, (trans), *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Continued on p. 199

A DIALOGIC CONSTITUTION OF THE PERSON AND ITS ONTOLOGICAL RELEVANCE *

Tomáš Tatranský

1 Introduction

Before we start to draft our brief description of a dialogic constitution of the person, some preliminary remarks need to be made.

First of all, let us glance at two key words occurring in the title: dialogue and person. By 'dialogue' I do not mean a merely verbal kind of communication. A common use of this term notwithstanding, in philosophy a much broader sense of 'dialogue' is arguably legitimate, given also the wide field of significance of the Greek term *logos* which includes, among other senses, 'relation' and 'value'. Accordingly, in the present paper the term 'dialogue' will stand for any form of communication or expression which allows an exchange of emotions, words, ideas, values, and, ultimately, of the spiritual life; an exchange which runs between the 'self' and the other human subjects, tending, as we shall see, to form a sphere of reciprocity.

Apparently, the term 'person' is even more ambivalent. I will denote by this term, to put it simply, such a human being that opens oneself by establishing a dialogue with the other. Given the subject as a substratum or *suppositum* of the human being assuring to him or her all the human rights and persisting through change as a psycho-physical continuum which holds its unique personality as a set of its psychological characters, the person is a result of a dynamic process of what may be called 'personalisation'. By realizing oneself as a person, the human being fulfills his or her personal identity which we can also name 'personhood'.

Let us turn now to the general plan of this paper. In the first place, we will attempt to outline a phenomenological description of the dynamic constitution of the person. Secondly, a brief metaphysical analysis of the central personalist phenomena will be given, underlining their ontological consistence. Finally, we will step over the threshold between philosophy and theology, in order to consider how our reflections may be illuminated and eventually further developed by the Christian revelation centered on the Trinitarian doctrine as well as on the event of incarnation. The perspective of a Trinitarian ontology and anthropology will be accordingly presented as the ultimate proposal of the paper.

2 Intersubjectivity, reciprocity, and personalisation

Even an elementary intuition suggests that each of us is living in a world that he or she shares with

other human beings who come, in different ways, into relations with us. It is our primary condition which may be called inter-dependence. Accordingly to the matter of fact, philosophers of the personalist orientation consider human being as an embodied person existing by gradually unfolding his or her personhood in space and time. They confirm that intersubjectivity or interpersonal¹ is in some way the founding dimension of the very identity of the 'self'. British philosopher John Macmurray, for example, observes:

We need one another to be ourselves. This complete and unlimited dependence of each of us upon the others is the central and crucial fact of personal existence. [...] It is only in relation to others that we exist as persons.²

With respect to this fact we can pose the following question: in the perception of myself as a pole of an *I-you* relation, which of those two poles occurs as primary, in both chronological and ontological sense? It seems that a personalist approach leads to somewhat balanced answer. While French philosopher Maurice Nédoncelle sustains a 'simultaneity of *I* and *you*,³ Emmanuel Mounier, the founder of the 'communitarian' personalism, is ready to accept the priority of the other:

The person [...] exists only toward the other, he or she knows oneself only through the other, he or she finds oneself only in the other. The primitive experience of the person is the experience of the second person. The *you*, and the *we* within it, precedes the *I*, or at least accompany it⁴

Significantly, Heinrich Ott points out that there is the co-originality of *I* and *you*:

The experience of *I* and the experience of *you*, the certitude of *I* and the certitude of *you* are co-original. [...] My self consists exactly in his or her certitude about *you*, while the experience of *you* should be sought in the fact that *I* am appealed. [...] Our spheres of reality compenetrate one another.⁵

Among many examples we could bring in order to strengthen the above mentioned thesis, one is unquestionably fundamental: the relationship between the mother and her child, from the very moment of the conception. Being the mother's womb virtually and literally the place of the ontological constitution of the child's subject, the relationship between the mother and the child, which evolves as a conscious dialogue after child's birth, enables the latter to perceive oneself as an *I*

simultaneously with – or perhaps even only consecutively to – the perception of the mother's *you*. So genetically, the human subject arises out of the primordial unity of the *I* and the *you* given in the moment of the conception, and perceives oneself as an *I* as he or she perceives to be generated, appealed, recognized, wished, loved by a *you*. Psychological research (as, for example, the analysis of the fact that during the babyhood the child tends to personify the things which surround him or her) thoroughly confirms what we have said.

Already in the relationship between the mother and the child is present the germ of the dynamic structure of the personal reciprocity which reveals itself as 'the universal and necessary pattern of personal development'.⁶ It is not only a reciprocity of cognition, but a reciprocity of recognition which is, in the final analysis, the reciprocity of love. The purpose of the following reflections is to shed light on the fundamental fact that there is no genuine dialogue without reciprocity.

If we look at the interpersonal relation between two human beings whose personhoods have already reached a certain grade of consistence, we can observe that the first feature of the other whom I approach is his or her alterity which may make reciprocity problematic. An appropriate way of considering the reciprocity in this context would be, therefore, to define it as a goal of ethical effort. Accordingly, Paul Ricoeur argues that 'the most profound ethical request is that of the reciprocity that institutes the other as my likeness and myself as the likeness of the other'.⁷ In other words, the discovery of alterity becomes a chance for the person to evolve, increasingly, as a 'being for the other'.

Reciprocity is thus the result of a movement which can assume also dramatic forms in the course of human existence and whose basic structure can be described as an encounter or synergy of my 'movement' of love – going out of myself and reaching the other – with the correlative 'movement' of the other which may also have a form of the other's answer provoked by my concern for him or her. My contribution in that exchange is to realise the so-called 'golden rule': to do to the other what I would want done to me; that means, in other words, to love the other as myself, to want the other's existence and promotion or development as strongly as I want my existence and my promotion.⁸ A fundamental character of the reciprocity is its gratuity. In contrast to justice, reciprocity is not enforceable. A sincere love is unconditioned: the loving person, even if he or she wishes to be adequately returned – not only because he or she wants to enjoy the other's love, but also because he or she knows that the other, too, would realise oneself by loving – cannot force the other to love, though love, by itself, tends to arouse reciprocity. Hence appears the real possibility of the

lack of reciprocity which one can easily verify by experience. When reciprocity is completely missing, the loving person runs the risk of a trauma or an alienation, and it is precisely here that one can begin either to claim the autonomy of oneself (as is the case with, among others, Sartre), or to submit resignedly oneself to the other (as is the case with Levinas).

However, even a minimum of reciprocity or an imperfect reciprocity can be a promise of the perfect reciprocity which ideally brings about the complete achievement of the person and the perfect identity of his or her personhood. The reciprocal relation is thus a driving force of the process of 'personalisation'. The fulfillment of this dynamics of becoming person consists in the free mutual gift of oneself to the other. Consequently, my interiority is not destined to be destroyed or lost within the act of giving, but to be given back to me by the other; in such a way I get enriched by the new elements which the love coming from the other brings about. Thus if we define the personhood as a capacity to create conditions for the mutual relations between me and the other, we can agree with Nédoncelle who says that 'the growth of the interiority and that of the personhood are parallels'⁹

3 A person-centred metaphysics

We have tried to show through a phenomenological description that the founding event of the very being of the human considered *as a person* is the relation with the other. By stressing the dialogic character of this relation, we have suggested that both alterity and temporality should be integrated within the conception of personal identity and consequently also within a model of being itself. Without an appropriate ontology, indeed, our personalist explorations would remain without a sure metaphysical ground and horizon. Moreover, it seems to me that only a metaphysical personalism can claim to be a philosophy and not just a sort of psychology or sociology.

By posing anew the fundamental question about our understanding of the being itself, we can argue that if the personal being has a dynamic character, it follows that, analogically, the ultimate or absolute reality is not a substance (a thing-like entity which subsists in itself) but rather an *act*. It obviously does not mean that being is in a continuous physical movement – we find already in Aristotle the distinction between *dynamis* (or *energeia*) and *kinesis* – but purely that the very essence of being is a kind of vital energy, an incessant process of becoming. Consequently, we cannot conceive the relation any longer as a mere accident nor as one of the categories: the relation is rather the ultimate and constitutive principle of being.

With regard to the person, whose basic ontological structure was already presented in a concise and

preliminary way in the introduction to this paper, we can now confirm that a model which conceives the person as a substance having relations as its accidents does not reflect the reality as it shows itself to us. We can instead comprehend the person as a being emerging in a dynamic or dialogic way out of its substratum. So definitively, the principle which provides the ontological consistence to the person, guaranteeing moreover his or her growing, is the relation. Karol Wojtyła develops this consideration by writing, in his outstanding essay *The Person: Subject and Community*:

The individual's whole development [...] tends clearly toward the emergence of the person and personal subjectivity in the human *suppositum*. In this way [...] the human self gradually both discloses itself and constitutes itself – and it discloses itself also by constituting itself.¹⁰

Besides, Hans Urs von Balthasar confirms this thesis by pointing out that 'being-for-oneself and overcoming-oneself, in the spiritual being, grow together'.¹¹ We can furthermore draw an ontological analysis of personal reciprocity. Macmurray observes that

the independent individual, the isolated self, is a non-entity. [...] We [...] have our being not in ourselves but in one another.¹²

Nédoncelle deepens this insight by asserting:

The one and the other have therefore [...] an existence of their selves in the other, because it is their very being which then develops and prolongs itself in another being.¹³

The being appears thus as a 'centrifugal' movement starting in me and reaching the other, but in the reciprocity of the personal dialogue it becomes also a 'centripetal' movement which brings my being – enriched and incremented, so to speak, by the other whom it has passed through – back to me. In consequence, we can conceive interiority and exteriority as two complementary constituents of the personal being. Similarly, Ricoeur insists that 'the alterity [...] belongs to the tenor of sense and to the ontological constitution of the ipseity',¹⁴ i.e. of the personal identity.

Perhaps we may advance, in the light of the previous reflections, the proposal of a 'dialogic identity' as an identity of the person who finds his or her proper place in a harmonious relation of reciprocity with other persons.

4 Sketch of a Trinitarian ontology and its anthropological consequences

We come eventually to the theological part of the paper. The starting point of the short analysis which will follow is an astonishingly simple statement: 'God is love' (1 *John* 4:8). This is the most

fundamental revelation brought by Jesus Christ, the ultimate interpretation of God's words addressed to Moses: 'I am who I am' (*Exodus* 3:14). Thus on the level of the absolute reality, Being and Love (in the sense of *agape*), coincide. Love is, then, not only the peak and the soul of all the values, the very sense of the good, nor is it a God's attribute; love is the very Being of God, the primordial God's *dynamis*, the Life of God. Even if we are normally not able to establish the perfect unity of being and love within the created world, the Christian revelation teaches us also that what counts in the world is to love, because what will remain of all the things will be the *agape* (cf. 1 *Corinthians* 13:13). Klaus Hemmerle comments on: 'Only one thing remains: the com-participation in such movement which is the very *agape*. This movement is the rhythm of being; it is the rhythm of donation which gives itself.'¹⁵

Moreover, God, precisely because he is Love, has fundamentally not a substantial, but a personal *modus essendi*, and, furthermore, he is not solely a Person, but Trinity, i.e. the communion of three Persons, the reciprocity of the absolutely relational Being of them. Thus, the primary pattern of dialogue and reciprocity is the Trinitarian communion of the Divine Persons, a communion which, in theology, is also called *perichoresis* (i.e. the mutual inhabitation of one in another, their reciprocal compenetration). The unity of God is therefore a reality of the being-in-communion which represents such an identity which includes alterity without alienation and excludes both separation and confusion.

But – one might object – how do theologians get to such high spheres? The answer is simple: by taking seriously Jesus Christ as the Mediator between men and the Trinity. Hence we can speak not only of a Trinitarian ontology, but also of a Trinitarian anthropology, which is based not only on the fact that man is created in the image of God (cf. *Genesis* 1:27), but, ultimately, on the fact that the second Divine Person brought on earth the same Life which circulates in the Trinity by assuming human nature. Indeed, if reciprocal Love is the fundamental 'rule' of the Divine Persons, there is the possibility for men to participate in the Trinitarian Life so far as they put into practice Jesus' new commandment, which is, precisely, a commandment of reciprocal love: to love one another as Jesus has loved us (cf. *John* 13:34 and 15:12).

Obviously, that does not mean that in the Christian perspective the human existence is no longer a drama. The opposite is the case: observing the life of Jesus himself, it is easy to see how much his life was permeated by both physical and spiritual suffering. The *kenosis* (i.e. the self-emptying) which Saint Paul attributes to Jesus' life (cf. *Philippians* 2:7) was the movement which led him all the way to the

humiliation of the cross, where Jesus experienced that even the reciprocity of the Trinitarian Love he was enveloped in – his unshakeable security, a bond which never was to break down – faded away: paradoxically, in the culminating moment of his embodied existence we see Jesus feeling himself abandoned even by the Father (cf. *Matthew* 27:46 and *Mark* 15:34).

There are, in contemporary theology, several attempts to approach this mysterious cry of dying Jesus, but let us draw attention only to one of them. Jesus forsaken on the Cross by his Father is the maximal revelation of the quality of the Trinitarian Love. It is a measureless *kenosis* which pushed Jesus to identify himself, out of love for humankind, with the most cursed among men, and even with curse itself (cf. *Galatians* 3:13). Though, in that extreme condition Jesus kept relying on the Father by commending his spirit to him (cf. *Luke* 23:46).

Finally, the event of the Resurrection reveals that the pure, perfectly selfless love which is, in a sense, the death of the person *as an isolated individual*, transmutes in a new life through reciprocity, be it in Divine or human condition. As Saint Paul stresses: 'If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.' (*Romans* 6:8). The perfect model of the person is given here, so that we can sum up, quoting one of the most outstanding theologians of today, Piero Coda: 'The accomplished form of the interpersonal relation is the reciprocity of *agape* in Christ.'¹⁶ In conclusion, all what we have said about the human person finds in the principle of our participation in the Trinitarian Life its ontological foundation, its explanatory model, and its ideal to be achieved.

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Notes:

- * This paper was read at the International Conference on Persons, Warsaw, August 2005.
1. Term suggested by Emerich Coreth in his *Was ist der Mensch? Grundzüge einer philosophischen Anthropologie* (Innsbruck-Wien: Tyrolia Verlag, 1986).
 2. John Macmurray, *Persons in Relation* [Gifford Lectures, 1954] (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), p. 211.
 3. See Maurice Nédoncelle, *Explorations personnalistes* (Paris: Aubier, 1970), p. 43.
 4. Emmanuel Mounier, *Le personnalisme* (Paris: P.U.F., 1962), p. 38.
 5. Heinrich Ott, *Il Dio personale* (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1983), pp. 78-9.
 6. John Macmurray, op. cit., p. 90.
 7. Paul Ricoeur, 'Approaching the Human Person,' *Ethical Perspectives* 6 (1999/1): 45-54, p. 46.
 8. Cf. Maurice Nédoncelle, *Vers une philosophie de l'amour et de la personne* (Paris: Aubier, 1957), p. 15
 9. *ibid.*, p. 77.
 10. Karol Wojtyła, *Person and Community. Selected Essays* (New York et al.: Lang, 1993), p. 225.
 11. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theologik*, Band I, *Wahrheit der Welt* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1985), p. 190.
 12. John Macmurray, op. cit., p. 211.
 13. Maurice Nédoncelle, *Vers une philosophie de l'amour et de la personne*, p. 42.
 14. Paul Ricœur, *Soi-même comme un autre* (Paris: Seuil, 1990), p. 367.
 15. Klaus Hemmerle, *Tesi di ontologia trinitaria* (Roma: Città Nuova, 1996), p. 50.
 16. Piero Coda, 'Sul concetto e il luogo di un'antropologia trinitaria,' in *Abitando la Trinità. Per un rinnovamento dell'ontologia*, eds. P. Coda and L'. Žák (Roma: Città Nuova, 1998), p. 131.

DISCUSSION ON BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTING IRRESPONSIBLY *

1 On being responsible for acting irresponsibly

Richard Prust

Abstract

It sounds paradoxical to charge someone with responsibility for behaving irresponsibly. The paradox can only be solved if we understand aright the logic of responsibility. Describing the discourse we use in moral and legal contexts when we talk about responsibility shows us that there are three conditions ascriptions of responsibility must meet to be truthful: they must identify an agent, they must characterise an action, and they must find the agent implicated in the action characterised. Charges of irresponsibility have a more complex logic of success. Instead of blaming an agent for whatever action occasioned the charge, they ascribe insufficiency to his resolve. Specifically, charges of irresponsibility are charges that somebody's deficiency of resolve unnecessarily allowed for the behaviour that occasioned the charge. Since we seem to be morally and legally responsible for all and only what we resolve to do, we are responsible for any deficiencies there may be in our resolve. When those deficiencies are held to have allowed irresponsible behaviour, we are indeed responsible for acting irresponsibly.

Personalists take seriously the co-ordinative function of active consciousness, a function systematically overlooked in reductionist thinking. In this paper I want to explore that function in terms of resolve. I hope to demonstrate the usefulness of focusing on the role resolve plays in our active lives by reconsidering an old conundrum, the paradox of holding someone responsible for acting irresponsibly.

Sometimes people deliberately misbehave... defrauding customers, spreading rumours, rigging voting machines. But sometimes too they misbehave without deliberating, often apparently without thinking at all. They say thoughtless things, drive home from a party drunk, or forget to do something they promised. Such harm they do they do without 'meaning to.'

When we reflect on examples of non-deliberate, 'didn't mean to' misbehaviour, I think we're inclined to call both the behaviour and the behavior 'irresponsible.' We may call somebody irresponsible when she behaves recklessly, gluttonously,

intemperately, or negligently, when he eats unhealthy foods, gives in to road rage, or leaves his cell phone on at the opera. Dante's 'incontinent' shades share this realm of hell: whatever they've given in to – lust, anger, or sloth – they are all guilty of having failed to bring their impulses under the control of reason. If we judge that someone somehow had the capacity to have contained the impulse to satisfy his intention irresponsibly, then we hold him accountable for not having done so.

But there is something verbally provocative about holding somebody responsible for behaving irresponsibly, and so it has stuck philosophers for a long time. Aristotle seems to be puzzling over a version of this paradox when he discusses a species of 'didn't mean to' behaviour he calls incontinence. His example is a drunkard acting ignorantly as a direct result of his drunkenness (*Nicomachean Ethics* Book III: Ch. 5). Aristotle blames him, but not directly for his ignorant behaviour. The ignorant behaviour occasioned the charge, but earlier on there was some moment when he *decided* to get drunk. The moment of *that decision* was the moment of the action we should blame him for.

One thing that certainly sounds right about Aristotle's account is the way he separates the moment of the behaviour that occasioned the charge (the ignorant act) from the earlier blameworthy moment. Aristotle is committed to the notion that it is *decisions* that are blameworthy, so the drunkard's active moment he fixes blame upon is the moment in which he decided to get drunk. This insistence on decision as a condition for blame enabled Aristotle to account for the connection between the character of the ignorant behaviour and the character of the action in the moment of his blameworthiness. As he understood it, the connection had to be established cognitively between the content of the blamed person's active awareness in the moment he is blamed for and the incontinent behaviour that got him into trouble (in the case of the drunkard, the ignorant act). If there wasn't any cognitive connection, Aristotle seems to assume, we wouldn't have a basis for assigning blameworthiness to any particular moment of action. The drunkard can only be blamed if he thought about getting drunk, and presumably we can only guarantee he thought about getting drunk if he decided upon that course.

But Aristotle's critics have pointed to a problem in this account: the scenario doesn't describe all the cases. Stephan Sverdlik points out that we can't always point to some earlier moment of decision on

which to fix blame.¹ Think of a careless vacationer who leaves home without locking up. Isn't it realistic to imagine that she never decided to do any such thing? We would describe her as 'negligent,' I suspect, because the negativity of that word expresses precisely the absence of such consideration on her part. It explicitly assigns blame with reference to what never crossed her mind.

I want to work my way back to this puzzle late in the paper when I hope to be in a position to modify the Aristotelian strategy to solve the irresponsibility paradox without relying on decisiveness to make the cognitive connection. My approach will be to highlight some of the features of the responsible/irresponsible distinction as we recognise them in moral and legal settings. But that logical fault line can best be mapped by plotting it in comparison with another, the one between responsible and *not* responsible, so it is there we must start.

'Not responsible' is obviously not synonymous with 'irresponsible.' To say that someone is *not* responsible for what he's charged with might mean that it's somebody else who is responsible, or it might mean that, though somebody did what he's ascribed to have done, we shouldn't impute *personal* responsibility to him for having acted that way. Being a reasonable person, you, my neighbour, wouldn't hold me personally responsible for snoring – I can't help it – even if it kept you awake, not in the way you would have if I'd played my bongos all night.

The fact that we make this sort of discrimination means that we have to represent somebody's responsible action as a subset of all of his actions, presumably a fairly large subset, but a subset none the less. Somebody is responsible for all of his intentional behaviour minus whatever of his movement he is not personally responsible for.

This is obviously the distinction we need to try to account for. If we can set apart the subset of actions for which an agent is 'not personally responsible,' that will leave us with the range he *is* responsible for.

To see the conditions under which we hold people personally responsible for their behaviour, consider the way we talk when we ascribe action to a person. We say things like, Bonnie drove the getaway car, Oliver lied to Congress, Martha traded on insider information.² Now when we mean to hold someone personally responsible using such an ascription, there are three jobs our words must do: they must *identify* an agent, they must *characterise* an action he's being charged with, and (as Aristotle saw) they must *establish a connection* between the agent charged and the action charged.

What shall we say of this connection? It is, first of all, a causal connection: for a charge to stick, somebody must really have done what he's charged with

doing. But causal responsibility isn't always sufficient for liability, otherwise all liability would be strict liability and we wouldn't be able to distinguish personal responsibility (playing bongos) from causal responsibility (snoring).

The language we use in formal proceedings is instructively firm on this point. For a charge to stick, we say, the defendant must be *implicated* in the action he's charged with. 'Implicated,' one notes, is a logical word, and I think our insistence on it tells us something crucial. Yet it has proven troublesome to represent the logic of this implication. It seems to require an inference *from* the character of the action charged *to* the person charged: how else could a *person* be *implicated* in the *action* he's charged with? But how are we to represent such an implication?

One answer, probably the most obvious answer, and one that has some initial plausibility, is to say that it's the intention of both act and actor that have to match, that if we can read out of the intention of the action ascribed the intention of the agent, we will have found the agent implicated in the act and therefore (provided we've properly identified the agent and characterised the action) personally responsible for it.

There is, as I say, a certain amount of initial plausibility in this answer, in that we do typically insist that the way an accusation characterises the agent's intention must square with the character of the action we charge him with. (If you knew, for instance, that I intended to retrieve my own suitcase off the airport luggage carousel but grabbed yours instead, you'd accuse me of negligence, not of theft. My intention – as you construe it – doesn't support the stiffer charge.)

Yet correspondence of intentions doesn't always establish personal responsibility. For example, I wouldn't blame someone chased by a Doberman pinscher for intentionally cutting across my newly seeded lawn. Under those conditions, the fact that he intended the shortcut doesn't make him personally responsible for his trespassing. No, for the intention of an act we ascribe to implicate the agent, I would contend that we have to contextualise that intention so as to grasp some still more comprehensive meaning it has. Take our example of the misappropriated luggage. We noted, you'll recall, that if you knew I intended to take my own suitcase, you wouldn't charge me with theft, only with negligence (for not having looked more closely at the tags). In order to discern which charge was appropriate, you'd have to put my luggage-taking in one or another active context. Perhaps you spot me running back in from the parking lot, your suitcase in hand, bounding toward the lost luggage office, embarrassment and chagrin written all over my blushing checks. In that case you'd take me for some irresponsible oaf fate put in your way. On the other hand, if you chased me

down just in time to see me cutting off the luggage tags, then you'd have grounds for accusing me of theft.

The most common word we use for such intentional co-ordination is *resolve*. Someone is resolved to the extent he is co-ordinating his intentional life to realise its satisfaction. People, we recognise, have 'moments of resolve' when they determine, prospectively if not finally, the way they will try to realise some accomplishment. What goes on those in moments of resolve is best described as a feat of imagination. To resolve to do something requires figuring out some course of action, however inchoate or sketchy, which promises to accomplish the satisfaction we intend.

Of course simple intending also involves a very primitive level of image projecting. But the imaginative feat accomplished in a moment of resolve is more than imagining the accomplishment of a discrete intention. When we project resolve, we project satisfying a variety of intentions co-operatively. As I write this I am resolved to go to the International Conference on Persons in Warsaw next August. To say I'm resolved to go implies that I can 'see my way' to doing it. But seeing my way in this case involves seeing how I'll pull off a whole variety of intentional satisfactions. (I'll use my frequent flier miles and budget for the other expenses, I'll postpone my trip to see Craig and Lynda in New Mexico, I'll apply for a new passport, and I'll try to do a little background reading in Polish history.) What makes resolving to go to Poland categorically different simply intending to go to Poland is that the imaginative moves I make in resolving configure various other elements of my intentional life, including intentions that need to be modified so that they can be co-ordinated with my intention to go to Poland. (I'll call my New Mexico friends and explain, I'll cut back on some of my other spending plans, I'll satisfy my joy in leisure reading with books not yet shelved.)

It is somebody's resolve, let me now suggest, that fundamentally determines the range of movement for which we hold him personally responsible. Persons are responsible for past actions if those actions were co-ordinated in past moments of resolve (provided those past moments of resolve can be assumed to be in narrative continuity with present resolve). And they are responsible for those of their present actions being projected to accord with present resolve.

When we identify the agent we charge, accuse, blame, or praise, it's enough to identify him as the character of resolve he was in the moment of the action we charge him with. That's because the only features of a defendant's personality relevant to our judgment as to whether the charged act was his

responsibility are those that enrich our grasp of his resolve in the moment of that acting.

This means that, for a charge to stick the intention of the act charged need only be seen to be co-ordinated in the agent's resolve. His resolve must appear to us the appropriate context for understanding what he did as the charge characterises it. In that sense, then, the action he is charged with *implicates* him, for its character is a function of his resolve and his resolve is transparent to *who* he is as a character of action.

Before we go on to map the responsible/irresponsible distinction, we need to notice one more thing about present tense responsibility. To say that the movement we are responsible for is coextensive with the comprehension of our resolve over our intentional life is to make it a tautology to say we are responsible for our resolve. This imports into the realm of our responsibility a structural feature of resolve, what we might call its acquisitiveness. If someone really is resolved upon some course, then we expect him to be co-ordinating as much of his intentional life as he can manage with the course he is resolved upon. Since any intentional agent is most realised when his intentions are best satisfied and they are best satisfied when he is most comprehensively co-ordinated, all of us are ontologically disposed toward the greatest possible co-ordination of our intentional lives as the mode of our realisation as agents. Not that we expect all of someone's intentions to be satisfied in accord with his resolve: some may be contentious to the end. But we do expect that *if* a given one of his intentions can be satisfied in accord with his resolve, then in the very name of his self-realisation as a character of resolve, he will modify his satisfaction to effect just that.

I've represented the logic of responsibility as requiring ascriptions of responsibility to do three things: identify an agent, characterise an action and find the former implicated in the latter. Now we must chart the logic of ascriptions of irresponsibility. Such charges, it would seem, require *five* conditions if they are to succeed in implicating an agent in an action charged. Three are counterparts to those implicit in charges of responsibility: to charge someone with behaving irresponsibly is to identify him as a character of resolve, it is to characterise an action that occasioned the charge, and it is to implicate him in an action charged.

There is a fourth requirement imbedded in the ascription adverbially, at least by implication. It is usually a one word characterisation. It's not just that we blame her for not setting her alarm clock; we blame her for *neglecting* to set it (which is to say, for failing in a certain way to set it). I don't simply berate myself for writing my pin # on my debit card; I berate myself for *foolishly* writing it there. It's not just that she swam too far out from shore; she

recklessly did so. It's not just that the Secretary of Defence sent troops to war without the proper equipment; he did so *heedlessly* or *ill-advisedly*.

We note that each of these adverbial characterisations refers to a moment *before* the behaviour that occasioned the charge (the oversleeping, the emptying of my bank account, the coast guard rescue, or the unnecessary casualties). This is why Aristotle's strategy remains so appealing: it recognises that what we blame people for must be temporally situated before the moment of the act or event that occasioned the charge. What fixes the moment of blame though is not necessarily a decision but the projection of resolve that the adverbial characterisation modifies.

Furthermore, the force of that characterisation in one way or another represents that resolve as deficient, hence the negative words we use. To be 'reckless' or 'heedless' or 'careless' or 'forgetful' or 'foolish' is to lack a degree of comprehension in one's resolve. Judgments to that effect point to the satisfaction of some intention which *could have been better co-ordinated in the agent's resolve but wasn't*. And of course we make that judgment when we find ourselves able to imagine the wayward intention's satisfaction accomplished in some way accordant with the agent's resolve. When we make such a judgment, in effect we hold someone responsible for failing to resolve his intentional life as well as he could have in the moment of projecting his resolve. Because it is in the very nature of resolving to be as complete as practically possible, we hold him responsible for his deficiency.

Fifth and finally, ascriptions of irresponsibility characterise the action occasioning the charge not with the claim that the agent is implicated in its character (the agent is blamed only for his deficiency of resolve) but as *evidence* of that deficiency. This I think explains our insistence on the word 'irresponsibility.' It is a simple logical truth that the behaviour occasioning the charge could reveal a deficiency in the resolve of its agent only if it was itself out of accord with that resolve as we imagine it. Precisely that is the force of proclaiming such behaviour 'irresponsible'. Calling it irresponsible explicitly *precludes* implicating the agent in it (which recognition the paradox of irresponsibility forces on us) and deflects the charge to one of deficiency of resolve.

I've been comparing two ways we hold people responsible. In simple ascriptions of responsibility, we identify the agent by finding his resolve implicated in the action we ascribe to him. I've emphasized that it's his resolve we're connecting with his action when we judge him, not merely his intention, and whether his resolve can be seen as the contextual meaning of the character of the act he's charged with determines whether he's guilty as charged. In

contrast, when we charge a person with irresponsible behaviour, we assert that the character of the action occasioning the charge was out of accord with his resolve and that he is (with reference to it) irresponsible, but that his irresolute behaviour none the less revealed deficiency in his resolve. In as much as even deficient resolve bears personal character, albeit less richly, he is implicated in his deficiency of resolve.

So Aristotle was right. Before the negligence of a negligent agent became manifest, the agent projected his action in a blameworthy way. In my account he projected his resolve less comprehensively than he might have, given his imaginative possibilities at the time. He didn't intend his deficiency, much less decide in its favour explicitly, but he did resolve his actions less comprehensively than he might have. That's enough to make him responsible for acting irresponsibly.

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Notes:

- * This paper, and the following Reply, were read at the International Conference on Persons, Warsaw, August 2005. (See also Prust's 'Being resolved, having identity, and telling one's story', *Appraisal* Vol. 4 No. 1, March 2002.)
- 1. Steven Sverdlik (1993). 'Pure Negligence,' *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 1993 30 (2), p. 141.
- 2. I'm going to confine myself to blame here, though I think one could run a parallel analysis of ascriptions of praiseworthy action.

2 A reply to Prust

Benjamin Huff

Professor Prust's analysis makes real headway in pinning down a slippery question. Progress in understanding irresponsibility is especially valuable because of its relevance to the central ethical concept of responsibility. It is helpful to regard irresponsibility as a deficiency of resolve, where resolve is the co-ordination of one's intentional life to best realise one's intentions. I disagree, however, with the way Prust goes on to assign responsibility in cases of irresponsibility, and in fact I call on Aristotle to support my view.

Prust's account of irresponsibility is designed to remedy deficiencies in a certain Aristotelian account of how blame is to be assigned in cases of irresponsible behaviour. On this Aristotelian account, blame can only attach to decisions, but of course, harms that result from irresponsible behaviour are unintentional. Hence blame is attached to some prior choice

from which the unintentionally harmful action resulted. For example, if someone crashes his car while fiddling with the radio, blame attaches to the fiddling, not the crash. In the case of the mistaken luggage, however, there seems to be no prior decision to which to attach blame. Prust sets out a notion of resolve, which plays the role of decision while also covering cases of omission.

Irresponsibility then is a deficiency of resolve, or in other words a deficiency of co-ordination in the actions by which one goes about satisfying one's intentions. Depending on the magnitude of the project, one may have a moment, or an hour of resolve, or even spend years solidifying a plan. In more ordinary cases, resolve may be implicit, but our manner of proceeding reflects a similar imaginative projection of the processes whereby the intention either will or will not be realised. If I inadvertently walk out of the airport with someone else's luggage, I am being irresponsible because my action of taking the bags should have been co-ordinated with a more careful effort to identify them.

Resolve illuminates irresponsibility, and it allows the Aristotelian strategy to be extended in a helpful way. Yet the extended account retains the basic idea that blame attaches not to the unintended harm, but to something prior. It seems to me we justifiably attach blame to the inadvertent harms that result from irresponsible behaviour. I argue that Prust's conception of responsibility is still too narrow. In fact, Aristotle's account has been misread, and the original account in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.5 explains how we are responsible for unintended harms, in cases of irresponsibility.¹

If I drive into a parked car while fiddling with my radio, I am responsible for the collision. Similarly, if I park on a hill without setting the brake, I am responsible for letting my car roll out of control. If I leave the airport with someone else's luggage, I am responsible for taking someone's luggage, displacing it though perhaps not stealing it. We hold people responsible for harms like these. We don't punish people for fiddling with the radio while driving; we only punish them where they break a traffic law or damage something. We don't become angry with people for walking out of the airport without looking at the luggage tags. We get angry when they walk out with the wrong luggage.

It may be that one is equally irresponsible, and equally blameworthy, even when no harm results. However, irresponsibility is not the only item to which blame is rightly attached; it also attaches to harmful actions. The prior decision, or deficiency of resolve, is relevant, but it does not remove responsibility for the unintended harm. Rather, one is responsible for the unintended harm *because* it results from a deficiency in one's resolve.

Prust seems to arrive at his conclusion that one is responsible only for the prior deficiency in two ways: first, his view of responsibility in general is too narrow; second, he follows the pattern of the Aristotelian account of irresponsibility as he understands it.

Prust first presents his conception of responsibility in terms of intent: 'the intention of both act and actor . . . have to match', with appropriate consideration for the context of action in interpreting intent (5-6). This context is already reflected, however, if we think of responsibility in terms of resolve: persons are responsible for actions co-ordinated in their moments of resolve. Yet what is missing here is precisely unintentional, but voluntary action, the sort of action we call negligent or irresponsible, but for which we still hold people responsible. The intent Prust emphasizes is sufficient, but not necessary for responsibility. Prust does not properly consider cases of irresponsibility or negligence in developing his account of responsibility. He does bring up the suitcase example and argue that the person is not responsible for theft in that case. Yet the reason is that what the person did is not theft, not that he is not responsible for what he did.

Perhaps Prust does not argue more at this point because he takes the Aristotelian strategy to be appealing enough already. He says, 'This is why Aristotle's strategy remains so appealing: it recognises that what we blame people for must be temporally situated before the moment of the act or event that occasioned the charge' (9). For my part, though, I do not find this idea appealing. Rather, I argue that there must *also* be something blameworthy before. It is *because* there is a deficiency of resolve that we are justified in blaming someone for unintentional wrongs that result from the deficiency. As it happens, my view is similar in form to Steven Sverdlik's conclusion in the article to which Prust refers: for Sverdlik, negligent actions are blameworthy because the agent could have and should have prevented them. However, I also take myself to be agreeing with Aristotle, and find his analysis quite helpful. Accordingly I will examine Aristotle's treatment in some detail.

Sverdlik and Prust both take Aristotle to endorse blaming someone for the prior, disposing fault, rather than for the unintentional harm. There is some basis in Aristotle's text for this reading. Sverdlik refers to a discussion of the penalties applied to irresponsible or negligent actions in III.5 1113b30-1114a4. When a wrongful act is committed in ignorance,

legislators also impose corrective treatments for the ignorance itself, if the agent seems to be responsible for the ignorance. A drunk, for instance, pays a double penalty; for the principle is in him, since he

controls whether he gets drunk, and his getting drunk causes his ignorance. (1113b30-34)²

Here of course the most explicit reference is to a penalty applied to the ignorance, which is distinct from the ignorant action.³ However, this does not necessarily imply that the ignorant action is not penalised. Indeed, in the next sentence, Aristotle seems to refer to penalising the ignorant act: 'They also impose corrective treatment on someone who [does a vicious action] in ignorance of some provision of law that he is required to know and that is not hard [to know]' (1113b34-1114a1). This passage is not as explicit as one might like, however, because Aristotle quickly moves from considering actions to considering cases where ignorance is a result of an inattentive, careless, or irresponsible character. Still, his meaning becomes clear for two reasons: (1) the theme of the whole chapter is a set of analogous cases about which Aristotle reaches the same conclusion, and irresponsible behaviour is one of these; and (2) Aristotle goes on to describe other cases of specifically irresponsible behaviour in the chapter, and indicates that we are responsible for them.

The primary theme of Book III, chapters 1-5, is to establish the nature and limits of voluntary action, and to confirm that it is voluntary action for which we are responsible, and to which praise and blame attach. Aristotle begins Book III by claiming that 'feelings and actions . . . receive praise or blame if they are voluntary, but pardon, sometimes even pity, if they are involuntary.' In chapter 5 he treats a set of problem cases including not just actions but even virtues and vices, to show that his principle holds in these cases as well: cases where something is voluntary *in virtue of* its following predictably from something prior, which is voluntary in a more straightforward sense.

Just before bringing up the double penalty for drunken misbehaviour, Aristotle reiterates the overarching principle about praise and blame: 'no one encourages us to do anything that is not up to us and voluntary' (1113b27). A drunk may not realise how wrong what he is doing is at the time, but still, 'the principle is in him', which is to say, the wrongdoing is voluntary, because it is up to him whether he gets drunk. Similarly, virtue and vice are voluntary. At any given time one cannot simply decide to be virtuous, but whether one is virtuous or vicious depends on the habits one builds, and these are built through voluntary actions. Again, it is questionable whether one is responsible for what appears good to one. At any given moment, whether one recognises 'what is best for oneself' depends not on choice but on one's character (1114b5). However, Aristotle claims that 'if each person is in some way responsible for his own state [of character], he is also himself in some way responsible for how [the end] appears'

(1114b3-4). In the case of irresponsible behaviour, as in the case of the virtues or the apparent good, one is responsible *in virtue of* having arrived at that point voluntarily.

What is voluntary, moreover, is not limited to action, or to what is decided. While decision may mark what is *most* voluntary, one does *willingly* what one could avoid doing, but does not take steps to avoid. Here another example Aristotle cites is instructive. Becoming sick by disobeying one's doctor is a classic case of irresponsibility. One need not have decided to disobey; it is enough simply to fail to do what one was told. But still, one is responsible. As Aristotle puts it, one

is sick willingly, by living incontinently and disobeying the doctors, if that was how it happened. At that time, then, he was free not to be sick, though no longer free once he has let himself go, just as it was up to someone to throw a stone, since the principle was up to him, though he can no longer take it back once he has thrown it. Similarly, then, the person who is [now] unjust or intemperate was originally free not to acquire this character, so that he has it willingly, though once he has acquired the character, he is no longer free not to have it [now].

Aristotle follows up: 'We never censure someone if nature causes his ugliness; but if his lack of training or attention causes it, we do censure him,' and likewise we 'would censure him if his heavy drinking or some other form of intemperance made him blind' (1114a23-29).⁴ We hold people responsible even for their physical condition.

So, what exactly do we find, here, in Aristotle? I have argued that we do not find the account Prust means to be extending. We also do not find, say, a deductive argument for the principle that where unintentional act or state *B* follows predictably from voluntary act or state of resolve *A*, then *B* is voluntary as well. However, we do find a set of analogous cases in which this principle seems to hold, showing how the voluntary extends more widely than the intentional: cases of physical condition, health, character, virtue and vice, and unintentional action. Each of these cases seems involuntary when considered in immediate context: it is not as though one chooses it at the time. Yet considered in a larger context, because it follows from something clearly voluntary, like throwing a stone, what results is also voluntary. Hence we are responsible, and subject to praise and blame for it. As Professor Prust helps us to say, one is responsible for the unintentional act *because* it results from a defective resolve.

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Continued on p. 199

DISCUSSION ON CRUELTY

On Nietzsche's drive to distinction:

1 A reply to Dr Colin D. Pearce: Giorgio Baruchello

I wish to thank Dr Antonio Casado da Rocha and Dr Colin D. Pearce for their competent and interesting contributions to the discussion on cruelty initiated by Prof. Wendy Hamblet and myself. Also, I wish to present a few lines in reply to the latter's contribution, because Dr Pearce focuses mainly on my input and retrieves insights from a fascinating author, to whom I have devoted interest, time and essays throughout my career, i.e. Friedrich Nietzsche.

Dr Pearce offers an accurate account of Nietzsche's understanding of human morality, which, according to Nietzsche, had its 'first generation' in a 'drive to distinction' that fed on 'pleasure in refined cruelty'. In a nutshell, our ancestors aimed at virtue in order to rejoice in the painful humiliation of their neighbours. Dr Pearce claims that, amid the many and seemingly contradictory types of cruelty that I have discussed, I ignored the one emerging from the 'drive to distinction'. I believe Dr Pearce to be right about my omission. However, I had reasons for this omission.

First of all, Nietzsche's study of cruelty is 'genealogical', i.e. developmental or genetic. My study, on the contrary, is conceptual. Consequently, my study is not suited to grasp an initial factor of development of human morality that, according to Nietzsche's own account, is likely to have disappeared along the process of development. Not unlike teeth and fingernails, the 'drive to distinction' may have been needed by the individual to defeat competitors in prehistoric or ancient times. Today, however, the same drive seems to serve the goal of collective well-being. After all, teeth are used to smile and fingernails to pick sheets of papers fallen from a colleague's desk. Furthermore, even if smiles and acts of kindness may still be used to humiliate another, most typical virtuous behaviours *as such* are difficult to explain along Nietzsche's line of understanding, e.g. parental devotion to one's newborn child and the stranger's assistance to a person in need, which we observe even in other higher mammals (viz. dolphins). I have serious doubts concerning the comprehensiveness of Nietzsche's claim, which, as Dr Pearce's account suggests, is meant to disclose the 'basic feature common to all forms of 'striving to do well' or 'do one's best'. Without dwelling too much in the exegesis of Nietzsche's philosophy, I wish to invite Dr Pearce to consider the possibility that Nietzsche's views be the fruit of: (1) a

social-Darwinist outlook, which sees selfish competition also when genuine cooperation is the case; (2) a genial but overstretched intellectual ability, which wants to reveal hidden and embarrassing truths behind the boundless rainbow of human hypocrisy, even when there may be none. Like his friend-foe Richard Wagner, Nietzsche loved to *épater les bourgeois*.

Secondly, prudential reasons, which I explained in my previous texts, led me to conclude that, when evaluating human actions, we should look *in primis* at most blatant forms of cruelty and that, in order to achieve this, we should start always from the victim's perspective. In fact, to start from the perpetrator's perspective could lead us to justify avoidable instances of cruelty as necessary evils. The same prudential reasons led me to neglect the drive to distinction, because there are minor and major forms of cruelty. The worse forms, involving a severe disproportion in the distribution of power (viz. Professor Hamblet's fundamentalist father), should be dealt with first. Nietzsche's 'drive to distinction' refers to subtler – if not dubious – cases of cruelty. It is obvious that a group of policemen beating mercilessly a peaceful protester are being cruel. It is less obvious that a chaste nun is being cruel toward the child-bearing mother by being chaste. She, or her inherited subconscious dispositions, may intend to be cruel. Still, *mens rea* – not mention *id reum!* – is not enough for cruelty to subsist: harm must be actually produced. Similarly, someone may suffer from the sight of a virtuous person, but the virtuous person's intention may be all but cruel. In brief, as the Latin adagio goes, *actus non facit reum, nisi mens rea*. Besides, cruelty resulting from the 'drive to distinction' implies competition and competition, in turn, implies a limited power imbalance. Since the power imbalance is limited, the power to produce actual harm is also limited. All the examples mentioned by Dr Pearce, with the sole and puzzling exception of 'the employee terminated by an arrogant boss', suggest scenarios where both the perpetrator and the victim of cruelty enjoy an even or acceptably uneven level of power. The humble person, the great artist, the chaste nun, the successful politician, the good student and the tenured academic achieve distinction after struggling with others, who have enough ability to count as adversaries. Proud persons, tone-deaf people, nymphomaniac porn stars, indifferent citizens, lazy students and illiterate brutes would never count as adversaries.

My reply having been made, I cannot deny that Dr Pearce's contribution is most welcome. His recovery of Nietzsche's insights compels us to look at cases

of cruelty that may be caused, at least in their genealogical origin, by the drive to distinction. Most importantly, it forces us to be wary of good intentions as an excuse for cruelty, which may hide in all corners of life (the possible 'omnipresence' of cruelty was discussed with Professor Hamblet in our latest joint essay). As I could only hope to witness in the beginning of the discussion on cruelty in *Appraisal*, contributions by readers like Drs Casado da Rocha and Pearce do foster our understanding of this issue and, for this reason, I am most grateful to them.

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2 Hannibal's humanism or the nature of cruelty: A response to Giorgio Baruchello's 'On Nietzsche's drive to distinction'

Colin D. Pearce

To the extent that the term 'cruelty' is a value laden term it connotes moral turpitude. By the very designation of an act as being 'cruel' we mean to say that it was evil and unjust. But this necessarily raises the question of whether cruelty is always 'cruel' or whether it is sometimes 'kind,' which is to say 'the right thing to do' under certain circumstances. We are reminded here of Machiavelli's description of Hannibal's 'inhuman cruelty' as perfectly complementing 'his infinite other virtues,' which is to say that under certain circumstances cruelty could be a virtue like wisdom or temperance.¹

The Machiavellian orientation to cruelty is to approach it as in some sense a 'necessary evil'. But to talk of 'necessary evils' is in a way to indulge in a certain lamenting. For Nietzsche on the other hand, such an attitude bespeaks a certain maligning of life. For him the question of the utility of cruelty is replaced by the psychological inevitability of cruelty as being very close to the heart of life. 'Is not living estimating, preferring, being unjust, being limited, wanting to be different?' Nietzsche asks.² Any time the word 'cruel' is used as a moral pejorative, whether it be in connection with gratuitous behaviour or grim necessity, the implication is that it should never happen or have to happen. The world should be otherwise than would allow such a thing as cruelty to endure. But for Nietzsche such an attitude is suggestive of a fatigue with life or an incapacity to love the earth or even 'death-wish' in that it is tantamount to rejecting the law of gravity

because it makes moving and lifting so arduous.³ For Nietzsche nature is 'wasteful beyond measure, indifferent beyond measure, without purpose and consideration, without mercy and fairness, fertile and desolate and uncertain at the same time.'⁴ And what he calls nature is the element within which we humans live and breathe. As part of nature we ourselves must inevitably share in these qualities or be liable to the accusation of being 'unnatural,' which is to say in some broad sense 'unhealthy'. Nature for Nietzsche connotes above all innocence and freedom from self-condemnation; thus human beings should strive to see all their doings including the 'cruel' ones as innocent as earthquakes, hurricanes and tsunamis. (There is no space here to go into how Nietzsche describes the doctrine of 'freedom of the will' as 'the metaphysics of the hang man'.)

Professor Baruchello insists on making a distinction between the 'perpetrator' and the 'victim' when probing the nature of human cruelty. Indeed, he says that we should 'look *in primis* at most blatant forms of cruelty,' and in order to do this 'we should start always from the victim's perspective'. Why always from the 'victim's perspective' in the professor's estimation? Because 'to start from the perpetrator's perspective could lead us to justify avoidable instances of cruelty as necessary evils'. But is this really a viable theoretical construct? Can we use the term cruelty as though it pertained only to some abstract being called the 'perpetrator' and yet had no reference to that other abstract being the 'victim'? Does this make theoretical sense in the light of Machiavelli and Nietzsche? Is it not their contention that at bottom these two creatures – 'perpetrator' and 'victim' – are always in principle, if not in each historical instance, one and the same? i.e. all of us, all human beings, will find ourselves in the role of both the 'perpetrator' and the 'victim' of cruelty at some point in our lives.⁵ At the least, if one allows that the perpetrator and the victim are in principle one and the same, i.e. today I am suffering from the cruelty of a Gestapo agent but yesterday I was brutally mean with my wife or kids, then Professor Baruchello's case that we must always begin with the 'victim' has no more intrinsic weight than the opposite case that we should begin the analysis by looking at the 'perpetrator'.

One of Professor Baruchello's main foci is to do with the problem of the inequality of power. He stresses the point that true justice can only obtain between more or less equals. This is a point made most famously by the Athenians in the *Melian Dialogue* of Thucydides. The Athenians say to the doomed Melians: 'Of the gods we believe, and of men we know, that by a necessary law of their nature they rule wherever they can....all we do is to

make use of (this law), knowing that you and everybody else, having the same power as we have, would do the same as we do.’⁶ Thucydides would seem to agree with Professor Baruchello that justice can only obtain when there is a rough equivalence of power. But going by the fate of the Melians we are reminded that such equality of power does not always obtain in international affairs. And even if we allow that some ‘rough justice’ may obtain in domestic affairs, e.g. equal pay for equal work or ‘every man’s home is his castle,’ we know that as long as society has some level of division of labour, which is to say is somewhat advanced on the scale of social progress, then there will be no mathematical equality of power between all classes and citizens.⁷

Consider the hypothetical example of the Lord Chancellor being cruel to the (mythical) Earl of Chalfont, the Earl being mean to his estate manager, the estate manager being harsh with the groomsmen, the groomsmen being brutal with the stable boy, the stable boy being cruel to the dairy maid, the dairy maid kicking the cat, and the cat batting at the mouse with its paws. What we see here in this hypothetical structure of a civilised society is a cascading flow of cruelty indicating that whenever we have some power over another, however low we may be, there is a tendency to use it to dominate and cause pain. Equalise the social condition as much as you can from one so ‘elitist’ and hierarchical, the question still remains whether men are not, as James Madison writing as Publius in *The Federalist Papers* said, much more disposed ‘to vex and oppress each other, than to co-operate for the common good.’⁸

The main point here I think is that morally speaking there is no difference between the Lord Chancellor and the stable boy or dairy maid. They are all guilty of cruelty to those in a subordinate or weaker position. This is Nietzsche’s ‘Will to Power’ as the deepest force in human psychology as well as the inner nature of all life. Not that it can’t be modified or redirected in its force and direction, or that on this day or that the estate manager might give the groomsmen the day off or the latter might give the stable boy a candy. But we don’t have to be familiar with a huge swath of novelistic literature to know that if the Earl should take a shine to the dairy maid her charms will play the role of a great equaliser of the power differential between the two. ‘Form is power,’ Hobbes says, ‘because being a promise of good, it recommendeth men (or women) to the favour of women (or men)’.⁹ In a word, the claim with which Professor Baruchello must of necessity contend is that human beings love to dominate, indeed, perhaps feel only fully alive when they can dominate and that this is just as

characteristic of the ‘powerless’ in any society as it is of the ‘powerful’. So Hobbes: ‘(I)n the first place, I put for a general inclination of all mankind a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death.’¹⁰

My difference from Professor Baruchello then consists in my seeing the problem of cruelty not so much in terms of social standing or ‘access’ to the levers of social power as in terms of Madison’s insistence on the human tendency ‘to vex and oppress’. The interesting thing about this formulation is that Madison, who saw himself as setting up a more just and more equal society than had been known hitherto, did not expect this tendency to be less in the new society he was constructing. Indeed, he made it the premise of his whole politico-constitutional system. And no one would claim that Madison lacked high expectations for the future and what might be accomplished if society would only become more enlightened and pursue a course of radical reform. In a word, the fact of cruelty or cruel intentions will be operative at some level in any society no matter how just and democratic it can bring itself to be.

If the claims of Madison here, together with those of Machiavelli, Nietzsche, Thucydides and Hobbes be allowed some weight, then it is strictly speaking impossible to discriminate between victims and perpetrators in the manner which Professor Baruchello would seem to wish to do. It’s not just the ‘winners,’ e.g. the artist, the nun, the politician, the student, the academic et. al. who are the cruel ones, but also the ‘losers’ e.g. the proud, the nymphomaniac, the lazy-bones, the indifferent, the brutes and such who are capable of and sometimes guilty of ‘radical evil’. Their social standing is ‘unequal’ perhaps but there are no ‘saints’ on this score, only ‘sinners’ actual or potential. Oscar Wilde once made the same point in another connection when noted that ‘the only people greedier than the rich are the poor’, and I think this is good way to make the point. We also recall here the famous line from *Hamlet*: ‘Use every man after his desert then who’d ’scape a whipping’.

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Continued on p. 199

BOOK REVIEWS

Michael Polanyi: Scientist and Philosopher

W.T. Scott and Martin Moleski, SJ.

OUP, New York, 2005; ISBN 0 19 517433 X; xvi + 364 pp.

This is the book that many of us have been awaiting for almost thirty years.

As Marty Moleski explains in the Preface, Bill Scott worked on this biography from 1977 to 1994, and produced an of MS 293,000 words, and sent copies to several of those who had known Polanyi. But in the intervening 5 years before his death in 1999, he was unable to make the revisions which they had suggested, in particular to reduce the MS by shortening or omitting the detailed summaries of Polanyi's writings on philosophy, theology, politics, economics, patent law and physical chemistry.

Bill Scott's widow, Ann, gave Marty Moleski a free hand to revise the MS. The result, as Moleski say, is a shorter book, neither what Bill Scott nor what Marty Moleski would have written, nor what they would have written had they worked together. Nevertheless, it is a fine achievement and puts all admirers of Polanyi in debt to both of them.

Bill Scott put a great deal of work into it, as witnessed by the list of more than 150 persons whom he interviewed, and the many archives and collections of letters which he consulted. By quoting extracts from Polanyi's notebooks and from letters from and to Polanyi, and recounting what he was told by those he interviewed, Bill Scott was able to give a detailed account of Polanyi's life and work, obviously more so in the later than in the earlier years. The book is illustrated with 25 photographs of Polanyi, family and colleagues.

The authors have skilfully woven together Polanyi's personal life, his scientific interests and work, and his interests and work in philosophy, politics and economics. Even those with little knowledge of physics and chemistry should be able to understand most of what Polanyi worked at and achieved, thanks to their clear and careful accounts. Likewise with his work in economics and philosophy. His life and work are properly and economically placed in their family, social, professional and historical settings: in Budapest where he was born on March 11th 1891, went to school and university, recuperated from illness during his service as a medical officer with the Austro-Hungarian army during the First World War, served briefly as the secretary to the Minister of Health during the post-independence Karolyi government, moved to the university when Bela Kun and the Bolsheviks came to power; Karlsruhe (1919-20) where, after Admiral Miklos Horthy became Regent and an anti-Semitic

White Terror replaced Kun's Red Terror, he returned to continue his research in chemistry, adopted Austrian citizenship, and became engaged to Magda Kemeny, also from Budapest; Berlin, where he worked at the Kaiser Wilhelm for Fibre Research (until 1923), and then at the Institute for Physical Chemistry, until Hitler came to power in 1933; Manchester, where he accepted the Chair in Physical Chemistry which he had previously declined, and exchanged it in 1948 for a personal Chair in Social Studies to continue full-time with his philosophical and economic studies until his retirement in 1959; and finally Oxford, where he was a Senior Research Fellow at Merton, and his many journeys abroad, especially to America, until his final days at St Andrew's Hospital in Northampton (after, as Magda later told me, being badly treated at a local authority home in or near Oxford), where he died on Feb. 22nd, 1976.

It is impossible to do justice to the wealth of documented detail about all the varied aspects and phases of Polanyi's life. As one who, for 35 years, has been deeply interested in his non-scientific work, but who never met him, I shall now mention some points that I found especially interesting and illuminating.

Firstly some items from his life in Hungary. Polanyi clearly benefited from being born into a busy, well-to-do and cultivated family, of Jewish descent on both sides. The Polanyi children (Laura or 'Mausi', Adolf, Karl, Sophie, Michael – the youngest, Paul, was mentally retarded, lived in an institution, and died in adolescence) were taught at home, with French and English tutors and German governesses. By the age of 6 Polanyi could speak and write in Hungarian, German (spoken at home), and French, and later in English. The children had their own horses, and (the boys, presumably) re-ceived fencing lessons. It comes as something of surprise that the last came in useful when Polanyi, as the offended party, took part in a formal student duel at the University of Budapest, and was able to draw blood and so satisfy honour, but about what we are not told.

Despite the bankruptcy of his father in 1900 (when bad weather washed out a railway line that he was building), and a significant decline in their standard of living, Polanyi was able to go, in 1900, to the Minta Gymnasium, a 'model school' where intending teachers could practise. There he studied Hungarian, German, Latin, Greek, religion and ethics, geography, natural history, geometry, maths and physics. His favourite subjects were physics and the history of art.

He also loved poetry, particularly that of the

contemporary Hungarian poet Endre Ady, plus Shakespeare, Goethe, Musset, Vigny and Holderlin, all of whom he recited to Jeanette Odier, from Geneva, his first love, who came to teach at Laura Polanyi's kindergarten in 1913.

Despite his interest in physics, he decided to study medicine when he entered Budapest University in 1908. More light is thrown on this decision: among other reasons were the difficulty he had with the necessary mathematics, and his belief that the medical faculty provided the best education in science. Indeed, the study of physics and chemistry was required for physiology. It was in the physiological laboratories that he encountered, via the study of colloidal gels and chemical reactions at the surface of cell membranes, the phenomenon of adsorption, which was to be the subject of his Ph.D. thesis and to occupy him for many years afterwards.

By 1912 he was thinking of a career in chemistry, and a short paper of his, arguing that entropy would decrease to zero under infinite pressure as well as under temperature decreasing to absolute zero (Planck's explanation of Nernst's Heat Theorem), was sent to Einstein who responded favourably to it. At the time Polanyi wrote (to Maus) that he had gambled and won, and now knew he was in the world for. But soon after he wrote again expressing frustration at having to continue with medicine and not with chemistry, and then, suffering a bout of depression, had to rest.

This alternation of periods of doubts about his talents and career and depression at his apparent lack of success, followed by treatment, rest and recovery, recurs later in Polanyi's career, as when he was preparing, and postponing, his Gifford lectures, which became *Personal Knowledge*. When Polanyi writes of the scientist staking his reputation and career on claims to have made significant studies, he knew what he was talking about.

Summing up Polanyi's scientific career (p. 108), Scott notes his obscuring of some of his most original work in measuring reaction rates, the 'near misses' when he almost discovered what others were to find soon afterwards, his failure to dominate one area of research and to make a name for himself among the general public, and not being involved, like other scientists, in the wartime and post-war 'big science' of encryption or the atomic bomb (Magda told me that he had been invited to join the Manhattan Project but turned it down because he thought it would not work: Moleski – p. 317, n. 177 – says that Scott failed to discover whether he had been invited, and, if so, if he had refused). Scott suggests that Polanyi may 'simply have been too diffident about his own work to shoulder his way into the company of the greats'. Yet he did make significant contributions to seven areas of physical chemistry, was a source of inspiration to others, and his

work on 'atomic reactions, backed up by the sodium flame experiments, was the kind of deep, original and fruitful research for which the Nobel Prize is often awarded' (pp. 208-9).

There is a notable gap between Polanyi's first two publications on non-scientific matters, 'To the Peacemakers' (1917) and 'New Scepticism' (1919), both in Hungarian, and 'USSR Economics' (1935) and the increasing stream of non-scientific publications and aborted projects thereafter. Previously, I thought that there was little evidence of any thinking by Polanyi on such matters during that time. But this *Life* shows just how much, and in what ways, Polanyi was thinking about them. Indeed, it does full justice to the previously neglected theme of Polanyi's work in economics (but see the following review).

It was the post-war economic dislocations, especially unemployment and the great German inflation of 1923-4, and the threat they presented to a free society by prompting a collectivist revolution, that turned his attention back to politics and to economics as well, first in correspondence with his brother Karl, of which Michael's side has been lost, and then also with Gustav and Toni Stolper, who had worked in Vienna with Karl and moved in 1924 to Berlin, where they contacted Michael and Magda, and founded *Der deutsche Volkswirt*. Polanyi subscribed to it and it kept him touch with economic events and thinking. Over the years Polanyi frequently wrote to Toni about economic issues, and their letters are quoted. He also began to read books on economics and social problems. In 1930 he formed a study group at which economists and scientists could undertake together solid research in economics. Ten meetings were recorded, yet in 1948 Polanyi noted that they had born fruit in what the participants had later done (p. 122).

Polanyi himself stated () that it was a conversation with Bukharin in Moscow in 1935 that he first heard of Marxist attempts to plan scientific research. Scott records three previous visits, in 1928, 1931 and 1932, the last two to give lectures. On the first he expressed his disgust with the malfunctioning of the economy and the oppressive atmosphere, yet misread the political situation. It would be interesting to learn more of these visits, and especially how Polanyi, of whom there is no record of having learned Russian, came to compile the facts and figures that he published in 1935 about the Soviet economy. If there are unused materials that Scott amassed about this, perhaps Marty Moleski could publish a summary of them.

Detailed attention is also given to Polanyi's pioneering efforts with diagrammatic films in order to bring a proper understanding to the general public of how an economy works to replace widely accepted fallacies, and especially of the role of money, the

expansion and contraction of the money supply, and how government action, by budget surpluses in times of economic growth and deficits in depressions, can ease, but never eliminate, the trade cycle. By such means, he hoped, the public would be alerted to the errors of Soviet and other collectivist propaganda and a free economy, and thence free society, would be preserved. Three films were produced and shown to small audiences in Britain and America but no further, much to our great loss in the years after the war, and even still today.

There is much more that could be mentioned, but I shall confine myself to saying how helpful I found the detailed account of Polanyi's travels, lectures, turns as Visiting Professor, and the like, after 1960, many of which gave rise to published articles. (How I wish that he had been a prophet honoured in his own (second adopted) country as well abroad!) And there are the personal details, such as his absent-mindedness and bad driving.

I noticed but three minor errors: (p. 48) Charles I (Karl) abdicated as Emperor of Austria but not, as implied, as King of Hungary, and in fact made an abortive effort to regain the Hungarian throne; on p. 180 'Mers-el-Kebir' in Algeria is spelt 'Mers-el-Kebic'; and (p. 292), Northampton, where Polanyi spent his last days, was hardly 'a country town' for it was growing rapidly and by then had a population of at least 170,000.

When, at the Polanyi Centenary Conference at Budapest in 1991, we visited the Minta Gymnasium, I said that I felt as if I had come full circle. For here I was at Polanyi's old school and he had died at St Andrew's, next door to Northampton Grammar School, my old school which I had left in 1960. One of my great regrets is that during those intervening 16 years I did not have the chance to meet Polanyi himself. His own books and this biography must suffice instead: the latter goes a very long way indeed. It is pity that Bill Scott was unable to finish it and to see it published. It is a tribute to its author as well as to subject.

Richard Allen

***Emotion, Reason and Tradition:
Essays on the Social, Political and Economic
Thought of Michael Polanyi***
edited by S. Jacobs and R. T. Allen
Ashgate, Aldershot, 2005, ISBN 0 7546 4067 1,
175 pp.

Polanyi is – at best – a philosopher of science in the eyes of the contemporary main stream philosophy with interesting and sometimes strange ideas. The essays collected in this book, *Emotion, Reason and Tradition*, help to refine this rather crude and distorted picture. Polanyi has in fact a philosophical

system embracing various different branches of philosophy, even if not evenly elaborated in every respect.

The editors, Struan Jacobs and Richard Allen have already done a lot to make accessible for scholarly study Polanyi's complete oeuvre within which his philosophy of science can be interpreted properly. One of the milestones in the English-speaking world was Allen's publication of Polanyi's selected papers in *Society, Economics, and Philosophy*, presenting his thoughts on a wide range of issues.

The present volume is introduced with a brief overview of Polanyi's intellectual biography by the editors, portraying him as one of the major 20th century humanists, being active in, and leaving his mark on, an incredibly wide range of fields such as politics, chemistry, technological development, liberal political movements, science policy, theoretical economics, social philosophy, ethics, philosophy of science, theory of knowledge, metaphysics, philosophy of art and religion – and on the top of all these he was one of the hubs in the network of leading contemporary intellectuals as it is clear from his correspondence. This is the interpretational context of his philosophical system.

Endre Nagy adds further details to Polanyi's intellectual development in chapter two. Nagy proceeds from the Polanyian tenet that we have a twofold relation to our culture. We are formed by the social-cultural milieu that we are brought up. It constitutes our fiduciary framework – the premises of our activities – that we use by dwelling in it. However we, especially the creative geniuses, are also able to break out of the frameworks we are educated in. Nagy surveys the most important factors of the young Polanyi's Hungarian socio-cultural background and analyses how Polanyi's anti-materialism can be interpreted against this background in his own technical terms of dwelling in and breaking out.

This second chapter can also be read as a brief historical case study about Polanyi's own life to illuminate and back up his ideas about the role of tradition presented in Chapter 6. But the editors organised the material of the book according to a different line of thoughts. The first two chapters concerns historical-biographical contexts of Polanyi's philosophy while from Ch. 4 to 12, in each chapter, one of Polanyi's major thoughts is interpreted either solely on the basis of his own texts or in a comparative manner by contrasting his position to the view of one or two key figures, though on occasions it was not transparent to me what the editorial intent was when arranging the material in this second bigger unit.

Whatever the organising principle of the editors might have been, Lee Congdon's masterpiece (Ch. 3) was certainly difficult to fit in. This paper can be read as a contribution to Polanyi's and apparently Koestler's intellectual autobiography, but it is also

possible to read this paper as the one in which Koesler's works, his crucial concepts and arguments and also his intellectual developments are invoked to illuminate the key concepts and positions of Polanyi's metaphysics and *vice versa*. This dialogic reconstruction of the works of the two friends and intellectual allies clarifies Polanyi's anti-reductionism, his criticism of critical philosophy, his relation to metaphysical and social order and his concept of transcendence playing a major role both in his metaphysics and his religious thoughts.

The systematic unit of the collection begins with the analysis of two central concepts namely that of emotion and moral value.

One of the novelties of Polanyi's epistemology is the positive cognitive role it assigns to emotions and, in this respect again, he was well ahead of his contemporaries. Until very recently emotions have had an awful reputation as to their role in cognition. It has been generally accepted that they distort and paralyze perception and judgment. However nowadays more and more cognitive scientists argue that emotions have two positive functions in cognition. On the one hand, emotions are necessary for any 'purely rational' cognition. On the other, certain cognitive theories of emotions suggest that emotions themselves represent our ancient and condensed cognitive relations to our environment. Polanyi rehabilitated emotions in the first sense as Richard Allen shows in Ch. 4. He gives a succinct and systematic reconstruction of Polanyi's philosophical theory of emotions including their social and political functions besides the cognitive ones. Some readers will probably miss and eagerly wait for, as I did, the follow-up of this brilliant reconstruction that would link Polanyi's theory of emotions to this new trend in cognitive science.

In the next chapter Chris Goodman points out the parallel between reality to be described by science and the reality of values to be grasped by our general moral judgments governed by our transcendental ideals. Value objectivism derives from this parallel. Moral good together with other values is like truth, a transcendental ideal not being subjective and objective either in the traditional sense of these expressions. Goodman argues that Polanyi has an axiological virtue ethics. Since it is based on the transcendental ideal of good life (what is good for human beings) and because it includes the assumption that a morally good action is the one done by a morally good agent. The latter can be supported by that a morally good action cannot be made explicit in terms of explicit conditions, at most we can say that, as Goodman puts it, '[a] morally good action is what a morally good person would do in the specific circumstances of the decision' (p. 95).

The following essays except Ch. 7 and the last one centre around the explanation of two interrelated pairs of converse notions: traditions and freedom, and spontaneous and corporate order, respectively. Both pairs are Polanyi's most fundamental concepts in his social philosophy.

In the view of many, tradition is one, probably the most significant, cultural means to confine freedom. Polanyi would probably concede this opinion in one of the two senses he understands tradition. According to Jacobs' illuminating reconstruction in Chapter 6 tradition is, in the first sense, the articulate lore transmitted from generation to generation while in the second tradition is the art of creative practice, research and discovery by which the articulate lore can be renewed. Tradition both imposes constraints upon creative freedom and teaches us how to exercise it. Jacobs analyses the roles tradition in both senses plays in Polanyi's philosophy of science and his theory of modern free societies.

Robert Brownhill takes up this theme in Ch. 9: how can personal freedom reconciled with the authority of tradition? As a first step he shows how Polanyi solves this problem in the community of scientists that Polanyi always considers as a prototype for the study of society as a whole. Then as a second step Brownhill critically analyses whether the mechanism that works for the society of scientists can be generalised for the totality of a free society. He brings to light the background assumptions of Polanyi's conservative liberalism concerning morality and the nature of social institutions that makes this generalisation possible.

In his second brilliant essay (Ch. 8) Jacobs' elaborates the second pillar of Polanyi's social philosophy namely the pair of corporate and spontaneous order and he shows how these two kinds of order supplement each other in free societies. He also argues that some germ of the notion of spontaneous order is most likely to be taken over by Polanyi from Köhler together with other elements of gestalt psychology.

In Ch. 7 Stephen Turner gives a political reading of Polanyi's theory of science. Three major issues are discussed: the problem of planning, the role of influentials and the political justification for science and its public funding.

Polanyi the theoretical, or rather, I venture the expression, the political economist, is the subject of the last three essays. In the first of these, in Ch. 10 Paul Craig Roberts sketches the two main lines of his economic thoughts and their historical contexts. His organisational theoretical considerations – which are also important for the understanding of his theory of spontaneous order and freedom – are elaborated by Carlo Vinti in the next essays (Ch. 11). Both Roberts and Vinti contrast Polanyi's

views with the theories of the members of the so called 'Austrian School'. Vinti also discusses the historical interactions between them with a particular emphasis on the history of the development of their ideas of a free society and spontaneous order. Vinti gives a very illuminating and detailed comparative systematic analysis of Polanyi's and Hayek's and Popper's ideas on liberty and free society, pointing also out the parallels and the differences in their background epistemological considerations. The second main line in Polanyi's economic thoughts, identified earlier by Roberts, concerns macroeconomics. In the last chapter Monia Manucci gives a careful comparison of Polanyi's and Keynes' theory of full employment shedding light on the similarities as well as the originality of some of Polanyi's theses.

The book is completed by an invaluable bibliography of the works of Polanyi and on Polanyi as well and by an index of names.

Finally it should be noted that the subtitle of this book is misleading in a sense, namely in a truly Polanyian understanding of the texts. It suggests that the essays will contribute specifically to the understanding of a certain *kind* of Polanyi's thoughts. It is true, they will indeed. Misunderstanding arises if we understand the subtitle as meaning only this and not more. For if, as Polanyi maintains, knowledge and understanding is holistic, and parts of the whole can be understood only in their contribution to the meaning of the integrated whole, then this essays will contributing to the understanding of Polanyi's philosophical *system* as a whole and to the understanding of his theory of knowledge and his philosophy of science as parts of his system. Therefore I see this fine collection of essays with a couple of masterpieces in it as a companion to Polanyi's philosophy helping the reader to understand the complete oeuvre and not just his social, political and economic thoughts.

Tihamér Margitay

Exploring the World of Human Practice: Readings in and about the Philosophy of Aurel Kolnai

Zoltán Balázs and Francis Dunlop (eds)

Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004.

This book consists in a short 'Introduction' by Francis Dunlop, eight of Aurel Kolnai's essays, and chapters by twelve scholars on Kolnai's thought. Several of the secondary studies were delivered as papers at a conference held at the Central European University in December 2000, shortly after the centennial anniversary of Kolnai's birth in Budapest. The editors of the book, who rank Kolnai

(1900-1973) among the outstanding moral-political philosophers of the twentieth century, are to be congratulated on this and their other efforts at bringing Kolnai's work to the attention of more readers, after decades of undeserved neglect.

Most of Kolnai's essays in the book, three of which were previously unpublished and two appearing in English for the first time, deal with ethical (and cognate) topics, as for example 'the Meaning of Right and Wrong,' 'Erroneous Conscience,' 'Practical Error,' and 'Degrees of Ethical Universality.' Writings of Kolnai on the nature of politics, and on the necessity of philosophy are also included. In these essays Kolnai's rigorous mind is manifest. He writes fluently but, it has to be said, the depth and intricacy of, and the many sentences of inordinate length in, his analyses make for difficult reading.

Among the topics that are covered in the interpretative studies in the book are Kolnai's ethical theory and his social-political philosophy. Basic ideas of Kolnai inform, and are amplified on, by essays in both parts of the book.

Kolnai understands *human nature* as consisting in 'animal' and rational dimensions. The animal dimension includes man's many appetites - affective impulses, desires, feelings and prejudices - which, for Kolnai, jostle against one another. All the appetites presuppose thought, according to Kolnai, and while reflective reason exists at a higher level than they, it can be clouded and corrupted by them. Nonetheless, Kolnai argues, it is the task of reflective reason to direct the appetites, deciding which of them is to be satisfied on each occasion and in what manner. Objective truth obliges us to develop our thinking and to reason rightly. Personal reflection, rational conversation, and study of philosophy Kolnai includes among the methods to this end.

Morality, as distinct from the 'business of life', Kolnai understands as *sui generis* and as 'polythematic'. There are obligatory themes of morality for us, Kolnai citing justice, truth, and self-control. These themes may converge but, says Kolnai, they never merge, and they remain irreducible to any supposed axiom. Kolnai's moral agent is led by the themes of morality, with their permanent binding quality that has no counterpart in human constructions, to their source in God, submitting to Divine authority. *Philosophy* is similarly seen by Kolnai as pointing toward Christian theism.

Kolnai's image of *social and political life* is redolent with Burkean and Tocquevillian themes. Kolnai detested social utopianism and political dirigisme, defining morality's role in politics as the constraint of means, not the justification of ends. The politician who promotes ideas of equalization and mass democracy is wittingly or otherwise, in Kolnai's account, promoting a populist dictatorship which

will be no less tyrannical for its being popular. The notion of the 'common' man finds no favour with Kolnai, being the type of person who is without aspirations and ideals and who resents others' attainments. The general will is, for Kolnai, the will of 'common' men. Kolnai favours a pluralist and hierarchical society, ruled over by a constitutional monarchy that is dedicated to the cause of liberty. In Lee Congdon's words, liberty is, for Kolnai, 'not secured by a few clear laws or simple principles, but by a densely complex society in which power was divided and jurisdictions overlapped, where the habits of liberty, disciplined by a respect for objective moral law, were deeply engrained'. The primary and secondary writings in the book show that Kolnai's *social-political thinking* is of a piece with his understanding of ethics and of human nature in being tied to Christian ideals and traditions.

Scholars who know their Kolnai will welcome this book for its making certain writings of his available, or available in English, for the first time. For students and scholars who wish to discover Kolnai, the book will provide a valuable resource. Such secondary studies in the book as 'Kolnai's Mature Political Philosophy' by Lee Congdon, 'The Ethical Theories of Aurel Kolnai' by John Beach, and John Hittinger's 'The Democratic Subversion of Political Liberty and Participation' are particularly instructive for their presentation of Kolnai's insights into perennially important topics of morality, democracy and the values of Western civilization.

Readers will be assisted by these, and by other, interpretative essays, to see the wood from the trees of Kolnai's thought. There is also stimulating discussion of ideas that are removed from those that I have noted. For example: Andreas Dorshel considers whether love is 'Intertwined with Hatred'; Thomas Norgaard explores 'Kolnai's Idea of Emotional Presentation'; and Robert Radford explores Kolnai's writing on 'disgust' as 'A Source in the Art and Writing of Salvador Dali.'

Struan Jacobs

I Am: A Philosophical Inquiry into First-Person Being

Raymond Tallis

**Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004
ISBN 0 7486 1951 8 (pbk) pp.350.**

Tallis both annoys and exhilarates. Interesting though it is to read his thoughts, you cannot help feeling that it is rather indulgent of him to expect readers to purchase all of his books on his general theme of philosophical anthropology - especially since his professional field is geriatric medicine and therefore there is no professional need to spread out his thoughts over as many books as possible. This

impression is confirmed by the discovery that every few pages there is a footnote telling you that if you want to read a detailed discussion of a particular argument you have to read one of his other books.

Tallis, it should be said, is a lucid writer, and for anybody interested in philosophy he is a must read - which is why it would be nice if he would express himself more succinctly. The assumptions he attacks well deserve some critical attention. As I write London Zoo has decided to lock up eight volunteers [they are released each night] for the public to view, on the grounds that human beings are just like all the other animals:

A lot of people think humans are above other animals, when they see humans as animals here, it reminds us that we are not that special.

But although we share 99% of our functional genes with other members of the primate family, it is rather obvious that the bit that makes us different is somewhat special.

Instead of seeking to distinguish human beings from other creatures via our ability to create and manipulate symbolic representations, Tallis traces it back to our more general ability to manipulate tools. More specifically he seeks to distinguish humans from other living creatures via a distinctive mode of awareness which he calls Existential Intuition i.e. our ability to live our lives at a distance from our organic existence. He suggests that this awareness arises as a consequence of our ability to use tools.

What fascinates Tallis, he returns to it again and again, is the role that embodiment plays in our personal identity. He wants to steer a path between the claim that the human is only contingently lodged in an animal body, and the view that we are nothing more than animated piece of meat i.e. he seeks to transcend what he takes to be the misguided dichotomy of either 'over-spiritualising' or 'over-biologising' humans.

Tallis identifies what is increasingly recognised as the most important philosophical contribution of the last hundred years - a hundred years it should be said of quite remarkable philosophical mediocrity - namely the rejection of the legacy of Descartes by thinkers such as Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and Merleau-Ponty. He fails to mention Polanyi but given his belief that our distinctive agency as human beings derives in large part from our capacity for explicitness his avoidance of Polanyi, although wholly misguided, is understandable. If Tallis were to read about and understand the implications of what Polanyi describes as the structure of tacit knowing the result no doubt would be another book, but it would be a book that would be well worth buying.

Continued on p. 200

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CONFERENCE REPORTS

1 Eighth International Conference on Persons, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw, August 9th-12th 2005

This conference is held every 2 years, alternating between Europe and the USA. There was a greater attendance, especially on the European side, than the previous one I went to, in Austria in 2001, even though, for various reasons some who had planned to come and give papers could not do so. This resulted in more papers being offered and thus in parallel sessions, such that one could not hear all. I was particularly disappointed in having my own scheduled alongside that of Philip Cronce (Chicago) on the great German personalist philosopher, Max Scheler, and the value of role models. Another innovation was the assigning of speakers as commentators on another speaker's paper. I was assigned to one by Dan Lazea (Cluj, Romania, but studying at Turin) on the Italian philosopher, Luigi Pareyson, of whom I have never heard and none of whose books

appear to have been translated into English: a great pity, for Pareyson clearly placed the person at the centre of his thinking. In contrast, a fellow member of the SPCPS and contributor to *Appraisal* Jan Olof Bengtsson (Sweden), was assigned to my paper on Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison: not only had he heard a previous version but he knows more than I do about the whole subject of the personalist reaction against the Absolute Idealism of Bradley and Bosanquet, and about personalism and idealism generally as he showed in his own paper, a summary of his work for his D.Phil. at Oxford.

The Conference opened with an address by the former President of Poland, Lech Walesa, on 'Personalism in Politics'. A later address, by Prof. Czeslaw Bartnik, the doyen of contemporary personalism in Poland, on 'The dignity of a person and the dignity of a nation', had to be read for him because of illness.

As is the custom, it closed with a banquet – at a hunting-lodge just outside Warsaw, and with a

(long) day trip to the historic city of Krakow in the south of Poland, where we had just enough time to see the principal sights.

I shall now briefly mention some of the other papers that I heard, apart from the two, by Tomas Taransky and Richard Prust with a reply by Ben Huff, which are published in this issue.

Harold Oliver gave an account, from his own experience, of the decline of the school of American Personalism founded by Borden Parker Bowne at Boston University.

Leen De Bolle (a post-graduate student from Leuven, Belgium) made me revise my few and second-hand ideas of Deleuze with her 'Personal identity as an impersonal passive synthesis: a paradox', which, if I have understood it properly, turns out to be something of a tacit synthesis of experiences which cannot be made wholly explicit and consciously controlled. I suspect that Deleuze's notion has some irrationalist implications but it does seem to be worth further study despite them.

Tom Buford (Furman U., USA) answered 'Yes' to his own question 'Are institutions persons?' but, to my mind, while definitely showing that they are personal, did not argue that they are persons in any sense stronger than the legal one of corporate or 'artificial' persons.

Neil Manson (U. of Mississippi) gave a concise and sound defence of the unfashionable that personhood, and therefore the idea of God, does not require embodiment.

Mark Moller (Denison U., USA) set out clearly the scientific facts regarding embryonic stem cells, from which he drew the conclusion that harvesting them for medical research and use cannot avoid raising the painful philosophical and moral questions of what is person that some think it to avoid.

Ray Boisvert (Siena College, Loudonville, NY) demonstrated how 'host' and guest', as words and roles, can be interchangeable and simultaneous: each can be guest and host with regard to the other at the same time. Moreover, these roles need not be only local (face to face) anymore, but can be fulfilled by any persons who communicate in any way.

Benjamin Huff's own paper was 'The Person as an Origin of Actions', starting from Aristotle and going beyond him, especially to argue that the virtuous person acts for the good of others, for the sake of the action itself or for the sake of virtue, and for the sake of happiness.

John Hofbauer (Mt St Mary Col., Newburgh, NY) argued that the phenomenological realism of such as Dietrich von Hildebrand and Karol Wojtyla is compatible with Thomism in respect of the quest for happiness, justice and the virtue of religion.

Richard Beauchamp (Christopher Newport U, VA) sought to correct a long-standing denigration of the bodily aspects of human being.

Andra Lazariou (Romania, but studying for a PhD at the Central European University in Budapest) argued that a person's life has intrinsic worth apart from its contents, and that autonomous choice is a central part of that value.

Finally, Wojciech Kaczmarek (Catholic University of Lublin, Poland) spoke on 'Theatre as a Personalistic Art', or, rather, as the most personal art because it essentially involves communion and participation between actors and audience.

From these brief summaries of about two thirds of the papers presented, it can at least be seen that the conference attracted speakers who approached persons and persons both positively and from a range of perspectives.

The next conference will be held in July or August 2007, at Western Carolina University, Asheville, NC.

Richard Allen

2 'The Philosophy of Cultural Convergence': 110th Lucian Blaga Anniversary Conference, Romanian Academy of Sciences, Bucharest, Sept. 15th & 16th.

In September 1995 I attended the Lucian Blaga 100th Anniversary Conference at Mangalia, and some of the papers given there were published in *Appraisal*, Vol. 1, No. 3, March 1997, along with some translated extracts from Blaga's philosophical works and some of his aphorisms and poems.

This second and shorter conference attracted a much larger attendance, including Blaga's daughter, Dorli, who, a few years after his death, in 1961, was able to have his books republished. It was accompanied by an exhibition of photographs and publications by and about Blaga.

With the exception of a paper in English by Eric Gilder, an American resident in Romania and presently at the Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, and his colleague Henrieta Serban, one in Spanish by the Cultural Attaché at the Chilean Embassy, on a contemporary Chilean philosopher (delivered too quickly for me to follow but I was kindly given a copy to read later), and my own, all the contributions were in Romanian. Some had already been published and I was able to follow the printed texts, along with abstracts in English, and gain some idea, with my very limited Romanian, of what was being said, and later I was given English versions or summaries of other papers. Here are brief summaries of the ones that I was most able to follow.

Rainer Schubert (Cultural Attaché at the Austrian Embassy) compared Kant and Blaga on the consciousness of time: Kant overestimating rationality and Blaga irrationality in the form of metaphor. Kant, as Blaga said, spatialised time and in a particular way, with the metaphor of a straight arrow, one that is now out of date.

Mihai Popa (Editorial department, RAS*) expounded Blaga's account of historical being. Man exists between two horizons: of the ordinary world, for subsistence, and of mystery for revelation and cultural creations such as myth, religion, science and art. Historical being is thus essentially one of 'style' (which in Blaga's philosophy is a feature of all distinctively human activity, and so there are styles of science as well as art). What lacks style is non-historical and belongs to nature, biology or psychology. Stylistic categories, inherited from the past, unconsciously affect contemporary life.

Prof. Vasile Macovicu examined more closely Blaga's notion of a 'stylistic matrix', the deeper set of categories, valuations, etc., which, as the categories of creative spontaneity, help to form, manifest themselves in, and constitute the unity of a phase of historical and cultural life.

Ionut Isac (RAS, Cluj-Napoca) stressed the importance for Blaga of a philosophical consciousness that is open to metaphysics, the creation of a world, as the goal and summit of philosophy. He defends metaphysics against modern criticisms, which rest upon a conception of knowledge as unidirectional and unidimensional, what he calls 'paradisiac' knowledge, and ignore what he calls 'luciferic' knowledge which breaks into the former in the name of something new which it cannot assimilate. Metaphysics especially exemplifies the latter, as do radical innovations in science. In this way metaphysics sustains the whole of spiritual and cultural life.

Eric Gilder and Henrieta Serban compared Blaga with Rorty. Blaga argues that man's situation in history and in the horizon of mystery, and his creativity, entail that no metaphysical system can be final and perfect: they all aspire to an absolute which they cannot reach. Rorty's irony asserts that there is no final vocabulary, nor any real essence which a vocabulary could capture. Blaga and Rorty are consequently very close. They concluded: 'Approaching the parallel between ironism [Rorty] and the historical being [Blaga] one understands that the tragedy of the historical being is therefore counter-balanced, in a very complex and tensioned way, by the chances to live authentically as a (liberal) ironist and as an inherently creative being'. But Blaga, I would add, also said that experience

can refute, though it cannot prove, a metaphysical system, and hence in his philosophy, unlike Rorty's, there is something more to, and corrective of, philosophy.

Gheorghe Constandache (Polytechnic University of Bucharest) surveyed a selection of Blaga's many aphorisms both to illustrate his thoughts upon poetry, aesthetics, metaphor, image, symbol, and aphorisms themselves, and as themselves exemplifying what is said in and through them.

My own paper began with the undeniable fact of cultural divergence. If, as Collingwood maintained, philosophy is concerned with the necessary and universal, it would appear that there can be only historical (empirical) studies of the contingent and local facts of culture, and no philosophy of culture. But Collingwood showed how philosophy can and must also be historical, if it is not to deal only with empty abstractions: e.g. a philosopher needs to know the history of his study (science, art, history, and philosophy itself) and of reflection upon it (previous philosophies of them) in order to deal with the real questions that arise in his historical, cultural and philosophical situation. And the history that he needs, and may have to write for himself, is a philosophical one that deals with the general features and presuppositions, usually tacit, of what has previously and now is done and thought. I illustrated this argument with brief examples from Collingwood and from Blaga.

Other papers were: Angela Botez (RAS, Bucharest), 'Blaga and Emerson: Convergencies in Transcendentalism'; Mircea Itu (U. of Bucharest) on Blaga and Shankara; Mircea Flonta (U. of Bucharest), 'Blaga's conception of History and Progress'; Teodor Vadim (Technical U. of Cluj-Napoca) on Blaga and Phenomenology; Victor Popescu (RAS Bucharest) on Blaga's theory of values, which was found to be defective in not dealing with moral and social ones, any hierarchy among them, nor their origins; and Victor Botez, 'Blaga and Brancusi on Contingencies of the Organic and Mystery'.

This wide variety papers proved that Blaga's philosophy, despite some acknowledged faults, still has relevance and application today. It deserves to be much better known outside Romania, especially in the English-speaking world.

My thanks to Angela Botez, the organiser, for inviting me to attend and to give a paper, and for helping to make it possible for me to do so.

Richard Allen

* RAS = Romanian Academy of Sciences

CONTINUATIONS

From p. 168:

15. Polanyi is often classed as a subjectivist in science. See A.E. Musgrave, 'Impersonal Knowledge: a Criticism of Subjectivism in Epistemology', Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1969. Also I. Scheffler, *Science and Subjectivity*, New York, 1967. This is incorrect as shown by his development of the concept of interpersonal knowledge. What he is trying to do is to point out that we must not use too strict a definition of objectivity, and also recognise the importance of individual commitment in scientific decision making. See R.J. Brownhill, 'Objectivity and Subjectivity in Polanyi's Personal Knowledge', *New Universities Quarterly*, Summer, 1981, for the opposite view to both Musgrave and Scheffler.
16. W.H. Walsh, 'Knowledge in its Social Setting', *Mind*, Volume LXXX, Number 319, July 1971, produces an argument along these lines, and attempts a justification of consensus decisions.
17. This is the same argument that is used in the case of the scientific community. If the scientific community rejects a scientific theory, which a scientist proposes, he cannot say that his proposal is scientific knowledge only that he claims that it should be accepted as part of scientific knowledge.
18. A similar concept to that of Talcott Parsons. See T. Parsons and E. Shils (Editors), *Towards a General Theory of Action*, Harvard, 1951, p. 151.
19. This applies equally well to the political community.
20. Polanyi, although accepting that we reveal them and in a sense bring them into existence in this world would argue that nevertheless they do exist independently of us in the world of external reality: things in themselves.
21. It can be argued that in entering the scientific community we accept its decision procedure, and it would therefore be irrational of us not to accept its decisions once we are in, a contradiction. Thomas Hobbes uses a similar argument in reference to obedience to the laws of the *Leviathan*. However, although accepting the decision, i.e., the legitimate authority has a right to make the decision, it would not be irrational to try to get the decision changed.
22. T.S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago, 1964.
23. R.J. Brownhill, 'Michael Polanyi and the Problem of Personal Knowledge', *Journal of Religion*, op. cit.
24. See an analysis by R.J. Brownhill, 'Political Education in Michael Polanyi's Theory of Education', *Educational Theory*, Volume 23, Number 4, Fall 1977 and R.J. Brownhill, 'Freedom and Authority: The Political Philosophy of Michael Polanyi', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, Volume 8, Number 3, October 1977, for attempts to apply the concept of interpersonal knowledge to politics.

From p. 176

25. Freedom and truth are rightly valued by Enlightenment secularists. However, freedom and truth can be politically and ecclesologically configured in such a way as to enable greater integration of the private and the public and the sacred than the nominalistic concept of the independent spheres permits. Enlightenment secularism rests upon this nominalistic separation of spheres. Yet, to find problems with Enlightenment secularism does not preclude one from upholding freedom and truth, even though the assumptions of Western secular liberalism now have a very hard time conceiving of such a stance.
26. Though I understand that Polanyi and Tillich did meet in 1963, and had a great respect for each other's work.
27. Allen, R.T., *Transcendence and Immanence in the Philosophy of Michael Polanyi and Christian Theism*, Rutherford House, Edinburgh, 1992; Jha, S.R., *Reconsidering Michael Polanyi's Philosophy*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002; Mullins, P., 'M. Polanyi 1891 - 1976', <http://www.deepsight.org/articles/polanyi.htm>.
28. Jacobs, S., 'Michael Polanyi, Tacit Cognitive Relativist', *The Heythrop Journal*, October 2001, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 463-79.

From p. 186

Notes:

1. Of course, Prust follows the characterization of Aristotle's view that appears in Steven Sverdlik, 'Pure Negligence', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 30:2 (Apr 93) 137-149; and Sverdlik in turn relies on other interpreters.
2. Unless otherwise indicated, I use T. Irwin's translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, 2nd ed. (Hackett, 1999).
3. We also follow this pattern today in some cases, for example by punishing drunk drivers even where no damage is done.
4. Sarah Broadie also reads Aristotle this way: 'But if he voluntarily got into the state where controlled action is impossible or severely restricted or much more likely to go wrong, then both the condition itself and what he does or what happens as a direct result of it are voluntary and to be laid at his door (1113b30 ff.)'. Broadie, *Ethics With Aristotle* (Oxford UP, 1991) 154.

From p. 189

Notes:

1. In the 'hard' or Machiavellian view the cruel passions lead to killing - killing leads to the defeat of the enemy - defeat of the enemy lead to national survival. In the 'soft' or more 'economic' Bernard Mandeville-Adam Smith school of thought the problem is reformulated into the famous 'private vice/ public benefits' argument. Greed leads to work - work leads to

production – production leads to ‘The Wealth of Nations’.

Lest we conclude that only a devil like the ‘murd’rous Machiavel’ (*King Henry VI Part III*, Act III, scene ii) would wink at cruelty we might recall that that great Whig liberal progressive (and Machiavelli apologist) Thomas Babington Macaulay did not at all rule out the practice of torture in an enlightened state under certain circumstances.

2. *Beyond Good and Evil* §9.
<http://www.geocities.com/thenietzschechannel/bgept1.htm>
3. Nietzsche is not so ‘hard hearted’ because of any possible Social Darwinist tendencies in his thought. He in fact insists that the process of evolution is most unkind to the higher species and creatures as these by definition are more fragile and more likely to be crushed by the great forces of change.
4. *Beyond Good and Evil* §9.

From p. 195

In the meantime I simply note when the various points where he makes a remark that fit hand in glove, so to speak, into a Polanyian account and say hooray! He notes for example that when we look at the world we tend to overlook ourselves, that it is in the nature of knowing that it is situated within a context, and that this context is embodied. He rightly attacks Heidegger for neglecting the role that is played by our body. Indeed the chapter where he discusses Heidegger is the best in the book. You long for him however to abandon his stream of conscious style and systematically address some of the implications of what he is asserting. It is not that he is unaware of them, it is just that you feel that he has put any further discussion aside for another book.

C.P. Goodman

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Ed. Phil Mullins, Missouri Western State College,
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mullins@missouriwestern.edu;
www.missouriwestern.edu/orgs/polanyi/
TAD is now available on line.

Vol. XXXI 2004-5

No. 3

Dale Cannon: 'Longing to know if our knowing really is knowing: reflections on Esther Meek's *Longing to Know: The Philosophy of Knowledge for Ordinary People*'

David W. Rutledge: 'Knowing as unlocking the world': a review essay on E.L. Meek's *Longing to Know: The Philosophy of Knowledge for Ordinary People*'

Esther L. Meek: '*Longing to Know* and the complexities of knowing God'.

Polanyiana

Eds Marta Feher and Eva Gabor, Stoczek u. 2,
H-1111Budapest, Hungary;
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Alternate issues in Hungarian and English

Humanitas

National Humanities Institute, PO Box 1387, Bowie,
MD 20718-1387 USA; www.nhinet.org/hum.htm

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Wu Xuezhao, Zhu Shoutong, Bai Liping, Ong Chang Woei: Articles on Babbitt's influence in China.

George A. Panichas: 'Kafka's afflicted vision: a literary-theological critique'; Richard G. Avramenko: 'Bedevilled by boredom: a Voegelinian reading of Dostoevsky's *Possessed*'; Patrick Malcolmson: '*The Matrix*, liberal education, and other splinters in the mind'; Sami Pihlstrom: 'On the skeptical 'foundation' of ethics'.

Personalism

Ed: Rev. Prof. C.S. Bartnik, ul. Bazylianowka 54 B,
20-160 Lublin, Poland. personalism@wp.pl.
www.personalism.pl. Separate English and Polish
versions of each issue.

6/2004

Walter George Muelder: 'Personalism'; Ralph Tyler Flewelling: 'Studies in American Personalism'; Karol Wojtyla: 'Thomist Personalism'; Czeslaw Stanislaw Bartnik: 'Personalisation of the Church according to Cardinal Karol Wojtyla'; Jerzy

Palucki: 'The concept of *person* in the Church'; Jan Krynicki: 'William Stern's personalism'

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Angela Botez: 'Lucian Blaga and his philosophy';
D. Allen: 'Mircea Eliade and Platonism'; M.L.
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Pareyson'

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INDEX TO VOLUME 5, 2004-5

4 issues with continuous page-numbering: issue number followed by page number

1 Articles

A critique of Rorty's conception of knowledge in the perspective of the theory of tacit knowing	3/123
A dialogic constitution of the person and its ontological relevance	4/178
Appreciations of Drusilla Scot and Robin Hodgkin	1/3
Can existence be cruel?	3/138
Communal morality: an analysis based on Michael Polanyi's concept of interpersonal knowledge	4/164
Cruelty and Nietzsche's drive to distinction	4/187
Gabriel Marcel's <i>Essai de Philosophie Concrète</i> in its historical setting	1/9
How cruel is disease?	3/141
Human excellence	2/75
Interpreting Hannah Arendt's <i>The Human Condition</i>	3/111
Is violence always cruel?	2/91
Ludwik Fleck's ideas in science compared to similar concepts of Michael Polanyi, with some consequences for teacher education	3/117
Neglecting the tacit dimension of knowledge may be hazardous to your business	3/145
Notes on pessimism	3/148
On being responsible for acting irresponsibly	4/181
Poetic inspiration and metaphysical knowledge	2/84
Polanyi among the theologians	2/65
Pursuing virtue and expecting progress: Nietzsche and Lecky on the question of cruelty	3/135
The organisation of experience and making judgments	2/59
To being or not to being? That is the question for ethics	3/131
Tributes to Joan Crewdson	4/163
Western culture and 'the hypothesis of God'	4/169
What is cruelty? A discussion	1/33
What we can learn from Polanyi about the computational theory of mind	1/25

2 Books reviewed

Zoltan Balazs and Francis Dunlop (eds): <i>Exploring the World of Human Practice: Readings in and about the Philosophy of Aurel Kolnai</i>	4/194
Thomas O. Buford and Harold H. Oliver (eds) <i>Personalism revisited: Its proponents and critics</i>	1/39
Mark Garnett: <i>The Snake that Swallowed its Tail: Some Contradictions in Modern Liberalism</i>	3/153
Eva Gabor (ed.): <i>Selected Correspondence (1911-1946) of Karl Mannheim</i>	3/153
Struan Jacobs and R.T. Allen (eds.): <i>Emotion, Reason and Tradition: Essays on the Social, Political and Economic Thought of Michael Polanyi</i>	4/192
Aser Jorn: <i>The Natural Order and Other Texts</i>	1/55
Frank G. Kirkpatrick: <i>A Moral Ontology for a Theistic Ethic</i>	1/49
Anthony Monti: <i>A Natural Theology of the Arts: Imprint of the Spirit</i>	1/52
Alexandru Popescu: <i>Petre Tutea: Between sacrifice and suicide</i>	2/101
William T. Scott and Martin X. Moleski: <i>Michael Polanyi: Scientist and Philosopher</i>	4/190
Raymond Tallis: <i>I Am: An Inquiry into First-Person Being</i>	4/195
Raymond Tallis: <i>The Hand: A philosophical enquiry into human being</i>	2/95
Andrew Wellburn: <i>Rudolf Steiner's Philosophy and the Crisis of Contemporary Culture</i>	3/151

3 Authors and reviewers

R.T. Allen	1/55, 2/95, 4/163, 4/190	Benjamin Huff	4/187
Giorgio Baruchello	1/3, 2/91, 3/138, 3/148, 4/187	Struan Jacobs	4/190
Jan Olof Bengtsson	1/39	Tihamér Margitay	4/192
David Britton	1/3, 1/49, 2/84, 2/101	Jere Moorman	1/6, 3/145
R. J. Brownhill	1/6, 2/59, 4/164	Endre Nagy	3/153
Tony Clark	2/65	Colin D. Pearce	3/135, 4/187
Dale Cannon	3/151	Richard Prust	1/81
Alan Ford	1/42	Hans Popper	1/9, 3/111
Richard Gelwick	4/163	Sheldon Richmond	1/25
Gerhard Glück	3/111	Antonio Casado da Rocha	3/141
C. P. Goodman	2/75, 3/153, 4/195	Tomas Tatransky	4/178
Wendy Hamblet	1/33, 2/91, 3/131, 3/138	Paul Tyson	4/169
		Yu Zhenhua	3/123