

APPRAISAL

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Philip Rolnick

Wittgenstein and Polanyi on the Person

Charlie Lowney

Seeing, being and saying the Gestalt

APPRAISAL

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- P From time to time *Appraisal* will include *Re-Appraisals*, articles or collections of articles upon 20th C. thinkers whose work deserves to be more widely known.
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- P *Appraisal* takes a particular, but by no means exclusive, interest in the work of Michael Polanyi.

Format:

- P The maximum length of articles is 10,000 words, although longer articles can be split into 2 parts for publication in successive issues. Shorter items (discussions, working papers, notes, etc.) are especially welcome.
- P All contributions should be in good, clear English, without jargon, and with end-notes and frequent sub-headings (at approx. every 700 wds).
- P Please see inside rear cover regarding references to the works of Michael Polanyi.
- P All contributions should be sent via e-mail or on disk.
- P **Please ask for the Style Sheet or save or print it from our web site: www.spcps.org.uk.**

In particular, please write or rewrite all end-notes (no footnotes) and their indices (superscript) as **ordinary** text; and please give in Abstract (no more than 100 words), and a list of Key Words.

The Editor has no secretarial assistance and ALL articles should be composed according to our standard paragraph styles.

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This issue's contributors:

Dr Philip Rolnick is Professor of Theology at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, and has published books and articles on personhood, theological language, the Trinity, and the engagement of science and theology. His *Person, Grace, and God* (Eerdmans, 2007) provides a history of the concept of the *person*, responds to the challenges from neo-Darwinian and postmodern thought, and develops a constructive synthesis of the concept. He has also written *Analogical Possibilities: How Words Refer to God* (now with Oxford University Press).

Dr Charlie Lowney is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at Washington and Lee University. He received his Ph.D. from Boston University and his MA from Boston College. His work is primarily on the limits of understanding and expression in the Analytic tradition and on Moral Epistemology. He has previously written on Wittgenstein and Polanyi for *Tradition and Discovery* ('Wittgenstein and Polanyi: Metaphysics Reconsidered', *Tradition and Discovery*, 26:1, 1999-2000).

EDITORIAL

I apologise for the long delay in publishing this issue, the first time that *Appraisal* has been late. It has arisen from a lack of articles and the time it can take to get them ready for publication, especially when, as here, one of them refers to particular pages in another. I was hoping that there would be at least one more article, but that has proved impossible without yet further delays. I expect that the October issue will appear in February or March at the latest. It will have three articles on Hans Jonas, a Jewish pupil of Heidegger who wrote on Gnosticism, the philosophy of biology and responsibility. A fourth article on Jonas will probably appear in the March issue, which should be published in May. Perhaps by October next year we shall be back on schedule if suitable articles are received in time for them to be reviewed and prepared for publication.

There is better news about conferences—see the notices on the next page. We are very grateful that Phil Mullins has made himself available during his planned stay in London, and that Walter Gulick will come over especially from a visit to Amsterdam, to speak at the joint conference in April. In August the International Conference on the Study of Persons will provide opportunities both to extend interest in Polanyi and to learn about other trends in personalist thinking. I hope to see at least some of you at one and perhaps both of these events.

The two international Polanyi conferences in June this year, at Chicago and Budapest, were well attended, enjoyable and instructive. I would like to congratulate both sets of organisers on their successes. Some papers from the former have already appeared in *Tradition and Discovery* — see p. 39. Those given in Budapest will appear in *Polanyiana*.

In Budapest, Chris Goodman, Bob Brownhill and myself discussed the possibility of holding a similar event at Nottingham in 2010, to continue the momentum until the next one in Chicago in 2012. To run such a conference a proper committee would have to be formed, obviously from members (all individual subscribers) resident in Britain. In any case I do not want to have to do almost everything any longer. We need immediately a Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Conference Organiser, plus anyone else willing to help, especially with the proposed conference in 2010. Sooner rather than later, I would like to give up at least one of the posts of Chairman and Editor. Twelve years of running *Appraisal* single-handed is already sufficient. We also at least one more Editorial Advisor who is *au fait* with contemporary Analytic Philosophy. Again, any volunteers, please?

SPCPS
AND
JOHN MACMURRAY FELLOWSHIP
JOINT CONFERENCE

‘PERSONS AND AGENCY’

SATURDAY APRIL 18th, 2009

**Friends’ Meeting House,
42 St Giles, Oxford
10.30-4.30**

Speakers and topics arranged so far:

Walter Gulick
(Montana State University;
Reviews Ed., *Tradition and Discovery*,
The Journal of the US Polanyi Society)

**‘Who are the persons of Michael Polanyi’s
Personal Knowledge and John Macmurray’s
Persons in Relation?’**

Phil Mullins
(Missouri Western University;
Editor of *Tradition and Discovery*)

**‘Polanyi on Agency and Some Links to
Macmurray’**

Further details later. Please see:
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or contact:
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**10th INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE
ON THE STUDY OF
PERSONS**

AUGUST 6th to 9th or 10th, 2009

**DERBY HALL,
UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM**

CALL FOR PAPERS

Papers, max. of 40 mins, are invited upon the study of any aspect of persons and from any perspective.

They should be sent to Prof. R. Auxier, Philosophy Dept, Southern Illinois University, Faner Hall, MC-4505, Carbondale, IL 62901, USA, (drauxier@yahoo.com) and must arrive by March 31st 2009.

Conference fees:

Accommodation at Derby Hall:

Full board, £237, for 3 nights, Mon. Aug. 6th to Thurs. Aug. 9th, or £310 for 4 nights to Fri. Aug. 10th if the conference is extended (*pro rata available terms for fewer days and non-residents*).

Registration: approx. £34

For updates and further details about the Conference, means of payment, travel to Nottingham, places to visit, etc., go to:

www.spcps.org.uk/intlconf.html

WITTGENSTEIN AND POLANYI ON THE CONCEPT OF THE PERSON

Philip A. Rolnick

Abstract

Neither Wittgenstein nor Polanyi offers a systematic concept of the person, but each one offers important insights. After a brief biographical comparison that shows their similar origins and background, their thoughts on the person are compared. Both men are concerned with transcendence, but Wittgenstein counsels silence where Polanyi ventures discourse. Both see the importance of language but differ greatly on its use and limits. Wittgenstein sees his work as a kind of therapy for philosophy. Polanyi attempts a kind of epistemological encouragement. Both see a crucial role for community—Wittgenstein's 'form(s) of life' and Polanyi's 'dwelling in and breaking out.'

Key words

Person, Wittgenstein, Polanyi, language, transcendence, tacit integration, mind, consciousness, objectivity, community, givenness, discovery, trust.

INTRODUCTION

Neither Ludwig Wittgenstein nor Michael Polanyi articulates a systematic concept of the person. Beginning with the crucial role of the person in the solutions to the Trinitarian and Christological controversies of the 4th and 5th centuries, the development of the concept is housed within theological discourse, and neither Wittgenstein nor Polanyi ventures very far into the theological arena.¹ However, notwithstanding Wittgenstein's reticence and Polanyi's indirectness on the issue, each author has things to say that do bear on our understanding of the person.²

I. A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL COMPARISON³

Wittgenstein (1889-1951) and Polanyi (1891-1976) were contemporaries whose lives and careers bear some striking resemblances. Both were born and raised in the years just before WWI, in the last years of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Both were of Jewish origin, Wittgenstein 75%, Polanyi 100%, and both were from very accomplished families and had very accomplished siblings. Karl Wittgenstein, Ludwig's father, was the major force in Austria's pre-war iron and steel industry. He had something of the same status and wealth as Carnegie in America or Krupp in Germany. To give some idea of his upbringing, the Wittgenstein home was host to such musical visitors as Gustav Mahler, Bruno Walter, Johannes Brahms, and Clara Schumann. Ludwig's brother Paul Wittgenstein was a renowned concert pianist. When Paul lost his right arm in WWI,

Maurice Ravel wrote the famous *Concerto for the Left Hand* expressly for him.

While the Wittgenstein home was in Vienna, Polanyi grew up in Budapest, at that time a vibrant centre of the Empire (Polanyi's parents had met in Vienna). Although it would be hard to match the Wittgenstein's wealth and fame, Polanyi's father, Mihaly Pollacsek (he changed the family name to the more Hungarian 'Polanyi' in 1904) was a well known engineer, and with his mother Cecile, their home was a centre of cultural gatherings. The Polanyi family wealth was lost when his father was building a railroad from the Danube Valley into Slovakia and Poland. Three months of steady rain washed out the rails, and the government, perhaps because Pollacsek was a Jew, refused to honour the 'Act of God' clause in the contract. Nonetheless, Pollacsek did the honourable thing by selling off his belongings in order to pay off 2000 workers.

Interestingly enough, where the Polanyi family lost its wealth during Michael's early childhood, Wittgenstein formally ceded all rights to the great inheritance to his brother and sisters. He apparently did so because he feared that he would commit suicide, as two of his brothers certainly did, and as a third probably did. After giving up the family fortune, Wittgenstein lived in modest circumstances for the remainder of his life, sometimes having to depend upon grants from Cambridge University to support himself.

Following his family's attempt to assimilate into Austrian society, Wittgenstein was baptised a Catholic. Likewise, when Polanyi married, he too accepted baptism as a Catholic. In a sense, both men were religious, but neither was a practising Christian. Wittgenstein's private writings especially show his profound concern with God, while Polanyi more overtly refers to Christian thought and worship in his publications. Both Wittgenstein and Polanyi served in the army of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in WWI, and Wittgenstein was actually rewarded for heroism in combat. After WWI, both men migrated to England, Wittgenstein to Cambridge and Polanyi to Oxford by way of Manchester.

These similarities notwithstanding, the two had real differences in temperament and tendency. Wittgenstein was a top logician who was personally trained by no less a figure than Bertrand Russell. Polanyi was a renowned physical chemist who was almost entirely self-taught in philosophy. Wittgenstein, who feared the encroaching hegemony of science and technology, tried to separate science and technology from his philosophical work.⁴

Polanyi, by contrast, explicitly tried to integrate science into his philosophy.

By all accounts Wittgenstein was dominating, reclusive, and difficult in many of his personal relations. His biographer Ray Monk portrays several of Wittgenstein's friends and colleagues complaining about how spending time with him exhausted them. Some of his closest associates, e.g., G.E. Moore and Bertrand Russell, at one time or another preferred to have no further contact with him. Wittgenstein on numerous occasions wrote, either in his diary or to close friends, that he was nearing suicide. As Wittgenstein wrote about himself, 'I sit astride life like a bad rider on a horse.'⁵ He was often in a miserable state of self-destruction. To his credit, he successfully resisted this tendency, undertook his work to the best of his ability, wrote works that have become classics of our time, and died of natural causes. Further to his credit, he had extremely talented friends and associates, who, whatever the personal difficulties involved, remained devoted to him and to his work. Three of these, Georg Henrik von Wright, G.E.M. Anscombe, and Rush Rhees, took on the considerably difficult task of being his literary heirs. Taking works to press that Wittgenstein himself never could quite complete is no small service. Wittgenstein was a complex man who cannot be easily summarised or described.

In fairly strong contrast to Wittgenstein's austere, reclusive tendencies (especially when trying to write), Polanyi celebrated and practised what he called 'conviviality.' He saw that the search for truth needed the coefficient 'of a cultural life shared by a community.'⁶ Polanyi's numerous friends and colleagues from all over Europe and America shared a similar devotion (and talent) to that held by many of Wittgenstein's associates, but there was little or none of the exasperation found among Wittgenstein's friends and colleagues.⁷ Polanyi's long obituary in the London *Times*, besides saluting his many accomplishments, noted that his friends attested 'to his sweetness of character, to a pervading sadness which was none the less at every other moment illuminated by sparkling humour, gentleness tempered by a strong and courageous spirit, patent honesty and the humility which is invariably the property of the wise'.⁸

Wittgenstein and Polanyi were men of similar origin who rose to the top of their respective fields. Since their deaths, each has become the focus of numerous articles, dissertations, and books as well as a guide for further investigation. Having briefly looked at each of these persons, let us now glean what we can from their thoughts on the concept of the person.

II. WITTGENSTEIN ON THE PERSON

II.1. Discourse and the unutterable

Most interpreters of Wittgenstein see an important shift in his view of the nature of language from the early work of the *Tractatus*, where Wittgenstein treats language as a cognitive, fact-stating device, to the later work of the *Investigations*, where he focuses on how words are used within a 'form of life' (PI, I, 19, 23, 241, pp. 174, 226).⁹ The early Wittgenstein believes that many things, including the most important things, cannot and should not be said. His concern is that saying things that are beyond us launches elaborations of nonsense. Later, his aim is to focus upon how words are actually used in communal life in order to offer a corrective to philosophy (and *a fortiori* to theology and its accompanying metaphysics). Throughout his limited writings, he does not indulge in metaphysics. Understanding this aspect of his work will shed light on what he says and what he refuses to say about the person.

In a letter to a friend, Wittgenstein displays his basic concern and his strategy for dealing with it: 'And this is how it is: if only you do not try to utter what is unutterable then *nothing* gets lost. But the unutterable will be—unutterably—*contained* in what has been uttered!'¹⁰ Because he is a highly reticent, even austere, minimalist, much of Wittgenstein's writing falls under this proscription, but he is hardly a sceptic or scoffer. As we shall see below, in some cases Wittgenstein believes more than he says, and in other cases he wants to believe more. However, as one trained and skilled in the logical work of Bertrand Russell and Gottlob Frege, the early Wittgenstein wants to proscribe utterances that go beyond verifiable propositions and the later Wittgenstein wants to proscribe language that goes 'on holiday' (PI, I, §38) from its grounding in the flow of our lives: 'It is a great temptation to try and make the spirit explicit' (CV 8). In the Preface to the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein's proscription and minimalism is starkly laid out: 'What can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence' (p. 3). Wittgenstein's proscription is controversial, and, eventually, we must decide whether it should in fact be followed, especially as it would apply to our understanding of the person.

II.1.1 Therapies for nonsense

The later Wittgenstein understands his own efforts as a kind of therapy for philosophy because philosophy, seduced by the mirage of its own language, attempts to utter the unutterable, especially in its metaphysical forays: 'A *picture* held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably' (PI, I, §115). Wittgenstein, who

uses a variety of metaphors to liberate us from such 'captivity,' thinks that language predisposes philosophers to let words get unmoored from their use in the flow of life. Once unmoored, he believes that such words as 'being' or 'I' lure us into essentialising them.¹¹ But Wittgenstein proposes a simple yet radical solution: 'What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use' (PI, I, §116). Apophatic and minimalist throughout his career, the more mature Wittgenstein continues to propose that we refrain from uttering the unutterable metaphysical, but now focuses on a word's use in the 'form of life,'¹² i.e., how words are actually used in the interactive nexus of community life.

Overcoming a bad habit is no small feat, and Wittgenstein would have us overcome some rather deep-seated habits of thinking and speaking: 'The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to.... There is not a philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies' (PI, I, §133). Even more directly, Wittgenstein asserts: 'The philosopher's treatment of a question is like the treatment of an illness' (PI, I, §255). Wittgenstein would treat the patient by focusing upon language: 'Our investigation is therefore a grammatical one. Such an investigation sheds light on our problem by clearing misunderstandings away' (PI, I, §90). Wittgenstein's various metaphors indicate that the treatment is more like weeding than like planting something new.

Wittgenstein is well aware that his investigation can be charged with merely being destructive and lacking any real importance:

Where does our investigation get its importance from, since it seems only to destroy everything interesting, that is, all that is great and important? (As it were all the buildings, leaving behind only bits of stone and rubble.) What we are destroying is nothing but houses of cards and we are clearing up the ground of language on which they stand. (PI, I, §118)

Wittgenstein, as is his wont, does not provide argument, only additional metaphors (e.g., clearing, house of cards) which serve to reassert his theme of revealing nonsense and returning to everyday use. Monk nicely summarises what Wittgenstein is attempting and why: 'The nonsense that results from trying to say what can only be shown is not only logically untenable, but ethically undesirable.'¹³

Is Wittgenstein's proscription helpful? Who gets to say when we should stop doing philosophy? Whatever our final judgment about Wittgenstein's apophaticism, in perhaps something like his own tendency, most of the Ten Commandments have for centuries been useful for knowing what not to do without instructing us in what we *ought* to do. *If* all

metaphysics is nonsense, as Wittgenstein asserts, then of course none of us should write or speak metaphysical discourse. But this rather huge question cannot really be settled by assertion.

II.1.2 Struggle against Language

Wittgenstein sees himself in a struggle with language and calls others to join him therein: 'We are struggling with language' (CV, 11), and 'Language sets everyone the same traps' (CV, 18). Influenced by Kant's attempt to critique the limits of knowledge, Wittgenstein attempts a similar critique of the limits of language: 'The limit of language is shown by its being impossible to describe the fact which corresponds to (is the translation of) a sentence, without simply repeating the sentence' (CV, 10). Here Wittgenstein claims that there is an inescapable abyss between language and its would-be referent outside of language, and his claim bears some analogy to Kant's distance between our structured knowledge of a phenomenon and the thing in itself (*Ding-an-sich*). But a key difference is that, for Wittgenstein, language, at least when being used correctly, is not abstracted from its everyday use in the flow of life. If we accept Wittgenstein's presupposition about metaphysics, then we too should join his struggle to police our language (the metaphor is mine). However, for those of us who do not accept his presupposition, he appears to struggle against a very helpful and quite often beautiful tool.

II.1.3 Recognising the Tacit in Language

Much like Polanyi, Wittgenstein also recognises that much that is expressed *in* language is tacit: 'There really are cases when someone has the sense of what he wants to say much more clearly in his mind than he can express in words. (This happens to me very often)' (CV, 79). We might add that there is often more expressed in words than the speaker or writer strictly said or wrote. Wittgenstein contends that even the very basic language-games rest on tacit assumptions. Discussing how a doctor and nurse understand indications of a patient's pain, he notes the objection: "'But then they make a tacit presupposition.'" Then what we do in our language-game always rests on a tacit presupposition' (PI, II, v). Even in the *Tractatus* he declares: 'The tacit conventions on which the understanding of everyday language depends are enormously complicated' (TLP, 4.002). Wittgenstein's early recognition of a crucial tacit component in all communication is a mark of his genius. The man whom Russell had anointed to complete his own work in logic breaks loose of that discourse and in so doing charts a new direction for many who follow.¹⁴

In a fascinating scenario he imaginatively depicts something about the open-endedness of language:

An indefinite sense—that would really not be a sense *at all*.—This is like: An indefinite boundary is not really a boundary at all. Here one thinks perhaps: if I say ‘I have locked the man up fast in the room—there is only one door left open’—then I simply haven’t locked him in at all; his being locked in is a sham. One would be inclined to say here: ‘You haven’t done anything at all’. An enclosure with a hole in it is as good as *none*.—But is that true? (PI, 99)

As one ponders the question with which Wittgenstein leaves the narrative—one could almost say, parable—we are left with a charming vision of interpretative possibilities arising out of something that had seemed to be settled. Can we live with Wittgenstein’s open door? Indeed, could we really live without one? In regard to our own focus on the person, whatever we manage to say successfully will no more lock up the subject than Wittgenstein’s locked room with one door open. Without addressing such lofty subjects as the person or the good directly, Wittgenstein focuses directly on language in its lived setting and then leaves the door open that such higher things will become manifest within the form of life.

II.2. Ethics and transcendence are the same

In his private life, Wittgenstein thought, said, and wrote much about ethics. His diary and notebooks contain numerous entries about ethics. In his own life, despite some pronounced character flaws (some of which are alluded to below), he often takes the initiative in attempting to do the right thing. On the weekend before WWI began, he was engaged with an agent who arranged sizeable donations to various Austrian artists and writers without means from Wittgenstein’s wealth. (As noted above, Wittgenstein later completely divested himself of the family fortune, signing it all over to his siblings and living quite frugally thereafter.) After his military service for the Austro-Hungarian Empire in WWI, and having already written the *Tractatus*, he enrolled in a teacher-training course and then sought an assignment in one of the poorer villages of Austria. During WWII Wittgenstein served with some distinction as a medical assistant in an English hospital. My point here is not to claim Wittgenstein as an ethical paragon. Much more minimally, I only wish to say that ethics, whatever his own moral status, was important to him.

In his published writing, however, Wittgenstein continued his apophatic, minimalist trajectory. Under the influence of Nietzsche and Kant, but also differentiating himself from them, he asserts: ‘It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words. Ethics is transcendental. (Ethics and aesthetics are one and the same.)’ (TLP, 6.421). Here he has placed ethics, transcendence, and aesthetics under his proscription of silence (discourse about the person would

likewise follow). He has not denied any of these; he just believes that they ‘cannot be put into words.’ Once again, he thinks the problem arises because our language is given to a kind of mirage which draws us into such discourse: ‘in so far as people think they can see the ‘limits of human understanding,’ they believe of course that they can see beyond these’ (CV, 15). Like Nietzsche, however, Wittgenstein reasons that if something is really transcendent, i.e. ‘beyond,’ then it must actually be beyond us. From this point of view, if we call something transcendent and then venture to discourse about it, what have we done except talk about something that is beyond us—something that we do not and cannot know?

Once again, Wittgenstein’s purpose is not to deny transcendence but by focusing on life as we actually live it, to let what is transcendent, ethical, or aesthetic appear where they may arise: ‘There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest*. They are what is mystical’ (TLP, 6.522). This remarkable statement continues the proscription, but it also includes an unmistakable affirmation.

Wittgenstein’s own life was characterised by a self-imposed sparseness, even austerity, one that matches his discourse proscription. In his view we cannot escape the language limits of our form of life:

My whole tendency and I believe the tendency of all men who ever tried to talk or write on Ethics and religion was to run against the boundaries of language. This running against the walls of our cage is perfectly, absolutely hopeless. Ethics so far as it springs from the desire to say something about the meaning of life, the absolute good, the absolute valuable, can be no science. What it says does not add to our knowledge in any sense. But it is a document of a tendency in the human mind which I personally cannot help respecting deeply and I would not for my life ridicule.¹⁵

Rather than attempting the hopeless task of ‘running against the walls of our cage,’ we might say that Wittgenstein attempts to construct an ethics from within the cage of language. In a letter to a potential publisher, he characterises the *Tractatus* as an ethical work:

The book’s point is an ethical one. I once meant to include in the preface a sentence which is not in fact there now but which I will write out for you here, because it will perhaps be a key to the work for you. . . . My work consists of two parts: the one presented here plus all that I have *not* written. And it is precisely this second part that is the important one. My book draws limits to the sphere of the ethical from the inside as it were, and I am convinced that this is the *ONLY rigorous* way of drawing those limits. In short, I believe that where *many* others today are just

gassing, I have managed in my book to put everything firmly into place by being silent about it.¹⁶

Here again is a clear affirmation of ethics and transcendence and the esteem in which Wittgenstein holds them. But is maintaining strict silence the best way, indeed the only way, to demarcate ethics? If we say anything about anthropology, are we guilty of ‘gassing’? While the *Tractatus* was destined to become a classic of philosophical literature, it is noteworthy that at least four publishers rejected the work. Neither Russell nor Frege, two of the greatest minds in philosophy, understood the work, at least according to Wittgenstein. The logical positivists of the Vienna Circle, Schlick, Carnap, Feigl, and Waismann, also at first misunderstood Wittgenstein’s ethical, even mystical direction in the *Tractatus*. Only after meeting with Wittgenstein did they come to realise that he was entirely serious about ethics and the mystical, and that he was not a fellow logical positivist.¹⁷ While most large musical pieces have silence (so-called ‘rests’) fitted into the whole, the silence is never the primary communicator. It has a role to play, but it is never the leading role.¹⁸ One could be forgiven for reading the *Tractatus* without having a clue that the work was intended to be ethical.

I certainly concur that a great deal written and said about ethics is *gassing* (or worse). From Charles Dickens’ villain, Uriah Heep, who tells us again and again that he is a ‘humble man,’ to contemporaries who tell us that they are ‘ethical’ or ‘spiritual,’ Wittgenstein’s silence is surely preferable. Nonetheless, not everything written and expressed about ethics is ‘gassing.’ Is Plato’s *Republic* gassing? Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*? One can additionally think of movies, musicals, works of fiction. So while I think it good to take Wittgenstein’s warning, it is not good if it cripples our efforts to express what is so often hard to express. The fact that many efforts merely rise to the level of mediocrity should not deter the effort. Those creations that actually do say something ethically helpful for us are worth all the other failed efforts, even the gaseous ones. And Wittgenstein, given his own ‘form of life,’ should have recognised that civilisation has means of sifting and sorting the efforts of individuals. But the sifting and sorting can only be done if works communicate something and then are submitted for public scrutiny. A great work does not terminate conversation; rather, it becomes a benchmark in ongoing conversation.

I think that the middle-range status of humanity may have escaped Wittgenstein, who asserts: ‘What is good is also divine. Queer as it sounds, that sums up my ethics. Only something supernatural can express the Supernatural’ (CV, 3). If Wittgenstein means, as he does elsewhere, that we should retain

silence, then his claim must be disputed, especially from a faith point of view. Human beings can participate in the good without being the good itself and certainly without being divine. And Jesus expects great things even from the least of his followers. Declaring that John the Baptist was the greatest of those ‘born of women,’ Jesus pointedly adds: ‘yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he’ (Luke 7:28). Unlike Wittgenstein’s statement above, I believe that humans can express the supernatural without being supernatural. It is a question of listening (receiving) before speaking.¹⁹ Of course we are also capable of grotesque baseness, but this broad range of human potential only testifies to our middle-range status. Wittgenstein, as was his tendency, sees a rather harsh picture: ‘Any man who is halfway decent will think himself extremely imperfect, but a religious man thinks himself *wretched*’ (CV, 45). In contrast to Wittgenstein, I think we do better when we neither too greatly exalt nor too greatly debase ourselves. The two extremes of self-appraisal have in common a problematic attentiveness toward the self.

II.3. Anthropological peek-a-boo

Like the game that adults sometimes play with very young children, and that children then often imitate in their own right, Wittgenstein would have us take self-imposed blinders off our eyes and just look at what is before us. ‘The face is the soul of the body’ (CV, 23); ‘The human body is the best picture of the human soul’ (PI II, iv); ‘My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul. I am not of the *opinion* that he has a soul’ (PI, II, iv). Wittgenstein’s later work takes a strongly anthropological turn to the flow of life in which ‘language games’ take place, but this turning is not one that would lay out a theory of the person. Wittgenstein came to be resolutely against a theory of mathematics, a theory of propositions, and, by extension, a theory of the person. Once again, he is not against mathematics, propositions, or persons—only constructing theories about them. All such theories, he believes, would be elaborations of ‘gassing’—i.e., ways of disguising nonsense: ‘My aim is: to teach you to pass from a piece of disguised nonsense to something that is patent nonsense’ (PI, 464). Once the nonsense is clear to us, we can let it go. About what happens beyond that Wittgenstein remains silent. He continues to see himself as a therapist, not a theorist.

II.3.1 The unobjectifiable subject

In the few direct anthropological statements that the early Wittgenstein makes, he asserts, following Otto Weininger and Arthur Schopenhauer, that the self is a microcosm: ‘I am my world. (The microcosm.)’ (TLP, 5.63). It is of interest that Wittgenstein says

nothing about the historical treatment of the human person as microcosm in the Christian tradition. Working from a strictly philosophical point of view, Wittgenstein suggests a strict separation between the subject and the world: 'The subject does not belong to the world: rather, it is a limit of the world' (TLP, 5.632). (It should be noted that Wittgenstein adopts the philosophical term 'subject' rather than the more theological term 'person' or 'personality.')

Because the subject is a limit of the world, Wittgenstein will say little to nothing about it:

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

As Wittgenstein portrays it, the world is a proper object of study, but not the *subject*. A more theological contemporary of Wittgenstein, Nikolai Berdiaev, makes a similar point: 'Personality is not part of the world, it is a correlative of the world, and a correlative of God also. Personality allows only of correlation, meeting, communion.'²⁰ The common point that the two authors make is that the personality or subject cannot be approached like an object found in the world. Perhaps Wittgenstein's writings about pain are trying to make a similar point:

But isn't it absurd to say of a *body* that it has pain?—And why does one feel an absurdity in that? In what sense is it true that my hand does not feel pain, but I in my hand? What sort of issue is: Is it the *body* that feels pain?—How is it to be decided? What makes it plausible to say that it is *not* the body?—Well, something like this: if someone has a pain in his hand, then the hand does not say so (unless it writes it) and one does not comfort the hand, but the sufferer: one looks into his face. (PI, I, 286)

With his characteristic indirectness, Wittgenstein suggestively points to what it means to be a person without explicitly saying what it means. Instead, in focusing on pain in the hand, he deflects our attention from the hand to the sufferer, what the less reticent among us would call the person, and then climactically notes that we look into his face.

Even in this later writing Wittgenstein's insight is that the *subject* cannot be objectified, but he now suggests that it can be detected if we pay close attention to how we speak and behave when pain arises in our lived interactions. Similarly, as we have seen, he refuses to offer an opinion of whether someone has a soul; he just relates to that soul (PI, II, iv). If we take Wittgenstein's use of 'soul' to be roughly equivalent to our own use of 'person,' then he once again appears to be asking that we alertly

avoid objectifying the person. Coming at this non-objectification from several creative angles, Wittgenstein declares: 'If there were a verb meaning 'to believe falsely', it would not have any significant first person present indicative' (PI, II, x). The unobjectifiable subject eludes attempts to grasp hold of it: "When one means something, it is oneself meaning"; so one is oneself in motion. One is rushing ahead and so cannot also observe oneself rushing ahead. Indeed not' (PI, I, §456). We can live the experience of being 'I,' and we can directly enter into relations with one another, but apart from such lived directness, all objectifications, all attempts to capture the essence of the subject in language are doomed.

In the *Tractatus*, when Wittgenstein claims that a metaphysical subject is outside the world that can be known, he raises problems that the *Investigations* cannot be said to solve but could be said to dissolve by looking at the person only in the form of life. It is another instance of Wittgenstein's choosing to stop doing philosophy when he wants to—whether or not we might agree with his choice.

II.3.2 Mental processes

Although Wittgenstein argues against private language in the *Investigations*, he does not want to deny an inner life (PI, I, §308). His ongoing effort is to show that language is not only the limit of the world but also of our own selves: '*The limits of my language mean the limits of my world*' (TLP, 5.6). Wittgenstein thinks that any inner life that we have will also be subject to language: 'An "inner process" stands in need of outward criteria' (PI, I, §580). He is suggesting that if we did not first learn to think in the language that we are taught in our form of life, then we could hardly be privy to any sort of inner life, at least not one that could be meaningfully described.

In his notebooks and letters he repeatedly refers to an inner process:

Nearly all my writings are private conversations with myself. (CV, 77)

And faith is faith in what is needed by my *heart*, my *soul*, not by my speculative intelligence. (CV, 33)

Someone who ... penitently opens his heart to God in confession lays it open for other men too. (CV, 46)

We don't want anyone else to look inside us, since it's not a pretty sight in there. (CV, 46)

From what he himself says, albeit privately, Wittgenstein clearly engages a deeply introspective process. In fact, he can be rather elegant in pointing to the inner life: 'Virtually in the same way as there is a difference between *deep* and shallow sleep, there are thoughts which occur deep down and thoughts which bustle about on the surface' (CV,

42). And Wittgenstein advises a friend, 'You should perhaps look a little more inside you ...'²¹

However, there is a broad range of ways to interpret Wittgenstein, and his own statements can lead in different directions. "At that word we both thought of him." If God had looked into our minds he would not have been able to see there whom we were speaking of" (PI, II, xi). Here I think that a bit more confidence in the divine omniscience might be in order. If we can assume that having an inner life is part of being a person, then Wittgenstein both cautions how we think about that inner life, yet affirms that such a life is possible.

II.4. Sorting out Wittgenstein on the person

II.4.1 The difficulty of the task

Understanding Wittgenstein's view of the person (a term that he does not use) is no easy task. He does not typically give arguments to support his positions, and let us also remember that many great thinkers misunderstood him to one degree or another. While it is clear that Wittgenstein cares about what we are calling the person, it also follows from his proscriptions about what we can and cannot say that we who attempt to write papers such as this one are violating his proscriptions. In spite of Wittgenstein's aforementioned efforts to take pains to do the right thing in some well known episodes of his life, many who interacted with Wittgenstein at Cambridge saw him as domineering and argumentative to the point of 'uncivilised savagery.'²² Julian Bell, a member of the Apostles, an élite society of Cambridge intellectuals, wrote a satire accusing Wittgenstein of violating his own proscriptions:

For he talks nonsense, numerous statements makes,
Forever his own vow of silence breaks:
Ethics, aesthetics, talks of day and night,
And calls things good or bad, and wrong or right.
... who, on any issue, ever saw
Ludwig refrain from laying down the law?²³

I think that we need to talk about ethics and the transcendent and that we can profit from doing so. The requirement of silence is simply too severe, its validity not at all apparent for all cases, and one that Wittgenstein himself could not fully adhere to.

Ultimately, I think that the question of whether we should or should not retain silence about the transcendent is a question of faith. But faith, empowered by the believed-in transcendent, finds a way to express itself. In this manner all sorts of creative human enterprises arise.

Wittgenstein in fact struggled with faith throughout his life. He sees faith as a kind of passion, and although he himself probably does not possess it, he is respectful of those who do. Like many of us, he says different things at different

times. At times he writes that he cannot pray (CV, 56), and at others he prays a great deal.²⁴ At one point during WWI, he was quasi-evangelistic about Tolstoy's *Gospel in Brief*, a work that embraces the teachings of Jesus in the four gospels apart from Pauline beliefs about Jesus.²⁵ Whatever his fluctuations, he never fully embraces Christianity.

II.4.2 Separations

In spite of the *implied* unity that one might derive from Wittgenstein's focus on the form of life, there are a series of separations that appear in his thinking, and these separations suggest a compartmentalisation rather than an overall unity.²⁶ His public work displays a strict separation of philosophy from theology, even though his unpublished writing (much of which is published posthumously) indicates an abiding interest, if not belief, in God, Christ, and religion. Likewise, even though he has some technical skill as an engineer, he leaves science out of his philosophical work: 'Man has to awaken to wonder—and so perhaps do peoples. Science is a way of sending him to sleep again' (CV 5). In a related vein, he separates knowledge of the world from higher knowledge: 'How things are in the world is a matter of complete indifference for what is higher. God does not reveal himself *in the world*' (TLP 6.432). By contrast Paul declares: 'Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made' (Rom. 1:20). *Contra* Wittgenstein, and perhaps somewhat more in harmony with Paul's views, I believe that science, philosophy, and theology can shed mutual light on one another.

Wittgenstein's apparently non-incarnational view of things, 'God does not reveal himself *in the world*,' could possibly be interpreted to mean that God reveals himself only to subjects (persons), whom Wittgenstein declares do 'not belong to the world' but are rather the 'limit of the world' (TLP, 5.632). If this interpretation is correct, then we must still note that Wittgenstein, although he understands what is at stake in Christ's resurrection, never clearly embraces it:

What inclines even me to believe in Christ's resurrection? It is as though I play with the thought.—If he did not rise from the dead, then he decomposed in the grave like any other man. *He is dead and decomposed*. In that case he is a teacher like any other and can no longer *help*; and once more we are orphaned and alone. (CV, 33)

To his credit, he does not attempt to metaphorize this benchmark event of faith. Either we get the kind of help that incarnate divinity would provide or we do not.

The tendency toward separation in Wittgenstein's writing can also be found in his romantic life. He seemed to prefer a relationship that did not express its love physically, although his biographers make it clear that he did sometimes engage physically.

Consonant with his focus on the form of life, Wittgenstein admires the practice of a Christian life but eschews Christian doctrine: 'If Christianity is the truth then all the philosophy that is written about it is false' (CV, 83). But here we have the separation of living a life from the teachings (doctrine) that provide meaning and direction to such a life.

Similarly, Monk's description of Wittgenstein's philosophical method as 'ahistorical' and 'existential' lend further credence to this separation tendency in Wittgenstein.²⁷ In his later work Wittgenstein often uses examples, but these are rarely historical examples. However, if human persons are possessed of intellect and will, we display a complex, interwoven interaction of our own intellect and will not only with all other persons in our sphere of activity, but also with the world of scientific law. As we do so, human history emerges, something that is neither purely determined like laws of nature nor purely random. Like overt talk about human persons, human history is tellingly absent from Wittgenstein's published works.

Let us conclude by agreeing with Wittgenstein that, 'Sometimes an expression has to be withdrawn from language and sent for cleaning, then it can be put back into circulation' (CV, 39). But if we were to follow Wittgenstein's advice, would the concept of the person ever get back into circulation? Following his apophatic bent, Wittgenstein quite rightly knew that persons (or subjects) were not given to being captured in definition, since a definition renders a common essence, but a person is a non-transferable particularity. Of course the theological tradition from Boethius to Richard of St. Victor to Aquinas had already focused on this idea by referring to persons as *incommunicabilis*.²⁸ Wittgenstein wanted to offer his writing as a kind of therapy, but perhaps everyone does not need and will not respond to the same treatment. For a very different sort of treatment, let us now turn to Polanyi's understanding of the person.

III. POLANYI ON THE PERSON

III.1. Moving beyond pure 'objectivity'

Polanyi and Wittgenstein independently countered the regnant philosophy of their era: the quest for pure objectivity, especially as seen in logical positivism, but also as the quixotic ideal of objectivity affected all areas of human understanding.²⁹ Combating the disguised errors of allegedly total objectivity was probably the driving

force of Polanyi's philosophical career—not only in thinking about science, but in thinking about all our cultural and religious activities. Polanyi thought that the greatest error of positivism was its account of knowledge that has no role for the person who knows.

Like Wittgenstein, Polanyi wanted to free us from a picture that held us captive, but Polanyi also wanted to explore a new direction of thinking, what he called 'post-critical' philosophy. Rather than the critical thought engendered by the Enlightenment, in which a quest for knowledge begins with doubt and suspicion and would end with indubitable certainty, or pre-critical thought, in which an inherited faith remains largely unexamined and even unquestionable, Polanyi's post-critical philosophy privileges a self-correcting faith, i.e., trust, as a starting point that can foster and converse with the cumulative gains of science and the broader culture. Polanyi's main interest was epistemological, not anthropological, but personhood is centrally interwoven into his epistemology, as is evident in the title of his *magnum opus: Personal Knowledge*.³⁰

III.2. Community and the person

Wittgenstein and Polanyi also share a focus on community as necessary and irreplaceable in all human knowing and being. However, from this base of agreement, major differences emerge.³¹ For Wittgenstein, 'What has to be accepted, the given, is—so one could say—*forms of life*' (PI, II., xi, p. 226). But Wittgenstein says little or nothing about how or why we should go beyond a community's present form of life. Wittgenstein knows that communities change, but, unlike Polanyi, he offers no account of how those processes take place or why such changes might be centrally meaningful to the ongoing life of the community.

For Polanyi the community is given, but it is given only as an initial location for viewing and interpreting reality. Polanyi's metaphor, 'dwelling in and breaking out' (PK, 195-202), encapsulates a dual sense of debt to the community and an even greater debt to something that transcends it—and upon which a viable community itself is based.

What Polanyi means by 'dwelling in' can be seen when he questions the coherence of the very idea of an isolated individual apart from the initial nurture of a community: 'To ask how I would think if I were brought up outside any particular society, is as meaningless as to ask how I would think if I were born in no particular body, relying on no particular sensory and nervous organs' (PK, 323). The community into which we are born provides our initial understanding of, and orientation toward, everything that matters. Writing in a highly individualistic age, he displays a great appreciation of, love for, and responsibility toward, community:

'Every mental process by which man surpasses the animals is rooted in the early apprenticeship by which the child acquires the idiom of its native community and eventually absorbs the whole cultural heritage to which it succeeds' (PK, 322). The community provides not just a physical dwelling place, but also a dwelling place for our thinking and higher commitments: 'We owe our mental existence predominantly to works of art, morality, religious worship, scientific theory and other articulate systems which we accept as our dwelling place and as the soil of our mental development' (PK, 286). Even as adults, most of what we know and believe comes to us by way of others in the community:

The amount of knowledge which we can justify from evidence directly available to us can never be large. The overwhelming proportion of our factual beliefs continue therefore to be held at second hand through trusting others, and in the great majority of cases our trust is placed in the authority of comparatively few people of widely acknowledged standing. (PK, 208)

The community is the living repository of accomplishments, and it will be the repository of anything that we ourselves may accomplish.

Having seen what Polanyi means by 'dwelling in,' let us now consider what he means by 'breaking out.' Whether the source of our second hand knowledge is a religious leader or a Nobel scientist, the authority we grant them is at most penultimate, not ultimate. Ultimate authority can only come from 'contact with reality' itself—from the discovery of truth—whether from God in religion or from the given laws of the world in science.³² All attempts to break out of the community's present understanding are undertaken because the inquirer believes that a new and greater understanding is possible. For Polanyi, breaking out of the community's understanding is not to be understood as the rebellion of a frustrated or antisocial individual; instead, it is the competent, responsible act of a person seeking something higher than the best of the community have so far managed: 'The modification of our intellectual identity is entered upon in the hope of achieving thereby closer contact with reality. We take a plunge only to gain a firmer foothold' (PK, 106). 'Dwelling in and breaking out' suggests the inherent tension between valuing the known and the desire to know yet more.

III.3. Language and reality

Unlike Wittgenstein, Polanyi does not think that we are inherently limited by language. He thinks that new discoveries arise from an increased 'contact with reality' which then generates new language. Polanyi is a realist, a critical realist. He sees our grasp of the way things are, i.e., of truth, as situated, open to correction, and cumulative. Wittgenstein, if

he is not actually an anti-realist, stays clear of realist discourse and focuses instead on language.³³

Perhaps because of his own scientific accomplishments and his broad knowledge of scientific development, Polanyi approaches the question of how language and reality are related quite differently from Wittgenstein. Commenting critically on Wittgenstein's use of the term 'language game,' Polanyi counters from his realist perspective: 'Disagreements on the nature of things cannot be expressed as disagreements about the existing use of words. . . . controversial questions can be attended to only if we use language as it exists to direct our attention to its subject matter and not the other way around . . .' (PK, 114). Polanyi considers Wittgenstein's focus on grammar as a pretence that lets Wittgenstein 'contemplate and analyse reality, while denying the act of doing so' (PK, 114). For our purposes, what is most important is that Polanyi makes a different decision than Wittgenstein about when 'stopping doing philosophy' is best (PI, I, §133). Polanyi unhesitatingly enters (and encourages us to do likewise) into the realms about which Wittgenstein enjoins silence.

III.4. Distinguishing the personal

Polanyi's anthropological account helpfully distinguishes the personal from the subjective:

I think we may distinguish between the personal in us, which actively enters into our commitments, and our subjective states, in which we merely endure our feelings. This distinction establishes the conception of the *personal*, which is neither subjective nor objective. In so far as the personal submits to requirements acknowledged by itself as independent of itself, it is not subjective; but in so far as it is an action guided by individual passions, it is not objective either. It transcends the disjunction between subjective and objective. (PK, 300)

The subjective is private and idiosyncratic, restricted to the individual. By contrast, when the 'personal submits to requirements . . . independent of itself,' it is seeking to know some aspect of the true, the good, or the beautiful (traditionally known as the 'transcendentals'). Polanyi rightly sees that this personal act is more than either subjectivity or objectivity. Subjectivity and objectivity may be included, but something qualitatively different transpires when a person seeks and finds truth, goodness, or beauty. Here Polanyi is on a track that resembles the claim of Karol Wojtyla (John Paul II): 'Transcendence . . . is to a certain extent another name for the person.'³⁴ The insight that Polanyi and Wojtyla share is that a distinguishing mark of persons is this capacity of transcendence, or, even more strongly, the proclivity towards it. Seeking the true, good, and beautiful is not merely another

activity which persons undertake. Rather, it is central to the realisation of the person's purpose.

Polanyi's epistemological anthropology is rooted in commitment to a reality that is transcendent, universal, and teleological in relation to the person and community that nurtures and trains persons. For Polanyi, commitment is another distinguishing mark of the person (See, 'Commitment,' PK, 299-324). Indeed, his position implies that the purely passive, subjective, uncommitted self is not fully personal.

III.5. Givenness and discovery

As a scientist, Polanyi early learned to appreciate truth claims that were universal, i.e., that would also be found true by others who attempted to repeat the procedure. While recognising that important differences will obtain between a scientific procedure and other kinds of inquiry (PK, 202), he extends his appreciation of universal principles to all realms of personal knowledge. As the self comes to desire and to understand a universal principle beyond its own subjective needs and wants, it actualises personal potentials:

We have seen that the thought of truth implies a desire for it, and is to that extent personal. But since such a desire is for something impersonal, this personal motive has an impersonal intention. We avoid these seeming contradictions by accepting the framework of commitment, in which the personal and the universal mutually require each other. Here *the personal comes into existence* by asserting universal intent, and the universal is constituted by being accepted as the impersonal term of this personal commitment. (PK, 308, my emphasis)

Strangely, Polanyi holds that the individual's desire for and achievement of an impersonal principle draws the personal into existence. The epistemological seriousness involved in discovering a universal principle and then upholding it to one's community leads the mere subjective self to the greater qualitative and ontological status of the person. By seeking and interacting with what is believed to be universally real, persons and communities of persons become more realistic and powerful. For example, the Copernican theory is more powerful than the Ptolemaic one that it replaced because it tells us more about the way things are, and by doing so, engenders further discovery. Contact with reality often leads to new and unanticipated benefits, even unimagined benefits. Following Copernicus, others could see beyond his understanding, eventually leading to the development of space travel. Following upon such medical advances as surgery and antibiotics, we now live longer.

Only by submitting to the independent status of the reality can we achieve a greater understanding and personal development. Every such act makes the

person and community that receives such advances more realistic. In a basic sense, societies that have learned to think scientifically have learned to listen to reality. They have discontinued puerile attempts to coerce reality (or the gods) through magical incantation.

In the givenness of the material world, we find a strict equality that rewards realistic efforts and punishes or ignores all others. Because of the givenness of the material world in science, and, I would say, of God in the religious quest, learning has the quality of discovery rather than of invention *ex nihilo*: 'The effort of knowing is thus guided by a sense of obligation towards the truth: by an effort to submit to reality' (PK, 63). So while human beings could fantasize about flying for millennia, actual air travel began once the principles of aerodynamics were sufficiently well understood. Strict equality is a concomitant of the givenness of the material world. Anyone who builds a flying device that successfully submits to the aerodynamic principles can achieve flight. Hence, because the principles are universally accessible, peoples of many nations have discovered many different kinds of flying apparatus that far surpass the original achievement of the Wright brothers. Learning to be realistic in our understanding of the world, of others, and of God is more than an epistemological technique—it is a moral calling to which persons may respond.

We can live in the ease of subjective drift, or we can respond realistically and responsibly to the possibilities that the world, community, and God present. For Polanyi, responsibility is a further distinguishing mark of the person:

While compulsion by force or by neurotic obsession excludes responsibility, compulsion by universal intent establishes responsibility. ... While the choices in question are open to arbitrary egocentric decisions, a craving for the universal sustains a constructive effort and narrows down this discretion to the point where the agent making the decision finds that he cannot do otherwise. *The freedom of the subjective person to do as he pleases is overruled by the freedom of the responsible person to act as he must.* (PK, 309)

Our relation to the reality that we seek to know, i.e., our desire for truth, compels us to think and act responsibly, to dispose our individuality in realistic ways, even to dedicate ourselves to the service of something that transcends our own being. In the moment of realising any great (or small) discovery, we are hardly present to the discovery like passionless automatons. Joy and fulfillment attend discovery, a shout of 'Eureka!' is typical; and frustration attends failures and delay. This particular kind of passion does not nullify our knowledge; it rather points to its personal nature. As Polanyi puts it: 'the discoverer seeks a solution to a problem that

is satisfying and compelling both for himself and everybody else. Discovery is an act in which satisfaction, submission, and universal legislation are indissolubly combined' (PK, 301).

Every act of true discovery makes a contact with reality that reveals something to the one who discovers, but most importantly, contains something still hidden and unanticipated which will be more fully revealed to later discoverers working forward from what has become known. Thus personal knowledge

claims to establish contact with reality beyond the clues on which it relies. It commits us, passionately and far beyond our comprehension, to a vision of reality (PK, 64).

Polanyi actually holds a rather humble 'vision of reality.' He knows that whatever we accomplish, our efforts will be deepened, expanded, and corrected by others who follow. In fact, he defines the true and the real in terms of unanticipated future discoveries:

To hold a natural law to be true is to believe that its presence will manifest itself in an indeterminate range of yet unknown and perhaps unthinkable consequences. It is to regard the law as a real feature of nature which, as such, exists beyond our control.

We meet here with a new definition of reality. Real is that which is expected to reveal itself indeterminately in the future.³⁵

One of Polanyi's notable examples is Columbus' sailing west in order to reach the Indies. After three costly failures to prove that he had reached the Indies, he died in shame, not realizing that his 'move in the right direction' would lead to something far greater than he had hoped for (PK, 310).³⁶

For Polanyi, inquiries normally display an unflinching belief in the reality of the referent. So Polanyi defines his own position over against the merely subjective on the one hand and against the constricted objectivity of logical positivism on the other. The passions that accompany and energize inquiry are never given arbitrary reign among those who succeed. The mistake of subjectivism is to emotionalize, privatize, and trivialize knowledge. The mistake of objectivism is, impossibly, to attempt to remove the person from knowledge. Polanyi attempts to hold together the person, passion for discovery, the impersonal reality known, and a universal legislation that attests to the community the truth of what has been discovered.

Polanyi proposes a double sense of trust, what he calls the 'fiduciary' element in our knowing: a trust in the given community that gets us started in the quest for truth and to which our own discoveries must be reported; and trust in the nature of the reality given to us, trust that it is knowable, that our

correct efforts will be rewarded with discovery and that no other kind could be.

Polanyi points out that no child could acquire language without trusting that those who teach the child are trustworthy. Most of us cannot prove that the earth revolves around the sun. We simply trust what our teachers have taught us. All human knowledge begins with persons who trust themselves to the community of their birth and then trust the dependability of the reality they seek: 'Any effort to understand must be sustained by the belief that there is something there that can be understood' (SFS, 44). Polanyi's epistemology consistently evinces what can be called a sense of grace, a sense of the goodness of the given.

Drawing upon Augustine, Polanyi believes that our post-Enlightenment cognitive powers can only be restored by recognizing the gifted nature of the given that we come to know:

We must now recognise belief once more as the source of all knowledge. Tacit assent and intellectual passions, the sharing of an idiom and of a cultural heritage, affiliation to a like-minded community: such are the impulses which shape our vision of the nature of things on which we rely for our mastery of things. No intelligence, however critical or original, can operate outside such a fiduciary framework. (PK, 266)

The grasp of truth is not attained through strictly cognitive procedures. Critical thought is possible and helpful, but we must begin in trust or else we cannot begin at all.

A dialectic arises among truth, community, and individual. A typical community comes into existence because its members have discovered something true, something worth transmitting to others, even others not yet born. Like a person, a tradition is a community that retains its identity as it traverses time. In order to conserve the truth of the past, all communities must have a conservative element, without which community accomplishments and the historical, communal identity would be lost. However, the tradition will become an ossified, depersonalized relic unless it continues to submit itself to the truth upon which and for which it was founded. Polanyi centrally places the devotion to truth in his account of community and person: 'A man who has learned to respect the truth will feel entitled to uphold the truth against the very society which has taught him to respect it' (SM, 61). The greater the departure from the community norm, the more dangerous to both individual and community is the presentation of new claims, but the tension and occasional acrimony brought by new truth claims is also the spur by which communities continue their movement through time.

III.6. Unifying levels: purposeful hierarchy

In his portrayal of personal knowledge, Polanyi uses the example of machines to clarify how different levels of reality may be non-reductively combined. His argument is that any given machine can be analyzed on a chemical and physical level without ever arriving at the purpose of the machine itself (SM, 52). Any attempt to understand the purpose of the machine by an analysis of the lower level alone is absurd. Its unnecessarily restrictive focus is doomed to failure.

Against the reductionist view, Polanyi contends that many things evince a 'stratified structure' with 'dual control.' For example, machines, people's purposive actions, grammatical sentences, and chess games all exhibit dual control and possess a stratified structure. If we were to smash the machine, utter words in no particular order, and make random moves in the chess game, the higher level meaning would be destroyed. However, in each case a lower level is left operative.

Hence no description of a comprehensive entity in the light of its lower principles can ever reveal the operation of its higher principles. *The higher principles which characterize a comprehensive entity cannot be defined in terms of the laws that apply to its parts in themselves.*

On the other hand, a machine does rely for its working on the laws of mechanics; a purposive motoric action, like going for a walk, relies on the operations of the muscular system which it directs, and so on. The operations of higher principles rely quite generally on the action of the laws governing lower levels. (KB, 217)

Analogously, Polanyi sees human knowledge as the active integration of different levels of reality, and, by implication, he sees the human person itself as an integration of different levels.³⁷ Higher level meanings depend on lower level clues but transcend the clues by merging them in a focal integration. We attend from subsidiary particulars to their integrated, focused, joint meaning. Body and mind are similarly related. When a person searches for truth, 'his body ceases to be merely an instrument of self-indulgence and becomes a condition of his calling' (PK, 389). Higher level integrations of dual levels go beyond the lower level but are never accomplished apart from the lower level.

Focusing exclusively on the subsidiary level tends to disrupt immediately the higher level focal meaning. Thus pianists often report that if they should shift their attention from the music to an awareness of themselves playing the music, they inevitably stumble in their performance.

All our conscious transactions with the world involve our subsidiary use of our body. . . . I am speaking here of *active* consciousness, which excludes incoherent dreams or pathological bursts of temper. Active

consciousness achieves coherence by integrating clues to the things on which they bear or integrating parts to the wholes they form. This brings forth *the two levels of awareness*: the lower one for the clues, the parts or other subsidiary elements and the higher one for the focally apprehended comprehensive entity to which these elements point. (KB, 214)

Knowing another person, including knowing his mind, requires attending from the subsidiary clues, including his body, to the higher level integration. As we have seen, Polanyi's anthropology considers lower level clues, but looks from the clues to the higher level, to 'an appreciation of man in the act of making responsible decisions' (SM, 71).

Much of Polanyi's epistemology and his overlapping anthropology rests on tacit integration:

. . . nothing that is said, written, or printed, can ever mean anything in itself: for it is only a *person* who utters something—or who listens to it or reads it—who can mean something *by* it. All these semantic functions are the tacit operations of a person. (SM, 22)

Tacit integration is centrally operative in Polanyi's understanding of machines, universals, and persons. Quite often the tacit simply cannot be made explicit. Both Wittgenstein and Polanyi agree that we know some things that we cannot say. The ability to merge, fuse, or integrate particulars into meaningful wholes fascinated Polanyi, and it should fascinate us; for our own understanding of the meaning of the person ultimately must rest on our ability to see the Gestalt.

Personhood for Polanyi is an epistemological calling that is morally charged. Polanyi sees personhood as a sort of achievement. In spite of the drives and fears that we share with other animals, we are capable of moving 'from the self-centered individuality of the animal to the responsible personhood of thoughtful man' (PK, 395). Through seeking to know a reality that is independent of ourselves, we transcend the natural impulse to egocentricity. A similar movement of thought is captured in Jesus' paradox: 'For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it' (Mark 8:35). In each case, the movement is away from the self toward something and someone independent of the self. The self totally focused on its own drives and needs is just not very interesting. It does not immediately lose its personhood, but buries it in neglect. Accomplishment of insight or encountering another person in love requires movement from the self toward the other. The self that does so, and only the self that does so, finds itself. Something better happens when the self purposely focuses on something other than the self.

Polanyi's concept of the person, like that of Teilhard de Chardin whom he cites with favor, is

expressly evolutionary. He sees a transition from the primitive individual-formation of the most basic bacillus to the full development of interpersonal relations:

A measure of companionship prevails even between the animal psychologist and a rat on which he is experimenting, but interpersonal relations become ampler as we deal with higher animals, and even more as we reach the inter-human level. Mutuality prevails to such an extent here that the logical category of an observer facing an object on a lower logical level becomes altogether inapplicable. The I-It situation has been gradually transformed into an I-Thou relation. This suggests the possibility of a continuous transition from statements of fact to affirmations of moral and civic commands. (PK, 346)

Polanyi has a holistic vision in which there is a 'continuous transition' from science to sociology, economics, politics, and theology. His development of personal knowledge is directed toward the broad swath of human endeavour.

Polanyi's language is not always clear or helpful, as when he refers to levels within the person as different persons:

Though appetites and sensory impressions are clearly personal actions, they are those of a person within ourselves with which we may not always identify ourselves. We have often to restrain our primary desires and correct the judgment of our senses, which shows that such sub-intellectual performances do not wholly commit ourselves. (PK, 301)

Here Polanyi's multiplication of persons within persons becomes a conceptual muddle. For Polanyi's project, the person needs to retain a unifying quality, as in tacit integration, and it can hardly do so when there are two or more competitors within the same being. The problem is not intractable, for if we were to take Plato's language of the appetitive, thymotic, and rational parts of the soul, we could then see how they might undergo Polanyi's tacit integration in the whole—in the person. Furthermore, to Polanyi's credit, in situations where we are tempted to do base action, it can often *feel* as though we were wrestling with ourselves.

III.7. Mind

Against some powerful voices among his contemporaries, Polanyi continues to speak of 'mind': 'my fundamental belief implies a belief in the existence of minds as centres of unspecifiable intelligent operations' (PK, 312). Polanyi sees a double unspecifiability: he would concur with Wittgenstein that our normal interactions in community are not reducible to strict logical formulae; *and* he insists that individuals possess mind, wherein they not only think, but also develop hunches and percolate creative processes. Many

problems, from the earth shaking to the mundane, have been solved when people explore their hunches. A strange intelligence is often found within a hunch.

The issue might be sharpened by examining Polanyi's critique of Gilbert Ryle. According to Ryle, mind is identical to its performances, without remainder. Polanyi considers this position to be as absurd as saying that a symbol is its own meaning.³⁸ Where Ryle wants to show that mind does not explicitly operate on the body and concludes that there is no Cartesian duality, no 'ghost in the machine,' and no 'occult causes,'³⁹ Polanyi contends that Ryle's search for something explicit misses the point and has to miss the point:

But what actually follows from the fact that mind and body do not interact explicitly is that they interact according to the logic of tacit knowing. And it is this logic that disposes of the Cartesian dilemma by acknowledging two mutually exclusive ways [tacit and explicit] of being aware of our body. (KB, 223)

Polanyi's alternative understanding differs radically from Ryle and significantly from Descartes. Using the example of stereoscopic photographs, Polanyi shows that we do not fuse two stereoscopic pictures to a single image by argument: 'The fusion of the clues to the image on which they bear is *not a deduction* but an *integration*' (KB, 212).⁴⁰ This sort of fusion is a power that Polanyi attributes to the human mind because the mind can see stratified entities and dual controls as a unity. On the flip side, the meaning of the higher level can be destroyed by focusing entirely on the lower level: 'You can destroy meaning wholesale by reducing everything to its interpreted particulars. By paralyzing our urge to subordinate one thing to another, we can eliminate all subsidiary awareness of things in terms of others and create an atomized, totally depersonalised universe' (PK, 199).⁴¹

Ever interested in the phenomenology of genius and even ordinary acts of new insight, Polanyi refuses to reduce mind to its results, largely because of

the originative powers of unconscious thought. The unconscious exercise of originality is usually still prompted by a conscious effort and a judgment of a high order, as in the case of the heuristic efforts which induce discovery during a subsequent period of latency. (PK, 339)

Polanyi thinks creative problem-solving involves a partnership between latent, non-explicit powers of mind and concentrated, explicit efforts. The solution of a problem requires a movement of mind that Polanyi calls 'crossing a logical gap' (PK, 123-130), but this movement cannot be restricted to a logical performance, since logic is the very thing lacking. If the logic were understood, there would not be a

problem to be solved. From H. Poincaré, Polanyi lists four stages of discovery: preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification (PK, 121). Here again, a partnership between latent and explicit powers of mind is at work. Passion, training, and intelligence are blended in the creative problem solving that finds a way across a logical gap.

Belief is crucial to Polanyi's system of thought, but he recognizes that beliefs can be wrong. Yet he distinguishes between the error of 'a competent line of thought' and 'mental processes that are altogether illusory and incompetent.' These latter, in which he would include Azande witch doctors practising the rite of poison oracles, do not rise to the level of the personal (PK, 318). This distinction, interesting and controversial in its own right for our anthropological understanding, takes on additional interest when we compare it to Wittgenstein's quip about the alleged consciousness of a tribal chief:

In what circumstances shall I say that a tribe has a chief? And the chief must surely have *consciousness*. Surely we can't have a chief without consciousness! (PI, 419)

The bite seems to be that, as Ryle would contend, we can identify a chief by his behaviour and the behaviour of others towards him. Is anything at all added by positing that the chief has a consciousness?

Polanyi, for one, thinks that something would be added. And by denying the Azande witch doctor (read: 'chief') the full status of personal knowledge (although not denying him rationality and some degree of kinship), Polanyi apparently classes such 'knowledge' in the same category 'with passive mental states, as purely subjective' (PK, 318). In a fascinating comparison to the Azande system, which is both coherent and false, he cites the confessions of a former Marxist (Arthur Koestler) and a former Freudian (Karen Horney). In each case Polanyi believes that the ideological certitude of the circular and false system is only reinforced when it is challenged (See PK, 286-294). Nothing new can be added to the essentially circular, self-reinforcing system. Unlike scientific endeavors, persons do not 'break out' in response to challenges; the challenges do not provoke persons to seek new and cumulative discoveries, only new ways of defending an old and wrong framework.

For our present purposes the point is that consciousness can be deceived by its own constructions. The chief/witch doctor and the true believer Marxist simply will not allow corrosive anomalies to enter their system. And they will appropriate other information for their ideological machinery through epicyclical explanations. Thus, for example, Evans-Pritchard found at least eight explanations of the Azande to account for failures of

the poison oracle.⁴² In these cases, the *failure* of consciousness, or, at least, its masking, implies its potential and presence. The fact that people can change their mind (their worldview) in the most dramatic way, even be 'born again,' lends further credence to the notion of consciousness.

III.8. Sorting out Polanyi

Polanyi's understanding of the person is centred on the meaningfulness of human inquiry—inquiry that is teleological, that searches out the universal, and that transcends its native particularities. He has an explicitly Platonic sense of realism (PK, 6, 114), but unlike Plato, he couples his realism with the creative dynamism of history. For Polanyi, history captures the record of meaningful efforts of persons and their communities through the passage of time, efforts that can achieve new and greater levels of understanding. Polanyi's realism is linked to his inherently hopeful vision: 'An innate affinity for making contact with reality moves our thoughts—under the guidance of useful clues and plausible rules—to increase ever further our hold on reality' (PK, 403). Here the contrast with Wittgenstein should be evident—both in the overtly ontological talk of 'contact with reality', and in the focus on history and historical examples which generally characterize Polanyi's writing.

Let us remember that Polanyi's career is undertaken against the headwind of objectivism. Utterly convinced that techniques such as logical positivism were no more than sophisticated silliness (see his rather mocking refutation on the opening page of *Personal Knowledge*), Polanyi places the human person, which logical positivism had attempted to remove or minimize in its account of knowledge, right at the center of things. Polanyi's person is no mere stick figure that can think, but rather one whose passions can and should be enlisted in the pursuit of its noblest goals. In his polemic against objectivism, Polanyi contends: 'Even the most elaborate objectivist nomenclature cannot conceal the teleological character of learning and the normative intention of its study' (PK, 371-372). For Polanyi 'the teleological character of learning' means that knowledge is personal and that its pursuit is the domain, interest, and fulfillment of human persons. Polanyi is hardly advocating the unleashing of rampant emotionalism; rather, he asks us to notice that caring deeply about an activity or reaching a goal is a typical and significant concomitant of achievement.

Polanyi's vision for the person bears some resemblance to Jacques Maritain's call for persons to 'feed upon the transcendentals', i.e., upon the true, good, and beautiful.⁴³ Polanyi acknowledges the historical setting in which we find ourselves, but also the importance of transcending it:

Our subjective condition may be taken to include the historical setting in which we have grown up. We accept these as the assignment of our particular problem. *Our personhood is assured* by our simultaneous contact with *universal aspirations* which place us in a *transcendent perspective*. (PK, 324, emphases added)

For Polanyi, passively to accept one's starting point as destiny would constitute depersonalisation. By contrast, Polanyi's notion that we can increasingly make 'contact with reality', his ontological realism, suggests that every community is immersed in and surrounded by possibilities of new discovery. His claim that 'personhood is assured' by its 'universal aspirations' that yield a 'transcendent perspective' suggests a tripartite interaction of ontology, community, and persons wherein the transcendent and universal may be realised:

Processes of creative renewal always imply an appeal from a tradition as it *is* to a tradition as it *ought* to be. That is to a spiritual reality embodied in tradition and transcending it. It expresses a belief in this superior reality and offers devotion to its service. (SFS, 56-57)

In contrast to Wittgenstein's careful focus on language and behaviour within a given form of life, Polanyi more expansively focuses on 'processes of creative renewal' that transform persons and communities. Polanyi's appreciation of tradition is never static; it is always coupled with a progressive dynamism, one that continuously seeks something more than is presently available. In Polanyi's tripartite interaction of the inquiring person, the community, and reality, the community holds the treasures of all past accomplishments and thus functions as the base from which all present endeavours are launched. Moreover, it will hold in trust the content of any new discoveries, any new contacts with reality. This creative process is inconceivable without the frank recognition of something that transcends the community of the present but is not unrelated to it—Polanyi's 'superior reality' that calls upon persons to offer 'devotion to its service'.

Polanyi thinks that reality talks back—if we pursue the right question in the right way. He sees a link between our approach to the world and our self-understanding: 'the satisfaction of gaining intellectual control over the external world is linked to a satisfaction of gaining control over ourselves' (PK, 196).

Being self-taught in philosophy (and theology), he occasionally presents notions that could be improved by a fuller acquaintance with the tradition. Nonetheless, on the occasions when he errs, his errors are still instructive.

In his reaction against objectivism, he perspicaciously sees that doubt is its logical

corollary (PK, 269). Perhaps as a result, he fruitfully investigated the epistemology of faith—his fiduciary component of personal knowledge. When understood as trust, faith is always and only exercised by persons. As we saw above, Polanyi advocates a kind of faith in the community and also in the reality that would be known, by 'the believer in transcendent reality', the 'metaphysical believer' (SFS, 81).

Where Wittgenstein is more interested in Christian practice than Christian doctrine, Polanyi rather freely interprets Christian doctrine but is deeply interested in Christian worship. As a 'metaphysical believer,' he sees worship as an act of 'indwelling' that opens onto a vista of unlimited realization (PK, 279). In fact, his magnum opus ends with him pondering 'an unthinkable consummation'—'how a Christian is placed when worshiping God' (PK, 405)—an indwelling that might foster its own breaking out.

Where we saw that certain 'separations' are characteristic of Wittgenstein's thought and life, Polanyi approaches reality, whether scientific, social, or spiritual, with a sense of unity. Possessed of this sense of unity, it makes sense that he could have successful careers as a scientist, economist, and philosopher. He sees the 'comprehensive affinities' of religion and considered Christianity related to natural experience as a thread in a 'network of mutual penetrations' (PK 284). For him, science, philosophy, and religion are interconnected pursuits that might all benefit from 'renewal of interest in the universe as one comprehensive whole' (SFS, 27). To the degree that he does embrace Christianity, he does so as part of his progressive, holistic vision:

Christianity is a progressive enterprise. Our vastly enlarged perspectives of knowledge should open up fresh vistas of religious faith. The Bible, and the Pauline doctrine in particular, may be still pregnant with unsuspected lessons; and the greater precision and more conscious flexibility of modern thought, shown by the new physics and the logico-philosophic movements of our age, may presently engender conceptual reforms which will renew and clarify, on the grounds of modern, extra-religious experience, man's relation to God. An era of great religious discoveries may lie before us. (PK, 285)

Polanyi's hopeful, expansive vision for the entire spectrum of human life is inseparable from his understanding of the person, for the person and the community of persons are the participants—the contributors and the beneficiaries—in the grand quest that he envisions.

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Notes

1. For a theological treatment of the *person*, including its historical development, see Philip A. Rolnick, *Person, Grace, and God* (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2007).
2. I am indebted to Alan Verhey for his critique of an earlier draft of this paper.
3. My main source for Wittgenstein is Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (New York/London: Penguin books, 1990). See also, William Warren Bartley, III, *Wittgenstein* (Philadelphia and New York: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1973). For Polanyi see William Taussig Scott and Martin X. Moleski, S.J., *Michael Polanyi: Scientist and Philosopher* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). I have also benefited from numerous accounts of teachers and colleagues who worked closely with Polanyi.
4. See Monk, p. 416, where he speaks of 'Wittgenstein's general attack on the idol-worship of science.' In another sense of 'science,' Wittgenstein's early philosophy was an attempt at finding the scientific limits of what could be said.
5. Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, trans. Peter Winch, ed. G.H. von Wright (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 36. Henceforth referred to parenthetically as 'CV.' Other works of Wittgenstein referred to parenthetically will be *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness, with an Introduction by Bertrand Russell (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961). Henceforth 'TLP'; and *Philosophical Investigations*, 3rd ed., trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan, 1958), henceforth 'PI.'
6. See *Personal Knowledge*, p. 203. See pp. 203-245 for Polanyi's development of 'Conviviality.'
7. One exception is that when Polanyi was nearing death, he became somewhat senile and apparently could not remember commitments that he had made to people who were trying to bring some of his works to press. See the last chapter of Scott and Moleski, 'The Last Years,' pp. 279-292. It should also be mentioned that Polanyi was an insomniac.
8. Scott and Moleski, p. 294.
9. Wittgenstein exegesis, not only in understanding the relation of his early to later work, but also understanding points within a given work, can be contentious among his commentators. There are often numerous ways to interpret an author, but in Wittgenstein's case the differences are worse confounded because of Wittgenstein's aphoristic style, his refusal to supply arguments, and his reticence to publish, explain, and defend his own thought. My effort in this article is not to enter the lists, but rather to focus on identifiable themes and tendencies as they might be related to the concept of the person.
10. Letter to Paul Engelmann, as cited in Monk, p. 151.
11. Anyone immersed in the metaphysical tradition of Thomas Aquinas would be unlikely to essentialise 'being.' Quite to the contrary, the emphasis on 'being' is often used to enliven the concept by pointing beyond what concepts by themselves can capture.
12. Wittgenstein uses this phrase in both the singular and the plural. See *Philosophical Investigations*, §23 (singular) and p. 226 (plural).
13. Monk, *Wittgenstein*, p. 156.
14. It is possible, but by no means certain, that Polanyi first learned to focus on the tacit from the influence Wittgenstein had in English universities.
15. Monk, p. 277, citing from 'Lecture on Ethics,' *Philosophical Review*, Jan. 1965, pp. 3-26.
16. Letter to Ludwig von Ficker as cited in Bartley, p. 57.
17. See Monk, pp. 241-244.
18. In a piece for piano titled '4:33,' John Cage directed the performer to present four minutes and thirty-three seconds of silence. '4:33' is more of a histrionic stunt than a musical performance, and its effectiveness is entirely parasitic upon those who actually do write and play music.
19. If we look at a later statement from the same notes that were unpublished during his lifetime, Wittgenstein actually comes quite close to my own view: 'The light work sheds is a beautiful light, which, however, only shines with real beauty if it is illuminated by yet another light' (CV, 26). It is good that Wittgenstein allows this much of the transcendent, but it would have been better had he published, explained, and defended these thoughts himself. Georg von Wright selected the material from Wittgenstein's notebooks that are now published posthumously as *Culture and Value*.
20. Nikolai Berdiaev, *Slavery and Freedom*, trans. R.M. French (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), p. 40.
21. Monk, p. 462.
22. Monk, p. 257.
23. Cited in Monk, p. 257.
24. See Monk, p. 534. Monk's biography portrays Wittgenstein as often praying, 'Thy will be done,' as well as having periods where such piety disappears from his private writing.
25. Monk, pp. 115-116.
26. It is perhaps relevant that Wittgenstein advised most of his followers not to go into the academic life.
27. Monk, p. 497.
28. See Rolnick, *Person, Grace, and God*, especially the Introduction and Chapter One.
29. While the early Wittgenstein, with his association with Bertrand Russell as well as the Vienna Circle, seemed to be a participant in that quest, in fact, the mystical statements at the end of the *Tractatus* already indicate that even the early Wittgenstein was not a logical positivist.
30. Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958, 1962) will henceforth be cited as 'PK.' Polanyi's essay, 'The Structure of Consciousness' in *Knowing and Being: Essays by Michael Polanyi*, ed. Marjorie Grene (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp. 211-224, will be cited as 'KB'. Polanyi's *The Study of Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959) will be cited as 'SM.' *The Logic of Liberty: Reflections and Rejoinders* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1951), will be cited as 'LL.' *Science, Faith, and Society* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1964) will be cited as 'SFS'.
31. Paul Holmer has characterized Polanyi as a 'lumper' and Wittgenstein as a 'splitter.' I think these two labels describe their overall inclinations rather well. See

- Holmer's Review Essay, 'Polanyi and Being Reasonable: Some Comments in Review of *Intellect and Hope*,' *Soundings* 53 (Spring 1970): 95-109, esp. p. 97.
32. Polanyi frequently uses variations of the phrase 'contact with reality.' See *Personal Knowledge*, pp. vii, 5, 63, 64, 104, 106, 123, 147, 335 *et passim*.
33. See the collection of essays on this subject, *Realism and Antirealism*, ed. William P. Alston (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002).
34. Karol Wojtyla, 'The Person: Subject and Community', *Review of Metaphysics* 33 (1979-80), p. 282.
35. Polanyi, SFS p. 10.
36. For a narrative approach to Polanyi's anthropology, see Phil Mullins, 'Narrative, Interpretation, and Persuasion: Polanyian Notes on Selfhood,' in *Polanyi on the Person*, *The Personalist Forum* IX:2 (Fall 1993): 109-132. In 'An Unlikely Synthesis,' pp. 81-107 in the same volume, Walter Gulick portrays a complementarity between Polanyi's views and Kant's.
37. I am reading Polanyi charitably here. As we shall see below, he is not always consistent.
38. Polanyi's criticisms are found in *The Study of Man*, p. 65; in *Knowing and Being*, pp. 222-223; and in *Personal Knowledge*, p. 372. His published repetitions of the critique demonstrate how important he considered the issue to be.
39. KB, p. 222, citing from Ryle, *Concept of Mind* (London: Hutchinson, 1949), p. 58.
40. Wittgenstein's use of a drawing that can be seen as either a duck or a rabbit implies a similar point (PI, II, xi, p. 194). Wittgenstein points to the integrative power of mind, but he does not want to say much about it.
41. Perhaps also borrowing from Jean-Paul Sartre, Wittgenstein writes something very similar. See Monk, p. 532.
42. As cited from E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* (Oxford, 1937), PK, p. 287.
43. Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, trans. John J. Fitzgerald (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966 [1946], p. 64).
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SEEING, SAYING, AND BEING THE GESTALT:

Continuing Investigations on Wittgenstein and Polanyi on the Concept of the Person

Charles W. Lowney

Abstract:

L. Wittgenstein and M. Polanyi both recognise a tacit background to knowing, but vary significantly in their understanding of how we know, what we can know, and what we can say about it. This paper explores whether we can *say* anything about the person as an emergent entity and how we know it, as Polanyi believed we could, or whether, as Wittgenstein early and late believed, the person is among those purported things that can only be *shown* and attempts to *say* how we know it lead to nonsense—if there even exists such an entity apart from the actions we may describe.

Key words:

Wittgenstein, saying v. showing, nonsense, mind, emergence, Polanyi, tacit knowing, persons, epistemology, ontology, gestalt.

In ‘Wittgenstein and Polanyi on the Concept of the Person’,¹ Philip A. Rolnick raises issues of central philosophical importance. The nature of the world, the nature of the person, how the person knows the world, itself, and others, and what it can *say* about what it knows, are all embedded in his discussion.² The issues that I take up here are, first, whether or not there exists, for Wittgenstein, such an entity as a person, whom we might legitimately have conceptions about; second, if there is such a person, whether or not we can *say* anything about it or *how* we know it without ‘gassing’ nonsense; and third, what challenges Wittgenstein presents for Polanyi’s epistemology and conception of the person.

If we take seriously Wittgenstein’s anti-objectivism and Polanyi’s own emphasis on the difference between tacit and explicit knowledge, there will certainly be limitations on discussing the person that will not apply to ordinary objects and actions. This is to be expected to the extent that we mean to express a concept that captures our first person experience of the world rather than a third person description of it. The radical inexpressibility present in Wittgenstein’s thought leads immediately to apparent shortcomings that Polanyi’s concept of the person militates against, but Polanyi’s approach also appears to draw us into quandaries that Wittgenstein avoids.

I shall start by exploring the more general question of whether there is something to be *shown* that cannot be *said* for Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus*. Are all purported ethereals illusions that dissolve away in Wittgenstein’s view? If so, the person appears to

be among them. Answering this question sets the ground for understanding what we can and cannot say about the person as Wittgenstein transitions from discussions about meaningful propositions in his early work, to the perspicuous representation of language-games in his later work.

1. What is shown but not said?

The first issue concerns whether or not there exist such entities as persons for Wittgenstein. Polanyi allows for the emergence of persons as active centres; they transcend their multifarious acts and, as real, they can manifest themselves in as yet unforeseen ways. (PK, 388; KB, 133; R, 15) Persons, for Polanyi, are metaphysical realities that are irreducible to the physical and behavioural qualities that we can directly examine. Could Wittgenstein say something similar? This issue raises the more general question of just how we should view Wittgenstein. Should we see him as an anti-metaphysician, who would break apart such purported ethereal unities, or as a healing physician? And must he be a metaphysician, acknowledging transcendent entities and issues, in order to be a physician?

1.1 Metaphysicians and physicians

In Rolnick’s view, Wittgenstein’s silence about metaphysics and ethics becomes identified with a ‘minimalism’. (R, 4,5,6) Rolnick can thus describe Wittgenstein’s silence as a ‘proscription’ that is in need of argument (R, 4,5,6,9) and his reticence comes to look like a ‘choice’ (R, 5,8). It starts to seem as though Wittgenstein is being timid, and he would prefer to be right and silent rather than risk being wrong about something so very important. It then begins to look as if someone bolder might use Wittgenstein’s philosophy as a springboard for more accurate metaphysical and theological theorizing.³ For Wittgenstein, however, the ban on metaphysical discussion is not just a proscription; it is not that one *could* say something explicitly but *shouldn’t*. For Wittgenstein, if one chooses to explicitly theorize about metaphysics or ethics one is automatically lapsing into nonsense, even though we may be fooled into thinking that it makes sense. It is also not the case that Wittgenstein is making an ‘assertion’ that requires an argument. (R, 5) For Wittgenstein, the very attempt to provide an argument in such cases would be an example of the metaphysical nonsense he seeks to avoid. Instead of providing an argument Wittgenstein must, as Rolnick notes,

attempt to show that metaphysical talk is a mistake by making its nonsense patent. (R, 7; PI, §464)

Wittgenstein would not sanction any positive philosophy that others might build up from his criticisms, even if it is couched as a negative theology. Wittgenstein sees his role as healing physician precisely in undermining any positive theoretical construction we may devise. Positive theories may indeed be garnered from assumptions Wittgenstein employs, but from Wittgenstein's own perspective he is simply gassing in order to expel gas.⁴ And, for Wittgenstein, distilling his own gas would be a misdirected enterprise.

Polanyi is the sort of physician we are used to calling upon. He attempts to bring healing by reaffirming a notion of metaphysical entities and allowing for explicit discussion about value and meaning. Wittgenstein, in contrast, attempts to bring healing by cutting through linguistic distortions that cause us to theorize about metaphysical entities and about ethics, and this, for him, puts us back in touch with life's richer texture.

But although Wittgenstein tears away at any metaphysical theorizing, Rolnick may indeed be right when he says that Wittgenstein's silence 'leaves the door open that such higher things will become *manifest* within the form of life.' (R, 6; my italics) We cannot talk explicitly about metaphysics without lapsing into nonsense but if there is still something metaphysical to *show*, then Wittgenstein might turn out to be a metaphysician, of sorts, after all.

The question of whether or not Wittgenstein acknowledges the person as a metaphysical entity takes us back to his early thought in the *Tractatus*, where Wittgenstein makes the distinction between what is *shown* and what is *said*. From that vantage point we can see more clearly how the same sort of issue arises in Wittgenstein's later thought, and how the same sort of conclusion will arise: If Wittgenstein was a metaphysician, he couldn't say so, and all he could do to promote his own metaphysics was undermine the metaphysical conceptions of others.

1.2 Arch-Realists and Dissenters

The question of whether there is something metaphysical, shown but not said, is a hotly debated issue in Wittgenstein scholarship. Warren Goldfarb demarcated the front lines of this battle in 'Metaphysics and Nonsense: On Cora Diamond's *The Realistic Spirit*'.⁵ He says that there are those, such as David Pears, and P.M.S. Hacker who hold the 'received view' that there is indeed something ineffable to be shown. Goldfarb calls this view 'arch-realism'.⁶ In this interpretation the propositions of the *Tractatus* are indeed 'theses' that guide us towards seeing what cannot be said; they

are not outright nonsense sentences. But 'New Wittgensteinians' such as Brian McGuinness and Cora Diamond, who hold the 'dissenting' or 'resolute' view,⁷ ask us to bite the bullet and take Wittgenstein seriously when he ends the *Tractatus* by saying that his own propositions are indeed nonsense:

My propositions are elucidatory in this way: he who understands me finally recognises them as nonsense, when he has climbed out through them, on them, over them. (He must so to speak throw away the ladder, after he has climbed up on it.)

He must surmount these propositions; then he sees the world rightly. (T, 6.54) The dissenters take the resolute view that 'nonsense' is nonsense; the only thing that is shown, then, is that a form of words that we thought made sense, actually does not. The so-called 'theses' of the *Tractatus* should thus be grouped with other propositions that the *Tractatus* dissects as nonsense, such as 'There exist objects' and 'There is only one 1' or '2+2 is at 3 o'clock equal to four'. (T, 4.1272) They may have the form of intelligible sentences, but they qualify as instances of disguised nonsense that Wittgenstein makes patent.

The dissenters ask the questions: If there exists a metaphysical realm or dimension that the arch-realists attribute to Wittgenstein—shown, but not said—how could we get any grip whatsoever on what it is? Does it make sense to *say anything* about this 'whatever it is', as Diamond calls it, at all? This 'logical form of reality, some essential feature of reality which reality has all right but which we cannot say or think it has.'⁸

These questions are malignantly incisive, for even if the arch-realists are correct, what is left for a positive, expressible construction? Rolnick brings out the notion that Wittgenstein's objective in the *Tractatus* was to express an unsayable, ethical dimension of reality. (R, 6)⁹ If there is such a metaphysical realm and there are ineffable truths about it that can be made manifest, is it possible to say or think anything about them at all? If this ineffable dimension exists, can we say it is 'religious' or 'spiritual' or 'ethical'? How would we know? If Wittgenstein is a torchbearer of religious feeling, mustn't he also be a mystic? Can there be a theology... a *study* of God, thought out in sentences and presented in sentences? Can there be any doctrine? It would seem that all attempts at expression, or even thought, of this ineffable domain must be nonsense for Wittgenstein.

If all that can be said are the propositions of natural science and 'whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent' (T, 6.53&7), then it would seem that there can be no religion for the religious and no ethics for the ethical. We can't even say that the purpose of ritual is to orient us towards

God or good, or that it engenders religious feeling, because those sentences would be nonsense, and whatever it is that they are meant to convey must be left in silence. What's more, leaving God aside, it seems we could not even say that persons exist as metaphysical subjects, nor could we positively characterize them as such without gassing nonsense.

Determining whether the arch-realists or dissenters are correct is important for our discussion about Wittgenstein's conception of the person. Does Wittgenstein show that the person is a metaphysical entity that cannot be discussed or does he show that the concept of person implodes as nonsense? How language works and, as a result, what is sayable and showable become more complex as we move beyond the *Tractatus* and into Wittgenstein's later philosophy. But we can get an idea of how these changes play out by following the concept of the person as it evolves in Wittgenstein's thought.

2. Who is shown but not said in early Wittgenstein?

There appear to be two philosophical concepts of person in the *Tractatus*. The first is the Cartesian soul or mind, which represents the world to itself. This concept Wittgenstein exterminates in a strange but elegant way *via* an attack on Russell's multiple relation theory of judgment, which presupposes the Cartesian notion of self.¹⁰ It is this concept of the person that Wittgenstein rules out when he says 'there is no such thing as the soul' (T, 5.5421) and which Rolnick points towards when he discusses Wittgenstein's attack on Cartesianism and objectivism in general. The second concept of person is the 'metaphysical subject', which Rolnick also discusses (R, 8) and which Wittgenstein takes more seriously.

2.1 The metaphysical subject and the limit of thought

The metaphysical subject is the I that, like the eye, cannot be inferred from any fact that it sees in the world. To this I the world is presented as 'my world', so from the start I cannot know other persons or a world independent from myself. It is in this context that Wittgenstein says, 'what solipsism means is quite correct; only it cannot be *said* but makes itself manifest.' (T, 5.62)

This lone metaphysical subject is described as the 'limit of the world—not a part of it'. (T, 5.641) This statement, juxtaposed to another important line in the *Tractatus*, 'the limits of my language are the limits of my world' (T, 5.6), gives us an inference that Hans Sluga makes explicit: 'that which is conceived as the limit of the world must also be conceived as being at the limit of language.' (Sluga, 1996, 329) The result is that the metaphysical subject cannot be objectified in language. The person is thus grouped in the *Tractatus* more

generally with those things that become manifest, but which we cannot say, such as logical form. Sluga echoes an arch-realist position, when he says that this I is not a part of the world, but it is 'rather, the non-objective condition of the possibility of the objective world.' (329) The person shrinks down to being 'not a *something* but not a *nothing* either' (328)—as Wittgenstein would later say of 'pain' (PI, §304) and as I say of clues when they are acting tacitly towards presenting a joint significance.

One might think that the discussion of this person, the metaphysical I, in the *Tractatus* should already silence the dissenting view, but the tables are easily turned. Sluga considers this person to be a transcendental condition that cannot be objectified, but resolute dissenters would see statements about this I as more disguised nonsense that becomes patent. As the limit of the world the metaphysical subject becomes fully transparent or identical with the world as a whole; it dissolves completely into the mere presentation of the world. All that is left are the descriptive sentences about the world, the sentences of science, with nothing left over.

From the standpoint of a resolute dissenter, there is really nothing above or beyond the world itself to be shown to any seeing. The concept of the person Wittgenstein seems to be offering implodes as a philosophical mistake. Talk about the existence of this I as an independent entity or transcendental condition becomes more misdirected nonsense.

Wittgenstein gives us a metaphysical description of the subject, but it gets thrown away as more nonsense. As Diamond puts it, 'The final step... leaves us without that description or any supposedly unspeakable understanding corresponding to it.' (3)

Whether the purported I shrinks to non-existence or shrinks to a condition for the appearance of the world, the result is the same: it also shrinks entirely out of meaningful conversation. And so Wittgenstein ends his *Tractatus* with his call to silence.

But then one might ask: Isn't *not saying* a way of saying something? Could Wittgenstein be providing a *via negativa*? The 'all I have *not* written' in his *Tractatus*? (See R, 6) Rolnick seems to give us an indication of how negative limits might have an ethical function when he likens the negative message of Wittgenstein's writings to the Ten Commandments:

Whatever our final judgment about Wittgenstein's apophaticism, in perhaps somewhat like his own tendency, the Ten Commandments have for centuries been useful for knowing what not to do without instructing us in what we *ought* to do. (R, 5)

Some arch-realists might agree, but the dissenters have good cause to dissent. The analogy fails to convey the radical sense of the person as the limit of language and thought. We do have a sense of what

is on the other side of 'not killing', or 'not stealing', etc. Such scenarios are thinkable. But there is no way to get a handle on what is on the other side of the speakable or thinkable itself. For dissenters, the only way not to take the name of God in vain is not to use it at all. It is also to recognise that the use of 'God' in the preceding sentence has no identifiable referent and provides no information.

2.2 Transcendental dissent and transcendent assent

The fact that *person* falls among the ineffables is probably the best evidence that the arch-realists have to show there is something to show for Wittgenstein, for persons seem to be something we can recognise without saying how. Consistency certainly seems to be on the side of resolute thinkers, but Wittgenstein may not have been quite as consistent in his thinking as they are on his behalf. My own assessment of Wittgenstein's view in the *Tractatus* is that transcendental ineffables, such as simple objects, logical form, and possibility, must be distinguished from transcendent ineffables, such as Kant's metaphysical ideas of God, Immortality and Freedom.¹¹ With regard to the former, and purported conditions for the possibility of understanding, I agree with the dissenters. But when it comes to the latter I believe, with the arch-realists, that there is 'something' inexpressible that Wittgenstein was gesturing towards, and I include the person, among those latter inexpressibles. We must still, however, take seriously Wittgenstein's call to silence about *any* characterization of what this something is. If we speak about ethics and the person directly, we speak nonsense for Wittgenstein, even if he intended something to be shown by the nonsense statements he used to break apart conceptions we have built up around them.

But then Wittgenstein breaks his silence, or does he?

3. Who is shown in but not said in later Wittgenstein?

The later Wittgenstein seems in a much better position to place the person in the world and discuss it. As Rolnick points out, Wittgenstein seems to have a new appreciation of the importance of the interaction of persons in community (R, 5); he seems to have broken free of any solipsism entwined with the idea that 'I am my world.' (T, 5.63; R, 7) He now utilises notions such as of *forms of life* that emphasize both action and interaction over and against propositional knowledge. He thus shows a greater awareness of the tacit elements that Polanyi brings out, which ground us in the world at many levels. Also, Wittgenstein's view of language shifts so that sense is no longer tied to representation. His notion of a *language-game* opens up the domain of

language beyond the propositions of science to various other expressive and communicative goals.

But the main question here is: Do we really gain any ground on an explicit, positive, understanding of the concept of the person? Yes and No.

What we do gain in the later Wittgenstein does not seem to give us what we want. And there is still the danger that as we describe the person's interactions in language-games we may, in resolute fashion, be describing the person away.

3.1 The Unobjectifiable Soul

An arch-realist might look at the later Wittgenstein and see a change in view that now allows the shown person to be said. Taking this positive arch-realist view, one might begin to discuss the person as something intimately related with forms of life. One can say, for instance, that the person is embedded in language practices, institutions and customs, and with these we now seem to have something that we can hold on to that will act as a reasonable basis for giving a theory about the person. Wittgenstein's philosophy is then seen as corrective for the tendency to etherealize the person. For instance, in light of reading the later Wittgenstein, one might say with C.B. Daly that 'the mental is *in* the behavioural, the rational *in* the physical, the spiritual *in* the material'. (Daly, 1968, 155)¹² But this would be misleading for Wittgenstein. It makes us think we have a grasp on what the mental is *apart from* the behavioural, the rational *apart from* the physical and the spiritual *apart from* the material, and it recasts but at the same time reinforces metaphysical categories that Wittgenstein would have us abandon.

Daly is certainly right to believe that these separations are illegitimate for Wittgenstein, but starting from the idea that each side of the separation makes sense is also illegitimate for Wittgenstein. If we start from these categories, it can seem as if something is lost then when the divisions are given up, and then we can be pulled back to a strong negative (dissenting) view that Polanyi ascribes to Gilbert Ryle. (R, 15) We come to the idea that there is nothing back there, i.e., nothing behind behaviour or intelligent performances, to call the 'person' or 'mind'. From this approach, questions about an intelligent subject or a centre of consciousness, like philosophical questions, would get dissolved. And *What is the concept of the person?* would go the way of *What time is it on the sun?*¹³

Rolnick rightly notes how the person, as a Cartesian self or soul with some sort of special access to its own nature continues to be the object of attack in Wittgenstein's later thought. (R, 8) But there still seems to be that *other* notion of the person—similar to the 'metaphysical subject' of the *Tractatus*—re-incarnated in the later Wittgenstein.

We seem to have the idea that the real person is the I that observes the world and cannot be objectified—the self that, *contra* Ryle, is there beyond a description of objects, actions and intelligent performances.

Rolnick points to this unobjectifiable metaphysical person, brought forward into Wittgenstein's later thought, when he discusses how Wittgenstein shies away from any straightforward pronouncements about trust in the other person's existence. He quotes Wittgenstein: 'My attitude toward him is an attitude towards a soul. I am not of the *opinion* that he has a soul.' (PI, p.178; R, 7) Rolnick says Wittgenstein's reluctance here should be seen as an affirmation that there is a subject, soul or person but that it 'cannot be objectified'. (R, 8) If *this* soul exists, then there is 'something' ineffable, even if it is not describable in language as a something nor a nothing, and to the extent that Wittgenstein believes this soul to be a development of the concept of the metaphysical subject, the arch-realists appear to have an ally in the later Wittgenstein. But would it be a change of mind? And even if we grant that there is some person *behind* or *with* the performances, we once again have that further question for the later Wittgenstein: Can this person be spoken about independently and directly?

3.2 Early and late continuity

For all the information we seem to gain when Wittgenstein shifts from the reticence in his *Tractatus* to his consideration of language-games in the *Philosophical Investigations*, there is surprising continuity in what he regards as bearing sense or being nonsense. Wittgenstein does criticize his earlier self, but by and large it is a criticism of his naiveté at believing he could point out and eliminate nonsense in one fell swoop.¹⁴ The shift in Wittgenstein's understanding of language comes with the recognition that nonsense is perennial: we must be more careful to recognise where disguised nonsense lurks and we must be more creative in finding ways to make it patent.

Whereas Wittgenstein used to think the line between sense and senselessness, and between senselessness and nonsense, could be sharply demarcated once and for all, now the boundaries are more fluid. The comment that Rolnick selects to show the 'open-endedness of language' (R, 6; PI §99) provides an excellent illustration of how Wittgenstein looked back at his earlier efforts to stomp out nonsense; it also provides an indication that his ideas about the inexpressibility of the person were developed, but did not radically alter. In the *Tractatus*, he was thinking along the lines of the analogy that he here criticizes. He used to think he could rule out nonsense just as one could lock a

door to a room. Now he sees what Burton Dreben called the 'fragility of semantics': language can retain sense, or slip into nonsense, or slip from nonsense into sense, and no enduring 'definite boundary' can house it. Locking a door, i.e., giving black and white conditions for when a proposition has sense, will not insure sense and neither will leaving a door open destroy it.

Does Wittgenstein *show* us something positive about the person *via* his critical campaign against nonsense in his later work? Here we can make explicit the parallel to the saying *v.* showing distinction in the *Tractatus*. Just as we could only *speak* the sentences of science, now we can only *describe* how we use words. This is the latter day analogue of showing: it is the painting a picture with words; a saying in order to show. One cannot legitimately build a theoretical structure to provide any wholesale explanations. Doing this would be the equivalent of being misled to *say* explicitly what can only be *shown via* description. What is transcendent (if there is a transcendent, *contra* the dissenting view) is fully revealed by saying what can be said, so the meaning of concepts such as *person* are *shown* simply and fully by *saying* the descriptive sentences of the language-games.

Within the context of saying *v.* showing here, we ask again the question of whether or not *something* is shown beyond what is said? Is there a person or mind behind the explicit descriptions of linguistic and physical behaviour?

A 'yes', would be an analogue of the received view of the arch-realists. A 'no' would bring us Ryle's view, which, as Polanyi presents it, is the analogue of the dissenting view. In it the purported person or mind is fully characterized by its interactions and what we thought we were talking about disappears, just as the metaphysical subject, in a dissenting view, fully dissolved into the world.

3.3 Showing through Description

The analogy between *showing* with the sentences of science and *showing via* a language-game might appear to break down because Wittgenstein will admit that there are perfectly legitimate contexts in which we can talk about people and values, whereas in the scientific context that the *Tractatus* provides such talk might immediately signal the importation of metaphysical nonsense. Also, as Rolnick suggests (R, 4), there appears to be a disanalogy in that the later Wittgenstein can seem at odds with science and is clearly no longer a proponent of the rigorisation of meaningful language to scientific language.

The analogy, however, regains its force when we see that what is said in a language-game loses its objectionable character for Wittgenstein because the terms no longer bring in and support the sort of metaphysical pictures that were being denied (or

relegated to silence) in the *Tractatus*. Also, early and late, Wittgenstein, like Polanyi, is an enemy of scientism. In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein fights by limiting the sense of scientific sentences and restricting science's possible areas of investigation; in the *Investigations*, he fights by denying that one can analyse every sentence as if it were subject to the truth-determining game that science plays. But, as I will show later, Wittgenstein is not an enemy of science as a pragmatic endeavour and he does not put the hypotheses of science and legitimate psychology in the same class as metaphysical theories. (See section 4.3 below.) I will also suggest that Wittgenstein, like Polanyi, is an enemy of reductionism in science, and if he is it is because he can take the existence of a certain objects of experience as basic, rather than as constructs from some level beneath. (See 6.4 below.)

The later Wittgenstein employs the idea of a language-game to bracket any metaphysical baggage that we might pack into terms such as 'person', or into value-laden predicates such as 'being good'. By describing the use of words, Wittgenstein invites us to look at what we do say in the particular contexts that we say it in.

We can talk about what John the man does, or what Spot the dog does, or what Hugo the hurricane does, but simply because a term is used as a subject does not mean there is an independent, active entity beyond the talking, barking or breaking trees. Although Wittgenstein, early and late, erodes the boundary between language and existence, the transportation of the discussion into the context of language takes away the immediate assumption that there is something transcendent beyond what we can experience and describe, even as it denies us a language-independent way of deciding when a described entity exists.

If persons gain independence from behaviour and actions and thus become active centres that can be talked about, as Polanyi would have it, then they are transcendent in the sense that a unity exists beyond the behaviour and actions that we can describe in language-games. And if values gain an objectivity that raises them above how we happen to relate with each other and what we might say about these relations, then, as Polanyi would have it, they stand with a normative force above the descriptions conveyed in language-games.

To describe how we use the word 'person' or 'self' or 'mind' in a language-game is not to acknowledge the person existing as an active centre, unless one sees the descriptions as a clue to the existence of persons beyond what can be described. Wittgenstein will not make this leap; hence dissenters can see the task of dissolving, rather than revealing, ethereal entities as a continuity running through the thought of early and late Wittgenstein.

Consistent arch-realists can continue to see Wittgenstein gesturing towards something higher that cannot be theorized about; 'something' that is neither a something nor a nothing, which cannot be *said* in the sense of *saying* that I bring forward into Wittgenstein's later work. (See Sluga's conception of self in section 5.3 below.) Consistent dissenters, however, who stress a continuity in, or a radicalisation of, Wittgenstein's anti-metaphysical endeavours, should have a more difficult time even gesturing towards the person or moral agency, but they (like Sluga) are also tempted to break silence.

Diamond, for instance, believes the drive of Wittgenstein's later thought is to resist 'the *laying down of philosophical requirements*.' (20). She wants to follow Wittgenstein by discussing 'the character of thought, mind and world', (24) without bringing in the baggage of *a priori* conceptual conditions. By abandoning a 'metaphysical spirit' that would make a distinction between realism and anti-realism, she feels free to explore ethics with a 'realistic spirit'.

Diamond is right in that Wittgenstein is undermining any *a priori* requirements that would allow us to understand what something is in advance, but for Wittgenstein this also undermined the use of any positive conception of the person and any normative standards of behaviour that we might construct. She is also right that Wittgenstein would want us to give up philosophical pseudo-uses of words such as 'mind' and 'morality', but then it seems she is straying beyond Wittgenstein in order to characterize 'the mind' and 'modes of moral thought'. Given what she says about how Wittgenstein dissolves nonsense into patent nonsense, it seems egregiously irresolute to attempt to even indirectly manifest positive conceptions by breaking apart philosophical misconceptions. There should be nothing left over beyond whatever is provided by an 'empirical or psychological approach' that has been demythologised (Diamond, 4).

When it comes to mind or person in the later Wittgenstein, some dissenters may ultimately 'chicken out' by transitioning to something more closely resembling an arch-realist perspective. Ryle expresses the view of a consistent dissenter.

It does not seem to me that Wittgenstein is denying the existence of something like a referent for 'mind' or 'person', just as he is not denying sensations such as pain or emotions like grief in his later work. Wittgenstein opposes metaphysical theories, but not the phenomena that the theories attempt to explain. With Rolnick, I believe that Wittgenstein is denying that we can objectify and explain these phenomena in the ways that language leads us to think we can. (R, 7) But, if we cannot objectify the person to discuss 'it', can we at least

say something about this entity indirectly? If any explicit concept of the person misses the mark, or falsifies, or gets re-routed in its expression, is the entity that we intend by the word still somehow sayable? To me it seems that Wittgenstein in his later work is indeed once again *showing* us what cannot be said directly, this time by giving us a perspicuous representation. The descriptions of language-games—about pain, for instance, where one might moan and grab one's arm—are playing the same role as the propositions of science in the *Tractatus*: they are saying all that can be said about how we use the words, without building up to the level where statements become nonsense.

4. Can how it is shown be said?

Looking at *how* the person is shown will further edify the way in which there may be a person to show who is not dissolved away. Here is also where we meet head on Wittgenstein's challenge to Polanyi's epistemology and any concept or theory of the person as an active centre that Polanyi or a strong emergentist might produce.

4.1 Leveling

'Ryle declares: "most intelligent performances are not clues to the mind; they are those workings", Polanyi responds by saying that the position is as absurd as saying that a symbol is its own meaning.' (R, 15; KB, 222) Polanyi 'refuses to reduce mind to its results.' (R, 15) and goes on to talk about the mind as an 'active centre' that we experience in ourselves and that we can see in others *through* the intelligent performances that we witness.

For Polanyi, to say the mind is no more than discrete intelligent performances—what can be observed and described—is like identifying the game of chess with the discrete moves, with no reference possible to a unified strategy. Rolnick brings this point across in his description of what Polanyi calls 'dual control' systems in which a higher level operates on the boundary conditions left open by a lower level. (R, 14, 15) Polanyi talks of levels, subsidiary conditions and joint comprehensions; Wittgenstein brings everything back to one level. What Polanyi takes as an emergent gestalt is, for Wittgenstein, nothing above the subsidiary clues that we can describe.

Rolnick captures this levelling by bringing forward the analogy of a poem (R, 4), which Wittgenstein uses around the time he is writing the *Tractatus*:

The poem . . . is really magnificent. And this is how it is: if only you do not try to utter what is unutterable then *nothing* gets lost. But the unutterable will be—unutterably—*contained* in what has been uttered!¹⁵

For Polanyi what is shown by the explicit, discrete lines of the poem is their joint comprehension or

meaning. The lines of the poem become tacit clues that provide access to the focal awareness of their joint meaning, which is the gestalt of their integration. We can then go on to talk about this meaning independently. For Wittgenstein, *how* these lines presence what is shown cannot be said, and one is misled if one thinks there is a different, higher level that can be *spoken* about separately as that which is *shown* by the explicit lines of the poem. Polanyi raises; Wittgenstein razes.

We can see how this levelling works in the *Tractatus*. The logical connectives, 'and', 'or', 'entails', did not represent (T, 4.0312)¹⁶; they did not mark logical form as some separate third thing above or deeply below the sentences they connected. In the end, there were only the discrete propositions themselves in various possible arrangements. Likewise, there was no additional ethereal force holding objects together in facts. Objects simply fit together like the links of a chain. (T, 2.03)

Similarly, in Wittgenstein's later thought, the life of the signs is their use. (R, 5; PI §432)¹⁷ There is no something different, no third emergent thing beyond them like a soul standing *separately* from the body as an active centre that bodily actions are pointing towards—or at least there is no such thing existing in the way we are tempted to think about it, i.e., as an *it*. We show the life of the signs by describing, i.e. saying, the use and 'nothing gets lost' by simply describing.

Although the example of how logical connectives disappear seems better fit to show how transcendental ethereals vanish in Wittgenstein's analysis, it gives an indication of how there can still be something to show, at least with regard to the person: the person becomes manifest as the life of the behaviours we can describe, just as the life of the signs becomes manifest in their use.¹⁸ Here we are neither pulled to thinking of the person as an independent, transcendental condition and metaphysical subject, but neither are we pulled towards imagining that the person vanishes completely into flat, describable behaviour.

In this way of thinking about the person, a full-fledged dissenting view would be an incorrect assessment of Wittgenstein, but even if the mind is not merely the simple sum of performances, Wittgenstein would still hold that those performances are all that we can *say* about the mind. Wittgenstein's challenge to Polanyi here is that by developing an epistemology of tacit knowing, and using it to further characterize the mind, Polanyi is developing a myth. He is either repeating what is obvious in a way that makes it sound like an explanation, or attempting to say what cannot be said, and therefore speaking nonsense.

Wittgenstein warns that 'In philosophy one is in constant danger of producing a myth of symbolism, or a myth of mental processes. Instead of simply saying what anyone knows and must admit.' (*Zettel*, §212) This would constitute Wittgenstein's response to Polanyi's accusation that Ryle, or he, mistakes the symbol for that which it symbolizes: the symbol for a purportedly emergent third thing provides no more information than we get by simply describing what is there before us—the clues or performances; it does not represent something different or new.

Here it does not help to say that a symbol acts as a metaphor that presents a reality we cannot speak about directly. For Wittgenstein, if a metaphor or simile means something then that meaning would have to be able to be cashed out in literal language. 'A simile must be the simile for *something*.'¹⁸ A symbol can summarise descriptions, in which case it does not provide any more information than those particular descriptions, or, if a symbol does presents something independently existent, then that something exists at the same level as other existent things and cannot be explained as a construction from a level below. 'Grief', for instance, might summarize a group of behaviours that we can describe, if so it can be fully characterized by them; but if we discuss it as something independent, then it cannot find the conceptual justification for its existence as an independent entity on those subsidiary characterizations.

4.2 Tacit integration

Both Wittgenstein and Polanyi were keenly aware of a tacit dimension of thought. As Rolnick points out, Wittgenstein acknowledges that 'what we do in our language-game always rests on a tacit presupposition' (PI, p.179; R, 5) and he recognises that the 'tacit conventions on which the understanding of everyday language depends are enormously complicated.' (T, 4.002; R, 5) But Wittgenstein believed that there is a temptation here to provide 'explanations' that are void of content. He might say that the tacit, as functioning tacitly, could not be brought into the light of knowledge without vilifying distortion. In addition, focal knowledge could not be expressed in terms of its clues without distortion. Rather than do something like develop a theory of how tacit knowing works, which can look to the clues to justify or explain the existence of an integration, Wittgenstein says,

What we have rather to do is to *accept* the everyday language-game, and to note *false* accounts of the matter *as* false. The primitive language-game which children are taught needs no justification; attempts at justification need to be rejected. (PI, p.200)

A look at how close Wittgenstein and Polanyi are in their recognition of tacit knowledge, and where they diverge with regard to the construction of a

theory of knowing or the induction to an entity, can be seen in these short passages in *Zettel*:

Get a human being to give angry, proud, ironical looks; and now veil the face so that only the eyes remain uncovered-- in which the whole expression seemed concentrated: their expression is now surprisingly *ambiguous*.

'We *see* emotion.'—As opposed to what? —We do not see facial contortions and make inferences from them (like a doctor framing a diagnosis) to joy, grief, boredom. We describe a face immediately as sad, radiant, bored, even when we are unable to give any other description of the features. —Grief, one would want to say, is personified in the face. (*Zettel*, §224,5)

We see here in Wittgenstein a sense of how the tacit comes into play. The person is personified in the body in the way that grief is personified in the face. But even though the tension around the eyes, a wrinkle in the brow, the way the lips are together but the jaw is relaxed, may all go into our seeing an emotion, such as grief, Wittgenstein is reluctant to theorize about *how* this is done.

Wittgenstein has a keen sense of the immediacy of our awareness of the emotion, what Polanyi calls the 'vectoral' quality of tacit integration (KB, 141). We are brought directly to the grief—and perhaps also to the recognition of a soul—but we cannot say how for Wittgenstein. If we try to vocalise the purported integration, we are importing structures, processes and categories that have no place. For Wittgenstein, we can merely describe the features of the face and know that if we cover all but the eyes we can no longer discriminate the expression. But if someone came along and said that a grieving face was a peaceful face, then we could point out clues to show them how they are mistaken, but they still might disagree.¹⁹

Polanyi and Wittgenstein were both very sensitive to the clues that are subsidiarily present in any phenomena that they describe. Polanyi builds structure and talks about an integration to a focus that is beyond the clues, an integration to something that is real, something transcendent that we commit ourselves to discovering. (R, 12) Wittgenstein usually stops at the description of the clues, but as we see here in *Zettel* even when he does not call into question the object that Polanyi would call the 'joint focus' of the clues, he does not move forward to theorize about *how* clues or signs come together and present something beyond themselves. It is clear that Wittgenstein recognises something like a tacit background contributing to the life of behaviours; just as he sees a connection between grief and bodily expressions of sorrow:

'Grief' describes a pattern which recurs, with different variations, in the weave of our life. If a man's bodily expression of sorrow and joy alternated,

say with the ticking of a clock, here we should not have the characteristic formation of the pattern of sorrow or of the pattern of joy. (PI, p.174)²⁰

Yet Wittgenstein would maintain that Polanyi's theory of *how* an integration works is empty and leads to nonsense.

4.3 Pseudo-explanation or making the tacit explicit?

In discussing the recognition of an emergent gestalt (to use Polanyi's language), in part II of the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein's reflections wander between two sorts of epistemological explanations: causal explanations that describe what is going on in physical reality, and conceptual explanations. The first sort of explanation constitutes a legitimate inquiry, but Wittgenstein is not interested in it;²¹ and the second sort of inquiry should not really explain anything so much as explain it away. For Wittgenstein, the proper way to go about conceptual explanation is to lay out the concepts in such a way that what was formerly perceived as a problem no longer appears as such. Hence he dissolves rather than solves metaphysical questions by correcting the missteps of language.

If Wittgenstein were to explicitly lodge complaints against Polanyi's epistemology it could thus take two forms. First, he could imagine that Polanyi is attempting to provide a causal, scientific explanation; second, he can imagine that Polanyi is providing a conceptual justification. With regard to the first, Wittgenstein might admit that something like integration is going on at an ontological level, but a proper causal explanation would be built on ground rough enough to provide criteria for when an integration succeeds or fails.²² He would see Polanyi's explanation as being so general that it is actually tautological; saying that clues integrate into a focal awareness would be considered as empty as saying 'There are parts and wholes'. With no traction as a causal hypothesis, Wittgenstein would immediately understand Polanyi as attempting to provide the second sort of explanation, a conceptual one. But here Wittgenstein would claim that Polanyi's enterprise is misdirected. If a successful explanation were provided, it would address causal rather than conceptual matters; it would be a hypothesis of psychology as a natural science, and not be the sort of explanation that seems to slip so easily into the establishment of *a priori* structures and entities.

Wittgenstein would see Polanyi's epistemology, and much philosophy of mind, as the imposition of structure where we have no grasp of what that structure actually adds to the description. Wittgenstein would thus call into question the very project of Polanyi's philosophic epistemology, and any philosophical anthropology that might come

from Polanyi's work. For Wittgenstein, Polanyi's attempt to produce explanatory structures merely redescribes what is there to be plainly seen and admitted; there is no more to say than what we do simply by describing what we see focally.

4.4 Is the tacit ineffable?

Polanyi affirms that we can identify many of the clues that go into a focal integration, and so, for Polanyi, much of what is tacit can be made explicit. But Polanyi also acknowledges that when something is acting as a clue to a focus it plays a completely different role than it does when we focus *on it* in isolation. This is the point Wittgenstein would exploit to push the tacit into the ineffable.

Polanyi discusses two 'mutually exclusive' modes of being aware and knowing, the knowing of indwelling and focal knowing. (KB, 223) But what our language explicitly captures is focal knowing. Even in discussing clues we must turn our focus towards them, and this instantly changes our mode of knowing them. How then can we connect the purported tacit structure with what we experience as focal? We can look *at* the lens of the telescope that we have been looking *through*, but then it is no longer playing the same role, we have objectified it into a focal *thing* that we can once again describe like any other focal thing.

Just as our focal knowing objectifies, our indwelling bears upon a focal object, e.g., what we experience looking through the telescope. We can never catch a clue performing its tacit role, i.e., we cannot catch it *acting* subsidiarily towards a focus. *That* can never be focal knowledge without killing its purported performance in the objectification. Polanyi discusses 'marginal' clues, which might appear to be an exception. (KB, 140) We might recognise a marginal clue while we are in the act of performing a skill or while we are focused on a joint meaning. For instance, we might notice the letters while focused on the meaning of a word. But, even here, to the extent we are making the clue explicit, we are dividing our attention to focus on it as an outside observer would, and are not catching it working together with other clues in its tacit role.

When some particular feature of the face is being attended from to see grief, for example, it is not acting as an object and what it is doing cannot be directly objectified. When it is subsidiary and seen *through* to a focal object, it is not an object, and not even an 'it'. It is neither subjective nor objective, for Polanyi; it is neither a something nor a nothing. And, in opposition to Polanyi, Wittgenstein would see this as a real limit on our ability to say anything about clues as such or about any tacit process that might act as a condition for the possibility of knowledge.

If we go strictly by what we see focally, there are no levels visible; there is only the one level of the focally existent. We cannot say anything about how our recognition of one 'clue' goes into the presentation of a higher or different entity. For Wittgenstein this ineffability of the tacit is an impenetrable barrier to saying anything about how what is tacit works to bring us knowledge. Ultimately Wittgenstein would see Polanyi's epistemology as an attempt to express transcendental conditions that are ineffable (for the arch-realists) or nonexistent (for the dissenters).

5. The price of silence

Wittgenstein might admit that there is a person shown, but there are several important things Wittgenstein loses in his refusal to develop an epistemology and further characterize the person beyond descriptions of linguistic and physical behaviour. These losses come into relief when Wittgenstein is contrasted with Polanyi.

5.1 Reality as *telos*

One important thing Wittgenstein loses is a conception of *reality* that is stable, enduring and independent from what we can say about it. He loses a level of reality that cannot be captured in our descriptions of what lies open before us. For Polanyi this means that Wittgenstein loses grasp of reality entirely, since anything real is such that it can manifest in new ways yet to be discovered. Wittgenstein loses this sense of an independent reality when he abandons the notion that the clues we describe are pointing to something beyond themselves that is manifested through them.

Rolnick notes that Polanyi's 'epistemological anthropology is rooted in *commitment* to a *reality* that is transcendent, universal, and teleological in relation to the self and to the community that nurtures and trains persons.' (R, 11) Rolnick sees that Polanyi's personal commitment to this transcendent reality prevents his philosophy from collapsing into the perspective of 'the mere subjective self' (R, 12) 'For Polanyi,' Rolnick states, 'inquiries normally display an unflinching belief in the reality of the referent.' (R, 13) Wittgenstein can speak of no such safeguard.

One might think that this pushes Wittgenstein over the brink into subjectivism, but he cuts off the discussion before we can get to this precipice. Since we cannot talk about the connection between language and the world, language and the world come together as a piece and the question of subjective idealism *v.* objective realism no longer makes sense for Wittgenstein.²³ But the cost here is that he loses a conception of reality that can act as a clear guiding *telos* for our intelligent activities.

It is precisely because Wittgenstein cannot expand the conversation into how our knowledge connects with the world through tacit structures, and because he has no such safeguard as Polanyi's conception of an independently real referent, that Wittgenstein is restricted to the objectively describable. The particular referent becomes located at an intersection in a matrix of sentences where utterance and world exist together in a living language-game. It makes no sense to talk about something, i.e. referents or persons, outside the matrices of our language-games in the *Investigations*, just as it made no sense to talk about them outside the sentences of science in the *Tractatus*.

5.2 Truth

Another connected loss is that Wittgenstein cannot talk about truth. The ineffability of truth comes as a corollary of the ineffability of the tacit. Discussing truth would involve discussing how sentences connect with, express, or reveal the world. Here Wittgenstein refuses to theorize, and without postulating some structure or mechanism, he is lost when it comes to describing how, rather than that, truth arises. Rolnick sees the price of this loss as especially high, because it can adversely affect progress. Wittgenstein might argue that a discussion about how new truth arises would at best give us more description and not provide a formula for action. Certainly pure description alone does not get us very far in motivating change. The cost may come, however, if Wittgenstein weakens our allegiance to truths and *telos*; this effect, as Rolnick notes more explicitly elsewhere, could impair both the progress of knowledge and the progress of civilisation. (R, 13)²⁴

Speaking as Polanyi does, one can risk mistaking an illusion for reality. (See 6.2 and 6.3 below.) But there are many virtues to knowing how truths arise. It can give us a sense of our fallibility while at the same time preserving an anti-sceptical allegiance to discovering truth. Knowing more about the process of tacit integration and how a focal knowledge manifests assists in guiding us to see *how* we understand in terms of a picture or interpretative structure. This can give us room to step back and see what other integrations might be possible. It can also let us know that we can understand more than we can explicitly see, and so we can know when we should look for more clues currently hidden from view. It shows us that our bedrock intuitions are not unsupported, but neither are they entirely unanalyzable. Our spade may be turned, but only for now.

5.3 Person

In Wittgenstein, no transcendent, independently real, guiding *telos* and no epistemological structure for discovery dovetail into an obfuscation of our

attempts to understand the person as an independent entity. Polanyi can say the real referent, and the person, can manifest itself in as yet unexpected ways. That sort of talk no longer makes sense for Wittgenstein. It doesn't mean the unexpected won't happen. It's just beyond us to say that the *same* thing is back there producing this new result. The person may once again dissolve into non-existence or into multiple momentary existences, each manifesting in what is already there to describe.

In Polanyi's view, we can explicitly understand the person in terms of its orientation, and not just in terms of current performances. We can know its mind as a real entity and so we can see which direction it might move in. This is objectifying, but it is done with the awareness that what we are looking to is beyond any particular objectification, and will surprise us.

Knowing a person involves constructing conceptions about that person and having concomitant expectations. It involves the attribution of mental states to others and it also involves self-reflection, i.e., the ability to reflect on a self as a focal object with mental states or dispositions. These objectifications help us understand others and also help us come to self-understanding and self-definition.

Hans Sluga helps again here by showing that Wittgenstein's inability to form a conception of the person is a real limitation in Wittgenstein's philosophy. The worst mark of this limitation is that Wittgenstein does not account for all the sorts of sentences he himself uses. Sluga divides Wittgenstein's sentences about the self into four categories. 'Consider...' Sluga says, 'the following types of utterance...

- (1) 'My arm is broken' and 'I have blue eyes';
- (2) 'I am in pain' and 'I am seeing the table';
- (3) 'I am not a genius, I am only a talent'... and 'knowing myself as I do, I will now act this way'...and finally,
- (4) 'I am L.W.' (Sluga, 1996, p.345)

The first sort of utterance includes statements about the self as a body, which are just as objective as any statement about the world. For example, 'I have a bump on my forehead.' (Sluga, 335; Wittgenstein, BBK, 66,67) In the second sort, the 'I' may have 'no referential function at all'. (Sluga, 335) For example, 'I have pain' acts as a substitution for something like a cry or exclamation. The third and fourth sorts, however, are statements of identification that 'seem to be talking about the mind rather than the body.' But then Sluga asks, 'How is that possible without assuming there is, after all, a mind or self to which we can attribute

objective characteristics?' (346) Sluga believes that these utterances have the function of defining

a self with a location in space and time, a self that has a fixed character, that has desires, purposes, goals, and hopes. It is this self that is identified in statements of identification. (348)

This self, according to Sluga, 'is not a real thing, it is rather a conception and image we construct, in terms of which we make sense of ourselves, of our states, experiences, and thoughts and in terms of which we project a coherent future for ourselves.' Nevertheless,

We are, thus, forced to modify Wittgenstein's account of the self by adducing a notion of self-image or self-conception as being inherently appealed to in our 'I'-utterances. (348)

Sluga states his belief that this self is 'not a real object existing with causal powers and in this sense Wittgenstein was surely right when he said the self is not an object,' (348) but in Polanyi's view, and in Sluga's own if he wishes to remain coherent, these conceptions do point back to some other higher self that is real and does have causal powers. More than this, we seem to be saying something about it.

5.4 More to Say

Even as a representative of the arch-realist position, which recognises that there is something to show for Wittgenstein, Sluga must go beyond Wittgenstein's showing to form a positive, sayable, conception of the person. And, although Sluga is inclined to say that this conception is an illusion, it bears, somehow, on the real person, who is neither an object nor a nothing. If this conception did not bear upon a real person or self, how could we possibly 'make sense of ourselves' in terms of this fictional self? So by speaking about this conception, we are in some sense speaking about what the conception bears upon.

It could be that Sluga, although attempting to be faithful to Wittgenstein's insights, is slipping because he dares to tread on ground that Wittgenstein avoids. Speaking as Sluga does draws us back to forming explicit conceptions of a metaphysical subject—what we can't talk about—and this is different from seeing the person as the life of the behaviours we describe in language-games, or simply recognising that 'The human body is the best picture of the human soul' (PI, p.178; R, 7).

Sluga is saying that the third and fourth sorts of utterances require a positive conception of a higher, unsayable self, at least to the extent that some person is creating these objectifications, these fictional 'persons'. Sluga's response to this lacuna in Wittgenstein's thought is to suggest that one go back to someone like Nietzsche or forward to someone like M. Foucault to see what a positive

conception of a self-creating self might look like. (Sluga, 349,350) But, with more unflinching loyalty to the referent and its capacity for *self-revelation* as well as self-creation, we would do better to go to Polanyi. Polanyi not only recognises that there is something higher to be revealed, an active centre that is neither a fiction nor merely an object, but he openly acknowledges that our behaviours, activities and conceptions do bear upon it and can be dwelt in to make it better known.

6. The price of speech

Polanyi gives us back metaphysics; Wittgenstein complains that we were drawn into metaphysics because 'a *picture* held us captive'. (PI, §115; R, 4) It may be the case that as soon as we attempt to speak about how we know or what is higher we are drawn into a picture, and although we can try to come up with a better picture, any picture can tempt us towards undesirable consequences. Above, in section four, I described how Wittgenstein might criticize Polanyi's epistemology of tacit knowing by means of argument. Here I will describe a price of speech that could manifest in Polanyi's philosophy simply because, from Wittgenstein's view, we are again being seduced by metaphysical pictures. I will also show how Wittgenstein manages to avoid the same charge.

6.1 A splitting of the I

The price that Polanyi must pay seems to be a risk that *any* attempt to explain the person must encounter as soon as one considers it something higher or different than what we can describe focally as a thing or action. As we see with Sluga, we start to imagine an invisible, indescribable, causal *other* split from visible, describable, causal experience. Polanyi attempts to avoid this split, by unifying our knowing awareness and our being in indwelling. Polanyi, indeed, does a superb job at overcoming the problems in dualistic splits that have manifested in different forms going all the way back to Plato. But Polanyi, too, from Wittgenstein's perspective, is motivated by the same sort of metaphysical picture that, in Kant for instance, leads to a separation of noumenal and phenomenal, and the price is a split between who we are and what we can know—which limits what we can know about who we are. Then, as a result of this split—or even as the result of a subsequent denial of this split—we can be perched on a slippery slope that can lead to the elimination of the person as anything higher or different than the material or empirical or phenomenal.

It seems that once we speak about how we know, we begin an objectification that leaves us open to the atomist's disintegration of what's higher into what's lesser. A Derrida is thus epistemologically justified in following a Husserl and eliminating the

transcendental ego as a 'supplementary nothing', and leaving left over the merely empirical ego. There is no evidence that can stop the reduction, because all speakable, causal content becomes drained from the purported ethereal.

Wittgenstein seems to be attacking ethereals, but his criticism runs even deeper. He is attempting to undercut pictures that cause us to split ourselves into an invisible something and an empirical something. He sees that if he starts to speak in the way Daly or Sluga do, he is already being drawn into a picture that leads to the 'nonsense' of philosophical divisions. These sorts of pictures tempt one to either build a metaphysics or tempt one to reduce what we experience to something other than what it is. He tries to break out of these pictures by simply describing primary language-games and leaving it at that.²⁵

Polanyi's epistemology makes significant progress in overcoming the division between knowing and being. He thus does well at steering clear of many of dualism's dangers. But, by Wittgenstein's light, Polanyi still puts us at considerable risk of recidivism. Not only do we face the risk of being wrong about what we do say, even if we are right, the pictures Polanyi's epistemology bring to mind could still put us in the precarious position that heirs of Plato, Descartes, Kant and Husserl found themselves.

6.2 Knowing and Being

The risk that Polanyi faces by speaking begins to become visible when we turn our tools for knowing back upon ourselves. The difference between *seeing* a gestalt and *being* a gestalt puts into relief the problems that can arise with Polanyi's picture.

According to Polanyi, we know of the existence of other minds and persons, who are real rather than fictions, through an integration from clues or performances to a knowing mind, but is this also how we know ourselves? Do we dwell in the clues of *our* performances in order to know ourselves? In Polanyi's way of understanding, is the only real difference between understanding ourselves as a person and understanding someone else that we have *more* clues—some tacit, some explicit—than someone else might have? We want to answer 'no', that by *being* ourselves we know ourselves differently, but then we are hard pressed to justify this answer, even taking Polanyi's notion of indwelling into consideration. And if one then says 'yes, we do know ourselves in the same way we know others,' then we seem to be in a picture that can either split our knowing from our being or, if we limit who we are to what we can know, we can be drawn back towards a resolute reduction.

Polanyi's route to knowing can motivate a split between who we are as an unobjectifiable

intentional consciousness and who we are as a knowable active centre, i.e., as the 'curiously unsubstantial' joint meaning of our bodies, persons with attributes and dispositions.²⁶ Rolnick begins to alert us of the danger of this split when he warns of a possible 'conceptual muddle' in recognising various persons and levels of personhood within the person. (R, 15) At the root of this muddle is the blurring of the difference between *how* we know and *what* we know, between the epistemological and the ontological. And this problem comes into its starkest relief when we attempt to distinguish how we know who we are from who we actually are.

For Polanyi, in knowing we unify groups of clues into a joint meaning, for example, instead of two separate images we see a 3D picture. We also see organisms whose parts come together in a comprehensive entity. In both cases the sum is greater than the parts. The 3D image gives us information we cannot get from the pictures taken separately; the higher principles which guide the actions of the organism cannot be reduced to the particular organs.

Now, when we see the parts as a unified whole, *looking at* the 3D image or *looking at* the organism, we have the sense that there is a reality there that is beyond the particulars, which can manifest itself in different ways: our seeing is revealing a being and is a way of knowing it. But, as Polanyi notes, even illusions have the same integrative structure as that which presents us with reality. (KB, 163,166) So, three problems can be stacked upon each other. First, the blurring: there is the problem of knowing when an integration is an illusion and distinguishing it from when an integration presents a reality. Then, the muddling: since multiple integrations are possible depending on which sets of clues one is attending from, there is the problem of a possible muddle when we attempt to understand the person as one unified whole. And, lastly, the splitting: even when the perceptual gestalt is revealing a real, unified entity that is not a projection, there is a difference between *seeing* this gestalt of clues and *being* this gestalt, which would again separate the personified person, i.e., the higher person revealed in body, behaviours and conceptions (Sluga's fiction) from the completely unobjectifiable intentional consciousness.

6.3 Overcoming blurring, muddling and splitting

The first two problems require investigation into what sorts of explicit criteria we can use to verify when the reality we see is indeed an independent something being manifested, and to what extent we must rely on tacit validation for this knowledge. To tell when we have got hold of reality here requires a case by case investigation. And here Wittgenstein would question the additional value discussing tacit

or 'imponderable evidence'.²⁷ (PI, p.228) The third problem is something Polanyi may not at first see as a problem, since he is comfortable with his new sort of dualism, but the dangers that he elegantly neutralises in explaining a Cartesian dualism can reappear at another level.

Polanyi explains the truth behind Descartes' distinction between spiritual and material substances by distinguishing between the awareness we have when we dwell in the body and look *through* it (spiritual) from the focal awareness that we have when we objectify it by looking *at* it directly (material). (KB, 147,148&223) How we know seems to solve the problem of a mind-body split. Dwelling in clues of the body points us towards focal integrations, which can reveal the higher reality of minds and persons. But we are drawn to a picture like that of electricity travelling on wire, or moving from sky to tree to ground, and we lose the unity of being the *consciousness* that we are and the *person* that we are together. The split then is between this personified person with its dispositions and hopes, which has objectifiable content, and the completely unobjectifiable intentional consciousness, whose being is extended into the physical world *via* indwelling. Together they make up the higher person who we actually are, but how can we conceive of them as being together? Polanyi gives us a sense of how body is infused with spirit, but how is the spirit infused with the body?

We want to say, in a way similar to Sluga, that the intentional consciousness is more real, and more *us*, than what clues and their joint significance reveal. But the pure intentional consciousness is not the real person unless it has or—in some sense—*is* the person that has dispositions. Our picture does not give us any grasp on how the intentional consciousness and personified person are unified in the higher person standing above the clues. How do the body, behaviours and joint meanings (including conceptions) we dwell in bear upon the higher person that includes this unobjectifiable moving through? And in what sense does this consciousness bare itself through the clues we can ascertain? We cannot say.

In knowing ourselves we cannot reflect on this intentional consciousness directly, even indwelling does not help. To know and discuss our own minds it seems we also have to utilize the same tools for understanding that we use to know other things, because we, too, are limited to speaking about what we can know focally. We are again drawn to silence when it comes to describing what that which does the dwelling in consists in above and beyond what the natural sciences could describe.

A quotation that highlights this issue is cited by Rolnick:

To ask how I would think if I were brought up outside any particular society, is as meaningless as to ask how I would think if I were born in no particular body, relying on no particular sensory and nervous organs. (PK, 323; R, 10)

Here Polanyi sounds very close to Wittgenstein. What can meaningfully be said about the person is intrinsically embodied in the sorts of relations that we can objectively describe. Conceptions that we have are the gestalt of the embodied self, and the conceptions bear upon a higher self that is actively participating in a particular society with a particular body. What then can be meaningfully said about us as intentional consciousness or as creative unobjectifiable consciousness?

Being ourselves includes intentional consciousness *and* having dispositions that our behaviours mark. Polanyi's route to knowing still leads us to a picture that can split who we are and what we can know, whether that knowledge be tacit or explicit. We can have no direct *knowledge* about ourselves as intentional consciousness. And with the intentional consciousness split off from what we can know, we are prone to a muddying of the distinction between *how* we know (through subsidiary structures; clues) and *what* know (the focal object, e.g., the personified person) that can effect a slip back into a reductionist view. Without the counterbalance of an unobjectifiable intentional consciousness that we can explicitly know, the weight of the personified person that we can know can start us slipping down the slope that reduces the person to body and behaviours.

6.4 Wittgenstein evades Parmenides' razor

The muddying of *how* we know and *what* we know may at first glance seem to be more of a problem for Wittgenstein than for Polanyi, for isn't this what Ryle is doing? Isn't Ryle being resolutely faithful to Wittgenstein by mistaking the symbols, i.e., the how, for what is symbolized? After all, it is Wittgenstein who believes that, 'an "inner process" stands in need of outward criteria.' (PI §580; R, 8) Doesn't this lead to a muddying of signified and sign, and of the known and knowing?

With regard to the person and the mind, Ryle may fall into this trap, but Wittgenstein avoids it. Wittgenstein sidesteps this problem when he says, 'It is correct to say "I know what you are thinking", and wrong to say "I know what I am thinking".' (PI, p.222) He thereby ducks what might be called 'Parmenides razor', since Parmenides believed that 'The same is there for knowing and for being.'²⁸

Polanyi builds a structure that is readily applicable to our knowing ourselves as to our knowing someone else. Wittgenstein separates out how we know the activities of other minds from how we experience our own. This is the thrust of why I

cannot use the word 'know' about my own thoughts. The word is not merely redundant, it doesn't apply. It is not that Wittgenstein is saying 'Of course *I know!* It's *my* thought.' For him, we do not have a grasp of what knowing would mean in that use. I can know what you are thinking, because I can be mistaken and corrected. That cannot happen when I am expressing my own thinking.²⁹ The danger I am pointing out for Polanyi is that he leads us to a picture where we are on the horns of a dilemma because Polanyi does not split knowing from being, and choosing either horn runs the risk of allowing space for the reductionist's view. One may split consciousness from the knowable and then identify the knowable and being, or one may *not* split consciousness from the knowable but still identify the knowable with being. In either case our tools of knowing, by parts and clues, seem to reduce focal being to subsidiary parts plus mechanical process. Wittgenstein, in contrast, splits the knowable from being by saying we cannot know our own thoughts, but that doesn't lead him to doubt their existence. By not theorizing about knowing, Wittgenstein evades Parmenides razor and avoids the identification of knowing with being and any reduction of what is to what we can know.

We have, then, a picture within a picture. First there is the dualist picture of spirit or consciousness separate from matter or focal things, and then there is the picture that material entities are explained by analysis into parts. Once you start explaining something in terms of parts or subsidiary clues—even tacit clues—you may risk dissolving that something into its parts or seeing it as a projection, especially if there is no hard evidence that can be brought to bear to show when we've grasped something emergent beyond the parts that is not an illusion. Even the picture that suggests we know *via* tacit clues is the sort of picture of knowing that can lead, resolutely, into Ryle's view and the elimination of the mind or person. We can see how this might happen by looking at the resemblance between Polanyi's tacit knowing and functionalism in the philosophy of mind; a functionalist account of the mind can be considered reductive rather than emergent account.

Of course, Polanyi can avoid these dangers. He can refuse to limit who we are to what we can know, and in effect this is what he does do, but then the emphasis falls to a split between knowing the gestalt (content) and being the gestalt (intent). This split can be benign rather than vicious—or even if it is vicious, it may be intrinsic to our human nature and its limits; it may be an inevitable consequence of our 'middle-range status', as Rolnick put it. (R, 7)

Polanyi doesn't make the reductionist's mistake. He preserves the intentional consciousness by describing the experience we have of ourselves as a

tacit indwelling, i.e., a different *sort* of knowledge than the explicit knowledge upon which scientifically dissectible knowledge is based. So, like Wittgenstein, he changes the quality of our knowledge of ourselves, but chooses to keep the word 'know' where Wittgenstein would abandon it. Polanyi is, however, staking out territory on a slippery slope because you have to have a picture like Polanyi's before you can, resolutely, make the reductionist's mistake. If our access to reality is *via* integrations, and integration becomes seen as the result of our knowing processes together with the clues, rather than the simple recognition of an ontologically existing entity, *then* the reality is prone to be dissected into clues and parts, particularly after an occult ethereal holding them together drops out as adding nothing to our knowledge. The residual image of this picture becomes the source of the identification of behaviour (clues) and mind.

We can now see how any 'resolute' approach that eliminates the person is succumbing to the residue of the sort of a picture that that lends itself to an atomism and precipitates reductionism. Ryle may start with a picture of knowing prone to this slide and may therefore be making the reductionist's mistake. Wittgenstein, however, is attempting to undercut the picture and therefore we cannot say he is making the mistake, at least not in the same way. Wittgenstein does not give us special access to ourselves, but we can acknowledge the ontological reality of ourselves, just as we can acknowledge ontological realities other than ourselves, by not buying into the picture. Wittgenstein's silence about how we know the person might actually be considered an anti-reductionist move. It is when we start talking about parts that make up wholes or clues that go into integrations that we start to imagine that the focal thing present to us can vanish into its subsidiary conditions.

Grief is an example of how Wittgenstein approaches a purported third and separate thing. Wittgenstein does not deny that the clues are relevant, but forestalls the development of a theory explaining grief as an integration. He also does not deny that there are other legitimate language-games that allow us to get a handle on grief as an object. Thus there seems to be hope for a discussion about people and values that is at least as informative as discussions about animals and hurricanes. But this analogy has its limits. The person, as a first person perspective that cannot be objectified, is more radically inexpressible than grief. The metaphysical person is beyond objectifying discussion. Its recognition may be preserved in Wittgenstein's reticence. The slope becomes slippery as soon as we start to build structure and spray out words.

Rolnick says 'our own understanding of the meaning of the person ultimately must rest on our ability to see the Gestalt.' (R, 14) But what is the difference between *seeing* the Gestalt and *being* the Gestalt? Can that be put in words? And, if we try, when we tease out the epistemological (the clues or subsidiary structure) from the ontological (our dwelling in the clues to presence a focal object), is there any *substance* left over for the soul?

7. Ways to go on

To speak or not to speak: that is the question: whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of metaphysical nonsense or... or can we find a way to break out of the trough that language would have us follow and think anew the relation between knowing and being? Wittgenstein's criticisms should not stop Polanyi but should warn him that it can be dangerous to put new wine in old skins.

A major motivation on Wittgenstein's part is to avoid a jump to *a priori* explanations. One might make a hypothesis in a particular case or set of cases, but that is different from buying into the distortions language can bring and thus seeing what is happening as the product of an *a priori* structure, or as revealing something that exists in-itself.

Of course we don't know anything *a priori* for Polanyi, we know through clues, some irretrievably tacit; and what exists, though it may gain an independence from its necessary conditions, is still emergent. So both Wittgenstein and Polanyi move against traditional notions of an *a priori* or transcendent realm. But concepts do tend to divorce themselves from any *a posteriori* roots and come to interrelate in an *a priori* conceptual domain.

Wittgenstein says, 'Our problem is not a causal but a conceptual one' (PI, p.203); and when Wittgenstein starts to sound like Polanyi in giving an explanation he will catch himself: he'll say, 'But that is a hypothesis.' (PI, p.216) It's all right to give a hypothesis or scientific theory but not to follow some *a priori* direction that our concepts are taking us in. The constant confusion between issues for science and issues for language is what Wittgenstein wishes to remain vigilant against, but a strong division here may be a mistake that harkens back to a strict separation between the psychological and the logical that the positivists inherited from Wittgenstein and Frege—the very mistake that Polanyi attempts to overcome with his notion of tacit integration.

Polanyi begins with scientific theorizing, with real causal questions of how we know, but he moves to what sound like *a priori* solutions. This is because he recognises that those causal processes provide us with meanings that are personal yet which disclose something objective; they provide something that

liberates us from the contingent and reductively causal and which gives us access to a higher reality. But Polanyi, too, stays away from the idea that these higher levels exist before their necessary subsidiary conditions, such as matter, exist, and he thus stays away from the idea that higher entities can be known *a priori*; such speculations would violate his commitment to emergence.

Polanyi affirms a notion of essence, and this seems irrevocably tied to the in-itself and the *a priori*. But the in-itself does not exist without subsidiary and supersubordinate otherness, and the categories *a priori* and *a posteriori* may no longer fit. Just as the category of *personal* takes priority over the subjective *v.* objective distinction, (R, 11,12; PK, 300) something else might come first. I'm not suggesting that we reject the *a priori* as redundant or absurd. I am suggesting that as a balance to the tendency to *a priori* and to hypostasize, on one hand, and the tendency to see mere matter or flux on the other, more thinking needs to be done about what it would mean for essences to be known *a posteriori*. Such an act of knowing seems to be, at once, both creation and discovery. Inquiry here might help us answer questions about how we can have a sense for what is independently real and how we can genuinely know each other, and ourselves.

Although Wittgenstein resists the metaphysical directions that theorizing about the person will pull us toward, he provides a rich environment for deepening our understanding of ourselves by continually calling our habits of thinking into question. By extending the say *v.* show distinction into Wittgenstein's later philosophy, I have suggested that there is more to show about the person than can be stated explicitly in a conceptual framework. In the description of language-games and in the rough ground of practices this something more may manifest.

We are unlike the sorts of somethings that language can more easily get a handle on. For both Wittgenstein and Polanyi, how we know a purported entity is going to make a difference to what we can say about it. Polanyi's epistemology shows that clues come together into a joint comprehension of meaning that can reveal real entities, active centres, with the ability to manifest themselves in different ways in the future. Wittgenstein, in contrast, cannot say anything about tacit processes that give us focal knowledge, nor can he say anything about the person beyond that which everyone must admit. Polanyi takes a risk in speaking. By not speaking, Wittgenstein may manage to avoid the reductionist's picture, but he shares in its barrenness when it comes to providing clear principles and firm identities.

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Notes:

1. References to Phil Rolnick's 'Wittgenstein and Polanyi on the Concept of the Person' (in this issue of *Appraisal*) will be indexed with an 'R'. 'T' will refer to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, C.K. Ogden translation Routledge, New York, 1955; 'PI', to the *Philosophical Investigations*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1991; and 'BBK' to *The Blue and Brown Books*, Harper and Row, New York, 1958.
2. In referring to *person*, I've taken on the convention in Rolnick's paper and used 'it' as a pronoun rather than the cumbersome, 'he or she'. This is yet another example of how language can encourage us to objectify that which is not an object in order to speak.
3. In an earlier version of his paper, Rolnick contrasted my view of Wittgenstein as an anti-metaphysician, with Fergus Kerr's view of Wittgenstein as a 'torchbearer', of sorts, for theology. Rolnick cited my, 'Wittgenstein and Polanyi: Metaphysics Reconsidered', in *Tradition and Discovery*, 26:1, 1999-2000 and used Fergus Kerr's *Theology after Wittgenstein*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1986.
4. Wittgenstein says, 'I will only make gas to expel old gas.' *Wittgenstein's Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics: Cambridge 1938*, C. Diamond, ed., University of Chicago Press, 1989, p.14.
5. Goldfarb, W., 1997, 'Metaphysics and Nonsense: On Cora Diamond's *The Realistic Spirit*', *Journal of Philosophical Research*, vol. XXII, pp. 57-73. He elaborated upon this topic at The Boston Colloquium for the Philosophy of Science, 'The Analytic Tradition: A Tribute to Burton Dreben', held October, 2000.
6. At the 2000 conference Goldfarb recognises the pejorative connotations of the adjective 'irresolute' and amended it to 'arch-realist'.
7. The 'dissenting view' was first called the 'resolute' position, but again this conjured a negative connotation for the opposing view, and so Goldfarb mitigated the language somewhat. The 'dissenting view', however, with the rise of 'New Wittgenstein' studies may soon become the received view.
8. Cora Diamond, 'Throwing Away the Ladder' in *The Realistic Spirit*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1991, p.181.
9. Engelmann, Paul, *Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1967, pp. 143,144.
10. See Hans Sluga's 'Wittgenstein on the Self' in the *Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 320-353. See section IV, pp. 322-327 for Wittgenstein's argument against this Cartesian conception.
11. See Lowney, 2001, 'The Silence after Kant' in *Wittgenstein and the Future of Philosophy: A Reassessment after 50 Years*, The Austrian Ludwig Wittgenstein Society, 2001, pp. 33-38.
12. In an earlier version of this paper, Rolnick used Daly's ideas to show how embedded the person is in forms of life. As Rolnick put it, 'Daly thinks that intending, believing, hoping, expecting, wishing, are for Wittgenstein, always embedded in language, custom,

- or institution.' See C.B. Daly, 1968, 'Polanyi and Wittgenstein,' in *Intellect and Hope: Essays in the Thought of Michael Polanyi*, T. Langford and W. Poteat, eds., Duke University Press, Durham.
13. In PI §350 Wittgenstein questions what it means to say 'It's 5 o'clock on the sun'.
 14. This is the position of the archangel of all resolute thinkers, Burton Dreben, who championed the dissenting view in its most consistent form.
 15. Wittgenstein in Engelmann, Paul, *Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1967, pp.143,144.
 16. 'The possibility of a proposition is based upon the principle of the representation of objects by signs. My fundamental thought is that the "logical constants" do not represent. That the *logic* of the facts cannot be represented.' (T, 4.0312)
 17. 'Every sign *by itself* seems dead. *What* gives it life?—In use it is *alive*. Is life breathed into it there?—Or is the *use* its life?' (PI, §432)
 18. Wittgenstein, L., 'Lecture on Ethics' in *Philosophical Occasions*, Kluge and Nordmann (eds.) Hackett Publishing, Cambridge, 1993, pp.42,43.
 19. Wittgenstein says, 'There is in general no such agreement over the question whether an expression of feeling is genuine or not.' (PI, p.227) There are no criteria available that would convince a skeptic that a third person is not merely pretending to feel an emotion. Similarly, there is always a way to go wrong in interpreting signposts. (PI §85, §198) This implies that the clues we can point to are not sufficient, and may not even be necessary for the establishment of the emotion, even though, for Wittgenstein, they are more intimately woven into the emotion as that which carries its life. For Polanyi, some of those clues must be necessary, or must at least have necessary analogs, otherwise it does not mean anything to say they are clues to that emotion.
 20. This certainly seems to be the start of an explanation or theory that Wittgenstein should not allow himself. Perhaps Wittgenstein would say here that he is saying no more than what is obvious, or perhaps it is a remark that begins to present a causal hypothesis, like others that he draws away from by reminding himself that going further along such lines is not his concern. (E.g., PI, p.193)
 21. In discussing the 'dawning of an aspect' in, e.g., a *Gestalt* switch from a duck to a rabbit, Wittgenstein made it clear that he was not interested in causal problems, but conceptual ones: 'Its causes are of interest to psychologists. We are interested in the concept and its place among the concepts of experience.' (PI, p.193) And, in response to an interlocutor: "'The phenomenon is at first surprising, but a physiological explanation of it will certainly be found.'"—Our problem is not a causal but a conceptual one.' (PI, p.203)
 22. The sort of criticism I imagine here is similar to Wittgenstein's criticism of Russell's multiple relation theory of judgment: Russell could not rule out nonsense and so he could not provide a criteria for sense. Also, we can see Wittgenstein's belief that there is not enough hold on rough ground when we attempt to judge the presence of an emotion in passages such as: 'There is in general no such agreement over the question whether an expression of feeling is genuine or not.' (PI, p.227)
 23. The reasons questions of realism and relativist cannot be considered by Wittgenstein, and why truth cannot be discussed, have to do with the way he understands language as the universal medium. See my dissertation, *The Tacit and the Ineffable: Frege and Wittgenstein on the Distinction between Language as a Calculus and Language as the Universal Medium*, Boston University Library, Boston, 2005, section 4.12, 'Is Relativism a Propensity of the UM View', pp.496-406.
 24. In an earlier version of his paper, Rolnick brought out this criticism of Wittgenstein more explicitly. Rolnick stated, 'While Wittgenstein recognises that new truth arises, he is far too reticent to attempt an account of how that might happen.' Rolnick expounds the ill effects of such a reticence in 'Polanyi's Progress: Transcendence, Universality, and Teleology' in *Tradition and Discovery* 29:2, 1993, pp. 13-31. See especially page 18.
 25. In primary language-games, such as those involving physiognomy, epistemic concepts have no place. On the difference between primary and secondary language-games see Hintikka and Hintikka, *Investigating Wittgenstein*, Basil Blackwell, New York, 1986, pp. 274-279.
 26. Polanyi uses the phrase 'curiously unsubstantial' in discussing the reality of universals as the joint meanings of instances. (KB, p.168) It seems equally appropriate in discussing the reality of the person.
 27. Wittgenstein asks, 'what does imponderable evidence accomplish?' and suggests that it does not give us criteria of verification. 'Imponderable evidence includes subtleties of glance, of gesture, of tone.' (PI, p.228)
 28. 'To gar auto noein estin to kai einai' can be translated in a way that equates knowability and being or in a way that equates thinkability and being. The first translation suits better my purposes, but even with the second it is arguable that, for Parmenides, knowability, thinkability and being all collapse together. Not knowing my own thought would then imply that there is no thought to be known.
 29. Consider also Wittgenstein's comment: 'That what someone else says to himself is hidden from me is part of the concept of "saying inwardly". Only "hidden" is the wrong word here; for if it is hidden from me, it ought to be apparent to him, he would have to know it. But he does not "know" it; only the doubt that exists for me does not exist for him.' (PI, pp. 220,221)

BOOK REVIEWS

Graham Dunstan Martin

Living on Purpose: Meaning, Intention and Value
Edinburgh, Floris Books, 2008, 202 pp., ISBN-10:
0863156320, ISBN-13: 978-0863156328, \$40, £20

Living on Purpose represents Graham Martin's second attempt to save the world from the evil materialists. Richard Dawkins, Edward O. Wilson, Francis Crick, Daniel Dennett, and Peter Atkins form a formidable army of 'dogmatic atheist materialists' who hold in their grip the current scientific interpretation of reality. They have reduced everything to matter, moved by a single class of causal explanation, the laws of physics. Human beings in this model are but complicated machines, elaborate assemblies of cells. Morality is a collective illusion, the ruse of 'selfish genes,' and our social traditions, political institutions, and moral customs are no more than ideas and thoughts — 'memes', similar to the 'genes' of our DNA — that spread from one mind to another, one cultural setting to the next, just as genes struggle for survival by imposing themselves across generations. Every last thing we are, we do, and we hold dear is reducible to parcels of energy driven by the same causal forces that cause stars to explode, animals to mutate, and civilisations to crumble.

If the conventional wisdom is accepted, then the universe is in deep trouble — no purpose guides it toward progress, no god is at the helm, human existence is meaningless, and free will, morality, and consciousness are but illusions of a misguided, unscientific mind. Martin calls the reigning ideology 'Vimfortism', (from the Latin *vim* or 'force' and *forte* 'by chance'). Martin is fearless in the face of this threat. He reconsiders each aspect of his meaningful universe and wrests it from the grip of these enemies of common sense.

First, he rescues consciousness. What does it mean to make the scandalous claim that consciousness does not exist? Does our moment to moment experience of the world not militate against this reductive fantasy? Isn't it rather the case that consciousness is the ground of existence? 'For if no one is there to experience anything, what does it mean to say that something exists?' he challenges. 'Consciousness founds both reality and value,' proclaims Martin (p. 17).

Next Martin moves on to vindicate free will, to ensure meaning and purpose in human life. Against the materialist claim that human beings do not act but are helpless bundles of energy at the mercy of automatic mechanical forces, Martin argues: 'the proof of free will is in the crossing of a busy road,

the cooking of a tasty meal, and the writing of a good book' (p. 44). It is as though those pesky materialists walk around town all morning, then insist that they have no feet, our hero reasonably asserts (p. 44).

We know we have freedom because we experience it indubitably. Our acts are not purposeless accidents of blind causal necessity, but are the result of the conscious application in our lives of our peculiar meanings and purposes. The evidence of our intentional steering of our individual lives is our consciousness of our purposes and their achievement. We experience our intentions, and feel acutely the successes and failures of our goals; so they must be real, asserts Martin.

Martin demolishes one by one every prejudice of modern science. Good and evil, God, and our moral ideas are not mere custom or fancy. The existence of the Golden Rule, a universally accepted value, proves that some values exceed local context. Then, with a sweep of rational audacity that rivals René Descartes' *Meditations* (three through six), Martin declares: If values can be universal, then the Universe must be rational, and who but a rational god would create a rational universe? 'Morality can be seen as fulfilling the Universe's most rational purpose; it ought to form part of an intelligible world which respects it; and [thus] it is reasonable to assume the existence of a divine power which guarantees that respect' (p. 63).

Since morality makes no sense without the free will that grants responsibility, Martin salvages the freedom of consciousness from the yoke of material causality. Not content with having saved God and the Universe (Martin always casts his ontological privilege points in upper case), Martin now turns his attention to the problem of evil, demonstrating that only the narrowest worldview sees this problem as insurmountable. Martin accounts a plethora of explanations, drawing from various religious and atheistic worldviews, to demonstrate that death and destruction need not challenge the existence of a benevolent creator. God may have withdrawn from the Universe, for the sake of a fully generous creation; God may not be omnipotent, but may lack the adequate power to solve the niggling problem of evil. Or perhaps evil is a blessing after all, and the world serves as a testing ground for moral worth, or as a millstone for the hardening of valiant souls. God may even be a process, rather than a completed being—an unfinished project to be perfected along the way, as he purges himself of evil.

A similar argument, from the burden of popular evidence, is then called upon to salvage the human

soul's immortality. Near Death Experiences (yes, in upper case) supply 'an enormous amount and variety of evidence in favour of life after death' (p. 126). Then the 'impressive weight' of testimony from dreams, visions, memories of the past, hypnotic regression, xenoglossy (the ability to speak a language of an earlier incarnation), and Wambach studies is rallied to support the theory of the reincarnation of souls. Sure, we cannot be certain how reliable the testimony is, or gauge with any accuracy how the expectations of the researcher effect the outcome of these studies, but the 'burden of proof' against life after death is no heavier than the 'burden of disproof,' insists Martin (p. 151). He closes his argument definitively: 'The evidence of Near Death Experience is so persuasive that the existence of an Afterlife [yes, again with the uppercase noun!] must surely be regarded as more probable than not' (p. 202).

Much of Martin's proof rests with the phenomenon. We experience it, so it must be so. Ironically, phenomenologists do not agree. Phenomenology does not enter into speculations about the absolute truth or falsity of human experiences; the point is to simply describe the subjective experience with as great an accuracy and as much naivety as can be mustered. The problem plaguing Martin's phenomenological account of consciousness, God, the universe, and the immortal soul is that he forgot to follow the founding guidelines of the investigative field, demanded by the Father of Phenomenology, Edmund Husserl. Martin has forgotten to check his presuppositions at the door!

This book will prove a delightful read for the popular audience that shares Martin's fears that science's ideas are a threat to their meaningful existence and their sacred values. But it will prove an utter disappointment to professional philosophers who demand greater rigour. The materialist worldview is but one of a great many possible models for the understanding of reality. All models have their grounding assumptions. Whether we choose to accept as adequate grounds for belief particle theory and quantum fields or the testimony of near death experience is a quandary that must be left to the individual thinker. Ironically, Martin grounds his rational, god-centred universe by the same method as the Father of modern materialism—in the undeniable experience of the Cartesian *cogito*.

Wendy Hamblet

Dan O'Brien

A Critique of Naturalistic Philosophies of Mind. Rationality and the Open-Ended Nature of Interpretation

Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter, 2007, 304 pp., ISBN -13: 978-0-7734-5266-4, ISBN-10: 0-7734-5266-4, \$119.95, £74.95

A Critique of Naturalistic Philosophies of Mind. Rationality and the Open-Ended Nature of Interpretation interprets the theoretical achievements within the realm of mind philosophy along a spatial metaphor: the manifest space of the scientific image.

Taking advantage of the limits of specific language of the naturalistic philosophies of mind, the approach undertaken by Dan O'Brien reveals 'signs' which translate a new syntax of the *philosophy of the mind* between interpretations and philosophical theories. Mapping the operations of the mind with a view to its improvement, generally referred to as the *philosophy of the mind*, it reveals a complex picture of the interplay ('the big picture'), an architectural paradigm which structures the sense of every temporal fragment of consciousness and meaning through its content and existential impact.

Dan O'Brien places the prepositional, minded aspects of the engagement with the world and each other into a *Space of Reasons*. Minds and mental relations can be described in terms that are appropriate to natural science, and the mind can seamlessly slot into a natural scientific account of nature.

The rational relations between intentionally individuated intentional states cannot be described using the terms of natural science, and this is his dissatisfaction with bald naturalism. The *philosophy of the mind* becomes a pretext for the author, used in order to construct an independent and open-ended *interpretative discourse*, able to (de)construct key concepts and give a full rendering of the embedded social, political or ideological meanings attached to such a *naturalistic philosophy*.

This book is separated into two parts: an exposition and a critique of bald naturalism. Bald naturalists assume that all knowledge of the world must be acquired through empirical investigation. It is this assumption that forces them to look for a natural scientific account of the mind. In relation to such an approach, a key feature of the exposition is that bald naturalism is not to be restricted to these with a strong reductive program. What matters is just that ideas whose primary home is the space of reasons are ultimately depicted as serving to place things in nature in a relevant sense. (p. 45ff)

An important distinction will also be highlighted, that between 'sophisticated' and 'crude' bald

naturalism. Sophisticated bald naturalists embrace the fact that we interpret each other as the holders of beliefs and propositional attitudes, and, for them, it is such a conception and such a structure of thinking that must be re-described in a scientific idiom. (p.95-133) Crude bald naturalists, however, do not think that this common-sense picture needs to be considered in their programmes of naturalisations. (p. 47-90) The theoreticians considered here eliminate beliefs and propositional attitudes from their conception of the mind and forward a natural scientific account in alternative terms.

These kinds of dual terminological relations are not relations of 'before-after', but ones of simultaneity, building a solid platform for the investigation of *the sense of assessing the philosophical diversity of the mind*. Therefore, the terms of his investigation are: sophistication, normativity, the elimination of materialism, the discussion intentional versus intensional content and even indeterminacy. These terms create a transversal link between the consecrated theories and the newer interpretations (McDowell, Davidson, Sellars).

In the second part of the book, Dan O'Brien argues that no such naturalisation is possible. There

are certain thoughts that one should have, certain thoughts that are justified, given the experience of the world. The study elaborates a philosophical and critical texture, recycling old structures and interpretations or procedures and reconsidering the relation between the new typologies.

However, in working through the various aspects of normatively a bald naturalist account is developed to a extent that has certain plausibility.

If the bald naturalist cannot account for interpretation, then he cannot account for the mind. Thus, the conception of interpretation as translation is criticized and a richer notion developed, the key component of which is to be understood as the empathetic engagement that we entertain with the thoughts of those we attempt to interpret.

For Dan O'Brien there can be distinct forms of rationality at play within the conceptual schemes of the diverse scientific communities. In conclusion, the practice of interpretation must be conceived as open-ended.

Henrieta Șerban
Viorella Manolache

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- CF = *The Contempt of Freedom* (London, Watts, 1940; reprinted New York, Arno Press, 1975)
- FEFT = *Full Employment and Free Trade* (London, C.U.P., 1945; 2nd ed. 1948)
- KB = *Knowing and Being* (London, Routledge; Chicago, University of Chicago Press; 1969)
- LL = *The Logic of Liberty* (London, Routledge; Chicago, University of Chicago Press; 1951)
- M = *Meaning* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1975)
- PK = *Personal Knowledge* (London, Routledge; Chicago, University of Chicago Press; 1958)
- SFS = *Science, Faith and Society* (London, OUP, 1946; 2nd ed. U. of Chicago Press, 1964)
- SOM = *The Study of Man* (London, Routledge; Chicago, University of Chicago Press; 1959)
- TD = *The Tacit Dimension* (London, Routledge; New York, Doubleday; 1966; reprinted Gloucester, Mass., Peter Smith, 1983)

Also:

- SEP = *Society, Economics and Philosophy: Selected articles by Michael Polanyi*, ed. R.T. Allen (New Brunswick, NJ, Transaction Publishers, 1997).