Table of Contents

TABLE OF FIGURES **5**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS **7**

A RETROSPECTIVE NOTE **9**

SHORT ABSTRACT **11**

LONG ABSTRACT **13**

ABBREVIATIONS USED **21**

INTRODUCTION **23**

CORNELIUS ERNST'S PROPOSED ONTOLOGY OF MEANING **27**

§1.1: Ernst's Incomplete Proposal: a new 'ontology of meaning' **28**
§1.2: Ernst's Wittgensteinian Thomism as Pedagogy **33**
§1.2: Ernst's Intrinsicism: Language and Mediation **40**
§1.2.1: Truth in-and-beyond Language: Intrinsicism and Revelation 42
§1.2.2: Truth in-and-beyond History: Intrinsicism of Being and Meaning 46
§1.3: Participation as Ontological Resource **51**
§1.4: Ernst's (Re)performance of Thomistic Pedagogy **58**
§1.4.1: Semantic Dogmatics between *Communio* and *Concilium* 59
§1.4.2: Semantic Dogmatics as 'Engaged Contemplation' 62
§1.5: The Absent Subject in Ernst's Ontology of Meaning **71**

POLANYI'S BIOSEMIOTIC ONTOLOGY OF MEANING **73**

§2.1: Polanyi and the Logic of Liberty **74**
§2.2: Polanyi's Deconstruction of the Myth of Neutral Reason **79**
§2.2.1: The Self-Referential Incoherence of Positivism 82
§2.2.2: Positivism's Reductive Ontology of Meaning 86
§2.2.3: Disinterested Objectivity and Extrinsicism 89
§2.3: Polanyi's Intrinsicist Account of Skills and Instruments **91**
§2.4: The Dynamics of the Cognitive Existential **98**
§2.4.1: Language and Articulate Frameworks 102
§2.4.2: Intellectual Passions 105
§2.4.3: Conviviality 109
§2.5: Metaphysical Development after *Personal Knowledge* **112**
§2.5.1: The Ontology of 'Universal Intent' 113
§2.5.2: 'An Ontology of Rooting': Polanyi's Terry Lectures (1962) 118
§2.5.3: Semantic Fields and 'Marginal Control' 124
§2.6: Polanyi's Biosemiotic Ontology of Meaning **127**

POLANYI ON RELIGION: AN ERNSTIAN CRITIQUE **133**

§3.1: Polanyi's Early Extrinsicist Account of Religion **137**
§3.2: An Ernstian Reading of Polanyi's Early Account of Religion **145**
§3.2.1: Reduction of Symbols to Images 148
§3.2.2: The Historical Availability of Theological Meaning 150
§3.2.3: Subjectivity and the Homogenization of 'Religion' 152
§3.3: *Meaning:* Polanyi's Later Intrinsicist Account of Religion **155**
§3.3.1: The Centrifugal Vector 159
§3.3.2: Imagination, Transnaturality and Framing 168
§3.3.3: *Meaning*'s Intrinsicist Account of Religion 172
§3.4: The Meaning Controversy **181**

§3.5: Towards the Doctrine of God 185

A SEMANTIC DOCTRINE OF GOD 189

§4.1: Polanyi's Absent Doctrine of God? 190
§4.2: Transcendence and Immanence in the Polanyian Universe 197
§4.2.1: Richard T. Allen's Analysis 198
§4.2.3: Divine Knowledge and the Tacit Dimension 204
§4.2.4: Allen on Christology and Mediation 205
§4.3: Polanyi's Embedded Doctrine of God as Ultimate Meaning 207
§4.3.1: Polanyi's Account of Religion as 'Ontology of Meaning' 208
§4.3.3: Theological Epistemology as a Function of Ontology 214
§4.4: Cornelius Ernst's Doctrine of God as the 'Meaning of meaning' 216
§4.4.1: A Genealogy of the 'Meaning of meaning' 219
§4.4.2: Meanings as Meaningful by Participation in Meaning 221
§4.4.3: Polanyi's Absent Doctrine of Creation 224
§4.5: Trinity and Meaning 226
§4.5.1: The Procedure of Supplementation 228
§4.5.2: Appropriation and the Trinitarian Mediation of Ultimate Meaning 230
§4.5.3: Meaning and the Innascibility of the Father 232
§4.5.4: Polanyian Trinitarianism(s) 233
§4.5.5: A Polanyian-Ernstian Trinitarianism 239
§4.6: Semantic Theological Ontology and the Doctrine of Creation 242
§4.6.1: Divine Knowledge and Creatureliness 243
§4.6.2: The Vectorial Character of Divine Knowledge 245
§4.6.4: The Integration(s) of Nature and Grace 250
§4.7: Towards Semantic Christology 256

SEMANTIC CHRISTOLOGY: METAPHOR AND OBJECTIVITY 259

§5.1: The Problem of the Unicity of Theologal Knowledge 261
§5.2: Torrance's Critical Realism 267
§5.2.1: Kataphysic Theology as Polanyian Science 269
§5.2.2: Critical Realism and the Vicarious Humanity of the Son 278
§5.2.3: Torrance's Extrinsicism: Doctrines as Disclosure Models 282
§5.3: An Intrinsicist Alternative: Metaphysics of Ontological Metaphor 287
§5.3.1: Metaphor as Embodiment rather than Substitution 289
§5.3.2: Ernst's Metaphysical Theory of Metaphor 296
§5.4: Hypostatic Union as Ontological Metaphor 302
§5.4.1: Ontological Metaphor and the Hypostasis of the *Logos* 304
§5.4.2: Ontological Metaphor and Sacred Humanity 307
§5.4.3: Ontological Metaphor and *Communicatio idiomatum* 310
§5.4.4: Ontological Metaphor and the Grace of Christ 313
§5.5: Theologal Faith as Ontological Metaphor 314
§5.6: Metaphor and Theological Realism 319
§5.6.1: Catachresis and Truth in Ontological Metaphor 320
§5.6.2: Metaphor and Objectivity 327
§5.7: Vocative Faith: Towards Semantic Pneumatology 331

WORSHIP AS MEANING: SEMANTIC PNEUMATOLOGY 333

§6.1 Polanyi's Intrinsicist Account of Worship 336
§6.1.1: Worship as 'Metaphor Transposed into Active Terms' 338
§6.1.2: Ritual as Framing Mechanism for Myth 340
§6.1.3: Worship in Eliadean 'Great Time' 342
§6.1.4: Mythic *Anamnesis* and Analogy 346
§6.2: Ernst on Worship as Ontological Metaphor 352
§6.2.1: Liturgy as Christocentric Ontological Metaphor 355

§6.2.2: Ernstian Personalism: Liturgy as 'Being-With' 358
§6.2.3: Liturgy as Semantic Locus 361
§6.2.4: Worship, Resurrection and Transfiguration 365
§6.3: Liturgy and the Practice of Dogmatics 368
§6.3.1: Dogmatics as Second-Order Discourse? 369
§6.3.2: Liturgy and the Connaturality of Theological Knowledge 376
§6.4: Semantic Pneumatology 381
§6.4.1: Pneumatology and Ecclesiology 382
§6.4.2: Holy Spirit as Framing Mechanism 386

CONCLUSION 391

APPENDIX A: THE *MEANING* CONTROVERSY 393

§A.1: *Meaning* as a Contested Text 397
§A.2: The Torrance-Polanyi Collaboration 403
§A.3: Polanyi's own Religious Views 413

REFERENCES 419

Table of Figures

Figure 1 Intrinsicism and Extrinsicism 41
Figure 2 Tacit Integration 96
Figure 3: Standard Semantic Integration 160
Figure 4 Somersaulting Vector 162
Figure 5: Metaphoric Integration 166
Figure 6: Metaphoric Integration 166
Figure 7: Integration into Metaphor 167
Figure 8: Framing Mechanism 171
Figure 9: Worship 175
Figure 10: Metaphor and Centrifugal Vector 294
Figure 11: Framing Mechanism and Centrifugal Vector 347
Figure 12: Centrifugally Framed Worship 347
Figure 13: Ernst's Diagram of Ecclesiological Mediation 385

Acknowledgments

It is an axiom of Polanyian epistemology that we know more than we can tell. This seems indubitably true when it comes to acknowledging my gratitude.

My *Doktorvater*, Rev. Prof Graham Canon Ward, the Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford, joins extraordinary generosity to profound theological acuity. He and my *Mitbruder,* Very Rev. Dr Simon Francis Gaine OP (Regent of Blackfriars), nurtured this project from its inception. They are practitioners of a scholarship that is both rigorous and humanizing (because it is Christian). Lovers of the English language owe them an especial gratitude for protecting it against my onslaughts. The examiners of this thesis, Dr Philip McCosker and the Rt. Rev. and Rt. Hon. Professor the Lord Williams of Oystermouth, brought charitable and critical scrutiny to bear on my work and rendered the *viva voce* examination an enjoyable and stimulating theological conversation.

The comfort of parody might compel an unrepentant Oxonian to lament the indignity of being 'viva'd' in Another Place, but honesty requires me to note that it forged an unexpected *inclusio* in my *Lebenslauf*. It was to Cambridge that I went, full of hope, to begin my formal tertiary education exactly fifteen years and a month earlier; it was there that I brought it to an end, full of different hopes (and yet still with the same Hope). The densely packed years between these two milestones have been labyrinthine and saturated with life; the friendships that have endured are treasured like Ariadne's thread.

Anyone who has accompanied a research student knows the challenges that doctoral work presents. Nonetheless, I feel compelled to say that writing this thesis has been one of the most enriching and exciting experiences of my life. I would do it all over again.

Dr Michael Polanyi and Fr Cornelius Ernst OP accompanied me in this work, as have St Thomas Aquinas and Professor Karl Barth. They already have their reward and this acknowledgment, whilst fulfilling all righteousness, must seem as straw.

Among those of us *in via,* a number of senior scholars and colleagues have offered theological friendship and caffeinated conversation. The result might seem like a litany of names, but each person has an inalienable place: Dr Silvianne Aspray, Barnabas Aspray, Dr Thana de Campos, Dr Mark Chapman, Nicole Chen, Rev. Dr Richard Conrad OP, Rachel Cresswell, Fr Nicholas Crowe OP, Dr Minlib Dallh OP, Prof Ivor Davidson, Kait Dugan, Rev Mark Earngey, Dr Lexi Eikelboom, Dr Sven Ensminger, Prof Mark Warwick Elliott, Rev. Dr John Farrell OP, Dr Andrew Gilland, Rev. Dr James Hanvey SJ, Dr Emily Holman, Fr Matthew Jarvis OP, Dr Cambria Kaltwasser, Emily S. Kempson, Dr Phillip Kennedy OP, Rev. Prof Fergus Kerr OP, Victoria Lorrimar, Jyoti Raghu, Nandhan Mani Ratnam, Dr Hanna Reichel, Br Jordan Scott OP, Katharine Staples, Dr Tobias Tan, Dr Matthew Thomas, Andrew Turnbull, Dr Maddy Ward, Rev. Dr T.-J. White OP, and Dr Peter Zocher. Professor Pamela Sue Anderson died during the writing of this thesis: all hail her memory.

The Special Collections Research Center at the University of Chicago's Regenstein Library houses the Michael Polanyi Papers, which I was able to consult during three long and enjoyable visits to Chicago. Archivists are surely amongst the most selfless of scholars: my thanks to Dr Dan Meyer and, especially, to Jessica Seet.

From the outset I encountered serious difficulties in obtaining necessary print resources. The assistance provided by the staff at The London Library was characteristically gracious and professional. They have performed a work of supererogation; the present work, for all its flaws, would simply not exist without them.

As Cornelius Ernst's favourite metaphor was gardening, it seems fitting to thank those who tend the University Parks in Oxford, where I have walked and thought on every clement day. They contribute to scholarship in ways that they may not realise.

There is a group of people whom I should dearly like to thank by name, but whose Traditions demand anonymity. They know who they are. They know what I owe them.

Finally, I turn to my family. I come from a large extended family (too many to mention by name) where love and support belong to what Polanyi calls 'the tacit dimension': you know it by relying upon it. My sister, Charlotte, and niece, Elsie, have encouraged and inspired me in untold ways. My parents, Michael and Stephanie… well, here words fail me. I have tried to find some superlatives adequate to the task of thanking them for their love and for believing in me from the very beginning. To paraphrase the John the Theologian: it seems to me that if everything they have done was written down, the world itself could not contain the books that would be required. So, I acknowledge them inadequately, by dedicating this thesis to them.

Go, litel book; go litel myn trageedy!

Fr. Oliver James Keenan OP
October 7th 2018,
Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary
St Dominic's Priory, London

A Retrospective Note

A web of administrative hurdles unfortunately congealed to contribute to an unusually long interval between my submission of this thesis for examination in March 2018 and my deposition of it in the Bodleian Library in February 2019 (with its successful defence on 1st October 2018 almost exactly bisecting its span). Naturally, with a delay that amounts to around one-third of the total time taken to write the thesis, elements of it now appear ripe for supplementation, reframing or reconsideration. *Deo Volente,* these will be clarified by any publications that might eventually flow from this thesis. I would, however, like to indicate here two highly relevant publications that have been released in this intervening period, and one additional consideration that was raised outwith the *viva voce*.

Firstly, in September 2018, Rowan Williams published *Christ The Heart of Creation* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018). It is unthinkable that I would not have engaged with this work in the development of the semantic Christology proposed by Chapter 5. To pick just one instance, it would certainly have stimulated deeper reflection on the ontological status of Christ's hypostasis vis-à-vis the assumed human nature (the *impersonalitas* problem). These issues were discussed quite extensively in the *viva.*

Secondly, the significance of Esther Lightcap Meek's defence of Polanyian realism in her *Contact with Reality* has continued to unfold. The work appeared in print as this thesis was being finalised, and although I was able to attend to its major arguments, I did not benefit from the issue of the Polanyi Society's journal *Tradition and Discovery* that was devoted to its consideration in late 2018. It now seems to me that *Contact with Reality* is a landmark in Polanyi scholarship and merits a much more sustained engagement than it receives here. Indeed, the distinction between Polanyi's early extrinsicism and late intrinsicism, developed in Chapters 3 and 4, might both be illuminated by these considerations and have something to contribute to the ongoing discussion.

Thirdly, in August 2018 the thesis found a sympathetic reader in Jessica Seet, one of the Special Collections team at the Regenstein Library at the University of Chicago (where Polanyi's papers are housed). Jessica pushed me on two issues: firstly, the role that negativity might play in my development of Polanyi's thought, particularly with regard to the artificiality of framing mechanisms; secondly, the ways in which meanings are sometimes felt to impose themselves upon the knower, particularly in the cases of meanings that arise as a result of what I call centrifugal vectors. Had I benefited from her insightful reading prior to submission, I would have made more extensive use of Polanyi's category of 'negative focus' as the basis for his resolution of the *Meno* paradox.

The notes of gratitude were written in October 2018 when I submitted the typographically corrected manuscript to the examiners. Their truth continues to disclose itself to me daily.

Fr Oliver Keenan OP
28th January 2019
Feast of St Thomas Aquinas OP

Short Abstract

Cornelius Ernst's doctrine of God as the meaning of meaning corresponds to the implicit theological ontology around which Michael Polanyi's fiduciary epistemology coheres. Conversely, Polanyi's account of cognitive dynamics supplements Ernst's metaphysics of meaning with a concrete account of the involvement of the embodied subject. Both Polanyi and Ernst seek to re-orientate their respective disciplines of theological and natural science within an intrinisicist perspective of meaning. Ernst's theological ontology secures a thematic metaphysics in which the unity of the semantic cosmos is located in the divine triunity of Meaning. This is achieved by a doctrine of creation, in which the world is always already charged by God's self-communication (corresponding to Polanyi's efforts to generate a biosemiotic ontology). Within this proposed ontology of meaning, the unicity of theological knowledge is safeguarded by an account of the incarnation as an 'ontological metaphor', which is non-identically repeated in the act of faith. As an ontological metaphor, faith has a vocative character, addressing God in an act of worship that is simultaneously doxological and doxastic. This is framed by the action of the Holy Spirit, mediated by the Church: doctrinal frameworks are semantic tools that are indwelt in worship in such a way that theological knowledge becomes connatural. The result is a 'semantic dogmatics in outline' which emphasises the pedagogical role of theology, balancing the necessary integrity of dogmatics with its proper eschatological provisionality.

Long Abstract

Cornelius Ernst's programmatic proposal of a Thomistic 'ontology of meaning' as a new perspective for dogmatic theology remains tantalizingly suggestive. This thesis develops Ernst's proposal in critical dialogue with the epistemological thought of Michael Polanyi, arguing that Ernst's doctrine of God as the Meaning of meaning supplements for what scholars have identified as Polanyi's absent doctrine of God. The result of this developmental dialogue is the generation of a 'semantic dogmatics in outline', in which the key Christian doctrines of the Trinity, Christology and pneumatology-ecclesiology serve an account of the way in which the ultimate divine Meaning is known in-and-through the creaturely meanings of human history.

Overall, the thesis finds the perspectives of Ernst and Polanyi to be mutually corrective and complementary. Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge* develops a robustly post-critical account of cognitive dynamics that is governed by his distinctive categories of fiduciary indwelling and the tacit dimension. Polanyi is, however, unable to develop the metaphysical correlates that he seeks as a means of supporting both his account of cognitive dynamics and the integral unity of meanings that form the semantic habitat of humanity. Conversely, Ernst's proposed ontology of meaning develops a robust account of the unity of the world of meanings as participant in the transcendent divine Meaning but lacks a concrete account of the mode by which individual semantic agents are embedded within this semantic cosmos. As such, Polanyi is weakest at the point of Ernst's greatest strength, and *vice versa:* the 'top' of the semantic ontology is provided by Ernst's doctrine of God, whilst the 'bottom' is provided by Polanyi's account of human semantic agency. Owing to the incomplete nature of their projects the dialogue

between Ernst and Polanyi is necessarily a development of their thought, moving along trajectories already established in their work: in the case of Ernst and Polanyi alike, to interpret their work is to develop it.

Chapter 1 identifies how, in the late 1950s, pedagogical concerns led Fr Cornelius Ernst OP to seek to rearticulate traditional Thomistic theological ontology using the unifying perspective of meaning (where classical Thomism deployed the category of being). This was not intended as a means of abandoning classical ontological categories, but of inducting students more deeply into their dynamic meaning and significance. Whereas contemporary students (whom Ernst identified as 'congenital Cartesians') struggled to grasp the dynamic and participative character of Aquinas's understanding of Being, they could more intuitively grasp a *systema mundi* governed by the unifying theme of meaning (which resisted coordination with specific static structures of the world). Applying a dose of Wittgensteinian and Heideggerian philosophical therapy, Ernst sought to overcome two dualisms that he identified as intuitive to the modern mind: the disconnection of *logos* and language, and the dissociation of truth from history. The result is a theological epistemology patterned by intrinsicism, in which ultimate Meaning is found in-and-beyond the meanings of the world (something that Ernst calls 'dynamic transcendence', but which also approximates Przywara's rendering of the *analogia entis*). Ernst's vision of theology, then, is presented as an 'engaged contemplation' that re-performs Thomistic pedagogy and is seen to occupy a *via media* between the opposed styles of *communio* and *concilium.*

Chapter 2 outlines the fiduciary epistemology proposed by Michael Polanyi, which seeks to overturn the scientistic myth of objectivity as constituted by disinterested and neutral reason, thereby reversing the modern inversion of *fides quaerens intellectum*. This re-valuation of faith as a necessary coefficient of all knowledge proceeds from an account of the cognitive dynamics of discovery that is derived from a quasi-phenomenology of scientific investigation. The chapter identifies a shift in Polanyi's thought (from 1958 onwards) towards a more metaphysical account of semantic agency as embedded within a biosemiotic hierarchy of meaning. This emphasis on noetic agency as enmeshed within an irreducibly semiotic cosmos is intended to affirm the coinherence of knowing and being, alleviating Polanyi's dependence on the subject's act of commitment through an affirmation of its ontological structure. This identifies an isomorphism between the projects of Polanyi and Ernst: both seek to re-orientate their respective disciplines within a renewed ontology of meaning, as a means of moving beyond what they perceive to be the deceptive and limiting strictures of critical philosophy.

The third chapter raises the question of the metaphysical status of explicitly religious meanings within the proposed semantic ontology. The chapter takes the form of a simulated debate between Ernst and Polanyi as it might have occurred in 1968 (when both were living and working in Oxford). Firstly, Polanyi's early account of religion (as reflected in *Personal Knowledge*) is presented, and its dependence upon a particular account of religious affectivity and desire identified. Secondly, this account is critiqued from an Ernstian perspective as being marked by an extrinsicist divide of religious frameworks from the divine meaning that they seek to communicate. Thirdly, Polanyi's later account of religion (evident in post-1968 publications like *Meaning*) is

presented as a response to this Ernstian critique. According to *Meaning*, religious articulate frameworks 'embody' the transcendent divine meaning that—to borrow Ernst's phrase—dynamically transcends them. This intrinsicist shift in Polanyi's account of religion is established by three distinctive conceptual innovations that Polanyi introduced in *Meaning*: the centrifugal vector, the category of the transnatural, and the framing mechanism. In the context of the contested provenance of the text of *Meaning*, archival evidence establishes the presence of these three intrinsicist themes in Polanyi's lectures on religion given during the 1960s.

Having established that religious articulate frameworks 'embody' ultimate Meaning and thereby actively participate in its historical mediation, Chapter 4 considers the ontological status of that ultimate Meaning itself, by proposing a semantic doctrine of God. Whereas scholars have spoken of Polanyi's absent doctrine of God, the chapter argues that Polanyi's account of God is implicit, below the threshold of articulation, but not strictly absent. Ernst's semantic doctrine of God as the Meaning of meaning corresponds to this implicit Polanyian theological ontology, bringing it to expression as well as supplementing Polanyian ontology by providing a fulcrum of unity. Ernst's semantic doctrine of God offers an account of both the transcendence and immanence of divine Meaning in a Polanyian universe, by positing God's innate semantic perfection in transcendence over the biosemiotic hierarchy (and thus the tacit dimension that coinheres with it), which is understood to exist as a creaturely participation in the divine Meaning itself. This account is achieved by extending Polanyi's implicit doctrine of God to provide for two lacunae in his thought: firstly, developing an overtly Trinitarian account of both the divine Meaning, both *in se* and in its mediation to creatures; secondly, by developing a theological account of the 'creatureliness' of

creaturely meanings that establish their real autonomy (including their involvement in causal pathways) within a broader awareness of their radical ontological dependence.

The Trinitarian account of the mediation of ultimate Meaning that is developed in Chapter 4 leads into a consideration of Christology in Chapter 5. The chapter proposes a semantic Christology as a means of securing both the objective presence of ultimate Meaning in human history and the unique character of the subject's salutary act of faith. This addresses an important corrective to Polanyi's synthesis. Polanyi tends to homogenize religious faith and the more general 'faith' that adheres to all acts of knowledge, thus risking a semi-pelagian account of the act of faith as residing within the sphere of natural human capacities. Any theological appropriation of Polanyi's fiduciary epistemology must, therefore, excavate a thoroughly theological account of faith properly so-called, as a gift of grace that elevates and ennobles natural human capacities.

Thomas Forsyth Torrance implicitly addresses this problematic by developing an account of theology as a *kataphysic* Polanyian science that is determined by Christ's vicarious humanity and vicarious faith. By refusing any necessary or logical relationship between faith and its object, however, Torrance inscribes a residual extrinsicism into his understanding of faith's dependence on the incarnation. An intrinsicist alternative is located in a development of Ernst's suggestive understanding of the incarnation as an ontological metaphor that is non-identically repeated in the act of faith. Polanyi's intrinsicist account of metaphor as embodying one meaning within another approximates Ernst's less thoroughly articulated account of metaphor as participation in a higher meaning: both emphasise metaphor as a skill of semantic transfer (which is,

therefore, reality-descriptive), rather than as a merely decorative or evocative use of rhetoric. In particular, Ernst develops the category of 'ontological metaphor' to narrate the ways in which meanings are actively transferred across semantic domains, particularly the introduction of divine Meaning into the sphere of creaturely meanings. The ontological metaphor of the incarnation relates to its non-identical repetition in faith as a container to that which is contained: the incarnation is the *sine qua non* of the act of faith, by which the subject embodies themselves within Christ's own embodiment of divine meaning. The use of the category of ontological metaphor to narrate the incarnation is provocative and is seen to have implications for the metaphysics of Christ's humanity, which is conceived as an indwelt instrument of his divinity, committing the proposed semantic Christology to a 'substantial holiness' account of Jesus's grace and to an account of Christ's voluntary human action as actions of the divine *logos*. The chapter pre-emptively defends such a use of ontological metaphor as a Christological category against suggestions that it compromises the literal truth of the incarnation (the literal identification of Jesus of Nazareth with God) and the objectivity of religious faith. Metaphor is seen as targeted meaning, marked by a vocative character that addresses a particular recipient: the objectivity of Christ is a function of God's act of 'targeting' humanity by the address of his Word.

If metaphor is always addressed meaning, then faith—as the non-identical repetition of the ontological metaphor of the incarnation—is also necessarily vocative. Chapter 6 develops an account of faith as always already instantiated as human meaning that addresses God. Faith is, then, coinherent with forms of worship: worship *is* theological meaning, and authentic theological meaning *is* worship (if only in the minimal sense of human meanings that implicitly address God in the second person).

Although Polanyi often appealed to worship as the mode of Christian inquiry, his account lacks systematic expression and fails to adequately address the role played by the worshipping community in mediating religious knowledge and forming the subject's response in faith. The chapter systematises Polanyi's account of worship by developing a hint from his unpublished papers, which describe ritual as having 'the structure of a metaphor transposed into active terms'. This is supplemented by an Ernstian account of the Holy Spirit as animating the Church in its sacramental unity of visible-institutional and invisible-mystical communion, which in turn 'frames' the act of worship in liturgy. This introduces an element of ecclesial mediation into the account of how the incarnation 'contains' the individual's non-identical repetition of it in the act of faith: the Holy Spirit makes present the incarnation as 'embodied' within the Church (which is the 'embodiment' of the incarnation in each successive era of history); the Church then embodies itself in liturgy, into which the individual believer embodies herself by faith-worship.

This turn towards the liturgy forms an *inclusio* with the pedagogical concerns that led to the genesis of Ernst's proposal. The liturgy not only mediates particular forms of knowledge to the believer (making present the referential focus of theological language), but actually constitutes a semantic space in which religious articulate frameworks become comprehensible (thereby providing sense as well as reference). The inherently doxological character of theological meanings binds theology in a reflexive relationship to the liturgy. Theological reflection deepens human participation in the liturgical celebration but also depends upon the liturgy to make present, by a liturgical anamnesis, the ultimate meaning that is theology's proper object.

In conclusion, by bringing Ernst's proposal to a more systematic expression, the thesis indicates the enduring value of his proposed ontology of meaning. Attentiveness to the concrete specificity provided by Polanyi's account of cognitive dynamics strengthens Ernst's proposal by connecting it with disciplined human praxis. Likewise, the supplementation of Polanyi's noetic indicates the potential value of a theological metaphysics to the philosophy of science.

Abbreviations Used

CD Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics.* tr., T. F. Torrance and G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1932–67)

EDA English Dominican Archive, housed at Douai Abbey, Berkshire. Reference format: EDA, Box Name, §Number, First Line of Paper.

KB Michael Polanyi, Marjorie Grene (ed), *Knowing and Being.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).

LL Michael Polanyi, *Logic of Liberty.* (London: Routledge, 1951).

ME Cornelius Ernst, Timothy Radcliffe (ed), Fergus Kerr (ed), *Multiple Echo.* (London: DLT, 1979).

MMT Cornelius Ernst, 'Meaning and Metaphor in Theology', *New Blackfriars*. 61 (1980): 100-112.

PI Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations.* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958).

PK Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy.* (London: Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1958).

PP Michael Polanyi Papers, housed in the Special Collections Research Center at the Regenstein Library, University of Chicago. Reference format: PP §Folder. File.

SCG St. Thomas Aquinas OP, *Summa Contra Gentiles.* Tr. Fathers of the English Dominican Province in 4vv (London: Burns and Oates, 1929)

ST St. Thomas Aquinas OP, *Summa Theologiae.* tr ed. Thomas Gilby in 60vv (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

ThSc Thomas Forsyth Torrance, *Theological Science.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

TFTP Thomas Forsyth Torrance Papers, house at Princeton Theological Seminary. Reference Format: §Box.File.

TD Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension.* (London: Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1967).

TG Cornelius Ernst, *Theology of Grace.* (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1974)

TLP Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus-Logico Philosophicus.* (London: Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1960).

Introduction

"Now I can go on!"[1] If Wittgenstein's analogy of understanding as knowing how to continue a sequence or carry on a task is accepted, the perceived crisis of theology under the conditions of late modernity indicates a crisis of theological understanding.[2] Indeed, some theologians have suggested that the hostile conditions of modernity are themselves a symptom of theological reasoning that has gone astray.[3] The perceived crisis calls not only for the displacement of hostile philosophical conditions, but for a renewal of theology *qua* theology, through a discipline-specific pedagogy.[4]

This thesis examines two such attempts to 'go on' through the process of intra-disciplinary renewal: Cornelius Ernst (in theology) and Michael Polanyi (in natural science). Ernst and Polanyi propose a renewal of their respective disciplines by the recovery of a philosophical worldview unified by the principle of meaning, disclosing itself historically in the diverse forms studied by the array of sciences. The thesis argues that Ernst's doctrine of God as the meaning of meaning provides an explicit account of the metaphysical fulcrum around which Polanyi's universe of meaning coheres. Conversely, Polanyi's account of cognitive dynamics supplements Ernst's theological ontology with a concrete account of the mode by which individual semantic agents are embedded within this semantic cosmos.

---

[1] PI: §151-155.

[2] Assessments on theology's contemporary predicament abound. For representative examples that include surveys of the literature, see: Kevin W. Hector, *The Theological Project of Modernism: Faith and the Conditions of Mineness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing Theology: Divine Action, Passion and Authorship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[3] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory* (2nd edn.; London: Blackwell, 2006).

[4] *Cf* John Bainbridge Webster, 'Theological Theology', *Confessing God: Essays in Christian Dogmatics* (2; London: T&T Clark, 2005): 11-32.

The first two chapters examine the semantic ontologies of Ernst and Polanyi in turn, demonstrating an isomorphism between the shift to a new ontology of meaning that Ernst proposes for theology and the biosemiotic ontology that Polanyi proposes for empirical science. Both Polanyi and Ernst are seen to advocate particular pedagogical programmes that depend upon the proposed semantic ontology. The third chapter examines the location of explicitly religious meanings within the framework provided by these ontologies of meaning, arguing that both advocate an intrinsicist account of theological meaning, in which the transcendent is embodied within the immanent, with the concrete and particular reality of history serving to mediate the infinite and transcendent meaning that is in-and-beyond creaturely meanings.

The three remaining chapters offer a prospectus of a semantic dogmatics developed within the proposed Polanyian-Ernstian ontology of meaning: in other words, they speculatively reconstruct how Ernst might have developed his thought into a more systematic expression. Chapter 4 serves two purposes. Firstly, it argues for the compatibility of Ernst's theological ontology with Polanyi's implicit doctrine of God; secondly, it develops a doctrine of creatureliness from within the proposed semantic doctrine of God. Chapter 5 addresses the question of the unicity of theological meaning: how the ultimate meaning becomes knowable within the universe of created meanings. The chapter establishes a semantic Christology, providing for the unique status of theological knowledge by supplementing Polanyi's epistemology with Ernst's category of ontological metaphor. The final Chapter 6 returns to the question of pedagogy by way of a semantic pneumatology, examining the role of worship in a Polanyian-Ernstian ontology of meaning.

By germinating Ernst's theological seeds into a more systematic expression, the thesis indicates the enduring value of his proposed ontology of meaning. Attentiveness to the concrete specificity provided by Polanyi's account of cognitive dynamics strengthens Ernst's proposal by connecting it with disciplined human praxis. Likewise, the supplementation of Polanyi's noetic indicates the potential value of a theological metaphysics to the philosophy of science. "Now I can go on!"

I

Cornelius Ernst's Proposed Ontology of Meaning

"Personal being is intrinsically communication".[1] This brief remark, buried in a footnote of one of Cornelius Ernst's essays and lying undeveloped, strikes at the heart of Ernst's theological programme. Ernst proposed a new perspective for theology by developing a worldview unified by the category of meaning. In so-doing, Ernst proposes a comprehensive metaphysical vision of the world in which there is no inert matter—no neutral 'stuff'—that is not always already semiotically soaked (if not totally saturated) with the divine self-communication, charged with the creative force of the divine intellect. To have personal existence, then, is to be caught up in these dynamic processes and praxes of communication, to belong meaningfully to a meaningful world.

This chapter identifies the contours of Ernst's proposed ontology of meaning, gathering together the fragmentary seeds of his proposal buried throughout his somewhat sporadic and disparate *oeuvre*. The first subsection identifies the basic features of the proposed ontology of meaning and notes the incomplete character of Ernst's proposal. This incompleteness is linked, in the second subsection, to a basic pedagogical impulse that governs Ernst's used of Wittgenstein, emerging in his 1956/7 Rational Psychology class and developing into his project of rearticulation. The third subsection integrates Ernst's concerns around a rejection of extrinsicism, noting his development of intrinsicist account of both language and history. Fourthly, the

[1] ME: 106.

ontological resources for this intrinsicism are located in Ernst's (not uncontroversial) prioritisation of Aquinas's doctrine of participation. The fifth subsection situates Ernst's theological approach as a re-performance of Thomistic pedagogy, presenting theology as a contemplative engagement of the meanings of the world. Finally, the chapter concludes by identifying a weakness in Ernst's synthesis: the absence of an account of the subject's active participation in the semantic ontology, as an embodied semantic agent. This leads into a Polanyian supplementation of Ernst in the following chapters.

§1.1: Ernst's Incomplete Proposal: a new 'ontology of meaning'

Ernst's project addresses itself to a question that has bedevilled twentieth century theology, contextualised by the felt-sense of precarity that marks contemporary religious discourse: 'how can we go on speaking about God in the ordinary world?'[2] Implicit in this question is a diagnosis: the conditions of the ordinary world as we actually have it are not ones that find classical theological claims amenable to easy comprehension or acceptance. Fundamentally, Ernst's response to this question is an instantiation of Thomistic realism. Nonetheless, Ernst argues that the 'ahistorical' repetition of Thomistic arguments (as he would characterise the work of neo-scholastics) has little purchase over the fundamental conundrum of establishing the real credibility of God-talk in the 'ordinary world'. Ernst's remedy is simultaneously something old and something new.

[2] ME: 74.

According to Ernst, features of contemporary intellectual culture and philosophical disposition compromise the capacity of classically expressed Thomism to address this fundamental problematic. The defect is not primarily to be located on the side of the Thomistic impulse, whose value Ernst never seems to seriously doubt, but on the capacity of the 'modern mind' to receive it.[3] In the context of contemporary intellectual predispositions and intuitive presuppositions, the category of being no longer carries the conceptual burdens that Aquinas placed upon it as the unifying principle of his theologically orientated metaphysics. When 'being' is understood in essentialist terms, as correlated with discrete existents ('beings'), it can no longer be understood to invoke a dynamic reality that encompasses the totality of all that exists by participating within it.[4] Using being as the unifying theme of a theological ontology risks leading the modern reader in the direction of ontotheology: the very opposite of Aquinas's intention.[5] In other words, whether we like or not, we start out with philosophical prejudices that impede our induction into a Thomistic worldview. Communicating the same classically Thomistic principles demands a change of idiom; the philosophical propaedeutic to theology is essentially about ridding ourselves of these cultural prejudices.

Ernst suggests that deploying the category of 'meaning' as the unifying principle of theological ontology offers a contemporary philosophical expression of the type of unified worldview that Aquinas articulated in terms of being.[6] Ernst's attraction to the

[3] TG: 66.
[4] ME: 140-142.
[5] ME: 79.
[6] TG: 66.

category of 'meaning' as a potential perspective for theology is partly derived from an awareness of contemporary philosophical interest in the category (particularly in the thought of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Martin Heidegger). Importantly, however, the word-concept 'meaning' remains in quotidian use in a way that being does not. For Aquinas, as Ernst reads him, our world was intuitively seen to be shot-through with being, populated by entities that in one analogical degree or another are unified by their participation in being. Ernst suggests that our contemporary mind-set perceives the world to be similarly pervaded by meaning, and that this is evident from the way in which we need no philosophically developed account of meaning to meaningfully use the term.

Nonetheless, the accounts of meaning as a mental event that are dominant in contemporary culture do not have the conceptual plasticity to unify a Thomistic theological ontology any more than the essentialist accounts of being do: faulty ontologies give rise to faulty epistemologies. As §1.2 demonstrates, Ernst understood the category of 'meaning' to become viable as a principle in theology only after an application of Wittgensteinian philosophical therapy, which weans the modern mind off the solipsistic intuition that meaning is a mental event. Ernst advances a working definition of meaning as the "process and praxis through which the world to which man belongs becomes the world that belongs to man".[7] Meaning is that dynamic activity through which the human creature engages the world in which she is embedded in intelligent and embodied ways, corresponding to the divine commission to 'till and

[7] TG: 68.

subdue'.[8] This definition of meaning closes the gap between *theoria* and *praxis*, between mind and the world:[9] theoretical reflection, as engaged with meanings, itself only emerges as a praxis.

Ernst's proposed ontology of meaning is, then, ordered toward the same concern as those contemporary philosophers of religion who seek to defend the credibility of theological truth-claims. Ernst, however, does not strictly seek to establish the *a priori* possibility of theology. Rather than developing a philosophical prolegomenon to theology, he starts with the real actuality of religiosity and theological reflection upon it. Theology is a living reality and despite every reason to predict its demise, it has a remarkable staying power: there is no shortage of people using the word 'God' meaningfully. As such, Ernst does not frame the question of the credibility of God-talk in terms of the doctrine of revelation.[10] In an intuitively Kantian climate, an engagement of the question of theology's possibility in terms of a phenomenally 'absent' referent risks inadvertently conspiring with the philosophical presuppositions (the extrinsicist division of phenomena and noumena) that lead to its precarity.[11] The question, for Ernst, was not to establish the basis upon which theology can get going, but rather to establish "how we may go on" with what is already taking place, *viz.* "speaking about God in the ordinary world".[12] That is to say, for all the difficulties of the ordinary world—all of its shocking sinfulness and lamentable tragedy—Ernst gives a methodological priority to the actuality of theology as it really takes place *in* the

[8] Genesis 1:28.
[9] ME: 55.
[10] Cf ME: 35 and references to *deus absconditus* at ME: 110.
[11] Johannes Hoff, 'The Rise and the Fall of the Kantian Paradigm of Modern Theology', in Peter M. Candler (ed.), *The Grandeur of Reason: Religion, Tradition and Universalism* (London: SCM Press, 2010): 167-96.
[12] ME: 74. The logic of the 'ordinary world' is explored at ME: 142.

ordinary world, in dialogical engagement with competing meanings, desires and discourses. Rather than evading responsibility to the world by a quasi-mystical escapism, theology is a sapiential discipline that looks at the world (perhaps with lamentation) and sees more that can be narrated by literal description.[13]

Although tantalisingly suggestive, Ernst's 'ontology of meaning' has never been subject of a systematic development, either by Ernst or by those sympathetic to his work. Three main reasons for this incompleteness can be identified. Firstly, Ernst's early death in 1977, aged fifty-three, cut short a theological career that was only just entering its prime. His work is, then, incomplete: as the English Dominican obituarist puts it, "he never wrote the books that were in him".[14] Secondly, apart from his slightly longer essay on grace,[15] all of his publications were sporadic and occasional, usually given as lectures and subsequently written up in article form, posthumously collected in *Multiple Echo.* His style and mode of theologising is such that it is not clear that he would ever have succeeded in 'writing the books that were in him'. As Louis Roy OP, one of Ernst's students, has emphasised (in one of the few pieces of secondary literature exploring Ernst's thought directly),[16] Ernst's writings are a collection of theological seeds to be germinated by subsequent generations, more adequately understood as a proposal to be developed than as an already complete account.[17] Any investigation of

[13] ME: 26.
[14] Simon Francis Gaine, *Obituary Notices of the English Dominicans from 1952 to 1996* (Oxford: Blackfriars Publications, 2000).
[15] viz., TG.
[16] For the other major article on Ernst's thought, see: Fergus Kerr, 'Ansombe, Ernst and McCabe: Wittgenstein and Catholic Theology', *Josephinum,* 15/1 (2008), 128-48, See also my: 'Sacrament of the Dynamic Transcendence of Christianity: Cornelius Ernst on the Church', *New Blackfriars,* 94/1052 (2013b), 396-414.
[17] Louis Roy, 'Cornelius Ernst's Theological Seeds', *New Blackfriars,* 85/998 (2004), 459-70.

Ernst's proposed ontology of meaning must generate a synoptic oversight that Ernst himself does not provide. As such, appropriating Ernst's suggested proposal inevitably involves not only interpretative judgment but also a development of his thought, with which it is hard to be certain that Ernst would agree. A third difficulty resides in the density of Ernst's arguments and the often convoluted manner in which they are expressed. As the homilist at one of his Requiem Masses put it, he was remembered for "his unusually contorted mode of expression".[18] Although these stylistic difficulties have often been overstated,[19] it is undeniable that Ernst was plagued by chronic over complexification and an intense form of perfectionism that prevented him from releasing his thoughts in publication.[20] A robust theological honesty prevented him from making unduly simplistic claims, but it also left him unable to say anything without seeming to say everything. The next section traces the origins of this incompleteness to Ernst's primary intention of teaching (rather than publishing), arguing that Ernst's work was more animated by a pedagogical impulse than by a drive to systematic expression.

§1.2: Ernst's Wittgensteinian Thomism as Pedagogy

This section identifies the fundamentally pedagogical impulse that undergirds Ernst's proposal of a new ontology of meaning. In particular, it was his experience of teaching that inaugurated Ernst's turn to an ontology of meaning, something that

[18] Simon Tugwell, 'Cornelius Ernst OP', *New Blackfriars,* 59 (1978), 2-4.
[19] See: Edmund Hill, 'Cornelius Ernst OP: "Multiple Echo", Fergus Kerr OP and Timothy Radcliffe OP (eds.)', *The Thomist,* 46/4 (1982), 631-36.
[20] The Ernst boxes at EDA show the great lengths to which Ernst would go to prepare a manuscript. Some of the essays in ME were edited and refined as many as twenty times over the course of several years. In this process a once simple sentence would become loaded with caveats and qualifications.

reaches a more developed expression in the essays that comprise *Multiple Echo.* Rather than a desire to develop a fully coherent dogmatics, then, Ernst's ontology of meaning is intended to overcome a defect that he detects in contemporary intellectual culture.

Unusually for a theologian, it is possible to identify with some certainty and precision the point at which Ernst recognised the need to develop the new ontological perspective of meaning. Indeed, this moment of theological creativity was catalysed, not under the pressure of a perceived inadequacy of existing theological frameworks, but under the pedagogical pressure of struggling to communicate those frameworks within a philosophically hostile culture. This section serves two purposes. Firstly, it locates Ernst's turn towards an ontology of meaning in 1956, when he began to use Ludwig Wittgenstein's later philosophy as a way of inducting students into the Aristotelian-Thomistic account of the hylomorphic relationship of body and soul. Secondly, it identifies the key pedagogical impulses that emerged from this Wittgensteinian turn and which endured throughout Ernst's theological career.

Although Ernst attended Wittgenstein's seminars in Cambridge during the academic year 1946/7, he claimed not to have understood their significance at the time.[21] The lectures that Ernst attended in 1946/7 were the last that Wittgenstein gave before leaving his teaching post to concentrate on writing. The notes taken by others who attended the course have been published, but they are notably difficult to harmonise into a coherent account of the lectures that Wittgenstein actually delivered.[22]

[21] Private Conversation, Paul Murray OP.
[22] Ludwig Wittgenstein and Peter Geach, *Wittgenstein's Lectures on Philosophical Psychology 1946-47* (London: Harvester, Wheatsheaf, 1988).

Much of the material, however, resembles that which was subsequently published in the *Philosophical Investigations*, particularly the Private Language Argument.[23] Materially, Ernst took from Wittgenstein's lectures a set of philosophical arguments that problematized dualistic accounts of subject and object, dividing inner from outer.[24] Wittgenstein emphasized to the students that, far from depending upon mental ostensive definition, meaningful language use is always already enmeshed in communal practices and grounded in the primitive biological reactions of the body. The body, and not the mind, turns out to be the noetic fulcrum for the nexus of meaning. Perhaps equally important, however, was what Ernst took from Wittgenstein formally: an account of philosophy as therapy, and an awareness of the importance of pedagogical techniques in helping students to recognise their faulty assumptions.[25] For Wittgenstein, the practice of philosophy can liberate the student from false prejudices and preconceptions, so that they might more clearly see the ways in which their use of language already contains some of the answers to their questioning. Philosophy, then, is not only—or even primarily—about providing answers, but about purifying the questions so that they do not foreclose the space in which the answers might appear.

---

[23] PI: §243-§271.

[24] ME: 13-27. Ernst wrote surprisingly little on Wittgenstein's influence on his theology. He did, however, exercise a considerable influence over the work of his student, Ignace d'Hert OP, which was published as: *Wittgenstein's Relevance for Theology* (Bern: Lang, 1975). The following presentation does not draw upon d'Hert's account, but he can nonetheless be recognized as an authentic custodian of Ernst's views on Wittgensteinian philosophy's utility for theology. Given how little Ernst himself wrote, scholarship has particular reason be grateful for the directness of d'Hert's mediation. Another of Ernst's students, Fergus Kerr, has published at a more critical and independent distance, see: *Theology after Wittgenstein* (2nd edn.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).

[25] As Wittgenstein put it, "Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language" (PI §109); "the philosopher's treatment of a question is like the treatment of an illness" (PI §255). For a systematic presentation, see: Robert J. Fogelin, 'Wittgenstein's critique of philosophy', in Hans D. Sluga and David G. Stern (eds.), *Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 34-58, See also: Kerr, *Theology after Wittgenstein*, 47-52.

A decade later, in the academic year 1956/7,[26] Ernst was appointed to teach a course on Aquinas's rational psychology to Dominican seminarians.[27] Ernst found himself confronted with the challenge of inducting students who instinctively thought along the lines of what Wittgenstein termed the "Augustinian picture"[28] into the worldview of Aquinas, which they found entirely counterintuitive. The 'Augustinian Picture', as Wittgenstein called it, is a particular account of language acquisition that locates the meaning of words and concepts in the objects that they stand for, a connection which is mentally established by ostensive definition. This view is characterised by an affirmation of the noun as the basic form of language: language is essentially nominal in that meaning is derived from the objects to which language points. Influenced by the idealism of their cultural milieu, Ernst's students instinctively thought of the mind as an intellectual substance dissociated from the world that it knows, operating by connecting mental representations with externally existing objects. There is, Ernst found, "a distinction between 'objective' and 'subjective' that has become deeply engrained in our tacit understanding of ourselves and our world".[29] This metaphysically generated dualism of subject and object, Ernst notes, is "conventionally identified as Cartesian",[30] though Ernst is careful not to be drawn into a consideration of

[26] I am grateful to two of the students who were enrolled in this class—Austin Gaskell OP and Fergus Kerr OP—for taking time to discuss their memories of Ernst with me.

[27] EDA, Gaskell §3, contains a complete set of notes—taken by the late Austin Gaskell OP—on this and all of Ernst's courses at Hawkesyard. Further information can be found in the studentate chronicle in EDA, Hawkesyard, §4. One of the students in the class has published an account of it, see: Kerr, 'Ansombe, Ernst and McCabe: Wittgenstein and Catholic Theology'.

[28] Wittgenstein uses this phrase in PI §1 to denote the highly representational account of language acquisition extracted from Augustine's *Confessions* I/8, where Augustine claims to remember learning language by ostensive definition. Wittgenstein extracts these somewhat representationalist remarks—which he never rejects *in toto*—from a much broader account of language, thus inevitably distorting Augustine's views. It is unclear why Wittgenstein appeals to Augustine. The so-called 'Augustinian Picture' probably more closely approximates the views Wittgenstein himself held in the *TLP* than it does any view Augustine ever held.

[29] TG: 66.

[30] TG: 66.

Descartes' actual texts. Notably, Ernst makes no overt foray into conceptual genealogy (as, for instance, scholars associated with Radical Orthodoxy have done), nor does he attempt to adjudicate on the correct interpretation of Descartes' highly contested method of hyperbolic doubt. Rather, Ernst begins with an actuality: the culturally mediated set of intuitions that he encounters in the classroom, which he takes to be recognizably related to the philosophical tradition of Cartesian-Kantian idealism.[31]

According to Ernst's analysis, the average new Dominican recruit was prone to what Bernard Lonergan called the 'cognitional myth':[32] the conception that knowledge is fundamentally about *looking* at the world through the windows of the senses rather than engaging and being engaged by—in other words *doing* something to or with—the world.

A consequence of this instinctive metaphysical dissociation of the subject from the object of its knowledge is the location of truth in the 'exterior' domain of objectivity. In so doing, truth comes to be conceived not as a perfection of the intellect enacted by contact with the world, but as an attribute of a proposition in its conformity with 'objective' reality. On such an account, the attainment of supposedly objective knowledge involves the attenuation of the role of the knowing subject. This instinctive dualism had, Ernst noted, wide ranging ramifications for the understanding of spiritual and religious practice. In particular, this cultural idealism implicitly contains a

[31] Ernst laments "artificially contrived Cartesian stoves for philosophical contemplation erected in seminaries", see: ME: 127.
[32] Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: DLT, 1971): 217.

particular account of personal identity, locating the 'truest self' in the disembodied domain of privileged interiority.

In short, this account of intellection as modelled in terms of what Wittgenstein called the inner-outer picture, posited a metaphysical gap between the subject and object that must be bridged by the subject's noetic gamble on the senses. This foreclosed induction into the intellectualism of the Thomistic synthesis: on Aquinas's account, as Ernst understands it, knowledge is an intimate relationship, through which part of the world is allowed to realise itself in an intellectual way within the knowing agent. Whilst Ernst's students intuitively assumed the existence of a gap between the subject and mind-independent reality, for Aquinas the mind was formally identical with that which it comes to know: "*intellectus in actu est intelligibile in actu*".[33] The mind becomes identical with that which it knows by the activity of the agent intellect in abstracting the formal cause from the specificities of the matter that it animates (and the accidents that it instantiates) so as to allow this to animate the passive intellect.[34] The world thus actualizes the potentiality of the human mind in particular ways.[35]

---

[33] "Actual thought is the actualized intelligibility of what is known", see: ST I, q. 12, a2. Interestingly this volume of the *Summa* in the Gilby translation, mostly dealing with predication and theological epistemology, was translated by Herbert McCabe, with whom Ernst would disagree so strongly on the question of Aquinas's doctrine of analogy (see below).

[34] For relatively neutral presentations of Aquinas's account of knowledge, including the relationship of the intellectus agens and intellectus possibilis, see: Michael S. Sherwin, *By Knowledge & By Love: charity and knowledge in the moral theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2003): 217-43, Norman Kretzmann, 'Philosophy of Mind', in Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (eds.), *Cambridge Companion to Aquinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 128-59, Scott Macdonald, 'Theory of Knowledge', in Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (eds.), *Cambridge Companion to Aquinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1993): 160-95, Whilst the foregoing provide technical accounts of Aquinas's metaphysics of knowing, for an account of the coinherence of epistemology and theology in Aquinas, see:Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (Oxford: Blackwells, 2002): 17-34.

[35] This cannot be said, of course, of the divine mind, which as actus purus cannot be actualised in any way, let alone by the perfection of a species. God therefore knows the world by knowledge of his own

On the other hand, whilst knowing does not physically change that which is known, it does, in a certain sense, actualize its potential by providing a context within which its diverse meanings can be unfolded. This epistemological intimacy is not, however, reducible to a question of a metaphysics of knowing. The importance of this intellectualism is, for Aquinas, ultimately soteriological. As the work of Pierre Rousselot (a Jesuit priest tragically killed in the trenches of the First World War) had identified,[36] Aquinas's understanding of the intellect as unitive allowed him to account for how the Beatific Vision could satisfy the subject's supernatural desire, and how, by *visio beatifica*, the subject could become 'like unto God'. Without the closure of the gap between the knower and the known, the subject could never satiate the desire for God through a relationship of knowledge, for that knowledge would always imply distance and never reach the rest of possession or identity.

In summary, Ernst's use of Ludwig Wittgenstein in his 1956/7 lectures provided him with the philosophical tools to (a) undermine the instinctive mind-body dualism of his students, so as to provide a fresh way of receiving Aquinas's hylemorphic dualism; and to (b) highlight the ways in which they were afflicted by the 'cognitional myth' so as to recover a Thomistic sense of knowledge as *doing* rather than *looking*. The next section identifies the ways in which Ernst extended this disruption of metaphysical dualisms to two further binaries: a truth-history dialectic, and the *logos*-language relationship.

---

essence. See: ST I, q 14, and: Richard Norman, 'Aristotle's Philosopher-God', *Phronesis,* 14/1 (1969), 63-74.

[36] Pierre Rousselot, *The Intellectualism of Saint Thomas* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1935).

§1.2: Ernst's Intrinsicism: Language and Mediation

This section identifies a key feature of Ernst's proposed semantic ontology as it emerges in two forms: his rejection of extrinsicism and his correlate development of intrinsicist accounts of the relationship of language-*logos* and history-meaning.

'Intrinsicism' and 'extrinsicism' are not concepts that are used extensively by Ernst and therefore require definition before they are used to interpret his work. The terms are, however, used by Karl Rahner in his essay on the relationship between nature and grace,[37] which was translated by Ernst for inclusion in the first volume of the *Theological Investigations*. The definitions proposed here extend Rahner's remarks beyond the nature-grace relationship but are grounded in the same fundamental analysis. Intrinsicism and extrinsicism are competing accounts of how two realities (paradigmatically natural and supernatural realities) are related. Rather than fully developed philosophical systems, they refer to patterns of thought or philosophical instincts that characterise approaches to theology. Extrinsicism stresses the relative autonomy of the natural order, positing a degree of separation between the two domains; this separation resembles the 'inner-outer' picture that Wittgenstein rejected. Intrinsicism, on the other hand, affirms the intrinsic relation of the natural to the supernatural: the two domains retain a distinction, but are not constituted in a disjunction, antagonism, or radical separation. In semantic terms, extrinsicism suggests

[37] Karl Rahner, 'Concerning the Relationship between Nature and Grace', *Theological Investigations v1: God, Christ, Mary and Grace* (London: DLT, 1961): 297-318.

language is meaningful by pointing to reality beyond language; intrinsicism suggests language is meaningful because it contains or is contained by the meaning that it communicates. A diagram from Ernst's collected papers shows the difference between an intrinsicist and extrinisicist apperception, which he associated with Kant:

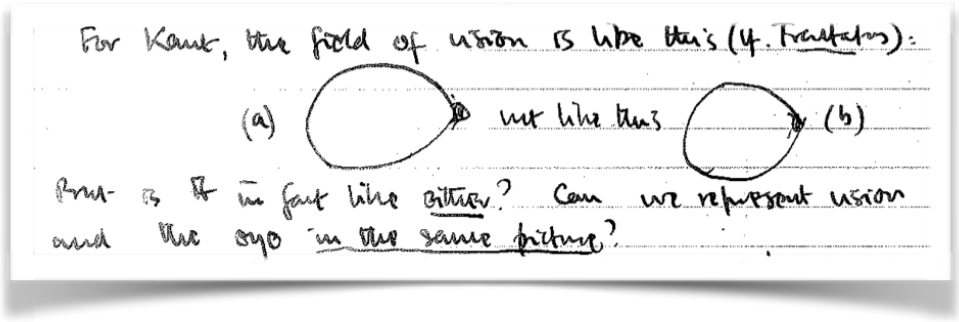


Figure 1 Intrinsicism and Extrinsicism

The distinction between extrinsicism and intrinsicism finds iterations in many loci of the *nexus mysteriorum*, but its impact is felt most powerfully in the doctrine of revelation and associated questions of theological epistemology. Extrinsicists tend to locate ultimate meaning outside the realm of human meanings, so that theological knowledge is added to other types of knowledge we have of the world—according the popular caricature, like the icing on top of a cake. On the other hand, intrinsicists hold that ultimate meaning is available within or inside of the world of human meanings, without a loss of the transcendence. Likewise, extrinsicism thus tends towards a dissociation of the individual's personal act of faith (*fides qua*, the faith that believes) and the contents of the faith (*fides quae*, the faith that is believed), emphasising the coherence of the faith independent of knowing intellect. On the other hand, intrinsicism emphasises their mutual interpenetration, and the necessity of *fides qua* for the full intelligibility of *fides quae*.

§1.2.1: Truth in-and-beyond Language: Intrinsicism and Revelation

This subsection identifies how Ernst's pedagogical use of Wittgenstein generates an intrinsicist account of language. The 'Augustinian picture' of the mind's relationship to the world, against which Wittgenstein laboured, posits an extrinsicist account of rationality: there is a separation of the mental realm of meaning and the physical realm of objects. Although the dualism of the inner-outer picture finds a paradigmatic instance in the mind-body dualism of Cartesianism, it finds further iterations that correspond to this division of substance into corporeal (*res extensae*) and mental (*res cogitantes*).[38] In particular, this dissociation implies an extrinsic relationship between the material practices of language and the immaterial meanings that they communicate. In theological terms, this invokes a separation of theological language from the divine *logos* that it communicates: *logos* and language are related according to the logic of extrinsicism, in which mediation is reduced to ostention (language points to *logos* but does not enact it). According to this view, language is meaningful principally as denotation, that is, insofar as it substitutes for the object that it denotes,[39] prioritising the noun,[40] rather than the activity of the verb, as the normative unit of language. The inscription of this view into our tacit understanding erodes a sense of language as genuinely mediatorial and contributes to a hollowing out of a symbolic culture in which language participates in the fullness of the reality that it communicates.[41] In other

[38] For the implications of Catesian metaphysics for the 'grey area' of non-human animal reactions, see: John Cottingham, ''A Brute to the Brutes?': Descartes' Treatment of Animals', *Philosophy,* 53 (1978), 551-59.
[39] PI §1.
[40] PI §2 and §7.
[41] ME: 66-68.

words, when it comes to rejecting the angelism of Cartesianism, much more than theological anthropology is at stake.

By calling into question the residual extrinsicism of the 'modern mind', Ernst intends not only to offer a prophylaxis against certain philosophical developments that threaten to interject into theological reasoning from outside, but also to critique certain modes of reasoning that were dominant in Catholic theological responses to modern epistemology. In particular, Ernst sees a residue of this extrinsicism as accruing to the account of meaning that was operative within neo-scholasticism,[42] and even present within the account of meaning that St Thomas himself articulated (but the limits of which he actually transgressed).[43] Two features of this account were, for Ernst, inadequate, and both involved an undue degree of abstraction. Firstly, 'concepts' within St Thomas's epistemology are intellectual similitudes of natures that are arrived at by abstraction of an intellectual principle from the matter that gives it concreteness.[44] Meaning can only become accessible through the manipulation of these similitudes, which—like the intelligible *species*—have a curiously disembodied character that is of uncomfortable proximity to a Cartesian *ego*, abstracted as they both are from materiality. Secondly, and consequent to the generalization that this conceptual abstraction enacts, the removal of material specificity that is necessary to arrive at a concept means that meaning is not truly historical but emerges at a level disconnected from history. "The theory of meaning implicit in all scholastic theology is dominantly

[42] ME: 52-55, 83.
[43] ME: 83.
[44] ME: 83-84.

'ontic', tied to the specific natures of the cosmic world".[45] In other words, neo-scholasticism offered an account of meaning marked by a two-fold extrinsicism: firstly, a language-*logos* extrinsicism, in which the *logos* always remained outside of the theological language that communicated it; secondly, a *logos*-history dualism, in which ultimate truth is always at least partially incompatible with historical particularity, reached by an abstraction from particularity. The result of this abstractive tendency reached its zenith in hypertrophied Baroque scholasticism, which privileged clarity of expression and the logical structures of deductive argument over depth of engagement and complex practices of narration that could articulate wider ranges of meaning than could logical syllogisms (albeit with a correlate loss of precision).[46]

Ernst's critique of extrinsicism amounts to a new intrinsicist account of how *logos* and language are related. Theological language, with its irreducibly historical character, is given a renewed status as part of an epistemological structure of mediation. In other words, theological language no longer only points away from itself *via* essentialist concepts to a reality that it signifies but becomes a site at which revelation is made available in-and-through language itself. To paraphrase this, even when language 'fails', as it must always eventually do in theological discourse, language itself participates in that failure. Apophasis does not invoke an escape beyond the limits of language so that truth may emerge in an extra-linguistic abnegation, but rather language itself enacts that negation, actively mediating that truth. As John Milbank puts it:

[45] ME: 83.
[46] ME: 79.

"*We only think in language, and only grasp the world through language [...] it is impossible to ever disentangle the knowledge we have of ourselves and through ourselves from our knowledge of the world. [...] [L]anguage [cannot] be decoded in terms of some content, natural or subjective, which is properly pre-linguistic [..]: before language, humanity is simply contentless*." [47]

[47] Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 149.

§1.2.2: Truth in-and-beyond History: Intrinsicism of Being and Meaning

The previous subsection identified Ernst's rejection of extrinsicist accounts of language and rationality. Ernst was not alone in developing an intrinsicist theology of revelation.[48] *Ressourcement* and *Nouvelle Théologie* approaches that emerged after the (well documented)[49] collapse of neo-scholasticism are generally intrinsicist in their approach. This subsection identifies Ernst's extension of his intrinsicist account of language into a central concern of the *Ressourcement* project: the question of history.

From Ernst's perspective, the neo-scholastic anti-modernism of *Pascendi* (and what Rahner had called 'Pian monolithism')[50] had correctly identified the Cartesian-

[48] Indeed, *Dei Verbum* itself indicates this shift, see: Joseph Ratzinger, 'The Transmission of Divine Revelation', in Herbert Vorgrimler (ed.), *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II* (3; London: Burns & Oates, 1968): 181-98. For approaches similar to that taken by Ernst, see: Karl Rahner, 'Revelation: God's Self-Communication', in Karl Rahner (ed.), *Sacramentum Mundi* (5; London: Burns & Oates, 1970): 342-58, Avery Dulles, 'The Symbolic Structure of Revelation', *Theological Studies,* 41/1 (1980), 51-73, René Latourelle, *La Théologie de la Révélation* (2nd edn.; Bruges: Desclée Brouwer, 1966), For two more general surveys of post-conciliar approaches to the doctrine of revelation, see: René Latourelle, 'Revelation', in René Latourelle and Rino Fisichella (eds.), *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1990): 905-50, Avery Dulles, 'Revelation in Recent Catholic Theology', *Theology Today,* 24 (1967), 350-65, For an account of the ways in which the Kantian paradigm has been refracted through the twentieth-century accounts of revelation, see: Hoff, 'The Rise and the Fall of the Kantian Paradigm of Modern Theology', For approaches that mirror Ernst's concern to unite epistemology, revelation and the doctrine of God, see: Bruce L. Mccormack, 'Revelation and History in Transfoundationalist Perspective', *Orthodox and Modern: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2008): 21-39, Thomas Joseph White, 'The Primacy of Revelation and the Unity of Knowledge', in Thomas Joseph White and Bruce L. Mccormack (eds.), *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013): 1-39, Rowan Williams, 'Trinity and Revelation', *Modern Theology,* 2/3 (1986), 197-212.

[49] Philip Gleason, 'Neoscholasticism as Preconcilliar Ideology', *Catholic Historian,* 7/4 (1988), 401-11, Fergus Kerr, 'A different world: neoscholasticism and its discontents', *International Journal of Systematic Theology,* 8/2 (2006), 128-48, Hans Boersma, *Nouvelle théologie and sacramental ontology : a return to mystery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray, *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), Fergus Kerr, 'Rahner Retrospective: Rupturing der Pianische Monolithismus', *New Blackfriars,* 61 (1980), 224-33, Fergus Kerr, *Twentieth Century Catholic Theologians* (Edinburgh: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007).

[50] The English Translation of Rahner's works often only translates 'der pianische Monolithismus' as 'monolithism' rather than 'Pian monolithism' or 'Pianic monolithism', thus rupturing the sense of a theological monolith that ran from Pius IX to Pius XII, epitomized by *Humani Generis,* and overcome finally by Vatican II. See: Karl Rahner, *Theological Investgations* (9; London: DLT, 1972): 108.

Kantian turn to subjectivity as corrosive of a unified theological worldview. They were equally correct to reject the correlated method of 'vital immanence' that subjected dogmatic truth to the vagaries of historical change.[51] The neoscholastic response, however, by emphasising an entrenched theological objectivity, remained trapped within the subject-object reification of extrinsicism (and thus unwittingly conspired in its own oppression).[52] The neoscholastic ontology of meaning was a vastly hypertrophied response to the immanentising threat of historicism, trying to overcome an excess of the subject with the dominance of the object.

As a result, neoscholasticism bequeathed to twentieth century theology a problem: how to acknowledge the theological value of history without succumbing to mere historicism. Neoscholastic ontology seemed unable to admit any real involvement of history in the mediation of truth, effectively regarding any historically conditioned reasoning as proximate to relativism. Aside from the central historical events narrated in systematic form by the creeds, the historical details of the scriptures (together with the reconstruction of the scriptural *Sitz-im-Leben* and the historical horizon of thinkers like Aquinas) seemed—at best—to have only an illustrative or supplementary significance. Indeed, as Ernst saw it, even this supplementary significance of historical data was hard to account for within the theoretical ontology of meaning that neoscholasticism proposed. An extrinsicist metaphysics of meaning had effectively pre-determined the semantic space within which theological meaning could be received,

[51] *Cf.* Pope Pius X, *Pascendi Dominici Gregis.* (1907): §§7-9.
[52] Nicholas Wolterstorff has made similar observations: 'Is it Possible or Desirable for Theologians to Recover from Kant?', *Modern Theology,* 14/1 (1998), 1-18, 'The Travail of Theology in the Modern Academy', in Miroslav Volf (ed.), *The Future of Theology: Essays in Honour of Jürgen Moltmann* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996): 35-46.

thus paring this meaning down by trimming off the supposed 'excesses' of history. The proposed semantic ontology that Ernst develops is marked by a concern to negotiate this problem of history, to find a way in which ultimate meaning can be historically accessible without domesticating its eternal and immutable veracity.[53] In other words, Ernst proposes an ontology that he believes can support historical mediation without succumbing to historical relativism. The challenge is to affirm that knowledge of objective truth is compatible with its real historical reception.[54]

Whilst it was from Wittgenstein that Ernst excavated arguments against *logos*-language extrinsicism, it was to Heidegger that he turned for arguments against the *logos*-history duality. Notwithstanding the considerable differences between the two thinkers, Ernst finds in both Wittgenstein and Heidegger a fundamental convergence in their shared rejection of metaphysically generated dualisms (or, more positively, their affirmation of intrinsicism).[55] Ernst reported that his decision to use Wittgenstein rather than Heidegger in his 1956/7 Rational Psychology class was largely determined by the easy availability of a translation of the *Philosophical Investigations*:[56] *Sein und Zeit* languished untranslated until 1962. If it was from Wittgenstein that Ernst learned a philosophical procedure for returning the soul to the body (and meaning to socially negotiated processes and praxes), it was from his engagement with Heidegger that Ernst developed an awareness of the unity of being and meaning within the historically

[53] This concern seems to underpin Ernst's account of temporality, see ME: 107-109.
[54] TG: 65-66.
[55] ME: 26-27. An account of the relationship between Heidegger and Wittgenstein that is similar to that hinted at by Ernst has been given masterful expression by Lee Braver in a recent monograph: *Groundless Grounds: A Study of Wittgenstein and Heidegger* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2014). I am grateful to Fergus Kerr OP for pointing me in the direction of Braver's work.
[56] Fergus Kerr OP, private conversation.

thrown character of human existence. Heidegger's analysis of the philosophical tradition's 'forgetfulness of Being' is refracted in Ernst's awareness of the theological tradition's 'forgetfulness of Meaning'.[57] Throughout, Ernst's theological programme is marked by Heideggerian impulses, particularly in his concern to affirm the real historical character of meaning whilst simultaneously avoiding the ontotheological identification of God as an object within the realm of beings. As Eric Mascall sees it, this is a fundamentally Thomistic insight:

> "*Saint Thomas's metaphysics of knowledge is Christian when it summons man back into the here-and-now of his finite world, because the Eternal has also entered into his world so that man might find Him, and in Him find himself anew*." [58]

From Heidegger, then, Ernst takes an account of *Seinsgeschichte,* the "history of culture as the bearer of ontological meaning".[59] That is, for Ernst, being discloses itself historically as meaning.[60] The meanings—and the very meaningfulness—of the world as they are engaged by the subject who has her being as always already enmeshed with the world and its meanings, are the temporal showings of things in their self-disclosure within the contingencies of space and time. "Truth is the revelation of being",[61] realised historically as meaning. As a result, the adoption of meaning as the unifying theme of a theological metaphysics is not an arbitrary selection of a theme remote from the concerns of the classical metaphysics of *esse*. Rather, meaning emerges as ultimately related to Being, to the extent that the terms are convertible (as transcendentals). The

[57] ME: 20-27.
[58] Eric L. Mascall, *The Openness of Being* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971): 74.
[59] ME: 144.
[60] ME: 11.
[61] ME: 10.

dynamic reality of meaning, then, captures the aspect of being under which reality gives itself to be known historically and the way in which rational creatures are actively engaged in its eventuation and appropriation. In proposing this quasi-transcendental character of meaning, Ernst's proposed ontology of meaning resembles Balthasar's reintegration of theological metaphysics around the divine self-disclosure in glory.

This intrinsicist account of the relationship of meaning and history—in which meaning is the historical disclosure of being—has three primary consequences for Ernst's theology. Firstly, historical contingency and truth are not constituted in a competitive relation of antagonism: their impulse is intrinsicist rather than extrinsicist. There is no route to ultimate Being and Truth that does not go through the historical self-giving of Being in contingent meanings. Secondly, as a result of this intrinsicism, the ultimate meaning is known only as it illuminates the particular meanings of a concrete context at a particular historical moment.[62] Thirdly, this asserts the ineliminable significance of the historical manifestation of God's saving economy, in all its particularity: the events of salvation history and the particularity of the whole of Jesus's earthly life are intrinsic to the theological mystery. It is these historical aspects of Jesus's mission that, Ernst thinks, that are notable by their absence in neoscholastic theology.[63]

In relation to the implementation of this third (methodological) principle, Ernst's work is marked by a self-referential incoherence. Although Ernst gives a clear

[62] ME: 156.
[63] ME: 106.

methodological priority to the historical, his own theological reflections do not draw extensively on historical matters: his treatment of the cosmic significance of the incarnation, for instance, is not accompanied by extensive reflection on the historical Jesus of Nazareth. The methodological implications of this ontology of temporality are discussed further in the account of theology as 'engaged contemplation' in §1.5.2. The next section locates the metaphysical basis for Ernst's intrinsicism in a neoplatonic reading of Aquinas that prioritises the doctrine of participation.

§1.3: Participation as Ontological Resource

The previous section identified Ernst's use of Wittgenstein and Heidegger to generate an intrinsicist picture of the relationship between *logos* and language, and truth-meaning and history. This section identifies the point of connection that Ernst locates between this contemporary philosophical propaedeutic and the thought of Aquinas. Ernst locates the resources for his intrinsicism in the 'ontological development' of the doctrine of analogy, where he finds Aquinas transgressing his otherwise extrinsicist account of meaning.[64] By describing the doctrine of analogy in terms of an 'ontological development',[65] Ernst is concealing within a laconic phrase a very significant interpretative decision, which sets Ernst's way of reading Aquinas (together with that of his teacher Victor White OP)[66] against another English Dominican mode of reading

[64] ME: 83, 66-69.
[65] ME: 67*ff.*
[66] The divergence between 'Ernstian' and 'McCabean' ways of reading Aquinas may be seen to be prefigured in the preceding generation, by the divergent styles represented, on the one hand, by Victor White and, on the other hand, by the shared approach of Mark Brocklehurst and Luke Ford. In 1930, Victor White submitted a dissertation for the Order's STL degree ('The Platonism of Aquinas') in which he argued against the dominant Aristotelian Thomism of his day (to which Brocklehurst and Ford broadly subscribed). For a biographical account of White's career, particularly in relation to Jung, see:

(represented in Ernst's generation by Herbert McCabe OP). For McCabe, the doctrine of analogy is not principally an ontological claim, but a fundamentally a grammatical principle (and one that has been given disproportionate attention by contemporary Thomists).[67] For Ernst, on the other hand, the core of the doctrine of analogy is a fundamental ontological determination, which in turn has ramifications for the grammar of theological discourse. These grammatical implications of the doctrine of analogy are functions of an ontology of participation, in which creatures have existence by a relationship of participation in the divine existence. Ernst's way of reading Aquinas therefore stresses the ways in which Aquinas's Christian rehabilitation of Aristotelian noetic applies neoplatonic thought as a corrective.[68] McCabe, by contrast, downplays the role exerted by Neoplatonic categories of participation, emphasizing Aquinas's thoroughly Aristotelian credentials.[69]

The scope of the doctrine of participation in Aquinas's thought is a notably vexatious question among contemporary readings of the Thomistic corpus. Some, like John Milbank and the Radically Orthodox, read participation as the conceptual heart of

---

Clodagh Weldon, *Fr. Victor White, O.P.: The Story of Jung's "White Raven"* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). For an account of Victor White as part of the English Dominican intellectual tradition, see: Aidan Nichols, *Dominican Gallery: A Portrait of a Culture* (London: Gracewing, 1997): 53-123.

[67] "Analogy is not a way of getting to know about God, nor is it a theory of the structure of the universe, it is a comment on our use of certain words." See: Herbert Mccabe, 'A Note on 'Analogy'', in Thomas Gilby and Herbert Mccabe (eds.), *Summa Theologiae: Volume 3, Knowing and Naming God: 1a. 12-13* (1975): 106-07.

[68] This argument has been expressed forcefully by another English Dominican student of German Idealism, Edward Booth OP: *Aristotelian Aporetic Ontology in Islamic and Christian Thinkers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[69] Although McCabe did not follow White (as Ernst did) in developing a Platonist reading of Aquinas, he did emphasize the apophatic dimensions of Aquinas's thought, and even the 'agnosticism' of Aquinas's doctrine of the divine attributes. See: Herbert Mccabe, 'The Logic of Mysticism', *God Still Matters* (London: Bloomsbury, 2002): 13-28.

Aquinas's anti-univocal intellectualism.[70] For Milbank *et al*, only the analogical worldview of Aquinas's participatory ontology can overcome the violence of modern representationalism.[71] Others, like the Thomists identified with the 'River Forest' school, argue that, for Aquinas, physics always philosophically precedes metaphysics.[72] For the River Forest Thomists, one of the vital features of the Thomistic synthesis for contemporary philosophical theology is its capacity to generate an epistemology of the natural sciences that does not conflict with theological epistemology: an empirical scientist does not need to follow Aquinas into theology for his epistemology to 'work'. From the perspective of the River Forest school, Milbank's Aquinas looks more like Bonaventure's noetic dependence upon divine illumination than it does Aristotelian *scientia*.[73] For Milbank, by prioritising physics over metaphysics, these River Forest Thomists remain imprisoned within an immanentist account of instrumental rationality.[74] Ernst does relatively little to address this controversy, nor does he offer an explicit account of how the divine prevenience relates to human noetic activity. Ernst's essay on the vocation of nature—where it might be expected to find an account of 'natural' reason—is among the least developed of those offered in *Multiple Echo.* Nonetheless, for all that he might have learned from the classical approach of the River Forest Thomists, Ernst's reading of Aquinas is located in the Neoplatonic camp, to the

[70] John Milbank, 'Only Theology overcomes Metaphysics', *New Blackfriars,* 76 (1995), 325-43, John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock, *Truth in Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2001).
[71] Milbank, 'Only Theology overcomes Metaphysics'.
[72] Benedict M. Ashley, 'The River Forest School and the Philosophy of Nature Today', in R. James Long and James A. Weisheipl (eds.), *Philosophy and the God of Abraham* (Toronto: Pontifical Medieval Institute, 1991): 1-16.
[73] For an account of the different approaches to Augustinian epistemology that characterize the Dominican and Franciscan intellectual traditions, see: Lydia Schumacher, *Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge* (Edinburgh: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).
[74] Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 83.

extent that he strongly emphasizes the determinative role played by the ontology of participation in providing a noetic route beyond extrinsicism.

Having identified an ontological development embedded in Aquinas's doctrine of analogy, Ernst develops his account of this ontology in terms of a 'dynamic transcendence', a category which he sees as the fundamental principle of Catholic theology.[75] By 'dynamic transcendence' Ernst means a relational transcendence that in no way negates immanence (somewhat similar to what Kathryn Tanner's account of a 'non-contrastive transcendence').[76] Ernst finds iterations of this dynamic transcendence across the whole *nexus mysteriorum.* For example, Jesus's victory over the 'world' is enacted within the 'world'; the Christian existential is in the world, but not of it. Similarly, Ernst holds that ultimate meaning is available within the world but is not constrained, or contained, by it.[77] The principle of dynamic transcendence disrupts any binary opposition of transcendent and immanent, allowing a more radically incarnational account of the relationship of *logos* to language, in which the *logos* can be in language without being determined or entirely contained by it. In other words, language can contain the *logos* without the *logos* being contained by language.

Ernst's account of dynamic transcendence resembles the account of the *analogia entis* offered by the Heidegger-influenced Jesuit Erich Przywara.[78] For Przywara,

---

[75] See the discussion of the 'fundamental tension' in ME: 32.

[76] Kathryn Tanner, 'Creation Ex Nihilo as Mixed Metaphor', *Modern Theology,* 29/2 (2013), 138-55, For a creative use of Tanner's account of transcendence in relation to medieval Dominican theological epistemology, see: Anastasia Wendlinder, *Speaking of God in Thomas Aquinas and Meister Eckhart* (London: Ashgate, 2014).

[77] ME: 13-27.

[78] Erich Przywara, *Analogia Entis: Metaphysik* (München: Kösel, 1932). Przywara's work was only translated into English in 2014 by John R. Betz and David Bentley Hart. For much English-speaking

arguing from the disjunction of essence and existence in creatures, the *analogia entis* denotes the way in which the creature is not entirely coincident with their existence (which is 'added' to their essence by participation in the divine *esse*):[79] the creature's existence, then, is always both in-and-beyond them, or—to use Ernstian idiom—the creature's existence dynamically transcends their essence. In noetic terms, the doctrine of analogy means that theological meaning is in-and-beyond (it dynamically transcends) theological language.

The extent of Ernst's engagement with Przywara's *analogia entis* is hard to judge. Ernst was certainly aware of Przywara's work,[80] which, along with thinkers like Guardini and Roussellot, form an essential component of the background to his contemporary Catholic theology. There is, however, no evidence that Ernst undertook a detailed study of Przywara's work, nor does he appear to have made any use of Przywara's categories in the development of his own ontological picture.[81] Indeed, for all the *prima facie* similarities between Ernst and Przywara, Ernst diverges from Przywara's *analogia entis* by thinking not primarilyy in terms of a dynamic transcendence of being (existence in-and-beyond the world), but of an analogy of meaning (meaning in-and-beyond the world). In proposing the new perspective of meaning, however, Ernst does not intend that the analogy of truth should displace

theology, Przywara's work was known largely through the lens of Karl Barth's stinging critique of the principle as the 'invention of the anti-Christ' in CD I/1. On the reception of Barth's critique (which may not actually have so directly targeted Przywara's work as first appears), see: Keith L Johnson, *Karl Barth and the Analogia Entis* (London: T&T Clark, 2010).

[79] Przywara, *Analogia Entis: Metaphysik*, 4-9.

[80] EDA, Ernst §1, Red Notebook 'Natural Theology' dated 1959, contains a brief reference to Przywara's conflict with Barth on the *analogia entis* and a suggestion that Barth had 'misread' Przywara.

[81] There are none of Przywara's characteristic 'in-and-beyond' sayings, nor reference to his *Dasein-als-Sosein* framework.

categories derived from the metaphysics of *esse*. Ernst does not regard classical substance metaphysics to be an 'optional extra' for Catholic theology.[82] The impulse behind this development of an analogy of meaning is fundamentally pedagogical. In particular, Ernst intuits that rearticulating the dynamic transcendence of the *analogia entis* in terms of meaning provides theologians with a new way into understanding how the category of being functioned in pre-modern theology. The route that Ernst traces is not from being to meaning, but through meaning back to Being. Being and Meaning are somewhat convertible: being is that which discloses itself historically in meaning.[83]

Importantly—though Ernst does not labour the point himself—the notion of dynamic transcendence is built into his definition of human meaning making. The human creature belongs to the world and yet she is able to take the world as her object (thereby standing, as it were, 'outside' of the world in a form of dynamic transcendence). The human person is 'owned' by the world even as they come to 'own' the world through the praxis of meaning. This process of transcending the world in meaning—somewhat like Rahner's notion of our transcending our finitude by recognizing it[84]—does not, however, abstract us from the world: the praxis of meaning makes us more at home within the world, more radically rooted in our finitude. Indeed, the basis for this dynamic transcendence is the unique metaphysical status of the human creature. As an embodied rational animal,[85] Aquinas understands the human person to straddle two metaphysical hierarchies: as a rational animal, the human

[82] Nicholas Lash, 'Listening to the Echo', *New Blackfriars,* 61 (1980), 89-93.
[83] ME: 85, see also ME: 143.
[84] Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, trans. William V. Dych (London: Herder & Herder, 1978): 31-35.
[85] ST I, qq. 75-76.

creature is the highest in the order of material beings, but also the lowest in the order of spiritual creatures.[86] Although Ernst does not make this implication of his synthesis explicit, this account renders the human person, in their very metaphysical constitution, as an instance of dynamic transcendence (more precisely, as will be argued in Chapter 5, an 'ontological metaphor'), a process of semiotic transfer from one semantic domain to another. As such, the human person is always in-and-beyond each of the domains, always mediating and communicating. Ernst's development of the notion of ontological metaphor is examined in detail in Chapter 5. For now, it is sufficient to note that the human person, as in-and-beyond the observable world, finds themselves inextricably caught within dynamic transcendence and that this could, at least in principle, be the subject of phenomenological investigation.[87]

A trace of this dynamic transcendence that inheres within language can be found in the necessary transgression of pure description.[88] When the work of description is (hypothetically) completed, there is still more to be said. An accurate description of the ways in which we are engaged by the world paradoxically demands more than mere description. The task of description therefore fails to articulate everything that *must* be said, let alone everything that *could* be said.

In summary, Ernst used a participatory reading of Thomistic ontology to negotiate an intrinsicism of both language and meaning, and meaning and history. The

[86] ST I, q. 76, a. 1.
[87] The reference to 'reason reflecting upon itself' is suggestive of this, ME: 130.
[88] ME: 13-27. This theme was taken up in the Gifford Lectures of one of Ernst's most prominent former students, Rowan Williams: *The Edge of Words: God and the Habits of Language* (London: Continuum, 2014): 1-34. This roughly corresponds to the first of the lectures, in which Ernst's work is treated extensively.

next section examines how the account of theology that emerges from this ontology situates Ernst in relation to contemporary theological movements.

§1.4: Ernst's (Re)performance of Thomistic Pedagogy

This section examines Ernst's relationship to the two dominant modes of theological reflection in the Catholic tradition of the late twentieth century: *Communio* and *Concilium*. Firstly, it is argued that Ernst enacts a 're-performance' of Thomistic pedagogy as a *via media* between these approaches. Secondly, Ernst's development of an account of theology as 'engaged contemplation' is identified.

Ernst's relationship to the collapse of neoscholastic extrinsicism is highly complex.[89] For all that he embraced the theological freedoms that the Council bequeathed to him, Ernst was far from uncritical of the ways in which the Council's teachings were being implemented. In many ways, Ernst was a contradictory mixture of 'progressive' and 'conservative'.[90] On the one hand, his theological work is creative and

[89] The collapse of neoscholasticism forms the background to Ernst's theological career and, whilst an engagement with neoscholastics is seldom the foreground of his work, it is almost always part of the implicit context. In assessing Ernst's relationship to scholarly material in his own time, the notes contained in EDA, Ernst §3 have proved invaluable, as have conversations with Ernst's students: John Saward, Robert Ombres OP, Timothy Radcliffe OP, Fergus Kerr OP, and his friend and former colleague, the late Timothy McDermott. It is, nonetheless, notable how little Ernst has to say about neoscholasticism directly in either ME or TG. Positively, he avoids the temptation to treat neoscholasticism as if it were in actuality a monolithic approach that lacked internal diversity. Negatively, it is not always clear to whom Ernst is 'addressing' his particular remarks. This is indicative of a certain scholarly caution that prevented Ernst from making potentially controversial claims that were not easy to textually substantiate (but which is also haunted his prose, leaving him apparently unable to firmly say anything without a catena of caveats). As in his reluctance to attribute what is 'conventionally called Cartesianism' to Descartes, Ernst seems implicitly aware of the huge textual diversity with which he would have to grapple if he invoked neoscholasticism directly.

[90] A recent monograph on 'progressive' theologians in 20th Century Catholic England treats extensively of Herbert McCabe but makes only one brief mention of Ernst. For all McCabe's involvement in the 'Catholic New Left', he was arguably much less progressive than Ernst when it came to philosophical

provocative, embracing a range of thinkers from secular continental philosophy. On the other hand, he struggled to accept the changes in the style of religious life and, in intra-Dominican discussions, was vociferous in his defence of classical practices such as *clausura*, and strongly critical of a renewal in the friars' political engagement.[91] In personal correspondence, he wrote of a painful awareness that, though much had been gained theologically by the Council, more had been lost.[92] His resignation as Regent of Oxford and relocation to the solitude of the enclosed monastery at Carisbrooke in 1975 was closely related to these and other personal tensions.[93]

§1.4.1: Semantic Dogmatics between *Communio* and *Concilium*

Ernst witnessed both the ascendency of post-neoscholastic theology and the fragmentation of the delicately balanced consensus of conciliar theologians across a spectrum of theological styles, clustered into groups around the distinctive approaches of the *Communio* and *Concilium* journals.[94] The difference between these two approaches has sometimes been overstated and the supposed 'rivalry' of the journals caricatured in terms of a conservative-vs-liberal model. To adopt the imagery of Lieven Boeve (a *Concilium* thinker), whilst both approaches acknowledge that they stand as

readings of Aquinas. See: Jay P. Corrin, *Catholic Progressives in England After Vatican II* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013): 139.

[91] ME: 149-158 contains remarks that were addressed, in the first instance, to the Dominican community in which he lived. The suggestion that the remarks were not for 'immediate discussion' (149) is perhaps indicative of an anxiety about how his remarks were wont not be warmly received.

[92] EDA, Ernst §5, Letter to the Abbot of Quarr, 12th September 1972.

[93] This is particularly clear in the frank correspondence that Ernst shared with Mark Schoof OP, who was equally disenfranchised from his own province: EDA, Ernst §1. Schoof, now known by his baptismal name Ted, graciously shared his portion of the correspondence with me, and discussed Ernst's relationship to the Oxford theological community in the 1970s.

[94] Tracey Rowland, *Catholic Theology* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017): 91-166. Rowland's preference for the communio style is immediately apparent.

recipients of a Sacred Tradition, they tend to model their relationship to that dynamic tradition in different ways.[95] *Communio* thinkers see themselves primarily as beneficiary-heirs, understanding their role as essentially that of preserving and transmitting their inheritance to the next generation without corruption. *Concilium* thinkers, by contrast, see their role as more akin to testators, summoned to actively implement and develop the tradition to which they are heirs, by a process of 'recontextualisation'.[96] These emphases are not mutually exclusive: a testator, for instance, is bound to implement the historical intention of the one who made the will, lest inheritance become only a derived reduplication of the contemporary *Zeitgeist*; a beneficiary-heir must also, if they are truly to be heirs and not only to reduplicate the historical will of the benefactor, make an engaged and intentional appropriation. Nonetheless, *Communio* approaches have tended to prioritise organic modes of theological development (most famously, Benedict XVI's 'hermeneutic of continuity'),[97] whilst *Concilium* approaches are more open to interruptive developments that catalyse dynamic recontextualisation.[98]

The ways in which Ernst negotiated this divergence of *Communio-Concilium* approaches, with their competing accounts of the theologian's role, whilst often lonely, is instructive. Ernst's attendance at the World *Concilium* Congress in 1970, and the

[95] Lieven Boeve, *Interrupting Tradition* (Louvain: Peeters, 2003): 24-49.
[96] Boeve, in a provocative article, appears to present the papal abdication of Pope Benedict XVI as the apotheosis of a *communio* approach that refuses the project of recontextualisation and thus inevitably ends up in the existential morass of cognitive dissonance. See: Lieven Boeve, 'Why Benedict XVI Resigned', *Theology at the Crossroads of University, Church and Society: Dialogue, Difference and Catholic Identity* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016): 221-34.
[97] The phrase was used in his Christmas Greeting to the Roman Curia on 22nd December 2005.
[98] See: Boeve, *Interrupting Tradition*, passim, See also: Lieven Boeve, *Lyotard and Theology* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014): 99.

publication of his acerbic reaction in *New Blackfriars*,[99] reveals his deep disquiet with the project of recontextualisation, both in its style and its substance. In particular, Ernst was concerned about the ways in which the event had been organized and manipulated as a political event, and the extent to which theology was implicitly (and at times explicitly) conceived in terms of a praxis analogous to the Frankfurt School of Sociology, chiefly engaged in a critique of society and politics. In the end, Ernst finds the polarization of *Communio* and *Concilium* lamentable insofar as it cohered around the location of 'authority' vis-à-vis the inherited tradition. This only entrenched, according to Ernst, an already undue theological preoccupation with the question of authority.[100]

Although Boeve's testamentary analogy is a useful model for capturing the distinctive features of the *Communio-Concilium* tendencies, it is difficult to locate Ernst's proposed ontology of meaning within it. On the one hand, Ernst shares the impulse that underpins the strategy of recontextualisation (seeing the value of a theological metaphysics articulated in contemporary idiom), but he is critical of the politicised revisionary tendencies of *Concilium*. Ernst's proposed ontology of meaning does not relate to classical Thomism as either an heir or as a testator. Rather, Ernst seeks to re-perform a Thomistic theological pedagogy within contemporary intellectual culture. This situates Ernst's strategy of rearticulation as something of a *via media* between the *Communio* and *Concilium* approaches. The next subsection outlines the distinctive methodological features of this *via media* that Ernst opens up through his re-performance of Thomistic pedagogy.

---

[99] Cornelius Ernst, 'The Concilium World Congress: Impressions and Reflections', *New Blackfriars,* 51 (1970), 555-60. In ME at 41-46.
[100] ME: 46.

§1.4.2: Semantic Dogmatics as 'Engaged Contemplation'

This subsection identifies how Ernst's re-performance of Thomistic pedagogy constitutes theology as the discipline of 'engaged contemplation'[101] in service of the *logos*.[102] The notion of theology as engaged contemplation is intended to cash out the disruption of the dissociation of *theoria* and *praxis* implicit in Ernst's account of meaning as an activity, and equally to undermine the conception of contemplation as a "retreat into the cell of self-knowledge".[103] Theology is contemplative because it is concerned with questions of ultimate and eternal meaning, but it is equally meaningful only insofar as it is an engaged activity, the process and praxis of meaning that is bound up in the contemporary world, engaging a world of meanings that are given to it as its context.

The principle of dynamic transcendence has ramifications for the way in which Ernst conceives of the fundamental structure of Aquinas's theological work. For Ernst, in the most fundamental sense of the word, Aquinas's theology is not systematic, but rather thematic.[104] This is not to deny that Aquinas is engaged in a task that is

---

[101] Graham Ward has recently developed an account of theology as 'engaged systematics'. Ernst would have had considerable sympathy with Ward's proposals, but, given his understanding of Aquinas as a thematic thinker, have preferred not to deploy the term 'systematics'. 'Contemplation' more precisely evokes the perspective of meaning that Ernst is seeking to develop. Ward's proposals, meanwhile, are embedded within the first volume of his systematics (something Ernst's sporadic approach to writing could not have sustained). See: Graham Ward, *How the Light Gets in: Ethical Life I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[102] Ernst's notion of 'servanthood of the Word' has been taken up into the 2016 Edition of the worldwide Order of Preachers' *Ratio Formationis Generalis*.

[103] ME: 151.

[104] Roy, 'Cornelius Ernst's Theological Seeds'. See also: Cornelius Ernst, 'Introduction', in Thomas Gilby (ed.), *Summa Theologiae--The Gospel of Grace [I-II qq. 106-114]* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1972a): xv-xxvii..

identifiable to contemporary students as 'systematic theology': he is clearly concerned with the form of his *Summae* as much as their content, and thus is concerned to structure his presentation of *sacra doctrina* in a 'systematic way' so that the shape of theology is not only expedient but is also itself communicative of theological meaning. To be systematic in the most proper sense of the term, however, presupposes closure. A semantic *systema mundi* operates as such because it has determined limits: this was precisely the way in which meaning functioned within the 'logical space' view articulated in the *TLP*.[105] The concept of Being, however, is deployed by Aquinas precisely because it does not delimit such a determinate space and thus resists systematic closure:[106] the boundary of the communion of entities participating in the divine *esse* are indefinitely revisable and expandable, as new things are brought into existence and others cease to exist. There can be no philosophical limits to the divine creativity. Likewise, in a semantic ontology, the indefinite dilation of the ontology governed by the principle of meaning is evident in the indefinite array of meaningful uses that a native speaker can enact within a language (Ernst here appeals to Noam Chomsky's notion of 'competence').[107] Meanings are perpetually generative of new meanings, as the great literary tradition attests, and the creative enactment of new metaphors, which are always inevitably historically and socially conditioned, allows a deeper penetration into the mystery of human experience.[108]

[105] ME: 13-27
[106] See the discussion of the *Grenze* concept in *TLP*, and the following development in *PI.* ME: 14*ff.*
[107] ME: 54-55.
[108] See Ernst's discussion of 'extended' metaphor, ME: 69.

Ernst's resistance to systematic theology properly so-called heightens the sense in which theological discourse is always marked by a proper provisionality, and that even the most valuable of theological systems, because they implicitly move by defining a finite logical space in which to contain the infinite, are ultimately destined to be disrupted by the divine *logos*. An awareness of Aquinas as a thematic thinker draws attention to the ways in which pedagogical concerns animate his structural decisions. Ernst inherited this awareness of Aquinas as pedagogue from his own Dominican teacher, Victor White OP, for whom the *Summa Theologiæ* was not primarily a textbook for students (as it has customarily been seen), but a manual for teachers of introductory theology courses, helping them to anticipate and provoke discussion and debate.[109] The *Summa* guides the teacher in developing an approach to theology as praxis that engages the student with questions and solicits from them a response. That Aquinas explicitly considered these questions of pedagogy is clear, not only from the historical record of his experimental 'personal studium' in Rome,[110] but equally from the text of the *Summa Theologiæ* itself. The prologue of the *prima pars* speaks of the true Catholic teacher as the one who leads the student by the hand, taking them through a theological journey into beatitude.[111] The Neoplatonic *exitus-reditus* structure, identified by Ernst's fellow Dominican and sometime correspondent M.-D. Chenu,[112] not only determined in a

[109] Victor White, *Holy Teaching: The Idea of Theology According to St. Thomas Aquinas* (London: Blackfriars Publications, 1958).

[110] Jean-Pierre Torrell, *St Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996): 142-59, See also: Leonard E. Boyle, 'The Setting of the *Summa Theologiae*', in Brian Davies (ed.), *Aquinas's Summa Theologiae: Critical Essays* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006): 1-24.

[111] This point has been made forcefully by Peter M. Candler, *Theology, Rhetoric, Manuduction: Or Reading Scripture Together on the Path to God* (Radical Traditions; London: SCM Press, 2006).

[112] The correspondence between Ernst and Chenu is preserved in EDA, Ernst §2. It is sadly in disarray, with little theological discussion surviving. For Chenu's masterful article, see: Marie-Dominique Chenu, 'Le plan de la somme théologique de saint Thomas', *Revue Thomiste,* 47 (1939), 93-107.

general way the 'emergence' of creation as ordained to final consummation, it is also determinative of the theologian's journey through the *Summa* into eschatological beatitude.[113]

Theological formation and training in holiness are thus somewhat coextensive: the theological life serves the life of grace.[114] Indeed, this formative function is reflected not only in the macrostructure of the *Summa*, but equally in the microstructure of the *Summa*'s most basic unit, the article. Framed as a theological question using the particle *utrum*, the article is constituted by a call-and-response of objections and their answers. In the Dominican context in which Aquinas taught, this rhythmic backwards-and-forwards motion invokes the antiphonal character of the chanted liturgy, and Aquinas's eclectic use of sources also deployed in the liturgy would have evoked a rich penumbra of memories and associations. The *respondeo*—Aquinas's conclusion, as it were—is not located at the end of the article, but in the middle. The response of the teacher does not end the dialogue and leave the student satisfied that they now know the 'correct' answer, but rather propels the student to return (in almost every case) to the objections and finds, in responding to them, the full implications of the *respondeo*.[115]

The principle of dynamic transcendence—that meaning is in-and-beyond the world—has the most immediate ramifications for theology. *In via*, there is no access to

[113] The connection between sanctification, theosis and the discipline of theology has been demonstrated by: Fáinche Ryan, *Formation in Holiness: Thomas Aquinas on Sacra Doctrina* (Utrecht: Thomas Instituut/Peeters Leuven, 2007), Anna Ngaire Williams, 'Deification in the Summa theologiae: A Structural Interpretation of the Prima Pars', *The Thomist,* 61/2 (1997), 219-55.

[114] Cf., ME: 121.

[115] This reading of the microscopic structure of the *Summa* offers a way of seeing Pope Francis' call to the existential peripheries as a summons to the renewal of this Thomistic pedagogy.

the Ultimate Meaning that is not mediated through the world of creaturely meanings, there can be no theology that attempts to reach the creator by bypassing the creation. For Ernst, theology *qua* theology has a necessary engagement with the world. Theology as we know it occupies a time between the resurrection of Jesus and the eschatological Parousia, the sign of which is the non-identity of the Church and the world. This metaphysical 'gap' between theology and the world is, however, marked by a particular form of dynamic transcendence. Theology can only discover the ultimate Christian meaning of time by way of a discernment of the Christian meanings of our times. In other words, the practice of theology always instantiates a relationship with the world of creaturely meanings that is modelled by the relationship between the *respondeo* of the article and the responses to the objections as was identified above.[116] Theology's full significance is illuminated only as it comes to illuminate the significance of the world. If contemplation is to be truly contemplation, it must be a contemplation that is engaged with the matter that theology illuminates. Theology's engagement with the world is not modelled in terms of taking an antecedently determined truth and finding its contemporary application. Rather, the often harsh interrogations that the world presents to theology become a way in which theologians can discover new depths to the eternal truth of the Christian mystery. In no way, however, does theology simply reduplicate the concerns of the contemporary *Zeitgeist*: theology comes to greater self-realisation only by seeing the ways in which the Christian mystery sheds light on the experience of the times. Therefore, the ultimate meanings that theology contemplates

[116] Theology has a rhythmic character, for Ernst, as his observations on the 'musical ontology of time' suggest, ME: 108*ff*. Although not dealing with Cornelius Ernst's work, Lexi Eikelboom's forthcoming monograph on rhythm as a theological category explores this in relation to the thought of Przywara (and Giorgio Agamben).

still necessarily retain something of a confrontational, contrapuntal, opposition to the world of human meanings. In-and-beyond this confrontational aspect, theology realizes itself in the world as a praxis, but also realizes the true significance of the world within itself, will be seen more clearly in Chapter 6.

Theology is, however, not only engaged in this sense of its relation to the world but also *engaging* of its practitioners, involving the whole human person in its contemplative activity. Doing theology as 'engaged contemplation', then, means learning to repeatedly allow ourselves—with all of our personal history, frailty and affective idiosyncrasy—to be confronted by the question of ultimate meaning, and thus with the theological interpretation of the meaning of our own lives. Such questioning is possible, Ernst thinks, only within the context of a life lived in the presence of the ultimate answer.[117] Here, Ernst's careful selection of verbs is notably important: whilst it is a conscious and deliberate action of the theology that repeatedly holds before her eyes the question of ultimate meaning, there is no immediate sense that it is necessary to be aware of living in the presence of the ultimate answer in order to raise the question. That presence is an ontological—but not necessarily noetic—presupposition. Raising the question of ultimate meaning thus awakens us more and more deeply to the ontological depths of reality, drawing an ontic presupposition into more explicit noetic focus. More paradoxically still, this awareness of life as lived in the presence of ultimate Meaning contains within itself a preapprehension of the radical inadequacy of any human articulations of it.

[117] ME: 152.

Ernst's account of theology as contemplative engagement, and his affirmation of the full involvement of the individual theologian in her theologising, is balanced with an awareness of the communal aspect of the theological discipline. Theology, for Ernst, is always a fundamentally ecclesial activity, raising the question of the Church's identity and self-understanding, even whilst recognising that this identity can only be known *in via* through an encounter of dynamic transcendence with the world. Theology's contemplation is, then, also self-engaged: a Christian tradition's practice of *Selbstverständnis*, which seeks to understand that tradition and examine its implications in relation to the historical and cultural changes that press upon it.[118] As a praxis of *Selbstverständnis*, however, theology cannot reflect upon the theological meanings entertained by the Christian tradition without itself being an instance of that tradition and of those meanings.[119] As such, there is one concrete context from which neither theology nor philosophy can, in Ernst's judgment, escape: the economy of sin and redemption.[120] Theology in particular always has this self-consciousness as, in part, a phenomenology of salvation. Theology, as the contemplative engagement of the Church and the world, is the discipline of critical intellectual articulation of the self-understanding within a given historical context, thereby illuminating both the context and the contents of that tradition more clearly. This self-engagement of theology indicates a multifarious reciprocity: theology not only reflects upon the meanings entertained and exchanged by the community as they are illumined by the world, but it also becomes part of those meanings (and therefore also part of the world) and is subject to its own praxis of critique and revision.

[118] ME: 30.
[119] ME: 79.
[120] ME: 126.

In his entry for 'Theological Methodology' in the *Sacramentum Mundi* (an essay that is densely packed and difficult to penetrate, even by his own rather opaque standards), Ernst advances an account of engaged contemplation as 'meta-theology'.[121] By this, Ernst means that theology undertaken within the new perspective of meaning must also have an awareness of its own epistemological presuppositions. It must, in other words, inevitably confront the mystery of its own existence. Ernst acknowledges that, in his own time, there were only 'anticipations' of such a meta-theology,[122] and it is difficult to know where he would look for such a theology in the decades after his death. Three features of this anticipated meta-theology are, however, clear. Firstly, meta-theology involves a movement beyond 'theologies' to an integrative and unitive 'Theology'. This process involves reflection upon the historical reality of both theological development and the presence of theological opposition, thereby raising the question of the meaning of the history of dogma in all of this fractured plurality. This move to penetrate the Theology-theologies distinction is reminiscent of Heidegger's treatment of the Being-beings distinction. Secondly, meta-theology is attuned to the role of the symbolic in the mediated structure of dynamic transcendence. The definitive 'ontic' answer is available in Jesus Christ, but the ontological meaning of this is worked out through what Ernst calls the "starting point of the *logos-eikōn-mustērion*".[123] Thirdly, this meta-theology is realized only as a "total human culture",[124] that is, as a progressive communal discovery of a common identity in Jesus Christ. The theological

[121] ME: 76-86, at 85.
[122] ME: 85.
[123] ME: 85. Greek script from the original is transliterated.
[124] ME: 84.

account of the *logos* embedded within this picture of meta-theology is one that cannot be confined mere to logical expression, but which rather 'plays in ten thousand places': truth is, for Ernst as for Balthasar, 'symphonic'.

This account of theology as the discipline of engaged contemplation places a great deal of emphasis on a process of dialogical communication, through which meaning is brought to fresh articulation. Nonetheless, the whole process of theological *Selbstverständnis* (which is always already missionary in its orientation) is, however, much it might involve articulation, always more than a discursive practice. Its discursivity is grounded in an antecedent *Vorverständnis*, a kind of unspecifiable pre-apprehension or "prophetic insight" that "resides in something deeper and more basic than the conscious mind".[125] Theology exists as a kind of culture, in which this 'prophetic insight' is cultivated into a Chomskyan theological competence. The discipline that cultivates theology as 'engaged contemplation' thus engages the total humanity of its practitioners. The theologian is spiritually corporeally, socially and affectively engaged by (and in) this theological task. As Ernst wrote in his private notebooks, theology demands "practices of bodily enlargement", which have a noetic impact "like that of Yoga".[126] Ernst does little, however, to suggest what bodily praxes might be viable candidates for such a role. This indicates a major weakness of Ernst's synthesis: the absence of a positive account of human subjectivity, which is explored in the next section.

[125] ME: 84.
[126] EDA, Ernst §4, Red Notebook entitled "Natural Theology". Undated remark.

§1.5: The Absent Subject in Ernst's Ontology of Meaning

This chapter has presented Cornelius Ernst's proposed ontology of meaning as a re-performance of Thomistic pedagogy, inducting students into an intrinsicist account of the relationships between language and *logos*, and truth and history. Ernst's proposals remained undeveloped, partly due to its fragmentary presentation and partly due to the dense complexity (and even obscurity) of Ernst's pleonastic style.

Any attempt at a more systematic development of Ernst's proposal, however, faces more than just stylistic obstacles. Ernst's proposal is marked by a major lacuna: although his semantic ontology opposes a Cartesian account of subjectivity, he offers no positive account of subjectivity in its place. There is no reflection on the life of the mind, the 'interior life' or on cognitive dynamics; Ernst's reflections on concrete practices of religiosity are brief and unsustained. Although Ernst identifies the contours of a theological method, his proposed ontology otherwise lacks the element of concrete connection with the subject who is engaged in theological reflection, in all her cultural and linguistic particularity as well as embodied affectivity. This critique is not only to note Ernst's tendency to avoid the concrete and his resistance to stooping to give anything as particular as an example. The weakness indicates a lacuna in Ernst's ontology: aside from rather inchoate appeals to embodiment and temporal thrownness, Ernst provides no metaphysical account of how the knowing subject is embedded within the semantic cosmos of his proposed ontology. In other words, Ernst lacks a fully developed account of how the meanings of the world actually come to be the meanings entertained by the individual semantic agent (and *vice versa*).

The next chapter examines the thought of Michael Polanyi, whose account of the 'tacit dimension' offers precisely such an account of how the subject's cognitive dynamics are always already enmeshed in the world of creaturely meanings. The chapter argues that Polanyi's project resembles Ernst's in its development of a semantic ontology to support his fiduciary epistemology.

II

Polanyi's Biosemiotic Ontology of Meaning

This chapter serves to presents the essential contours of Michael Polanyi's epistemological project, arguing that it depends from the outset upon a biosemiotic ontology that resembles Cornelius Ernst's proposed ontology of meaning.

Polanyi's central contention is that many contemporary philosophical accounts of epistemology—both explicitly developed and implicitly embedded in popular conceptions of science—advocate a mode of investigation that is intrinsically inappropriate to the type of creatures that we are. The first section of this chapter, therefore, identifies Polanyi's diagnosis of a dynamo-objective coupling that inheres within contemporary accounts of science. The second section identifies Polanyi's deconstruction of the 'myth of neutral reason': Polanyi seeks to undermine positivist accounts of science by suggesting their self-referential incoherence and incompatibility with the actual practice of science. The third section moves to consider Polanyi's more constructive proposal. Polanyi develops an intrinsicist account of knowledge, narrated in terms of the 'indwelling' of tools and instruments. The fourth section highlights the dynamic nature of Polanyi's epistemology, in particular his reliance upon language, community and affectivity as the motor principles of discovery. This in turn depends upon an ontological vision of the world as a unified and meaningful entity, as the fifth section notes. Polanyi finds the resources for this in his appropriation of Rothschild's theory of biosemiotics.

§2.1: Polanyi and the Logic of Liberty

This section presents Polanyi's analysis of the relationship between the contemporary scientific outlook (the 'modern mind' as he calls it) and the social and political crises of his time. This socio-political analysis forms the context within which Polanyi's epistemological thought developed.

Polanyi's intellectual career and personal life were indelibly marked by the historical and political events of early twentieth century Europe. Serving as a medic in the first world-war, it was on furlough from military services that he completed his first doctorate on adsorption of gasses (which was positively reviewed by Einstein). The complex and tumultuous events of the 1918-20 Hungarian Revolution effectively launched him into his third career (having briefly served in the government of the short-lived Hungarian Democratic Republic and having subsequently returned to medicine). Fritz Haber provided Polanyi with a place of refuge by offering him a research position in Physical Chemistry at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Berlin. The financial crisis that Polanyi witnessed first-hand in Weimar Germany (together with his concerns about the developing views of his brother Karl) drove a process of reflection on economic theory. The rise of National Socialism displaced Polanyi again: a secularised Jew, he was effectively forced to take an academic post outside Germany, arriving—after a false start and various complications—at the University of Manchester in 1933. By the mid-1940s, Polanyi's academic interests had decisively shifted away from empirical science towards a philosophical analysis of contemporary society: in

1948 Polanyi was formally translated to a Personal Chair in Social Science in 1948, allowing a new appointment in Physical Chemistry.

These continuities and discontinuities of Polanyi's life are the context of Polanyi's work (accounting for the somewhat idiosyncratic character of Polanyi's thought). Additionally, Polanyi understood his work as both an analysis of, and a response to, the political crises that marred his times. On the one hand, he grieved for the collapse of the liberal pan-European intellectual culture that he had known in his youth: "an almost forgotten past of peace, of bold intellectual and artistic enterprise and of continuous progress towards liberal ideas".[1] On the other hand, his work is remarkably devoid of philosophical nostalgia, grounded in a realistic sense of political possibility and the actuality of scientific research. The future of political liberty and the intellectual integrity of science are, for Polanyi, inextricably bound together: the fate of science and character of the *polis* are two features of an underlying fault line in epistemology. Science is not, therefore, merely the innocent victim that stands to lose its freedom at the hands of an extrinsic tyranny.[2] Rather, Polanyi suggests that in allowing the myth of scientific omnicompetence to develop, scientists, with the help of philosophers of science, have conceived a child that, like Oedipus, is destined to kill its parent.

[1] Michael Polanyi, 'Why did we destroy Europe?', *Studium Generale,* 23/1 (1970), 909-16 at 909. See also: Richard Gelwick, *The Way of Discovery: an introduction to the thought of Michael Polanyi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977): 4.
[2] LL: 83, LL: 106-110.

Polanyi's analysis directly correlates the explosion of political totalitarianisms with the over-extended and hubristic account of rationality embedded within exaggerated accounts of scientific omnicompetence, which have, in part, been generated and fostered within the scientific community itself (but which are not, in fact, consistent with scientific practice *per se*). The development of a sense of scientific competence has, in Polanyi's analysis, been the greatest influence that science has exerted over popular culture: "the main influence of science on modern man has not been, as is often supposed, through the advancement of technology, but through the imaginative effects of science on our worldview".[3] Polanyi's hoped for political renewal follows from a humble self-examination on the part of science, culminating in a re-affirmation of scientific humanism and the practice of science as a moral discipline. Like Cornelius Ernst, then, Polanyi recognises that more is at stake in our epistemology than a harmlessly abstract account of the grounds of scientific knowledge. The force of the scientific rationalism generated by positivist epistemologies has "been a major influence towards intellectual, moral and social progress", but it has effectively slipped its metaphysical moorings and "become a danger to the spiritual conception of man".[4] In Polanyi's assessment, the outbursts of violence that characterise modern tyrannies are not only a scourge, but also indicate a nihilistic implosion at the scientific foundations of Western culture. For this reason, modern tyranny demands, in Polanyi's eyes, not only condemnation and more outrage, nor merely sociological study, but a sustained philosophical analysis and epistemological response.

[3] M: 104.
[4] Polanyi, 'Why did we destroy Europe?'.

Polanyi's analysis of the phenomenon of modern nihilism identifies two distinct but related concepts: a 'dynamo-objective coupling' that leads to 'moral inversion'. According to Polanyi the modern mind-set is characterised by two essentially irreconcilable dispositions: a moral scepticism (that tends to eliminate moral injunctions as irrational excess, reducing morality to biological flourishing or pleasure) and a moral indignation (that is outraged by the injustices and inequality of the world). Neither of these dispositions is itself a distinctively modern phenomenon. It is the unstable fusion of these dispositions that constitutes the fundamental fracture at the basis of contemporary intellectual culture. Polanyi attributes some of this instability to the latent influence of Christianity:[5] the lofty ideals of Christian morality can never be truly perfected in Christian cultures; Christianity thus generates a passion that could never be fulfilled and is destined to frustration. The result of the conjunction of moral scepticism and moral indignation, however, is what Polanyi calls 'dynamo-objective coupling': a self-fulfilling and self-reinforcing reverberation between the moral conclusion and the moral impulse.[6] Moral indignation comes to drive moral scepticism and becomes the mark of its own success: where moral scepticism succeeds in paring down morality to the limits of supposedly rational objectivity, it does so only by being morally indignant at the presence of supposedly irrational accretions in moral tradition. Similarly, the denial of the legitimacy of certain kinds of moral systems, including religious worldviews, is driven by a form of the moral zeal that moral scepticism claims to overcome by an appeal to scientific objectivity. In short, the exaggerated rationalism

[5] KB: 3-23.
[6] PK: 230.

of the epistemological framework embedded in moral scepticism depends upon moral indignation but can afford it no moral legitimacy.

A consequence of this dynamo-objective coupling is what Polanyi terms the state of 'moral inversion'. This occurs when patently immoral means are justified by a putative scientific moral vision that has been generated through the biased self-confirmation of dynamo-objective coupling. In short, where a moral theory affirms that a maximally moral society could be establishing according to an objective blueprint—a plan derived from structuring principles that exclude the decisive importance of human moral subjectivity—it becomes morally obligatory to implement that planned society, and to eliminate any opposing elements as merely subjective (or irrational). The consequence, according to Polanyi, is that "a high moral purpose operates only as the hidden force an openly declared inhumanity":[7] the immoral is co-opted in service of the moral.

Like all 'grand narratives' that seek to offer a generalised account of the irruption of totalitarianism, nihilism and violence, Polanyi's account of a dynamo-objective coupling and associated moral inversion is liable to critique. The identification of an unstable conjunction between moral scepticism and moral indignation is incisive, but his account of dynamo-objective coupling lacks a systematic development: it is not always clear, for instance, what impulses are coupled, nor whether this coupling inevitably devolves into moral inversion. Polanyi is content to identify the existence of an immanent and self-referentially incoherent tension, which inscribes an unavoidable

[7] KB: 16.

tendency towards nihilism. However, Polanyi extrapolates his account of this immanent dialectic from a very brief analysis of rather extreme political events, without a consideration of the historical factors that contributed to their genesis. Nonetheless, whilst Polanyi's epistemological proposal was developed in response to this analysis, it remains essentially autonomous from his social and political analysis. Whilst acknowledging that Polanyi's political analysis risks making unsubstantiated generalisations, this subsection has demonstrated the scope of Polanyi's interest in epistemology. According to Polanyi, a common-place form of exaggerated rationalism that excludes certain humanizing aspects of knowledge has a de-humanizing effect on our moral lives, potentially working devastating social and political affects.

§2.2: Polanyi's Deconstruction of the Myth of Neutral Reason

Prior to the development of his own constructive alternative, Polanyi offers a deconstructive analysis of the defective accounts of rationality that he opposes. This section identifies Polanyi's analysis of the 'modern scientific mind-set' that he regards as the root cause of the contemporary nihilism outlined in the previous section. In particular, three stages of Polanyi's deconstructive analysis are identified: firstly, his account of the self-referential incoherence of positivist epistemologies governed by the ideal of 'disinterested objectivity'; secondly, the reductive ontologies of meaning embedded within these accounts; thirdly, the extrinsicist bifurcation that the ideal of disinterested objectivity inscribes between theory and reality.

Polanyi describes the programme of *Personal Knowledge* as a "rattling of all the skeletons in the cupboard of the current scientific outlook",[8] in order to "show that complete objectivity as usually attributed to the exact sciences is a delusion and is in fact a false ideal":[9] the "attempt to rigorously eliminate our human perspective from our picture of the world" is not only impossible *de facto*, but intrinsically undesirable insofar as it "must lead to absurdity",[10] to a 'denaturing' of our concept of the human.[11] The source of this "massive modern absurdity",[12] Polanyi claims, is the inversion of the Augustinian dictum *credo ut intelligam*, the refusal to believe anything that has not first been understood.[13]

The central feature of the targeted 'current scientific outlook' that culminates in the inversion of *credo ut intelligam* is, as Polanyi sees it, the denial of the principle that we strive for understanding "under the guidance of an antecedent belief".[14] Such an insistence that antecedent faith be expunged from the act of knowledge effectively reduces science to a brute summary of experience,[15] though even science practiced under the auspices of the logical positivist outlook targeted by Ernst extends itself beyond these foundational claims. As his description of *Personal Knowledge* as a post-critical epistemology indicates, Polanyi traces this critical tendency to the Copernican revolution of Immanuel Kant, and, behind him, to the empiricism of John Locke.[16] Like

[8] PK: 18.
[9] PK: 17.
[10] PK: 3.
[11] PK: 181.
[12] PK: 9.
[13] PK: 181 and 141.
[14] PK: 266.
[15] PK: 13.
[16] PK: 9.

Ernst, however, *Personal Knowledge* is less concerned with a genealogical determination of the aetiology of modern epistemology than with overcoming it. Rather than engaging in extensive exegesis of the primary texts of Descartes, Kant and others, Polanyi issues deconstructive gestures that are aimed an epistemological ideal that he believes is sufficiently well-entrenched in the popular psyche (as well as the specifics of scientific method) as to be immediately recognisable, and thus liable to disruption at the root.

In nuce, the ideal that Polanyi targets is the correlation of the achievement of maximal objectivity with the attenuation of personal involvement ('subjectivity'). According to the picture that Polanyi seeks to refute, 'objectivity' is achieved through the methodological and systematic elimination of the personal and unspecifiable aspects of knowledge—anything vaguely 'artistic' or 'religious'—including the contribution made by 'feeling' or 'intuition', so as to allow the mind to directly observe the world as it really is, unmediated by presupposition. For clarity of expression, this account of knowledge as observation of facts about the world, driven by the ideal of disinterested objectivity, is referred to as 'positivism'. Although Polanyi does not engage with the breadth of positivist accounts of knowledge, the broad sense of the term captures the essence of the account of science that Polanyi opposes: the refusal to accredit as valid any knowledge not subject to empirical verification, and the consequent prioritisation of understanding over belief.

§2.2.1: The Self-Referential Incoherence of Positivism

The first aspect of Polanyi's critique of positivist accounts of neutral reason is his argument that positivism is inscribed with a fundamental contradiction and is, therefore, self-referentially incoherent. This argument has two aspects. Firstly, Polanyi argues that positivist epistemology is unable to ground its own truth-conditions according to its own account of truth, and is, therefore, liable to auto-deconstruct. Secondly, Polanyi suggests that positivist epistemology does not adequately describe science as it is actually practiced. Positivism, according to Polanyi, defines a noetic ideal that is both unachieved and unachievable, being incompatible with the ways in which human beings actually know things.

The quest for simple observation by elimination of the disruption of personal participation is, however, understandably attractive to empirical scientists. By the determination of experimental method, scientific truth claims are necessarily open to public scrutiny and thus to discoverer-independent verification (although Polanyi later argues that the skills of experimental science are far more of an art, requiring the skills of trained intuition, than they might first appear).[17] The philosophical expression of this quest for 'objectivism'[18] is located by Polanyi in the verificationist tendencies of the logical positivist movement, which in turn emerged out of the thought popularised by the Vienna Circle.[19] Polanyi is concerned to oppose accounts of reason as a neutral and

[17] *Cf.* PK: 53*ff.*
[18] PK: 15-17.
[19] PK: 9.

unmoved observer, knowing the world from outside of the world, with a critical reserve that is uncontaminated by culture, affectivity or tradition. As §2.3 demonstrates, Polanyi's constructive account presents reason not as an external and neutral force but as always already embedded within the world and actively engaged with it. Against the background of such an account of rationality, the ideal of disinterested objectivity emerges as a category mistake, fundamentally irreconcilable with the nature of rationality itself.

The ideal of epistemic objectivism, which Polanyi argues rests upon a fundamental self-referential incoherence, not only reduces the scientist to a mere stenographer (to borrow a Wittgensteinian phrase), it equally deprives theory *qua* theory of any authentic explanatory power. In the hands of positivism, Polanyi believes that theory becomes a mere summary of universally accessible experience, and science is, as Ernst Mach described it,[20] tasked with the "simplest and most economical abstract expression of facts", which are assumed to be readily available for our inspection.[21] As Polanyi understands it, this Machean view renders any truth-claims that move beyond the immediate *concreta* of particular empirical experiences (or principles derived from them) not only subject to asymptotic doubt, but simply meaningless *per se*, falling outside the verificationist realm of claims that can be validated as meaningfully true or false. If something cannot be found in the details of common sensory experience, it cannot be verified. If it cannot be verified, it cannot be subject to corrigibility and therefore cannot be meaningful in any authentic sense.

[20] PK: 11-12.
[21] Ernst Mach, 'The Economical Nature of Physics', in Thomas Joseph Mccormack (ed.), *Popular Scientific Lectures* (Chicago: Open Press, 1895): 207-14, at 207.

Polanyi, then, identifies a self-referential incoherence at the heart of positivism's constitutive logic: positivism, insofar as the knower can only evaluate her frameworks insofar as they are currently in use (and thus inevitably disrupts the framework by inspecting it as an object in its own right), cannot be subject to verification without infinite regress.[22] Mach cannot stabilise his own method with the necessary rigour to verify it as having any sort of meaningful use, nor is there any space for a positivist appeal to non-positivist frameworks that could justify the truth claims of positivism, which are necessarily exclusivist.

The argument for the dynamo-objective coupling of positivism and the ideal of disinterested objectivity seeks to deconstruct the positivist position by tracing its limits *ab intra* (a manoeuvre that is, paradoxically, not remote from the movement of Kantian critique or Cartesian scepticism). Polanyi supplements this with an appeal to the disclosive force of reality as it manifests itself to the knower. The thesis that scientific investigation is based upon empirical observation (made accessible by the freely repeatable nature of experimentation) is undermined for Polanyi by the antecedent dependence of such verification on the very powers for the recognition of rationality that are presupposed by science itself.[23] In other words, the ability to contest the reasons governing the state of affairs of the object *x* presupposes that a number of agents can and do independently identify, with requisite precision, the same object from the surrounding world, and, concomitantly, that there is something 'patterned' against

[22] PK: 184.
[23] PK: 13-14.

which we can ask questions about the probability of such a pattern emerging either from chance or order.[24]

What verificationist accounts of objectivity have omitted to consider, according to Polanyi, are not only its own truth conditions, but its antecedent metaphysics. Even under the reductive regime of the Laplacean thesis, the human person necessarily has the power to 'establish' the existence of rational patterns in nature: they need the capacity to see an individual atom of fact *as* an atom of fact and not just part of a putative background 'chaos'. Whilst the "avowed purpose of the exact sciences is to establish exact control over experience",[25] the reality of these established patterns is determined by their systematic elusion of total control. Not only is the distinctiveness of an orderly pattern revealed by way of its own importability[26]—thus suggesting the existence of order *per se* cannot be contradicted simply by a contrary experience of disorderly states of affairs[27]—the pattern is *revealed* insofar as its implications extend indefinitely beyond the brute moment of observation. In other words, things only disclose themselves as existing when there is more to them than that which can be seen in the moment of observation: they have an historical past, an ontology, and a teleological future, that is not captured by reducing their analysis to a single atomic moment of time.

[24] PK: 33.
[25] PK: 18.
[26] PK: 37.
[27] PK: 38.

Part of the reality that lies 'unseen' by a moment of punctilliar observation is the complex webs of historical relationality that governs existence. The 'revealed pattern' of the world as it shows itself to the knower's observation is a function of a rationally structured, teleologically ordered, world, and not something that is imposed upon the world as it is segmented by the knower's rational faculties.[28] Polanyi emphasises the continuity between the human capacity to identify objects (in Polanyian idiom, complex 'comprehensive entities' that are made up of numerous particulars) with other animals:[29] that we, together with a range of other animals, routinely identify naturally occurring comprehensive entities (such as other animals or mountains) and take them as the object of our intentional action, indicates that the principles of order are immanent to these comprehensive entities themselves, and not the extrinsic product of individual knowing minds.

§2.2.2: Positivism's Reductive Ontology of Meaning

The second aspect of Polanyi's deconstruction of positivism is the argument that the idea of disinterested objectivity excludes from the realm of knowledge meanings that are both scientifically relevant and necessary to human flourishing. This resembles Cornelius Ernst's argument against neoscholasticism: positivism posits a reductionist ontology of meaning, the theoretical boundaries of which are routinely violated by science as it is actually practiced. Indeed, these philosophical arguments aside, Polanyi's phenomenological analysis attests that nobody—not even the most hard-nosed of the

[28] PK: 369-372.
[29] E.g., PK: 69*ff.*

logical positivists, nor the most rigorous practitioners of putatively detached scientific method—could live in a world governed entirely by such a reductive ontology of the meaningful. The zenith of the positivist aspiration is taken by Polanyi[30] to be the Laplacean vision of a mind that at a single given moment of time knows exhaustively "the forces by which nature is animated and the respective positions of the entities which compose it" and which could then generate a totalising *Weltanschauung* from which "nothing past, present or future would be uncertain".[31] This Laplacean standpoint, by offering such exhaustively certain knowledge, would also be the apotheosis of the intellectual quest: accepting the Laplacean vision as the ultimate instance of knowledge requires that we reduce the range of possible questions that can be validly and meaningfully asked (and thus the range of a semantic ontology) to those questions that can be answered in terms of atomistic facticity of the Laplacean picture.[32]

That a "virtually meaningless" hypothetical compendium of data concerning the specification of the locations of *p, r, s* and *q* (and so on, almost *ad infinitum*) and the forces acting between them at a single moment of time *t,* and deriving from that a list of states of affairs in every subsequent moment thereafter (notably invoking Zeno's paradox), could be identified as "knowledge of all things" (let alone as something that is desirable) is, Polanyi thinks, a "stark absurdity".[33] It is self-evident to Polanyi that quotidian human experiences, like being in love, cannot be described in terms of atomic localities without eliminating a significant meaningful remainder. Moreover, there is

[30] PK: 140.
[31] See PK 140: Pierre-Simon Laplace, *Traité de Probabilité* (Paris: Acad. Sc., 1886): vi-vii.
[32] *cf.* PK: 141.
[33] PK: 140.

necessarily an analogous 'unaccountable' element, not only in such acute cases of inexpressibility as profound emotion, but in the sense of exploration that accompanies and animates even the most incisive and rigorous scientific experimentation (as advocated by the neopositivists).[34] Presumably, Laplace invested energy in his project because he perceived it to be valuable and satisfying, and yet these value judgments, which cannot be determined by atomic locality—and therefore cannot be included in Laplace's vision except by reduction to physical states—are, nonetheless, absolutely necessary for moral agency (intentional action being governed and explained, as Davidson has argued, by belief-desire pairings).[35]

By rejecting the Laplacean model both in terms of completeness and satiety, Polanyi hints at the direction of his own constructive proposal. For Polanyi, even if there are adequate theoretical reasons to doubt the validity of Laplacean theory, we are equally justified in rejecting Laplace's vision as an absurdity on the affective basis of its inherently unsatisfying character. Polanyi does not dwell on the question of whether Laplace's determinism overrides voluntaristic freedom, nor of whether a hypothetical catalogue of states of affairs is even hypothetically possible within the finitude of the human mind. His focus remains on the failure of the Laplacean approach, even in principle, to satisfy the intellectual desire of the knowing subject. The Laplacean 'universal knowledge' (hypothetical though it is) is not something we would naturally aspire to, because it does not, and could not, satisfy the range of our human curiosities, and this is, for Polanyi, indicative of its inevitable failure. Polanyi sees in Laplace a

[34] A point Polanyi develops later: Michael Polanyi, 'The Unaccountable Element in Science', *Philosophy,* 37/139 (1962), 1-14.
[35] Donald Davidson, 'Actions, Reasons, and Causes', *Journal of Philosophy,* 60/23 (1963), 685-700.

tendency to flatten the ontological range of meaning into a neatly divisible atomism: in Ernst's terms it exhibits a defective ontology of meaning.

§2.2.3: Disinterested Objectivity and Extrinsicism

The third aspect of Polanyi's critique of positivist accounts of science concerns its tendency to enact an abstraction of knowledge from the reality which is known,[36] which—in Ernstian terms—constitutes extrinsicism. By treating the knowing intellect as if it were a disembodied observer that examines the world from afar serves to disconnect knowledge from the contingencies of history and culture. The reduction of meaning to an economical organisation of facts that are a true representations of atomic states of affairs invokes, Polanyi thinks,[37] a bifurcation of mathematical knowledge (the 'directory') and empirical knowledge (the 'states of affairs' of which the directory is a representation), which is later linked to a bifurcation of science and technology.[38] This, Polanyi holds, contributed to the disastrous separation of ideology and political reality, generating enormous moral consequences, and unleashing horrendous suffering, in recent European history.[39]

The essence of this extrinsicist bifurcation is located in the elevation of possibility over actuality that governs the inversion of *credere ut intelligere.* As such, the ontological proofs of the possibility of a state of affairs are elevated over their cosmological

[36] Although the only entry in the index of *Personal Knowledge* for 'abstraction' relates to the section on the abstract arts (PK: 193-195), the concern to undermine an abstractive dissociation of the knower from the world known percolates throughout the first part of *Personal Knowledge* and beyond.
[37] PK: 9.
[38] PK: 175.
[39] *Cf* PK: 153.

actuality: this is how scientific method handles anomalous experimental data.[40] Consequently, geometry becomes the science of an 'empty space' within which static events occur,[41] a pure possibility supposedly derived from actuality but in fact determining what questions can be endorsed as meaningful in the first place: those which can be contained by a reduced zone of meaning.

This abstraction of theory from the reality that it narrates, which is achieved by an account of 'theory' as an endlessly revisable series of observations (resting at a possible future point of Laplacean totality, but not having any intrinsic or instrumental truth as a means of gaining further penetration into reality), is coupled with an alienation of the knower from the empirical facts of their own existence (including their body): the transcendental character of the idealist turn is seen by Polanyi as a "hope of overcoming the appalling disabilities of our bodily condition".[42] That pure mathematics, the most abstracted and purely theoretical of contemporary sciences, is lauded as the paradigm case of objectivity reveals a noetic contempt of the physicality of the particular, which is regarded as a contamination of the purity of idealised Laplacean knowledge. Polanyi seeks, by contrast, to stress the finitude and particularity of knowledge, through, in the words of Colin Ewart Gunton, an affirmation of "the basis of knowledge as a form of particularity: not the particularity of the disembodied empiricism, but that of an embodied mind in particular and determinate relations with the world".[43]

[40] PK: 20, 292-3.
[41] PK: 8.
[42] PK: 5.
[43] Colin Ewart Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 43.

This section has outlined the deconstructive element of Polanyi's work, *viz.* his deconstruction of the positivist myth of neutral reason. Three aspects of this deconstructive critique have been identified: the argument that positivism is self-referentially incoherent; the identification of a reductive ontology of meaning implicit in positivism; and the location of an extrinsicism embedded within positivist accounts of reason. The next section identifies the constructive features of *Personal Knowledge*'s proposal, its account of instrumental indwelling, which is seen to have an intrinsicist character.

§2.3: Polanyi's Intrinsicist Account of Skills and Instruments

The heart of Polanyi's constructive proposal is the notion of knowing by indwelling. Rather than knowledge derived from putatively disinterested objectivity, Polanyi outlines a mode of knowledge where we know by 'pouring ourselves' into things, extending ourselves into the semantic world that surrounds us. This constructive proposal continues Polanyi's deconstructive impulse: Polanyi is concerned to undermine contemporary science's pretence toward absolute objectivity by demonstrating its practice to be the skilled implementation of an art. This, Polanyi thinks, will displace the understanding of the knower as a 'disinterested objective observer' with the older, Keplerian account, of the scientist as engaged in an 'ecstatic communion' with what is known,[44] knowing it by indwelling. Polanyi notes that, as the skilful practice of the art of investigation, scientific method necessarily requires an unformalised—and intrinsically unformalisable—component. This is demonstrated by

[44] PK: 7.

analogy with the skilled practice of riding a bicycle. The mathematical 'rules' governing balance adjustment cannot be known explicitly when they are in use by the cyclist: if a cyclist were to attempt a mathematical analysis as she was riding, this would necessarily disrupt the practice of cycling (with possibly devastating consequences). Rather, these rules are 'known' only in their intuitive and learned use (by being 'indwelt'). Polanyi argues that the rules of a skilful performance, including those of scientific investigation, are known only through their being contained in a concrete historical use and cannot be articulated in an explicit form *per se* by the practitioners of those performances.[45]

This knowledge, moreover, must remain instrumental and not be explicitly formalised: deriving rules governing skilful practice can be useful, but they do not—and cannot—determine the practice itself. Rather, they guide the practitioner only by being integrated into the disciplined practice of the art itself,[46] verified by practice, peer observation and collaboration. As a result, skills cannot be accounted for in terms of a comprehensive list of particulars but are holistic realities that are destroyed if they are subject to an analytic reduction to rules. The appropriate mode for the teaching of skills is not, therefore, the destruction of the skill into its component parts in order that they can be re-constructed by the new practitioner, but the process and praxis of tradition, by which a neophyte practitioner is apprenticed to an experienced and respected teacher,[47] subjected to the standards of connoisseurship.[48] This, however, invokes the

[45] PK: 49.
[46] PK: 50-52.
[47] TD: 55, PK: 56.
[48] PK: 64-65.

very authority that objectivist ideals abjure, for "to learn by example is to submit to authority".[49] Apprenticeship, then, necessarily involves a degree of un-critical acceptance, even if only initially: tradition is animated not by analytical individuality, but by the inherently relational categories of trust and mutuality;[50] intellectual societies that seek to preserve skilful practices must submit to a degree of 'uncritical' (or pre-critical) induction by imitation.[51]

Polanyi connects this resistance of skills to non-destructive analysis (their fundamental 'unspecifiability') with our innate cognitive capacities to semantically integrate comprehensive entities from conglomerations of diverse particulars.[52] Whereas on the positivist picture knowledge involves separation and a necessary distance between the knower and that which is known, indwelling involves bringing otherwise disconnected elements together in a two-fold integration. Firstly, the knower is drawn into connection with the things that they know. Secondly, particular elements of perception are integrated in a mental act that joins them as parts of wholes. This act, termed a 'semantic integration',[53] allows the perception of complex structures as coherent wholes (in Polanyian idiom, as 'comprehensive entities').[54] This mental act generally operates at the subconscious level of tacit knowledge (and is thus often referred to as a 'tacit integration'), but in certain cases its operation enters into conscious control (as in the artificial case of Wittgenstein's duck-rabbit).

---

[49] PK: 53.
[50] *Cf.* PK: 203-206.
[51] PK: 53-54.
[52] PK: 57-65.
[53] M: 79.
[54] See: Harry Prosch, *Michael Polanyi: a critical exposition* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1986b): 70.

Using insights drawn from Gestalt psychology,[55] Polanyi observes that the *meaning* of the particulars that make up a comprehensive entity is lost or obscured if awareness of the "pattern, which they jointly constitute" is disrupted.[56] Moreover, that awareness is necessarily lost if the particulars themselves are made the subject of focal attention: just as focussing on the specific component features of a particular skill (like the balance adjustments of riding a bicycle) disrupts the overall practice of the skill itself, so focussing reductively on the particulars that are semantically integrated into comprehensive entities disrupts not only awareness of the comprehensive entity, but also the meaning of those particulars themselves, which is realised by their semantic integration. For Polanyi, then, particulars are known by integration, not by isolation, by how they belong and function as wholes, not as dissected atoms of facticity. As Polanyi notes,

> *"…we may say that when we comprehend a particular set of items as part of a whole, the focus of our attention is shifted from the hitherto uncomprehended particulars to the understanding of their joint meaning."* [57]

Polanyi maps this characteristically *Gestalt* shift from component parts to constitutive wholes onto a distinction between two mutually exclusive forms of knowledge, which are complementary and embedded within the act of semantic integration:[58] subsidiary and focal forms of awareness.[59] Focal awareness is the distal

---

[55] See Chapter Four below. For Polanyi's use of Gestalten in the locus on skilled performance, cf. also: Stefania Ruzsits Jha, 'A New Interpretation of Michael Polanyi's Theory of Tacit Knowing: integrative philosophy with 'intellectual passions'', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science,* 28/4 (1997), 611-31, Robert E Innis, 'Polanyi's Model of Mental Acts', *The New Scholasticism,* 47/2 (1973), 147-78.
[56] PK: 57.
[57] TSM: 29.
[58] PK: 56.
[59] *Cf.* PK: 55-57, TD: 12.

term of our knowledge: the comprehensive entity of which we are consciously aware and which we take as the object of our intentional and mental action. The subsidiary form of awareness is more proximate to the knower and her body, and less the object of conscious mental action. These subsidiary aspects take two forms. Firstly, they are aspects of awareness that the knower relies upon to form focal awareness of the comprehensive entity (the tacit awareness of the instrument that is indwelt). Secondly, the subsidiary elements are the component parts of a comprehensive entity that are known only in their integration into the whole. When a knower perceives a face, they attend to the fact as a comprehensive entity by integrating the eyebrow, which falls within their field of perception, as a component part of the face. When the eyebrow is taken as the focal object, it no longer serves this subsidiary function in forming awareness of the comprehensive entity, and thus the face ceases to be the focal object of awareness. Polanyi explains:

> "[The semantic integration] *changes altogether the manner in which we are aware of the particulars. We become aware of them now in terms of the whole to which we have fixed our attention. I shall [...] speak correspondingly of a subsidiary knowledge of such items as distinct from a focal knowledge of the same items*." [60]

This can be represented schematically, where 's' is the subsidiary aspects of tacit knowledge; 'f' is the focal awareness of a comprehensive entity; and the vector is the mental act of semantic integration that tacitly integrates the subsidiaries *s* into awareness of *f*:

[60] TSM: 30-31.

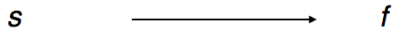


Figure 2 Tacit Integration

Although Polanyi does occasionally use such visual analogies of subsidiary knowledge in *Personal Knowledge*—especially the recognition of facial physiognomy[61]—his preferred analogy is of a practice, *viz.* the skilled use of tools. Polanyi sees the relationship of subsidiary and focal awareness as analogous to the intelligent use of a tool in service of a focal goal. This is reflected in his remark that subsidiary knowledge might also be called "instrumental knowledge".[62] When using a hammer to drive a nail, for example, we have subsidiary awareness of the sensations in the palm of our hand, but focal knowledge of our effect: we 'feel' the hammer hit the nail. Importantly, what is perceived in our awareness is not the sensations of the palm (except in a hidden, subsidiary, way) but the sensation of the hammer striking the nail that is derived from those sensations: the tool has been 'attached' to the body (indwelt, as Polanyi terms it),[63] so that our focal awareness has been projected away from the body: subsidiary awareness is the proximate pole of that which is known distally. As Polanyi puts it, "we have shifted outwards the points at which we make contact with things"[64] by "pouring ourselves into [these tools] and assimilating them as parts of our own existence.".[65]

---

[61] PK: 60.
[62] See: PK: 91-92. Although there are only two occurrences of Polanyi referring to 'instrumental knowledge', the phrase is indexed as "see subsidiary knowledge", *cf.* PK: 460. Polanyi's preference for 'subsidiary' over 'instrumental' is, perhaps, explained by the (a) the connection of the term 'subsidiary' with the holistic movement of integration; (b) the desire to avoid the Aristotelian causal category of 'instrumentality' as an explanation, *cf.* PK: 146-147.
[63] PK: 211-215; TD: 17, 30.
[64] PK: 59.
[65] PK: 59.

The integration of the distinction between subsidiary and focal awareness with an account of intelligent tool use invokes two key Polanyian principles—the metaphysical nature of 'indwelling' and the body's role as a noetic fulcrum—to which attention will be given later. Polanyi's concern is to affirm the subsidiary-focal structure as the essential and ineliminable form of a 'personal knowledge': we trace "personal knowledge to its roots in the subsidiary awareness of our body as merged in our focal awareness of external objects, [revealing] not only the logical structure of personal knowledge, but also its dynamic sources".[66] Tools are, Polanyi observes, but one—and perhaps the most accessible—example of this 'merging' of the body's boundaries into the world. Likewise, our personal 'commitment' to language and concepts is an extension of our subjectivity into the realm of objectivity,[67] and can be understood by analogy to our use of physical instruments.

The 'tradition-ing' of scientific method is, for Polanyi the sustained effort to "assimilate certain particulars as extensions of our body, so that, by becoming imbued with our subsidiary awareness, they may form a coherent focal entity".[68] The deconstruction of the contemporary scientific outlook is thus seen to cohere around a strong affirmation of our bodily constitution, and a recognition of the co-presence of the body in all (human) acts of knowing: our corporeality is the *sine qua non* of our human intelligence, and, consequently theory is an extension of our bodies. Theory can never

[66] PK: 60.
[67] PK: 61.
[68] PK: 63.

pretend to an acorporeity, nor to have eluded the subjective contingencies of the physical world. Polanyi therefore affirms the "bodily roots of all knowledge":[69]

> *"…parts of our body serve as tools for observing objects outside and for manipulating them. Every time we make sense of the world, we rely on our tacit knowledge of impacts made by the world on our body and the complex responses of our body to these impacts. Such is the exceptional position of our body in the universe."*[70]

Polanyi's evaluation of skilled performance, then, implies a claim about the ontological 'location' of meaning, displacing 'disinterested objectivity' as a noetic ideal with two metaphysical markers of authentic knowledge. Firstly, meaning is located at neither pole of a rigidly bifurcated ontology in which 'subject' and 'object' are irreversibly reified. Rather, meaning emerges in the reciprocal relationality of subject and object in which the knower is both engaged by, and engages in return, the *concreta* of the world. As such, meaning is embedded within a holistic event that necessarily implies the personhood of the knower, and not in a static state of affairs. Secondly, the reciprocity of this 'engagement by' and 'engaging of' in the event of semantic integration gives knowledge a dual 'active' and 'passive' character: it is "an activity, but always one that always has an element of passivity in it".[71]

§2.4: The Dynamics of the Cognitive Existential

[69] *Cf.,* PK: 153-158.
[70] KB: 147.
[71] PK: 63.

The previous section identified the key role played by the category of indwelling in Polanyi's account of semantic integration. Although semantic integrations generally occur without conscious involvement, Polanyi understands the process as one that nonetheless involves the subject in active noetic engagement of the world. In knowledge we are not merely passively acted upon by objects in the world, but are actively bringing the world to comprehension in our minds. This section identifies Polanyi's account of the dynamics of cognitive activity. Polanyi's account of the subject as actively engaging the world in tacit knowledge constitutes a metaphysics of the human person as a semantic agent. Three particular features of this account are identified: firstly, Polanyi's account of human involvement in language and articulation; [72] secondly, the role played by conative intellectual passions in propelling the subject more deeply into reality; [73] thirdly, the necessary involvement of the subject in social frameworks of conviviality. [74] These three principles correspond to three chapters in part two of *Personal Knowledge*. These chapters are more like vignettes than staging posts on a deductive logical journey. Polanyi himself notes that the ordering of the first two chapters is somewhat arbitrary.[75] Nonetheless, the clear thrust of the section is to offer a metaphysical account of the point of connection that is established between the body—"the only assemblage of things known almost exclusively by relying on our awareness of them for attending to something else"[76]—and the world. Particularly, Polanyi attempts to account for the body's availability for extension through the subsidiary assimilation of 'external' realities into its subsidiary orbit, which he takes to

[72] PK: 69-124.
[73] PK: 132-190.
[74] PK: 203-248.
[75] PK: 131.
[76] KB: 147.

be the *conditio sine qua non* of knowledge of increasingly complex comprehensive entities.

The account of tacit integration as involving an active grappling of the subject is an important principle that differentiates Polanyi's proposal from the Gestalt psychology on which he drew. Whereas Gestalt theorists had stressed the spontaneous equilibration of the mind to reality,[77] Polanyi stresses human agency as the *sine qua non* of knowledge. Meaning emerges in and through the active 'grappling' of a human noetic agent as they are summoned by a reality that transcends them. This active account of noetic agency already invokes the personal coefficient: knowledge is not an orthogenic encounter between brute facts that imprint onto *tabulae rasae* but involves an active engagement and integration of a distinctively human kind. Thus the 'I' remains an essentially personal one in both the Buberian I-It and I-Thou relations:[78] even knowledge of the most rudimentary of objects involves the agency of one personal term. For Polanyi, like Ernst, idealist epistemology's implicit affirmation that knowing involves seeing rather than doing is a corruption of epistemological realism.[79]

Polanyi's efforts to 'stabilise the dualisms' of epistemology[80] operate by embracing a dynamic understanding of cognition, rather than by isolating the component parts of knowing in order to elucidate a static foundation. Epistemology investigates the subsidiary contribution to focal awareness. There can, then, be no pure

[77] PK: 340-343.
[78] Cf PK: 346.
[79] TD: 5-6.
[80] *Cf* PK: 184.

epistemology, just as there can be no pure experience of knowledge denuded of an object. Epistemology is always already in-act, invoked through our being embedded in the world in the fullness of historical actuality.[81]

Polanyi's shift away from the quasi-mathematical language of a 'tacit coefficient' to the imagery of a 'tacit dimension' indicates Polanyi's developing tendency to understand the metaphysics of knowing in terms of spatial and architectural metaphors. *Tacit Dimension* proceeds "by working out the *structure* of tacit knowing" so that "the reliance on the necessity of commitment" can be reduced. In other words, Polanyi intentionally develops his thought so as to secure it against a fideistic solipsism, in which epistemic burdens are carried by a noetic gamble on the veracity of belief.[82] Although this metaphysical impulse reflects a development in Polanyi's thought, it is by no means a rupture. As early as *Personal Knowledge*, Polanyi is unashamedly metaphysical: to paraphrase his handling of the metaphysical status of denotative language use,[83] only a robust metaphysics can overcome the nominalism that so often accompanies modern epistemology.[84] As the plethora of examples Polanyi draws from the history of natural science indicates, this metaphysics is grounded in—and in part governed by—a phenomenology of enquiry (both ordinary and scientific). Polanyi presents himself with the question of what *must* be true, if the universal human experience of learning and investigation—of our variegated modes of navigating the

[81] Archival evidence demonstrates that Polanyi studied Heidegger's work extensively, see: PP: 16.10, 47.3. He seems to have intentionally concealed this in publication, perhaps due to the political implications (especially in the early 1950s) of a secularised Jew developing theories that approximated Heidegger's.
[82] TD: xviii, *emphasis* is mine.
[83] PK: 104-117.
[84] See especially PK: 113.

world—is to be accepted and philosophically validated in its totality, without succumbing either to the reduction or abstraction that Polanyi has sought to deconstruct in the first part of *Personal Knowledge*.

§2.4.1: Language and Articulate Frameworks

The first dynamic principle that governs the cognitive existential is determined by our involvement with articulate frameworks as linguistic creatures. By situating his treatment of language within the 'tacit component', Polanyi performs a counterintuitive manoeuvre: immaterial linguistic frameworks constitute part of the subsidiary extension of our bodily awareness.

Polanyi refers to 'articulate frameworks'[85]—linguistic structures and practices—that we indwell as a means of developing more comprehensive knowledge of the world. By developing into these articulate frameworks, language becomes, like a blind person's white stick, a tool that we indwell to explore the world, knowing, as it were, 'from the end', from the boundaries of words and linguistic categories. This brings Polanyi close to Ernst's Wittgenstein-derived awareness of the subject as existing only as enfolded within the transcendental world of linguistic meaning. The immateriality and pervasiveness of our language, however, gives our indwelling of it a much more pervasive and existential character. Whereas we can cast off or improve the various material tools that we adopt, language exercises a far more dominant control of our epistemic experience: we dwell within our linguistic superstructure, just as much as it

[85] PK: 195.

dwells within us;[86] our use of language conditions our perception of the world, providing us with categories through which to penetrate reality more deeply. Our indwelling of language is, then, reflexive: we indwell language, but language also indwells us.

For Polanyi, our linguistic tools are characterised by an inbuilt and indefinite expansibility, which is evident from the asymptotic absurdity of trying to generate an exhaustive topography of our language:[87] much specialised scientific investigation proceeds by moving through a domain of sophistication,[88] expanding and refining our customary language to allow a more precise expression of reality.[89] Paradoxically, then, by assimilating language to ourselves, we know from the 'boundaries' of language that are undetermined and constantly shifting. Although Polanyi does not develop this point, it provides the metaphysical basis for a Polanyian account of subjectivity in which the knower is endlessly open to the disclosive force of the world.

The indefinite expansibility of language, which is for Polanyi the *sine qua non* of our developed intelligence,[90] is not an accident of particular languages, but intrinsic to the metaphysical structure of language itself, as the condition of our being able to share linguistic communication over a variety of personal iterations.[91] The operational principles of language, then, include both consistency and grammatical poverty, but also

[86] *Cf.*, PK: 102-104.
[87] PK: 81.
[88] PK: 87.
[89] See, for example, PK: 81.
[90] PK: 69*ff.*
[91] cf.: Walter B. Gulick, 'Michael Polanyi's Theory of Meaning and Reality', *Ultimate Reality and Meaning,* 9/4 (1986), 262-75.

what Polanyi terms the 'law of iteration'.[92] Taken as a coupling, these operational principles of grammar and iteration are akin to Wittgenstein's opposition to private language: whilst language may fail, it can still be used to narrate and explore its own failure; scientific discovery, like philosophical discourse, pushes 'at the edge of words'.[93]

Polanyi attributes particular significance to our ability to develop linguistic purchase over reality by way of metaphor.[94] Citing the German Catholic scholar Karl Vossler's philosophy of language, Polanyi observes that "the true artists of speech remain always conscious of the metaphorical character of language",[95] which allows them to attend to the "unity and certainty of thought".[96] Whist this, *prima facie*, seems to approximate Ricoeur's account of linguistic metaphoricity, Polanyi sees it as an extension of animal behaviour, analogous to "the capacity of the rat to manifest its knowledge of a maze in an unlimited number of different actions".[97] Polanyi's resistance to the abstractive tendencies of modern epistemology leads him to emphasise time-and-again the continuities between the human person and non-human animals, seeing language as a development that builds upon and extends nature without vitiating its integrity (a theme that is given a metaphysical hue in the concluding section of *Personal Knowledge* and in the third chapter of *The Tacit Dimension*). Polanyi's account of the human person as a linguistic creature carefully balances the unique capacity that linguistic reasoning bestows upon the human person with an awareness of the real

[92] PK: 79-81.
[93] A theme picked up in Williams' Gifford Lectures: Williams, *The Edge of Words: God and the Habits of Language*.
[94] PK: 103*ff*.
[95] PK: 102.
[96] PK: 102.
[97] PK: 102.

continuities between animals and humans. This constitutes an important corrective to Wittgenstein's tendency to emphasise the uniqueness of human language as a function of a particular form of embodied sharing in the same *Lebensformen*. Whereas Wittgenstein famously argues that if lions could talk we would not be able to understand them (as a result of our having fundamentally different types of bodies and therefore different cultural lives), Polanyi suggests that the tacit dimension might be more continuous with the capacities of non-human animals (the dog and the human share the capacity to identify the bone as a coherent object, and to make it the object of their action).

§2.4.2: Intellectual Passions

This subsection identifies the second dynamic principle that animates Polanyi's account of the personal cognitive existential, the role played by intellectual passion. Polanyi's account of articulation constitutes our reciprocal linguistic indwelling as the basic enabling condition for the incorporation of theory into our subsidiary awareness. However, articulate "formalisation is itself but an embodiment of our antecedent unformalizable powers":[98] if language serves as an essential *sine qua non*, it is the intellectual passions that provide the motor that animates the dynamic of our cognitive existential, driving us outwards toward the metaphoric boundaries of our language. The passions drive us to investigate the world beyond our superficial gaze. The expressive and interactive powers of linguistic articulation,[99] together with our powers of

[98] PK: 130.
[99] PK: 134-135.

intellectual intuition,[100] take us to higher levels of insight, but there remains a significant "sharing of tacit intellectual powers with animals".[101] "Works of art or social imperatives have a manifest emotional force", but these are "evoked within an articulate culture to which no speechless being has access", consequently, "no animal can appreciate the intellectual beauties of science."[102] The intellectual passions are not entirely independent of, nor antecedent to, the articulate culture in which the subject is embedded (as the next sub-section demonstrates).

The reference to the satisfying *beauty* of truth implies a metaphysical claim that the human person is naturally possessed of an *inclinatio ad veritatem* that is satisfied by discovery.[103] Nonetheless, Polanyi's arguments proceed from a much more elemental level, gleaning evidence of the activity of intellectual passions in contemporary science from the fact that accuracy is not the sole determinant of the value of scientific insight, even within a putatively detached scientific culture.[104] In our valuation of scientific truth-claims evaluation of certainty must be coupled with some consideration of either (or both) intrinsic interest and profundity. Our intellectual passions help us to differentiate between facts that are scientifically relevant and those which are true, but not possessed of the same significance or existential relevance. This 'selective' function of intellectual passion serves to delimit science from other forms of observation.[105] The passions cathect particular facts with an emotional charge (as either repellent or attractive). As a result, not all knowledge is equally valuable. The passions govern the

[100] PK: 130.
[101] PK: 132.
[102] PK: 133.
[103] *Cf.,* S.T., II-IIae, q156, a3, *ad* 2.
[104] PK: 135-137.
[105] PK: 159.

selective nature of our attention, directing scientific attention towards a particular segment of reality at the expense of others (a decision governed by a value-judgment concerning the potential or actual significance of the information to be gained). Indeed, it is on the basis of this selective operation of intellectual passion that the hypothetical Laplacean index was dismissed as existentially irrelevant. Similarly, it is the intellectual passions (as they are trained into intuition) that enable the scientist to discern whether a particular unexpected result should be evaluated as an anomalous observation or as a true observation that thereby demands a revision of the working theory or an alternative explanation.

On Polanyi's account, then, the scientific passions not only serve a propaedeutic, selective, function, determining which details are relevant and which are not, but also a heuristic and persuasive function. By the operation of the passions, the "cognitive content [of science] is supplemented by a conative component".[106] This takes two forms. Firstly, the heuristic impulse of our intellectual passions links the appreciation of scientific truth with a vision of reality,[107] which guides and directs our impulse to investigate the truth. It is the heuristic operation of intellectual passion that propels us and animates the ascetic dimension of rigorous inquiry, through which we abandon the comfort of a familiar accepted framework and commit ourselves to a new one. Heuristic passion allows the knower to accept a more comprehensive narrative about the world, even when it contains more problematic or uncertain features: intellectual passion enables the investigator to cope with the *lacunae* of her knowledge, in the conviction

[106] PK: 159.
[107] PK: 159-161.

that the framework to which she is committed is more comprehensive and satisfying than the one they have left behind.

The second form that the conative component of scientific inquiry takes is its persuasive force. The persuasive function of intellectual passions serves to convict the believer of the truth of theory. This conviction extends beyond the conviction that emerges from logical demonstration. Consequently, persuasive passion is the wellspring of intellectual controversy: academic science is marked by controversy precisely because its domain is valued as important, significant and meaningful by the intellectual passions. Indeed, "[p]assionate preoccupation with a problem can alone elicit discovery", and by the resultant protracted struggle with doubts about the significance and validity of our observations "the ardour of discovery is transformed into the craving to convince."[108] Without intellectual passions, science would never get started and conclusions would never be shared.

"In order to be satisfied, [however,] our intellectual passions must find a response":[109] the knowledge that satisfies our discovery, which terminates the problem that first generated the process of investigation, "gratifies a passion similar to that which sustained the craving for discovery".[110] Rather than a collection of facts and information, then, it is the sense of mastery over a domain that gives a "permanent sense of intellectual satisfaction".[111] Polanyi posits a distinction, here, between scientific

[108] PK: 171.
[109] PK: 150.
[110] PK: 173.
[111] PK: 173.

and technological satisfaction: "in science [the beauty of] originality lies in the power of seeing more deeply than others into the nature of things, while in technology it consists in the ingenuity of the artificer in turning known facts to a surprising advantage".[112] The distinction that Polanyi draws here is somewhat overstated. In the case of theoretical advances, part of the satisfaction of intellectual passion is that of an artificer: the production is not a physical one that constitutes a technological advance, but an immaterial conceptual production of an articulate framework that allows for a more comprehensive investigation of reality. Polanyi's prior decision to model linguistic indwelling in terms of the instrumental use of tools forecloses the distinction between different forms of passionate satisfaction in the case of technology and science. Indeed, in both cases the intellectual passions are logically antecedent to the principles of investigation that they generate and sustain. The necessary pre-condition for establishing premises is the recognition of authentic instances, a task for which the intellectual passions are both necessary and indispensable.[113]

§2.4.3: Conviviality

The third principle that Polanyi identifies as animating the cognitive dynamic is 'conviviality': the belonging of the investigator—not only sociologically but also metaphysically—to a community of explorers. Although Polanyi holds that the "emotional life engendered by an articulate culture is […] primordially rooted within the emotions of inarticulate creatures",[114] the principles of 'articulation' and 'intellectual

[112] PK: 178.
[113] PK 160-164.
[114] PK: 194.

passion' are kept from sliding into immanent subjectivism by a third metaphysical principle, 'conviviality'. The linguistic structures on which scientific enquiry depends, as well as the intellectual passions that generate it, are received from a concrete historical community by the process of tradition. For Polanyi, the articulate systems that generate and animate intellectual passions can only survive with the support of a culture and society that respects and nurtures these passions.[115] The tacit sharing of passionately cathected knowledge, therefore, undergirds every moment of articulate communication, just as it undergirds every moment of our common life in the body politic, and our communication in the diverse settings of our lives. In ways that are again reminiscent of Wittgenstein,[116] Polanyi notes the dependence of grammar upon the common consensus of a particular community,[117] emerging from a shared set of "heuristic intimations".[118] The use of a word is marked by an 'active'-'passive' dynamic, invoking and depending upon a consensus, that is simultaneously modified or entrenched.[119] We are, at one and the same time, determined by and determiners of our communally mediated intellectual apparatus, albeit with a necessary asymmetry, by which the knower is more determined by their culture than determining of it.

As such, the conviviality of explorers is not, for Polanyi, reducible to their sharing of information or capacity for peer-review, nor are other practitioners within a convivial community 'pole stars' around which to organise one's own academic investigation. In a gnomic and somewhat un-developed remark, Polanyi observes that

[115] PK: 203.
[116] See: Cahal B. Daly, 'Polanyi and Wittgenstein', in Thomas A Langford and William H Poteat (eds.), *Intellect and Hope* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1968): 136-68.
[117] PK: 205.
[118] PK: 208.
[119] PK: 208-210.

the conviviality of scientific exploration is "often sustained and enjoyed in silence".[120] The type of conviviality that is integral to the tacit component is more 'human' than specifically 'intellectual', extending far beyond an experiential-expressive agreement concerning shared experience or expertise.[121] Polanyi hints that conviviality is somehow metaphysically irreducible, integral to the explorer's ecstatic communion with the reality that they probe by the indwelling of an articulate structure generated in the convivial 'environment' of human culture.

Polanyi's development of the principle of 'conviviality' indicates an important direction of travel for his philosophical investigations after the publication of *Personal Knowledge.* The two principles of articulation and the intellectual passions locate the metaphysical dynamics of tacit knowing within the subject: the impulse towards knowledge and the conditions for the determination of true knowledge, reside finally within the domain of the person. The principle of conviviality attempts to secure the objectivity of these immanent principles by locating a public basis from which they are internalised by indwelling. Nonetheless, the task of providing such an external fulcrum for knowledge remains incomplete in *Personal Knowledge*, in two important ways. Firstly, Polanyi does not fully implement his analysis of conviviality, struggling to determine its consequences for tacit knowing. As subsection §2.5.1 demonstrates, the principle of the 'universal intent' of noetic commitments returns Polanyi to a more immanent account of the basis of knowledge. Secondly, the metaphysical structure of conviviality itself remains unspecified. Conviviality, as it is presented in *Personal*

[120] PK: 210.
[121] PK: 218.

Knowledge, extends the basis of knowledge beyond the confines of the subject's immanent dispositions, but does not yet affirm an ontological connection with reality as it actually is. In other words, Polanyi's dynamic is not yet adequately defended against a solipsism at the level of the community, by which the boundaries of the Cartesian monad are extended but do not become permeable. Polanyi develops an account of the connection between conviviality and the metaphysical structure of the world[122] in more detail as part of his account, in *Tacit Dimension*, of the "metaphysical grounds which underlie all our knowledge of the external world".[123] This is the subject of the next section.

§2.5: Metaphysical Development after *Personal Knowledge*

This section identifies Polanyi's development of a metaphysics to provide for a point of connection between the dynamics of tacit knowing and reality. This is the task that Polanyi set himself in *Tacit Dimension*, the first major work he published after *Personal* Knowledge.

Polanyi remained essentially committed to the contours and substance of the account of cognitive dynamics, as they were articulated in his Aberdeen Gifford Lectures and published as *Personal Knowledge*. The concept of tacit integration remains a basic unifying feature of Polanyi's epistemological thought, from its first inception through to

[122] *Cf* TD: 55.
[123] TD: 68

its mature expression.[124] This, indeed, is evident in the concluding section of *Personal Knowledge* ('Knowing and Being'), which is described as "outlining some views on the nature of living beings, including man, which clearly follow from the acceptance of […] personal knowledge".[125]

This section is comprised of three subsections. The first subsection identifies the problematic ontology of meaning that is contained within Polanyi's early concept of 'universal intent'. The second subsection notes Polanyi's development of what I call an 'ontology of rooting', through which tacit knowledge can be embedded within the ontological structure of the world. The third subsection argues that Polanyi gives content to this ontology of rooting with the concept of semantic fields governed by marginal control of boundary conditions. The overall consequence of the metaphysical developments identified by this section is that the ontology of rooting weans Polanyi's epistemology off dependence on the fiduciary category of commitment.

§2.5.1: The Ontology of 'Universal Intent'

This subsection identifies the problematic ontology of meaning that inheres within Polanyi's account of 'universal intent', and which Polanyi's later metaphysical developments sought to address. The stress on the fiduciary character of tacit integrations[126] placed considerable burden upon the principle of commitment and its

[124] Richard T. Allen, *Transcendance and Immanence in the Philosophy of Michael Polanyi and Christian Theism* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992): 16-30.
[125] PK: 327.
[126] PK: 266-267, 280-286.

correlate axiom of universal intent.[127] Consequently, the idea of commitment risks devolving into a noetic gamble in which the subject wagers that their own mental act is correct (either implicitly or explicitly).[128] At the heart of Polanyi's project in *Personal Knowledge* is his self-declaration, which he believes is shared—implicitly or explicitly—between all practitioners of science: "I believe that in spite of the hazards involved, I am called upon to search for the truth and state my findings".[129] Whilst the notion of a 'calling' already invokes a summons from beyond subjectivity, codified by "intellectual beauty as a guide to discovery and a mark of the truth",[130] the epistemological burdens are carried here by the subject's noetic act (the first-personal 'I believe'). As a fundamental statement of orientation, this is a belief that is self-justifying and self-legitimating, practicing under the authority that it itself establishes.[131] Consequently, the fundamental role played by the disposition of commitment risks appearing as a Polanyian version of Descartes' *cogito*, an indubitable noetic act that grounds a discipline and structure of knowledge.

This account of commitment lies at the root of what Polanyi terms the 'objectivist dilemma', an existential bind in which the person feels obligated[132] to make and assert objective commitments with a degree of impersonality that discredits all forms of commitment *qua* commitment (another instantiation of the dynamo-objective coupling identified in §2.1). This is resolved, in part, by an appeal to desire as the motor of

[127] PK: 301-309.
[128] This view of the fiduciary component of all knowledge, and its use as a means of re-valuing theological faith, has been identified with Hans Küng, see: Fergus Kerr, 'Küng's Case for God', *New Blackfriars,* 65 (1984), 226-31.
[129] PK: 299.
[130] PK: 300.
[131] PK: 299.
[132] PK: 299-300.

cognitive dynamics, propelling the knower 'into' the world whose confrontation of the knower generates desire in the first place: the thought of truth implies a desire for it.[133] The axiom of universal intent, then, emerges from and complements the heuristic passions:[134] our claims to truth are claims to universal applicability, a function of our shared quest for the truth about ourselves and the world to which we belong.[135] Any claim to speak about reality is indicative of the antecedent existence of a personal anchoring point for facticity[136] within the world (*viz*. the body and its historical embeddedness).[137]

Polanyi's affirmation that any presumed contact with reality necessarily asserts universality is,[138] in the era of post-modern deconstruction, much more contentious than he realised. Indeed, the suggestion, developed in the concluding section of *Personal Knowledge*, that the principle of commitment generates a "fiduciary component that allows me to choose my fundamental beliefs in harmony with my total situation"[139] is reminiscent of so-called Wittgensteinian Fideism,[140] according to which culturally borne

[133] PK: 308.
[134] See: Richard Gelwick, 'Heuristic Passion and Universal Intent', *Tradition and Discovery,* 28/1 (2001), 16-22.
[135] The connection of conviviality and universal intent is emphasised by:Mari Sorri, 'The Body Has Reasons: Tacit Knowing in Thinking and Making', *Aesthetic Education,* 1994/28.2 (1994), 15-26.
[136] PK: 311.
[137] Michael Polanyi, 'On Body and Mind', *The New Scholasticism,* 43/2 (1969), 195-204.
[138] PK: 311.
[139] PK: 335.
[140] Accounts of which can be located in: Kai Nielsen, 'Wittgensteinian Fideism', *Philosophy,* 42 (1967), 191-209, Kai Nielsen, 'The Coherence of Wittgensteinian Fideism', *Sophia,* 11/3 (1972), 4-12, Bela Szabados, 'Wittgensteinian Fideism 1967-89', in Kai Nielsen and D.Z. Phillips (eds.), *Wittgensteinian Fideism?* (London: SCM Press, 2005): 1-17.

systems of ultimate (particularly religious) truth are functions of the 'total situation' from which they emerge, and are thus immune to extra-systematic criticism.[141]

Despite his acknowledgement that commitment necessarily invokes an ontological framework,[142] then, Polanyi arrives at the "opening of [the] last chapter [of *Personal Knowledge*] without having suggested any definite theory concerning the nature of things; and [he finishes] this last chapter without having presented any such theory."[143] Reminiscent of Ernst's use of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, Polanyi hopes that *Personal Knowledge* has been a philosophical therapy, leading the reader to a new vantage points that enables them "to realize the crippling mutilations imposed by an objectivist framework". The hope is that "once the veil of ambiguities covering up these mutilations has been definitively resolved many fresh minds will turn to the task of reinterpreting the world as it is, and as it then once more will be seen to be".[144] That is not to say that the fiduciary epistemology that Polanyi derived from phenomenology is only propaedeutic to Polanyi's main task: *Personal Knowledge* is both deconstructive and constructive. The metaphysical development proceeds by interrogating what *must* be the case if the fiduciary epistemology to which Polanyi is committed is to be accredited as a source of true and reliable understanding of the world. This is, however, liable to the critique of dynamo-objective coupling: Polanyi develops a metaphysics to account for the validity of his epistemology, which itself depends upon the developed metaphysics. Nonetheless, whilst this may not be the

[141] Dewi Phillips responds to Nielsen's claims in detail: D.Z. Phillips, 'Wittgenstein and Religion: Some Fashionable Criticism', in Kai Nielsen and D.Z. Phillips (eds.), *Wittgensteinian Fideism?* (London: SCM Press, 2005): 39-52.
[142] PK: 379.
[143] PK: 381.
[144] PK: 381.

methodologically appropriate route to the development of metaphysics (Ernst resists making epistemology determinative of metaphysics), in the *ordo essendi* (if not *inventionis*) it is the metaphysical principles that Polanyi develops that are determinative of his epistemology.

There are clear indicators of the direction of metaphysical travel. The final chapters of *Personal Knowledge*, 'Knowing Life' and 'The Rise of Man' are concerned to trace the emergence of complex forms of life, including the unique significance of human persons as noetic agents. In a series of uncharacteristically disconnected observations, Polanyi notes the intrinsically teleological character of learning,[145] which points to a stratified account of reality, "the rising levels of life"[146] that are themselves integrated into a complex world-picture by the human linguistic animal,[147] who emerges as part of that complex totality. This teleonomic account of reality is not resolved in the human person, however: just as a map cannot read itself, so the human person *qua* person is only truly comprehensible in the light of their role in a higher, more comprehensive vision of reality.[148] Whilst the world has a certain inherent meaningfulness, there is, for Polanyi, a two-fold personalist revolt against meaninglessness, insofar it is persons who most authentically embody and concretise events of meaning: the first revolt lies in the generation of self-centred centres of subjective agency. The second, more significant, revolt "aspires to eternal meaning"[149] but, owing to the finitude of the human creature, is eternally penultimate, bound in an

[145] PK: 369-372.
[146] PK: 375.
[147] PK: 376.
[148] This is alluded to repeatedly in PK: 402-405.
[149] PK: 389.

asymptotic quest for ultimate reality that is ordered toward an "unthinkable consummation", a quest that is mirrored by the attitude in which "a Christian is placed when worshipping God".[150]

§2.5.2: 'An Ontology of Rooting': Polanyi's Terry Lectures (1962)

This subsection identifies the 'ontology' of rooting, through which the subject's intellectual activity is embedded within the world. Polanyi began to develop this metaphysical account of knowing more explicitly in the Terry Lectures, given in October 1962 at Yale University, and published in a redacted form as *The Tacit Dimension*.[151] In these lectures, Polanyi drew together the metaphysical strands that were left unresolved at the conclusion of *Personal Knowledge* and was consequently able to reduce his "reliance upon the category of commitment".[152] Polanyi addresses himself in the *Tacit Dimension* to an ancient epistemological aporetic, which was given classic articulation in Plato's Socratic dialogue the *Meno*.[153] The *Meno* paradox concerns the mechanisms of discovery: how can somebody know that they do not know something in such a way as to allow them to discover it? If the subject knows what they are looking for, investigation is unnecessary. On the other hand, if the subject does not know what they are looking for, investigation is impossible. This leads to the Platonic development of the doctrine of the reminiscence of the forms, as a means of holding together a certain form of (primordial) knowledge with temporal ignorance. Polanyi develops his own

[150] PK: 405.
[151] Referred to as 'TD' throughout: Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (London: Routledge, 1967a).
[152] TD: xviii.
[153] M. Bradie, 'Polanyi on the Meno Paradox', *Philosophy of Science,* 41 (1974), 203ff, Herbert A Simon, 'Bradie on Polanyi on the Meno Paradox', *Philosophy of Science,* (1976), 147-50.

account of the tacit dimension as a means of affirming that "we know more than we can tell":[154] by complex processes of intuition and instinct we can know things in ways that lie below the threshold of articulation. Consequently, we can know things by tacit intuition without knowing them in explicit or articulate ways.

The five-year delay between the delivery of the lectures and their publication (in a much more modest volume than *Personal Knowledge*) is attributed by Polanyi to "hope and fear", specifically to residual concerns about the answer to the paradox of Plato's *Meno* given in the Terry Lectures.[155] Having developed the argument in a number of metaphysical essays,[156] Polanyi feels confident to offer *Tacit Dimension* as an "interim report on a project started more than twenty years [earlier]":[157] the existence of the *Meno* dilemma is, Polanyi argues, itself symptomatic of the existence of an inarticulate and inexpressible mode of knowledge, upon which explicit knowledge reposes. If all knowledge were explicit knowledge, there would be no *Meno*.[158]

The axiom of Polanyi's tacit dimension is the existence of this inexpressible knowledge that renders the *Meno* paradox.[159] This inarticulable knowledge, however, cannot be conceived as a static repository of presuppositions or (like Rahner) an

[154] TD: 4.
[155] TD: xiii. As will become clear, this was already contested, see: Bradie, 'Polanyi on the Meno Paradox', Simon, 'Bradie on Polanyi on the Meno Paradox'.
[156] Specifically: 'The Structure of Consciousness', *Brain,* 88/4 (1965a), 799-810, 'Sense-Giving and Sense-Reading', *Philosophy,* 42/162 (1967b), 301-25, 'On Body and Mind', 'The Creative Imagination', *Chemical Engineering News,* 44/17 (1966), 85-93.
[157] TD: xvii.
[158] TD: 22.
[159] TD: 4.

unthematic openness to truth from which the knower's encounter with the world draws active knowledge. The overall title given to the Terry Lectures was "The Man in Thought":[160] the later Polanyi consistently draws attention to the engaged and distinctively personal nature of tacit knowledge as constituted by an act of human intelligence, rather than extant as a passive state of affairs.[161] The fiduciary framework of *Personal Knowledge* is now seen to generate a "harmonious view of thought and existence, rooted in the universe":[162] the noetic centre of gravity is not located within the subject's acts, but in the world that grounds those acts. It is the ontology of this 'rooting' in the world that enables the fiduciary framework to "find a stable alternative to the ideal of objectivity".[163]

The first of the three Terry Lectures—entitled "Tacit Knowing"[164]—serves to give more content to the structure of the act of tacit integration, by enumerating four distinctive aspects. The functional aspect, already clearly defined by the from-to structure of subsidiary-focal awareness, denotes the functional relation that the knower establishes between the two terms of tacit knowing: that "we know the first term only by relying on our awareness of it for attending to the second".[165] This is, however, accompanied by an additional 'phenomenal aspect' of tacit knowing, in which the subsidiary elements are known in the fact of the 'appearance' of the thing that is known.[166] This derived, phenomenal, aspect of tacit knowing is, perhaps, unfortunately

[160] TD: 86.
[161] M: 42.
[162] TD: 4.
[163] TD: 25.
[164] TD: Chapter 1.
[165] TD: 10.
[166] TD: 11.

named: Polanyi relates it not to a distinction between the noumena and phenomena, nor to phenomenology, nor to any particular description of the impact of the phenomena at hand, but simply to the disclosure of truth to the mind, which is always accompanied by a qualitative experience.

This phenomenal disclosure occurs, however, as a consequence of the functional aspect's establishment of a relationship between two otherwise discrete particulars: something 'appears' to the agent that was previously not apparent. Under the phenomenal aspect, however, a response is evoked in the subject. This is accompanied by a third aspect of tacit knowing, which is constituted by the conjunction of the phenomenal and functional aspects that gives rise to the significance that the event of unconcealment has for the knower: this semantic aspect of tacit knowing is the "meaning to us" aroused by the apprehension of something to which our attention is directed.[167] It is in terms of the meaning of things to us that we are said to enter into the appearance of the functional relation.[168]

That the comprehensive entity discloses itself under the mode of an appearance, 'standing out' from the background, indicates, according to Polanyi, a fourth, ontological, aspect of tacit knowing. This is the most decisive development of *Tacit Dimension*, which serves to reduce the burdens placed on subjective commitment. For Polanyi, the 'ontological' aspect "tells us what tacit knowing is a knowledge of":[169] that which reveals itself under the phenomenal aspect of tacit knowing shows itself *as*

[167] TD: 11-12.
[168] TD: 12.
[169] TD: 13.

something to or for the agent. This ontological aspect of tacit knowing emerges from the agent's establishment of a noetic relationship between two terms (functional), generating an understanding of the comprehensive entity (semantic). This is a distinctively human and personal action, but one that depends upon the real existence of (mind-independent) particulars that are drawn into semantic relationship by the embodied action of the knower. As such, it is this ontological aspect of tacit knowing that enables Polanyi to present universal intent as more than merely subjective intention: rather, it "lends an ontological basis for [the person's] grasp of [their] own dignity and high calling in the universe".[170] The ontological aspect accounts for the coinherence of knowing and being, affirming the act of knowledge as in some way 'contained' by an antecedent connection with reality.

The ontological aspect of tacit knowing, therefore, makes implicit claims both about the metaphysics of the human person (whose mode of 'being-in-the-world' involves a certain form of tacit activity) and the ontology of reality (which itself invokes, and is amenable to, tacit inquiry). The human person, who stands both in-and-beyond the material world, has a unique significance within the cosmos as the one who forms "intellectually and practically an interpreted universe populated by [comprehensive] entities, the particulars of which are interiorized for the sake of comprehending their meaning in the shape of coherent entities".[171] The tacit knower is not a mere stenographer but actively engaged with calling forth new strata of reality, realising the inherent meaningfulness of the world in a new way by its intellectual integration.

[170] Prosch, *Michael Polanyi: a critical exposition*, 197.
[171] TD: 29.

The precise character of the ontological aspect of tacit knowing is further specified in the second of the Terry Lectures, focussing on "Emergence",[172] where Polanyi attempts to give "a solid content to this hitherto rather vague ontology".[173] The ontology that Polanyi develops here is a thick account of reality as polyvalent and operating on different levels: meaning, like existence, is not a flat predicate, signifying a digital binary opposition between 'extant' and 'not extant', but an analogue measure according to which two extant particulars can have greater or lesser degrees of being, can be more-or-less actualised.[174] This, Polanyi thinks, is indicated by an isomorphism between the structure of comprehension and the structure of that which is comprehended.[175] This affirmation of the isomorphism of mind and reality in the event of knowledge becomes a central feature of Polanyian epistemology. According to this *kataphysic* principle, reality is known with a mode of knowledge that corresponds to it.

The structures that can be located within the phenomenology of the tacit dimension, then, are reduplications of metaphysical principles that account for the unity and stability of comprehensive entities *per se*.[176] This common structure—like the sharing of an intellectual 'formal cause' by the intellect and the object known in Ernst's Thomistic epistemology—is properly embedded within the world and the individual structures that populate it, but is nonetheless discovered by noetic agency of tacit knowing. In this way, as the critical reading of Tihamér Margitay of Budapest's

[172] For Polanyi's use of 'emergence', see: Daniel Paksi, 'Emergence and reduction in Michael Polanyi (II)', *Appraisal,* 8/4 (2011).
[173] TD: 33.
[174] TD: 32-33.
[175] PK: 6. See especially, KB: 181-206, 213-223.
[176] TD: 33-34.

University of Technology and Economics has recently noted,[177] Polanyi advocates a strong version of the 'coherence thesis' according to which the knower enacts a likeness between mind and reality by their tacit powers of perception.[178]

§2.5.3: Semantic Fields and 'Marginal Control'

This subsection identifies the way in which Polanyi gives content to the enacted isomorphism of mind and reality by developing an ontology of semantic fields operating under marginal control of boundary conditions. Polanyi argues that the way in which tacit knowledge of focal objects depends upon an integrative relationship of elements actively mirrors the structure of reality. This is evident in two ways. Firstly, in the hierarchical nesting of human skills; secondly, in the basic principles of 'marginal control'[179] evident in progressively higher levels of reality. As Polanyi notes, the "laws of physics and chemistry govern the raw material of bricks; technology prescribes the art of brickmaking; architecture teaches the builders; and the rules of town planning control town planners",[180] and so on. Each distinct level has its own integrity but is 'open upwards' leaving a degree of redundancy that can be deployed in any number of ways by the higher levels, without violation of its integrity.

---

[177] TihaméR Margitay, 'From Epistemology to Ontology: Polanyi's Arguments for the Layered Ontology', in Thiamér Margitay (ed.), *Knowing and Being: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Michael Polanyi* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2010): 128-40, Phil Mullins, 'Tihamér Margitay on Polanyi's Ontology: An Introduction', *Tradition & Discovery,* 39/2 (2013), 9-10, Margitay's defence of her reading of Polanyi against critiques can be found at 'Polanyi's Ontology from Inside: A Response to my Critics', *Tradition & Discovery,* 39/2 (2013), 42-58.

[178] This 'enacted' character of our knowledge of comprehensive entities has been connected to Polanyi's realism by Kyle Takaki, 'Enactive Realism', *Tradition and Discovery,* 38/1 (2011), 43-59.

[179] TD: 40.

[180] TD: 35.

Polanyi identifies the presence of this hierarchical nesting of marginal control even within a single act of an intelligent agent. In complex language use, there is a nesting of phonetics, lexicography, grammar, stylistics and perhaps even literary criticism:[181] each level retains its own autonomic integrity, but is built upon by the higher levels, uniting a homologous series of integrations within a single act. The laws of lexicography presuppose the laws of phonetics on which they supervene;[182] but these laws are not contained *in nuce* by lexicography, which rather exploits the 'open upwards' nature of the lower levels, a zone of freedom provided for by a degree of redundancy that avoid absolute determinism. An agent working at the higher level of literary criticism or comparative studies performs a tacit integration of the lower levels into the higher level that they enact.

Marginal control is not only evident in intentional action but is inscribed in the ontic structure of the world: the atomic integrating the sub-atomic; the molecular integrating the atomic; compound structures integrating the molecular; and at the higher levels, biological processes integrating chemical reactions; psychological systems of control integrating innate response, and so on. One of Polanyi's favoured analogies is the technological integration and harnessing of natural processes to generate a machine: a complete empirical description of the mechanism will not say anything about the machine *qua* machine; a total account requires a higher, teleonomic, level of

[181] TD: 35-37.

[182] A connection between supervenience and emergence has been made by Philip Clayton, writing before Margitay's more recent studies: 'Emergence, Supervenience, and Personal Knowledge', *Tradition and Discovery,* 29/3 (2002), 8-19.

integration that is enacted by the indwelling of the mind of the machine's designer (*viz.* the level of *formal* causality).

Polanyi's account of marginal control provides a point at which the structure of knowing corresponds to the structure of being. This gives specific content to the 'ontological aspect' of tacit knowing. A similar role is played in Erich Przywara's work of fundamental metaphysics *Analogia Entis* by the principle of non-contradiction, which binds the meta-noetic and meta-ontic together:[183] for Przywara, that something cannot be and not be also implies that something cannot be true and not be true at the same time. Polanyi, however, finds the point of connection between knowing and being in the more organic, but shifting, sands of his account of meaningful relationships enacted across semantic fields governed by marginal control.[184] The account of semantic fields that are integrated according to the marginal control of boundary conditions gives concrete content to the ontological framework that Polanyi has been developing. The coinherence of the structure of the world and the structure of thought allows Polanyi to establish a 'point of insertion' of the embodied mind into the cosmic hierarchy of being-meaning. Nonetheless, the model risks an unduly static depiction of reality as a succession of non-overlapping magisteria, like layers of a tiered cake. The next section outlines Polanyi's use of biosemiotics to generate a more dynamic account of the relation of semantic domains as part of an ontology of meaning.

[183] Przywara, *Analogia Entis: Metaphysik*, 1-6.

[184] Terence Kennedy sees 'field theory', rather than the category of tacit integration, as the properly basic feature of Polanyian epistemology, see: 'The Morality of Knowledge: Transcendence and the Intellectual Life in the Thought of Michael Polanyi', (Pontifical Lateran University, 1979).

§2.6: Polanyi's Biosemiotic Ontology of Meaning

This section serves to outline the final major development in Polanyi's metaphysics: his use of biosemiotics, which draws his ontology into close proximity with Cornelius Ernst's proposed ontology of meaning. Polanyi[185] was able to give content to his semantic 'field theory' by integrating the concept of indwelling into the emerging movement of biosemiotics, then associated with philosopher-psychiatrist Friedrich Salomon Rothschild.[186] Rothschild published a summation of his thought in the same year as *Personal Knowledge*,[187] attracting Polanyi's attention shortly after. According to Rothschild,[188] biotic processes are themselves inscribed with structures of semiosis: layers of reality are constituted by their belonging within an interlocking nexus of incipient signification, rather than by power relations of interacting forces. Whereas the 'teleology' embedded within technological exploitations of nature such as information systems is generated and imposed by the human designer, Rothschild sees the teleonomic structures implied by biosemiosis as immanent, advancing a broadly Aristotelian account of the purposiveness of natural substances, but reading this in terms of processes of communication.

On Rothschild's account, the processes of semiosis that emerge in the realm of nature are not a secondary addition to pre-existing ontic levels. Rather, precisely

[185] Polanyi's direct engagement with biosemiotics is mostly located in: 'The Structure of Consciousness'.
[186] Stefania Ruzsits Jha, *Reconsidering Michael Polanyi's Philosophy* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002): 85-86.
[187] F. S. Rothschild, *Das Zentralnervensystem als Symbol des Erlebens* (Basel: S. Karger, 1957).
[188] A truncated exploration of his biosemiotic theories in English was also cited by Polanyi (see KB 223-224): F. S. Rothschild, 'Laws of Symbolic Mediation in the Dynamics of Self and Personality', *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences,* 96/3 (1962), 774-84.

because they are inherently communicative, the levels are mutually-constituting, with the basic dynamic principle of semiosis having a certain ontological priority over the static unifying particularity of the levels themselves. Although Polanyi's engagement with biosemiotics in his published work was sporadic,[189] the turn toward a semantic ontology of interlocking levels patterned by 'marginal control' is unequivocal.[190] That biosemioticians account for higher realms of consciousness as 'emerging'[191] by an act of integration of the lower realms, just as the lower realms have themselves 'emerged', situates the act of knowledge within a primary ontological hierarchy. The isomorphism between the structure of tacit knowledge and the structure of the reality that is known is a function of their fundamental belonging within the same hierarchical order of reality. This metaphysics, then, coheres around an account of the human person as an embodied and socio-cultural noetic agent who brings about, by their own inherent teleological function, the 'embodiment' of the world in a meaningful way.[192]

This ontological aspect of tacit knowing, read in terms of levels of biosemiotic communication, provides the metaphysical legitimation for Polanyi's method in *Personal Knowledge*, described by Amartya Sen's foreword to the *Tacit Dimension* as "an extraordinarily ambitious attempt to achieve an understanding of the world—physical

[189] Despite the enthusiasm of *KB* pp. 222-224, Rothschild is not cited by name in *TD*, despite the omnipresence of field theory in that work, and is only alluded to in the contested work *M* (although, by the time of *M*'s publication, Polanyi's biosemiotic ontology had developed beyond Rothschild's increasingly contested theories).

[190] References are *passim* in *TD*, and frequent in *M* (see, for example, pp. 177-178, pp. 213-217). Boundary conditions, marginal control, and tacit integration offer a solution to the 'hard problem' of consciousness, see: Polanyi, 'The Structure of Consciousness'.

[191] Writing in the 1960s, without extensive engagement with the work of G. E. Moore, Polanyi's use of the term 'emergence' is somewhat less loaded than it would be for many contemporary philosophers. See, for instance: Edward Joseph Echeverria, *Criticism and Commitment: Major Themes in Contemporary Post-critical Philosophy* (Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 1981): 80-96.

[192] TD: 55.

as well as mental—through the perspective of knowledge".[193] Sen's comments require some clarification, if they are to be applied to the trajectory of Polanyi's metaphysical development that this chapter has traced. Whilst Polanyi's synthesis does reflect an attempted development of a comprehensive and unified perspective, the unifying theme is not, as Sen suggests, knowledge *per se*, for two reasons. Firstly, Polanyi deploys the tacit dimension as a metaphysical principle that is prior to the distinction between knowledge and being. The tacit dimension is inscribed into our metaphysical constitution and gives rise to a knowledge that is deeper and more expansive than can be articulated or brought to focal knowledge. Secondly, the tacit dimension is a function of a more basic underlying ontology that is derived from biosemiotics: the category of communication. The tacit dimension emerged because of the human creature's unique status within the biosemiotic hierarchy, reflecting personal being as an embodied mind that is physically and metaphysically the integration of lower semantic levels. These levels are themselves enacted only in-and-as communication. It is not, then, the tacit dimension, nor the category of knowledge derived from it, that provides the point of integration for Polanyi's unified vision of the world, but semiosis, the principle of dynamic communication.

The deployment of semiosis as the unifying theme of Polanyi's ontology locates his metaphysical vision in close proximity to Ernst's proposed ontology of meaning. Polanyi sees the world not as neutral packets of information, but as teeming with the energy of communication. The cosmos is a dynamic process and praxis that can only be known by an intelligent participation within the flow of this movement: semiosis goes

[193] TD: ix.

all the way down to the lowest levels of reality, and all the way up to the highest levels of reality. Importantly, the semantic ontology that Polanyi proposes does not conceive of neutral beings that have communicative relations. Rather, there is no conceptual space in Polanyi's ontology for beings prior to their insertion into the nexus of communicative relationality. As Ernst puts it, "personal being is inherently communication":[194] for Polanyi, as for Ernst, personal being is not antecedent to communication, but emerges as a function of the communication that is constitutive of being. 'Being' is a way of referring to centres that are concretised through their being foci of communication. In unpublished fragments, Ernst makes the connection between biotic processes and personhood more explicit: "human metabolism is a vehicle for revelation-in-particularity. We are a metabolism transfigured into transcendence."[195]

Notwithstanding the evident similarities of the ontological worldviews of Ernst and Polanyi, the unifying categories of 'communication' (or 'semiosis') and 'meaning' are not straightforwardly synonymous. The category of communication implies some form of meaning that is communicated between points or levels, and the category of meaning implies the potential presence of communication but does not require that a meaning be successfully communicated for it to exist. Consequently, Polanyi more trenchantly emphasises the dynamic and lively character of a semantic ontology, whilst Ernst tends to emphasise the uniqueness of human noetic agency (attributing communication as a function of *personal* being, and meaning-making as primarily a praxis reserved to intelligent agency). Ernst's ontology therefore moves towards the

[194] ME: 74.
[195] EDA, Ernst §3, Diary Entry 19th March 1962.

transcendent point of integration located in the infinite noetic agency of the divine mind, whilst Polanyi's ontology is open to a more agnostic reading in which 'intelligence' is embedded within the purposiveness of natural substances. Both are agreed, however, in locating a fundamental intrinsicism between being and the semantic (where 'semantic' is taken in a broad sense to include both Polanyi's 'semiosis' and Ernst's 'meaning'): meaning and being coinhere; metaphysics and epistemology are consequently interlocked.

In nuce, Polanyi's epistemological project (as it has been presented in this chapter), particularly in its later metaphysical development, resonated with Cornelius Ernst's proposed ontology of meaning (as presented in the last chapter). Polanyi and Ernst share a common concern to undermine positivist accounts of knowledge that contain reductive ontologies of meaning and which consequently propose de-humanising methods of investigation. At the programmatic level, both are concerned to re-orientate their respective disciplines of theology and empirical science within a renewed ontological perspective of meaning. The resources for this reorientation are found in an intrinsicism. Polanyi's intrinsicist account of knowledge by the indwelling of skills and instruments corresponds to Ernst's concern to establish a metaphysics of mediation, in which meanings come to us through the instrumentality of other meanings. Polanyi's account of the 'subjective' element of knowledge, particularly the role of the intellectual passions and conviviality (outlined in §2.4) provides a much more robust account of subjectivity than Ernst is able to offer. Conversely, the semantic ontology that Polanyi developed in his later writings (outlined in §2.6) is somewhat fragmentary and tentative. Polanyi does not appear to have completely integrated the

biosemiotic element of his thought into his more general system. Polanyi's ontology could further be strengthened by the kind of theological ontology that Ernst's develops, in which meaning (or semiosis) is itself given an objective basis in the doctrine of God.

III

Polanyi on Religion: An Ernstian Critique

Introduction

The previous two chapters identified the formal similarity of Ernst's and Polanyi's epistemological projects: both are concerned to negotiate post-Kantian epistemological challenges by re-situating their respective discourses within the perspective of a new ontology of meaning. This chapter investigates the place of specifically religious meanings within their broader semantic ontologies. In particular, it is argued that Polanyi moved from an early[1] account of religious articulate frameworks that had extrinsicist tendencies, to one that was more intrinsicist in its character (thereby further developing in the direction of Ernst's thought).

This is established by simulating a critical dialogue between the earlier Polanyi and Cornelius Ernst, positing the Prosch-Polanyi collaboration in *Meaning* as a 'response' to this Ernstian critique. This simulated dialogue is developed as a three-phase argument. In the first section, Polanyi's pre-1969 account of religion is summarised and seen to be extrinsicist in its account of the meaning of articulate religious frameworks. In the second section, Polanyi's early extrinsicist interpretation of religion is critiqued from the perspective of Ernst's proposed ontology of meaning.

[1] This chapter is primarily concerned with Polanyi's theological epistemology, and not with his private religious convictions. As such, the distinction between 'early' and 'late' does not neatly bisect Polanyi's life, but rather divides the epistemological phase of Polanyi's publications (which was itself chronologically 'late'). Throughout this chapter, then, the 'early'-'late' division is located after the publication of *TD*. 'Late' therefore primarily denotes *M* and associated lectures, but also some of the essays contained in *KB*).

Thirdly, the publication of the Prosch-Polanyi collaboration *Meaning* in 1974 is seen as a partial response to these Ernstian concerns, effectively shifting Polanyi's account of religious frameworks in an intrinsicist direction.

Such a dialogue between Ernst and Polanyi could easily have taken place in, or around, 1968, when both were living and working in Oxford.[2] The debate is, however, artificial on two counts. Firstly, although Ernst knew of Polanyi's work as early as 1958,[3] and briefly mentioned Polanyi in print,[4] there is no evidence in his *Nachlass* that Polanyi was familiar either with Ernst himself or with his work.[5] On the balance of probabilities, it seems unlikely that the two ever met.[6] Ernst's profile was raised considerably by the posthumous publication of *Multiple Echo,* which—carrying a foreword of Donald Mackinnon—might have caught Polanyi's attention, if it had been published a decade earlier. Secondly, the gap between *Tacit Dimension* and the lectures eventually published as *Meaning*—where this simulated dialogue can emerge—does not exactly

[2] Polanyi moved to Oxford in 1959, living at 22 Upland Park Road. Ernst was called to Blackfriars in Oxford to be pro-Regent in 1966 and appointed full Regent in 1970. From 1959, Polanyi was Senior Research Fellow at Merton College.

[3] EDA, Ernst §3 contains a list of possible Summer reading for 1958 containing a reference to *Personal Knowledge*, and Ernst cites Polanyi in: 'Truth and Verification in Theology', *New Blackfriars,* 40/468 (1959), 100-11. It is very likely that Ernst knew of Polanyi's work earlier, for instance by reading Laurence Bright OP's account of Polanyi's Riddell Lectures, in: Laurence Bright, 'Nature and Natural Theology', *New Blackfriars,* 35 (1954), 118–24.

[4] This can be found at: Ernst, 'Truth and Verification in Theology', at 105. There is no citation, although the reference is to *TSM*, to the effect that Polanyi's analysis of the development of technique in the empirical sciences shows the ways in which it can resemble the development of the humanities and, by extension, the development of doctrine in theology.

[5] Polanyi had some familiarity with the Dominican Order through his association with the Dominican-run International Academy of the Philosophy of Sciences in Brussels, where he also met Thomas Forsyth Torrance. There is no evidence in EDA that Ernst had any association with this Academy.

[6] Both Ernst and Polanyi were, however, operating on the peripheries of their respective faculties. Polanyi's position in the philosophy faculty was particularly precarious. Polanyi was not only lacking formal philosophical training (relying upon Marjorie Grene to both mediate the philosophical world to him and correct his frequent *faux pas*), he also felt that the Oxford faculty in particular (Ayer, et al) was dominated by the views that he was opposing. For details on Polanyi's time in Oxford, see: William Taussig Scott and Martin X. Moleski, *Michael Polanyi: Scientist and Philosopher* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 239-78.

correspond to the time when Ernst's ideas were sufficiently well-developed as to offer a critique of Polanyi's earlier views. Some of Ernst's most important essays were only published in the period 1972-1974:[7] before the publication of *Meaning*, but not before the lectures of 1969/70, on which *Meaning* was based. For the purposes of this simulation, then, it is assumed that Ernst's later work is expressive of views he already held in 1968.[8] This allows the conceptual issues, rather than historical questions of development, to take primacy.

It is not only for these historical reasons that it is necessary to stress the thoroughly simulated—and, therefore, highly speculative—nature of this dialogue. The fusion of the horizons of Polanyi and Ernst would likely have been fruitful, but also highly unpredictable. Whilst Polanyi's thought had reached a stable form in the late 1960s, it is likely that Ernst was developing his much more protean ideas until the end of his life. If Ernst had seriously engaged with Polanyi's work, he would have critiqued it in the ways that are suggested below (although he may not have been so forthright in expressing these criticisms), but it is equally certain that he would have incorporated aspects of Polanyi's concerns into his own developing account. The simulation of such a debate invokes the kind of extrinsicism that Ernst's principle of 'dynamic transcendence' opposes: in a simulated dialogue, the mode of simulation requires a

[7] I think, in particular, of: Cornelius Ernst, 'Metaphor and Ontology in Sacra Doctrina', *The Thomist,* 38 (1974b), 422-25, Cornelius Ernst, 'Theological Method', in Karl Rahner (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Theology: The Sacramentum Mundi* (1975): 1671-78, Cornelius Ernst, *The Theology of Grace* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974a).

[8] Some of Ernst's most important essays were published before 1968 and seem to clearly indicate the ways in which his theology would develop from 1968-1975. Of particular significance is: Cornelius Ernst, 'Words, Facts and God', *New Blackfriars,* 44/517-518 (1963), 292-306, Also highly determinative of his theological programme are: Cornelius Ernst, 'The Gospel and the Church', *New Blackfriars,* 43 (1962), 301-13, Ernst, 'Truth and Verification in Theology'.

degree of fixity, such that the two figures are seen to relate to one another entirely externally, from positions that are fixed and securely determined. In an authentic dialogue, organic reactivity is to be found on the part of both participants: *in nuce*, it is simply impossible to know how the fusion of horizons between Ernst and Polanyi would have affected the trajectories of their thought.

Determining the fixed points of the dialogue in the published works of Polanyi and Ernst, clarified (where necessary) by their collected papers, appears, *prima facie*, straightforward. The text of *Meaning*, published by Polanyi in collaboration with Harry Prosch, is, however, contested. Some scholars, especially Polanyi's literary executor Thomas Forsyth Torrance, have argued on historical grounds that the account of religion offered by *Meaning* should not be accepted as Polanyian, but as an interjection by Polanyi's co-author Harry Prosch. Assessment of these historical claims is deferred to the fourth section, which assesses a necessary historical presupposition to this reading of *Meaning* as indicative of a development of Polanyi's thought. For those unfamiliar with the history of Polanyi scholarship, the presence of §3.4 requires some explanation. *Meaning*—and particularly its account of religion—has been the subject of the longest of most entrenched debate within the guild of Polanyi scholarship, commonly referred to as the '*Meaning* Controversy'. The account of religion contained within *Meaning* has been especially controversial. Section §3.4 briefly addresses this controversy as a means of defending the use of *Meaning* in §3.3 to respond to the Ernstian critique of Polanyi's early account of religion. Section §3.4 establishes that the response developed from *Meaning* in §3.3 is authentically Polanyian.

§3.1: Polanyi's Early Extrinsicist Account of Religion

This section presents Polanyi's early (and still developing) account of religious meaning, as reflected primarily in *Personal Knowledge* and *Tacit Dimension*.[9] The few fragmentary places where Polanyi published explicit treatments of religious epistemology have generally been found by both philosophers and theologians alike to be among the least satisfactory aspects of his work.[10] This is unsurprising: Polanyi had no formal training in theology and relatively little direct engagement with theologians and scholars of religion. When asked directly about the theological implications of his work, Polanyi would customarily indicate that his lack of formal training prevented him from making definitive comment.[11] On the one hand, Polanyi would frequently affirm the possibility of doing theology in a Polanyian key. On the other hand, he frequently—perhaps hyperbolically—claimed that his lack of theological training prevented him from making any assessment of theological readings of his work.

Whilst religious matters were by no means extraneous to Polanyi's project, they were nonetheless somewhat peripheral to his primary concern. From 1946 onwards, Polanyi's career was unified by a concern to articulate the philosophical basis on which the freedom and integrity of science could be secured, and to examine the socio-political realities that were implicated in this question. Evidence from Polanyi's *Nachlass*

[9] That Polanyi understood his account of religious knowledge to be in development can be established from his remarks about the nature of the *Meaning* project as an 'extension' of his earlier fiduciary epistemology into other semantic fields, see: §3.3.

[10] See, for example: Ronald L Hall, 'Michael Polanyi on Art and Religion: Some Critical Reflections on *Meaning*', *Zygon,* 17/1 (1982), 9-18, Tony Clark, *Divine Revelation and Human Practice* (Cambridge: James Clarke Press, 2008a): 137-44.

[11] See Appendix A.

demonstrates that, in the last decade of his scholarly life, Polanyi was increasingly convinced that achieving the aims of this epistemological project could only realistically be achieved by the articulation of an ontology of meaning that could support a religious paradigm,[12] but this interest in religion remains somewhat instrumental to Polanyi's primary concern. Polanyi seems to arrive at the study of religion with a pre-established system, derived by generalisation from his investigation of empirical sciences, which is then applied to religious questions. Polanyi's extensive knowledge of scientific practice cannot be plausibly denied, but his writings do not evince a similarly detailed understanding of religiosity.

Polanyi's early account of religious epistemology can be located in two substantial chunks of material towards the end of *Personal Knowledge*:[13] 'Dwelling In and Breaking Out'[14] and 'Religious Doubt'.[15] In these sections, Polanyi makes two foundational determinations to which he remained essentially committed in all of his subsequent publications. The first of these concerns the unique ontological status of God. As God is not the type of thing that can be subjected to empirical examination[16] (and thus noetically 'accepted' in the way that empirical facts can be),[17] Polanyi argues that God can be known only by being served in worship—that is, by living with God in a

[12] PP 22.6 'Notes on Religion'. This interest was, for Polanyi, reflexive: "all modern theology must realise that religion cannot be saved without rescuing the whole surrounding modern culture" (PP 22.6 'Prospects of Theology Today').
[13] That is, within the ambit of the more ontological aspects of *PK*'s developmental arc, as identified in Chapter 2.
[14] PK: 195-202.
[15] PK: 279-286.
[16] PK: 279: "God cannot be observed, any more than truth or beauty can be observed." See also PK: 284.
[17] Hence the notion of 'accreditation' developed at PK: 283-284. Note that Polanyi develops a distinction between 'verification' in the natural sciences and 'validation' of religious claims. PK: 281.

relationship of a certain kind—and not as a discretely abstracted principle.[18] In this respect, Polanyi understands God to be analogous to beauty or justice: knowable by being identified, respected and accredited in faithful enactments, not known *per se*.[19] The second determination reflects the correspondence of human knowledge of God to the divine nature. The 'service' of God takes its concrete form as worship. Considered under the aspect of worship, religious knowledge is an indwelling of an articulate framework,[20] and not primarily an affirmation of fact.[21] These 'articulate systems' form the subsidiary components that are integrated into knowledge of the supernatural.[22] This distinguishes theology from religious studies: empirical study of these articulate frameworks *per se* disrupts the from-to structure of theological knowledge by drawing into focal perspective the subsidiary pole of the theological integration.

The key feature of worship as the form of Christian inquiry, Polanyi argues, is its capacity to evoke and sustain a unique form of heuristic desire: [23] it is "a framework of clues which are apt to induce a passionate search for God".[24] Worship functions to sustain and evoke a distinctive form of religious ecstasy within the subject.[25] Further, the structure of worship serves to 'guide' natural human feelings of contrition and longing for the eternal, by framing them, stripping back distractions and attuning the knower more closely to their innate religious desire for infinite knowledge. This,

[18] PK: 279.
[19] PK: 279.
[20] PK: 281-284.
[21] This is not to say that facts are not embedded in these articulate frameworks. Chapter 6 notes the importance of specific narrative content within the articulate frameworks of worship.
[22] PK: 281.
[23] PK: 281.
[24] PK: 282.
[25] PK: 281-283.

however, invokes a circularity: religious frameworks evoke and sustain a particular form of desire in the subject, which serves as the criterion of the framework's success or failure. As such it is the capacity of the articulate framework to evoke its distinctive affective religious ecstasy that accredits it with noetic validity. Problematically, this appears to instantiate a form of dynamo-objective coupling: there is a self-confirming reverberation between the articulate frameworks of religion and the desires that constitute a major component of religiosity. The epistemological burdens of theological truth-claims are thus borne by the intellectual affectivity of the subject, which is both the motor principle that animates religiosity and the criterion by which religious frameworks are judged.

Polanyi's emphasis on an immanent principle as the determining cause of religiosity inevitably raises the question of the role played by the objective content of religious beliefs. In places, Polanyi seems to assume the existence of an infinite term of religious desire (i.e., the infinite reality of God as the final resting point of these religious affections),[26] but it is by no means a necessary feature of Polanyi's synthesis that he assert this. All that is necessary for the early Polanyi, is the desire itself, the impulse that "can live only in the pursuit of its proper enquiry".[27] Accordingly, this properly theological desire only has existence insofar as it is eventuated by the act of worship. Polanyi can, then, remain agnostic on the question of worship's origins: whether this is something given by God or an artefact of human culture.

[26] PK: 279-286.
[27] PK: 296.

Polanyi is unapologetic about the circularity that this account of religiosity generates. Religion is, he says, self-accrediting, an articulate framework "expressing its acceptance of itself as a dwelling place for the passionate search for God".[28] This circularity of self-accreditation by affective criteria commits Polanyi to a particular account of theological language: owing to its self-accredited character and its function in sustaining insoluble heuristic states, "religious worship can say nothing that is true or false".[29] The various linguistic aspects of worship function as tacit subsidiaries, and take the form of narrative, describing intra- and inter-personal states of affairs.[30] These—and the truth claims that they contain—are integrated into worship and thereby come to be generative of heuristic desire. For Polanyi, the vital feature of a religious framework is that it is affectively charged by the subject's accreditation of it: being endorsed in this way, the framework's contents need not (and strictly cannot) be accepted as true even as they are intensely meaningful. As a result, truth and meaning have been effectively dissociated: a characteristically extrinsicist move.

Polanyi's early account of religion is, therefore, fundamentally extrinsicist: the contents of religious articulate frameworks are extrinsically related to the essential meaning that they foster and communicate. Within such an extrinsicist account of religious affectivity, there is no metaphysical principle—no intrinsic content—that prevents worship from generating a false or unfulfillable desire. Indeed, Polanyi notes that one of the distinctive features of the heuristic religious impulse is precisely its immanent frustration. Polanyi contrasts religious meanings with the indwelling of other

[28] PK: 296.
[29] PK: 281.
[30] PK: 285.

"frameworks of inherent excellence":[31] religious articulate frameworks are never 'enjoyed',[32] their value is instrumental and extrinsic, pointing us beyond themselves, towards an unmediated contemplative encounter in which "we are poured directly into experience".[33] Such contemplation is reached by a form of disciplined detachment from all articulate frameworks, including those of religion.[34] This instantiates another extrinsicist bifurcation: the fullness of theological meaning is incompatible with the articulate frameworks of worship. Worship gives rise to "a heuristic vision which is sustained for the sake of its unresolved tension".[35] Polanyi summarises:

> *"[W]orship is expressly designed to induce and sustain this state of anguish, surrender and hope. The moment a man were to claim he had arrived and could now happily contemplate his own perfection, he would be thrown back into spiritual emptiness."*[36]

As a result of this extrinsicist bifurcation of religious articulate frameworks and contemplation, the tension generated by worship is not only actually unresolved but intrinsically unresolvable. This leaves Polanyi in something of a bind: because there is no real 'pathway' between the articulate frameworks of religion and authentic contemplation, Polanyi can only assert that worship affects the worshipper at the level of images,[37] but religious articulate frameworks *per se* do not communicate anything of the reality that it narrates.

---

[31] PK: 198.
[32] PK: 198.
[33] PK: 197.
[34] PK: 197-198.
[35] PK: 199.
[36] PK: 198.
[37] PK: 199.

The extrinsicism of Polanyi's account of the relationship between worship and contemplation indicates a number of problematic features of his understanding of religion. Firstly, because his account of religion primarily concerns articulate systems that are both posterior to (derived from) and antecedent to (used to generate) certain forms of affective knowledge, but which are not directly engaged with the object of knowledge, Polanyi can remain methodologically agnostic when it comes to the question of theological realism.[38] Moreover, within this closed circle of affectivity, there can never be a criterion of corrigibility to constitute theological reflection as a science. Consequently, theology and apologetics become radically different disciplines: one (theology) ordered towards the inward intelligibility of the divine mystery and the other (apologetics) an outward looking discipline, defending the credibility of faith and translating religious truth-claims vis-à-vis other discourses. Indeed, because Polanyi can happily give up the specifics of the truth-claims that are embedded in worship and doctrine, the articulate systems of religion—whilst necessary—can only have an intra-systematic truth value (much like Wittgensteinian fideist accounts of religious grammars).[39] The primary value of religion, for Polanyi, resides not in its capacity to narrate actual facts about the God and the world, but in its capacity to humanise society by forming a cultural attunement to questions of eternal and ultimate meaning (that is, in its intrinsic affirmation of an inherently meaningful world).

---

[38] Much depends on how the question of the character of Polanyi's more general realism is answered. For more, see Chapter 5. See: Phil Mullins, 'Polanyi's Participative Realism', *Polanyiana,* 6/2 (1997), 5, Percy Hammond, 'Polanyi's 'Ontological Equation': A Response to Recent Discussions of Polanyi's 'Realism'', *Tradition and Discovery,* 27/2 (2000), 34-38, T. Ray, 'Rethinking Michael Polanyi's Realism: From Personal Knowledge to Intersubjectively Viable Communication', *Prometheus,* 26/3 (2008), 241-57, Andy F. Sanders, 'Science, Religion and Polanyi's Comprehensive Realism', *Tradition and Discovery,* 26/3 (1999), 84-93, Dale Cannon, 'Some Aspects of Polanyi's Version of Realism', *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical,* 26/3 (1999), 51-61.

[39] See: Nielsen, 'Wittgensteinian Fideism', Nielsen, 'The Coherence of Wittgensteinian Fideism', Phillips, 'Wittgenstein and Religion: Some Fashionable Criticism', Szabados, 'Wittgensteinian Fideism 1967-89'.

Secondly, although Polanyi stresses the importance of indwelling articulate frameworks in seeking God, he is never explicit about his own theological commitments.[40] This touches on the notoriously vexatious question of whether it is possible to identify Polanyi as a Christian thinker.[41] Polanyi's assessment of the articulate frameworks of religion can often appear disengaged from the concrete realities of worship and religious praxis. Polanyi's account of religious frameworks appears to survey their role from a privileged Archimedean point above the indwelling that he so strongly emphasises, but the location of this 'point' is never adequately stated (and may well be another version of the 'view from nowhere' that Polanyi's entire philosophy sought to undermine). The fundamental determinations of Polanyi's early religious epistemology are, then, not adequately derived from an analysis of religion itself, and are therefore not entirely consistent with Polanyi's own assessment of religious praxis. Indeed, Polanyi's engagement with religious themes appears somewhat minimalist and secondary, serving either as a means of extending an argument derived from empirical sciences into the humanities, or as a way of demonstrating the coherence of his overall system with somewhat scattered observations about religious practice. Religious belief is almost never investigated as a phenomenon in its own right and the analysis of religious practice never strays beyond superficial observations. As a result, Polanyi's early epistemology does not do justice to the complex reality of religion, even as a social phenomenon.

[40] The claim that ritual religious worship 'keeps the mind free from distractions' seems a somewhat over-optimistic assessment of the role of ritual in religious knowing. PK: 281.

[41] T. F. Torrance, 'Michael Polanyi and the Christian Faith', *Tradition and Discovery,* 27/2 (2000), 26-32, Harry Prosch, 'Prosch Replies to Torrance', *Tradition & Discovery,* 15/1 (1987), 24-25.

In summary, Polanyi's early account of religion has four key features. Firstly, an identification of contemplation as the authentic realisation of religious meaning. Secondly, an extrinsicist account of the relationship between religious articulate frameworks indwelt in worship and the ultimate theological knowledge realised in contemplation. Thirdly, an emphasis on the subject's affectivity, and the constitution of religion in terms of a unique category of irresolvable religious tension. Fourthly, the immunity of religious discourse to extrasystematic evaluation as the result of a circular mutual interdependence of the frameworks indwelt in worship and the affective dispositions to which they give rise. The next section brings an Ernstian critique to bear on the extrinsicist basis of Polanyi's early account of religion.

§3.2: An Ernstian Reading of Polanyi's Early Account of Religion

This section develops a critique of Polanyi's early extrinsicist account of religion from within the horizon of Ernst's proposed ontology of meaning. The next section (§3.3) simulates Polanyi's response to this Ernstian critique, derived from Polanyi's later work. Although this section elaborates an Ernstian *critique* of the early Polanyi, Ernst's response to the overall epistemological project of *Personal Knowledge* would have been broadly positive. As Chapter 2 demonstrated, both Polanyi and Ernst shared a common diagnosis of the ills of modern critical epistemology, and Polanyi's project can be read as attempting to do for empirical science what Ernst attempted in theology: a reorientation of the discourse within the new, or renewed, perspective of meaning.

Notwithstanding these similarities, Ernst's work differs from Polanyi's in significant ways. The most significant differences are formal. Ernst writes as a confessional theologian, whilst Polanyi writes with the broader scope of a philosopher of science and social critic. Unlike Polanyi, Ernst was unequivocally and unambiguously (although not uncritically)[42] committed to a particular religious framework. Likewise, Ernst engaged in detailed study and analysis of particular religious practices (extending beyond the limits of his own tradition).[43] Whereas Polanyi sought to generate an all-encompassing and systematic epistemology, Ernst was resistant to such systematising impulses.[44] Whilst Polanyi's thought reached a stable form and systematic expression in his books, Ernst's insights are developed in scattered and disparate articles. Identifying Ernst's critical response to Polanyi is, then, both an archaeological and a speculative task, requiring the excavation of fragments buried throughout Ernst's writings and their reconstruction into a coherent response. This involves speculation, following the direction of travel that Ernst stablished in his published work, according to the principles identified in Chapter 1.

The constellating principle that Chapter 1 identified as governing all of Ernst's theology is that of 'dynamic transcendence'. In the context of an Ernstian response to the early Polanyi, this principle is reflected in a concern to generate an account of how

[42] ME: 1: "Ultimately, I cannot accept the framework of experience demanded and presupposed by the orthodox ecclesiastical tradition. I think I must face this, with consequences that I cannot foretell. I have another tradition to which I am almost equally respectful—in some ways more so—the tradition of the human heart: novels, art, music, tragedy. I cannot allow that God can only be adored in spirit and in truth by the individual introverted upon himself and detached from all that might disturb and solicit his heart. It must be possible to find and adore God in the complexity of human experience."
[43] ME: 189-191.
[44] See §1.4.2.

theological truth is historically mediated.[45] This would have appeared to Ernst's Heideggerian sensibilities as an obvious lacuna in Polanyi's thought. Polanyi has almost nothing to say about the historical mediation of religious frameworks, and his bifurcation of worship and contemplation devalues the role played by the historical particularity of the worshipping community and their culturally conditioned articulate frameworks. Whereas, on Polanyi's early account of religion, religious practice enacts a space in which the subject anticipates an intervention from above that interrupts the normal historical exchange of meanings, Ernst stresses the authentically historical character of theological meaning itself.[46] Whereas Polanyi expects Meaning to break into meanings, Ernst holds that Meaning is known only in-and-through meanings.

From this constellating principle of dynamic transcendence, then, three overlapping clusters of Ernstian critique can be identified: firstly, a rejection of Polanyi's systematic dissociation of authentic theological contemplation from the practices of religious articulate frameworks; secondly, the incapacity of Polanyi's early account of religion to accommodate genuinely historical and socio-cultural mediation; thirdly, Polanyi's excessive dependence on an account of the subject's religious affectivity as the basis and motor of religious knowledge.

[45] See ME: 87-91.
[46] ME: 156, 83-84.

§3.2.1: Reduction of Symbols to Images

This subsection examines the first cluster of simulated Ernstian critiques, which concern Polanyi's dissociation of religious articulate framework from contemplation, and his identification of authentic knowledge of God with the latter. In Ernstian perspective, this effects a reduction of religious symbols to images.[47] Whereas symbols participate in the reality that they communicate, images point beyond themselves to the realities that they image by remote resemblance, without actually sharing in their reality.[48] Religious articulate frameworks are, according to Polanyi's early thought, marked by a dialectic tension. Positively, religious meanings are propaedeutic articulate frameworks that are indwelt as a means of anticipating the achievement of contemplation, which is enacted 'from above'. Negatively, the experience of 'religious ecstasy' that religious frameworks depend upon and which, reflexively, they generate and sustain, is not itself articulable.

Two aspects of this first cluster of Ernstian critiques can be identified. Firstly, Ernst would reject the notion of a 'pure' and intrinsically inarticulable experience that was either the goal or foundation of articulate frameworks. For Ernst, such an account reproduces the angelism of Cartesianism, and is vulnerable to Wittgenstein's private language argument.[49] Language does not function, for Ernst, as an encoding of an antecedent unthematic meaning, but serves to mediate reality to us.[50] The point of a

[47] ME: 63-65.
[48] ME: 64.
[49] ME: 13*ff.*
[50] ME: 52-56.

semantic ontology—the very reason Ernst finds it amenable to theological deployment as a renewed way of capturing the Thomistic metaphysics of *esse*—is that there is nothing actual that falls outside of the putative limits of the semantic. By positing a meaningful reality that is antithetical to linguistic expression (and not only maximally resistant to it), Polanyi seems to violate this necessary ontological enclosure.

The second aspect of this critique concerns the theology of grace. According to the early Polanyi, the theological contemplation that is enacted from above (the moment of operative grace, in theological terms) has no real relationship or point-of-contact either with the articulate frameworks that anticipate it, nor with human structures of meaning more generally.[51] For Polanyi the articulate frameworks that await God have no inherent theological truth and are rendered substantially inoperative by the contemplation that they point towards. Contemplation therefore puts an end to religion (at least temporarily).[52]

As a result of this bifurcation of the meaning of religious frameworks and authentic theological knowledge, Polanyi understands articulate frameworks of religion to be ordered towards their own disintegration. Conversely, for Ernst, religious meanings 'contain' and communicate the reality that they symbolise.[53] In Polanyi's synthesis, religious frameworks constitute an affective space, a question that anticipates a divine answer. The frameworks are, however, generated in such a way that the only

[51] ME: *passim*, especially 83-84.
[52] See, for instance, Barth's use of the term 'religion' as a human construction antithetical to authentic theological knowledge, which is annulled by divine self-revelation: CD I/2, p. 280*ff*
[53] ME: 62.

adequate response to them could be an unmediated one (the 'pouring' of the subject into pure experience).[54] As a result, the divine response does not so much answer the question posed by articulate frameworks, as do away with the question along with the framework that generated it. This theme in Polanyi's early religious epistemology has been picked up by Barthian developments of *Personal Knowledge*, which stress the absence of the *analogia entis* between human meaning and divine revelation or an *Anknüpfungspunkt* (or obediential potency) within nature for divine revelation.[55] For Ernst, however, this interruptive notion of grace as suspending or doing away with the natural articulate frameworks would violate the Thomistic principle that grace perfects nature without destroying it or otherwise violating its integrity. For Ernst, the human ascent to God in articulate frameworks is not only an opening point that is met by the divine initiative, but rather is itself always-already enclosed within God's own act of self-communication.

§3.2.2: The Historical Availability of Theological Meaning

The second cluster of Ernstian critiques concerns the capacity of Polanyi's extrinsicist account of the relationship between authentic theological knowledge and religious articulate frameworks to generate an account of the historical availability of authentic theological meaning. According to Ernst's principle of dynamic transcendence, truth is both in-and-beyond the flow of worldly history.[56] The distinctive claim of Christianity,

[54] PK: 197.
[55] Tony Clark, 'Michael Polanyi and the Knowledge of Faith', *Anvil,* 25/4 (2008b), 269-81, Clark, *Divine Revelation and Human Practice*.
[56] ME: 121 and 39.

according to Ernst, is that ultimate meaning has, in the person of Jesus Christ, entered into human history.[57] What is communicated historically by religious tradition, then, is not only a skilful practice for the generation of religious affectivity, but a true and authentically meaningful reality. Religious language and worship is, in all its historical particularity, authentically communicative of the reality to which it points:[58] Ernst's theological epistemology is intrinsicist at precisely the zenith of Polanyi's extrinsicism.

Ernst's concern to safeguard the mediatorial character of religious language and practice would lead him offer a dialectical 'yes' and 'no' to Polanyi's account of the extrinsic relationship between religious articulate frameworks and authentic theological meaning. On the one hand, Ernst would have affirmed the privileged standpoint of the intrasystematic perspective of *fides qua*, but would not follow Polanyi in affirming the absolute immunity of *fides quae* from extrasystematic critique.[59] For Ernst, unlike Polanyi, worship and articulate religious frameworks are authentic human frameworks possessed of an intrinsic truth-bearing capacity, and can therefore be interrogated both theologically and philosophically, presupposing the inherently meaningful nature of the divine mystery that they communicate. Nonetheless, in rejecting Polanyi's extrinsicism, Ernst would emphasise the unity of *fides qua* and *fides quae*: the content of the faith, even as its validity is in no way dependent upon the individual believer's act of faith, can only be truly penetrated from within the standpoint of believing faith,[60] which is the supernaturally infused theological virtue

[57] ME: 74-75, 76-79.
[58] ME: 109*ff*.
[59] ME: 126-136.
[60] ME: 39, 78.

that makes divine knowledge connatural to our created intellects.[61] For Ernst, the act of faith is by no means a neutral means of appropriating the content of the faith, but enfolded within the content of faith and inextricably interwoven with it.

The acceptance of the privileged standpoint of *fides qua*, however, does not lead Ernst to a Polanyian account of theological language and ritual as only propaedeutic to divine self-communication and ultimately only a semantic vacuole. The articulate frameworks of religion really enact within human history the theological meanings and dispositions that they communicate, pointing beyond themselves only by already participating—as symbols pregnant with meaning—in the reality that they communicate.[62] Theological language is, then, not only about forming the subsidiary elements that cultivate an individual's own religious affectivity and relationship to God, but, rather, genuinely communicates truth, both within and beyond the worshipping community.[63]

§3.2.3: Subjectivity and the Homogenization of 'Religion'

The third cluster of Ernstian critiques concerns the dependence of Polanyi's early account of religion on the subjective pole of creaturely affectivity, rather than the unique ontological status of the object of theological knowledge. This results in the protean circularity that was identified in §3.1, in which the driving motor and criteria for religious frameworks emerges from, and is determined by, the affective dispositions

[61] The issue of the unicity of theological faith is explored in Chapter 5.
[62] ME: 76-85.
[63] ME: 33, 151.

of the subject. For the early Polanyi, the 'measure' of a religious framework is its capacity to do something to the subject: to generate emotions and affective dispositions of certain types. This indicates a tendency in Polanyi's early thought to homogenise various groups of practices and narratives into the common category of 'religion'. In Ernstian perspective, Polanyi's assimilation of Christianity to the more general category of 'religion' renders Christianity as one instance among many instances of the same type. This subordinates the contents of the Christian *mythos* to a more general principle derived from analysis of religiosity (*viz.*, *pathos*), and which is thus determined from outside of the domain of Christian revelation (*logos*). The picture here is of Christianity as one of a wide variety of different human articulate frameworks that cultivate a universal type of human affectivity or give articulation to a universal impulse toward ultimate meaning.[64] For Ernst, there can be no *pathos* without *mythos* and no Christian *mythos* without *logos*.

Polanyi's assimilation of Christianity to a homogenised category of 'religion' is opposed by two Ernstian principles. Firstly, it entrenches the separation of *fides qua* and *fides quae*, by making the objective content of religious *mythos* largely irrelevant to its subjective function. Secondly, assimilating Christianity to a more general category denies the *Neuheitserlebnis* that is inherent to Christianity. For Ernst, the radical 'jolt' of the incarnation, is *sui generis*, not merely one meaning—perhaps the most intense—among many, but a meaning that radically alters the possible contours of creaturely meanings.[65] In other words, Polanyi's extrinsicism detaches ontology and epistemology.

[64] ME: 114, 20.
[65] ME: 79.

The 'genetic moment' that Ernst understands to be consecrated and extended by Christian articulate frameworks is not reducible to an experience immanent to the human person, but is the objective historical event of Jesus Christ in the economy of divine self-revelation.[66]

The 'newness' of meaning that is communicated by the ontological 'jolt' of the incarnation is not one that fits into an existing semantic structure, but rather reconfigures that structure and redefines in his personal actuality the realm of semantic possibility.[67] In short, the early Polanyi, for Ernst, makes theology a matter of general epistemology and thus a development of an innate human capacity.[68] Time-and-again, Ernst's presentation of theological epistemology returns to Jesus Christ as the objective principle and absolute condition of both worship and theological discourse.[69] For Ernst, there can be no extrinsicist separation of the 'form' and 'content' in theology, whether in God's self-revelation or in the human reception of divine revelation. On the objective side of God's self-revelation, Jesus is personally identical with the meaning that he communicates, and on the subjective side of the reception of that knowledge, the act of faith is given with the content of faith. Consequently, the question of truthful and historical mediation is intrinsically bound up with the phenomenon of religion itself.

In summary, an Ernstian evaluation of Polanyi's early account of religion rejects three of its extrinsicist features: firstly, the bifurcation of contemplation and

[66] ME: 86. Christ as the metaphysical meaning of history is in-and-beyond its flow.
[67] ME: 74.
[68] ME: 159-161.
[69] ME: 32-36, 217.

articulation, which leave Polanyi unable to offer an account of the historical mediation of ultimate meaning; secondly, Polanyi's failure to allow for the mediation of ultimate Meaning in-and-through the articulate meanings of the world, so that divine reality can be encountered only by transcending these meanings through their negation; and thirdly Polanyi's tendency to homogenise religious articulate frameworks into a common genre or genus. Ernst's affirmation of the real involvement of theological meanings in creaturely articulate frameworks allows him to develop a theology of mediation that safeguards the unicity of Christian revelation. Rather than seeing ultimate Meaning as antithetical to creaturely meanings, Ernst understands meanings to participate in their own transcendence and negation as they come to mediate ultimate Meaning.

§3.3: *Meaning:* Polanyi's Later Intrinsicist Account of Religion

This section identifies the way in which Polanyi's final book, *Meaning,* offers a response to the simulated Ernstian critique developed in the previous section. Whereas Polanyi's pre-*Meaning* account of religion was governed by an extrinsicist account of the relationship between creaturely meanings and divine meaning, *Meaning* develops an essentially intrinsicist alternative. This is more consistent with Polanyi's post-*Personal Knowledge* development of a biosemiotic ontology,[70] and locates Polanyi's thought in greater proximity to Ernst's.

[70] KB: 222-224.

The argument of this section proceeds in two stages: the first subsection identifies three distinctive features of *Meaning* cohering around the self-giving vector (which I describe as 'centrifugal'); the second subsection examines how the distinctive features of *Meaning* govern an intrinsicist account of religious articulate frameworks. As noted above, to allow the conceptual dialogue between Ernst and Polanyi to take centre stage, historical questions concerning the authenticity of *Meaning* are deferred until the next section (§3.4). For the purposes of the present section, then, *Meaning* is assumed to be an authentic expression of Polanyi's later views, a presupposition that will be defended in §3.4.

In the last decade of his working life, Polanyi sought to extend the basic framework of his epistemology to "account for the types of meanings achieved in metaphors, poetry, art, ritual, myth and religion".[71] The most comprehensive account of these efforts is found in *Meaning,* published in collaboration with Harry Prosch. *Meaning* extends the fiduciary framework of *Personal Knowledge* to account for those types of meanings that are not principally derived from observation or perception, but which involve a degree of creative artefaction on the part of the knower. Polanyi includes religion within the domain of these meanings that involve the subject in processes of creative artefaction. Religion, according to Polanyi, involves the use of developed articulate frameworks to attend to complex meanings that transcend the merely observable (without bypassing empirical reality). In treating religious knowledge alongside metaphor and the arts, Polanyi is not (necessarily) asserting that religious articulate frameworks are reducible to the creative productions of human

[71] M: ix.

minds (as opposed to being dependent upon divine self-bestowal). Rather, Polanyi is affirming that in religious knowledge, the subject imaginatively indwells complex articulate frameworks as a means of integrating reality in a certain way, thereby achieving a comprehensive vision of the world as meaningful.

Foundational to *Meaning* is the axiom that the human person "lives in the meanings [s]he is able to discern. [She] extends [herself] into that which [s]he finds coherent and is at home there".[72] This understanding of 'meaning' as a semantic habitat is ontologically determined by the movement towards a biosemiotic ontology that was outlined in §2.6 (although Polanyi cites Rothschild only once in *Meaning*).[73] Developing a line of thought from *Personal Knowledge*, meaning is not understood as being reducible to the sheer mental equilibration that characterises Gestalt accounts of perception:[74] rather, reality itself is meaningful, as that which we "expect to manifest itself in unexpected ways in the future […] something that has a life of its own".[75] The world of meaning transcends the knower and discloses itself to her, but the subject is not inert: "all knowing is action—it is our urge to understand and control our experience which causes us to rely on some parts of it subsidiarily in order to attend to our main objective focally".[76] Thus we know reality not by "detachment but by involvement" with it, through the process and praxis of indwelt participation.[77] The mode of our indwelling often takes the form of semantic constructs, which determine whether or not we accredit appearances as real, or dismiss them as illusory: "[m]any of

[72] M: 66.
[73] M: 218.
[74] M: 34
[75] M: 66.
[76] M: 42.
[77] M: 63.

the coherences we see around us we may not believe in […] if our theories tell us they are not real".[78]

These 'artificial' segments of our semantic habitat are, then, indwelt, not as inert atoms of facticity, but as modes of exploring the seemingly infinite complexity of reality itself. For Polanyi in *Meaning,* our semantic frameworks, including metaphor and ritual, are intellectual equivalents to physical instruments. This recapitulates themes from *Personal Knowledge,* where a nascent intrinsicism accrued to his account of instrumental knowledge by the indwelling of tools and instruments (which 'extend' the knower's body into the world). Polanyi argues that this type of personal participation in artificial semantic frameworks applies not only in the case of highly imaginative forms of meaning, like poetry or metaphor, which are clearly not reducible to denotation, but equally for the type of empirical observation that characterises the natural sciences.[79] So far, then, *Meaning* tracks the argument that runs from *Personal Knowledge* through *Tacit Dimension*, albeit with a more intrinsicist thrust drawn from an awareness of noetic activity as enmeshed with the meaningful biosemiotic cosmos. The purpose of *Meaning*, however, is to "expand our notion of knowledge [as investigated in *Personal Knowledge*] from that which is related, directly or indirectly, to *observations* to that which consists of the sort of *acceptance* that we grant to works of art").[80]

Polanyi develops his project further, then, by suggesting that these highly imaginative productions can themselves be indwelt to attend to 'higher' levels of

[78] M: 66.
[79] M: 150.
[80] M: 149.

meaning (in the sense of more comprehensive levels of the biosemiotic hierarchy). The types of meaningful knowledge that Polanyi explores in *Meaning* are no less concerned with the description of reality than the meanings derived from perception and observation that are explored in *Personal Knowledge*. Polanyi does not establish a rigid distinction between the literal and the metaphoric. Through the use of complex articulate frameworks (including metaphor) as indwelt cognitive instruments, the knower can attend to vastly more of reality than is amenable to simple observation. The human mind can thus formulate "a daring speculation, transcending *all* observable objects and extending the imagination far beyond any possible experienced horizon",[81] but it does so, not by dissociative praxis, but by an embodied movement that embraces the finite limitation of the empirical.

This section identifies three new conceptual features that Polanyi introduces to his synthesis in *Meaning*, which effect the extension of his epistemological project into the domain of complex articulate frameworks. These features are explored in turn: the somersaulting vector; the development of the category of the transnatural, and the function of the framing mechanism. Together, these three distinctive features of *Meaning* develop an intrinsicism, in which meanings can be communicated and mediated by being contained within other meanings that actively draw the subject into a deeper level of semantic involvement.

§3.3.1: The Centrifugal Vector

[81] M: 121.

The most decisive conceptual innovation introduced in *Meaning* is Polanyi's development of a distinction between two forms of tacit integration. The first, the 'self-centred' integration is associated with perception; the second, 'self-giving', integration is proper to symbolization and metaphor, semantic actions that are said to 'carry us away' into the reality that we know.[82] In the self-centred integrations, on which Polanyi focussed in *Personal Knowledge* and *Tacit Dimension*, the subsidiary clues that the subject indwells do not contain what he terms 'intrinsic interest' (the presence of which he designates with the matheme *+ii*, and absence with *-ii*):[83] the sensory clues that are fused into a perception are not interesting in themselves (at least in the present act of integration), and are therefore invested with significance only through integrative fusion into awareness of a focal particular. In this type of cognitive relationship, the subsidiary and focal poles of the integration relate in a straightforward way, with subsidiaries being used functionally, to bear upon a focal object. This is depicted by Polanyi as follows:[84]

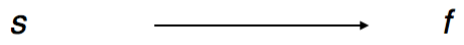


Figure 3: Standard Semantic Integration

By introducing the self-giving integration, Polanyi argues that the relationship between subsidiaries and the focal pole does not always proceed in this simply functional manner in which subsidiaries point or constitute a focal term. This becomes

[82] M: 71.
[83] M: 73-79.
[84] M: 70.

clear in Polanyi's analysis of symbols. Polanyi argues that in relationships of symbolisation, intrinsic interest is located at the subsidiary pole, but is only made accessible by its integration into a focal object that is not otherwise interesting: the focal comprehensive entity 'stands in place' of something else, constituting—in its very lack of intrinsic interest—a locus into which the intrinsically interesting subsidiaries can be integrated and thereby accessed. On Polanyi's account, a flag, examined as a coloured piece of cloth, is largely devoid of intrinsic interest (*-ii*), but when engaged as a term of a dynamic symbolization integration, the flag becomes the zone of interest because of the subsidiaries that it now embodies. This emerges only insofar as the flag is constituted by a tacit semantic agency as a symbolic space into which a variety of immaterial subsidiaries (national identity, diffuse and boundless memory, and so on) are integrated. Although the symbol lacks intrinsic interest, it becomes charged and invested with meanings that come from a source outside of itself.[85]

Prima facie, the symbol's receptivity to meanings from outside of itself might suggest a contrast between symbolic 'extrinsic interest' and the category of 'intrinsic interest' (*+ii*). Polanyi, however, offers a different account of the relationship between the symbol and the meanings that they receive. Polanyi refers to this relationship in terms of 'embodiment':[86] subsidiary meanings become embodied within the focal symbol,[87] which provides a way in which diverse invisibilities can be negotiated in empirical (and, therefore, shareable) ways. In other words, symbols are not merely mirrors that reflect meanings that are outside of themselves as on an extrinsicist

[85] M: 79.
[86] M: 73, 75.
[87] M: 73.

account but come to 'contain' these meanings in such a way that the symbol is enacted in possession of these meanings as if they were intrinsic to it.

Whereas the relations established by self-centred integrations establish a relationship between two fixed points (using *x* to bear upon *y*), the symbolization relations draw the two poles into a much more complex relationship of interpenetration. Symbols summon the subject to 'embody' themselves within the symbol or articulate framework in a much more direct manner. "[T]he focal object also carries [the subject] back toward (and so provides [her] with a perceptual embodiment of) those diffuse memories of [her] own life which bore upon the focal object to begin with. [In this way] the symbol can be said to carry us away".[88] Polanyi depicts this complex and self-involving relation of embodiment with a 'somersaulting vector':[89]

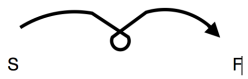


Figure 4 Somersaulting Vector

Importantly for Polanyi, the elements embodied in the symbol—and captured by the somersaulting arrow—are not only realities remote from the subject, but rather things that are 'owned' by indwelling and proper to the subject herself. As Polanyi puts it, "the somersaulting arrow indicates the embodiment of ourselves" and, as such, the "surrendering [of] ourselves[. W]e, as selves, are picked up into the meaning of the symbol […] we accomplish the integration of those diffuse parts of ourselves that are

[88] M: 73.
[89] M: 72.

related to these persons or things".[90] The interrelationship between 'being carried away' and 'surrendering' is, however, unspecified, and does not function in a mechanistic or linear fashion: "[t]his attainment of coherence does not take place in the serial manner in which we have had to discuss it: first this, then that, etc. It is a whole of which the various aspects of it that we have discussed are the functionally interrelated parts".[91] Polanyi attempts to maintain both the freedom of the knowing subject in voluntarily giving herself to be embodied in a symbol ('surrendering' to it), and the transcendence of the symbol over-and-against the subject ('being carried away'), but he does not clarify explicitly the metaphysics that facilitates such a conjunction. Nonetheless, it is the subject's yielding to semantic embodiment in the symbol that leads Polanyi to designate the class of integrations that involve the 'somersaulting arrow' as 'self-giving' rather than 'self-centred'.[92]

The introduction of the somersaulting vector is the decisive formal extension that *Meaning* contributes to the Polanyian synthesis. Polanyi defines these integrations as 'self-giving' integrations, as opposed to the 'self-centred' integrations governed by the linear vector introduced in *Personal Knowledge*. The juxtaposition of self-centred and self-giving, however, results in a binary differentiation, in which any event of knowledge is *either* self-giving *or* self-centred. An alternative model, which allows for a complex interplay of linear and somersaulting vectors, is that of centripetal force (standard linear integrations, tending to move towards the centre) and centrifugal force (somersaulting integration, tending to move away from the centre). The image here

[90] M: 72-73.
[91] M: 73.
[92] M: 75.

depends upon an identification of the subject as a point upon which forces act as it 'orbits' around a centre. Importantly, then, the noetic agent is not the fixed and stable point around which objects are orientated but is a point that is always already in motion, caught in the semantic flows of the world that act upon it. These forces can act at the same time on the same object, resulting either in equilibrium or movement. Knowing subjects can therefore be simultaneously involved in multiple complex noetic relationships that are both literal and symbolic. This nuanced vocabulary clarifies that, for Polanyi, self-giving integrations do not compromise the integrity of the subject any more than do self-centred integrations. Whereas self-centred integrations have their centre of gravity firmly within subjectivity, self-giving vectors propel the subject more deeply into the instrumental articulate frameworks that they assimilate to themselves.

The ways in which the centrifugal vector operates to constitute relations of symbolization involves a complex negotiation of intrinsicism and extrinsicism. On the one hand, the symbol remains extrinsic to the meaning that it communicates: the semantic content that evokes interest in the object does not arise from anything inherent to the focal object, prior to the enactment of the centrifugal vector. At the level of its intrinsic nature, the symbolic object must lack semantic over-determination, thus being possessed of an amenability to constitution as a symbol. On the other hand, the relationship of symbolisation 'embodies' otherwise inaccessible meanings within the semantic space of the focal object. Thus, the meanings embodied within the symbol are not generated, but rather mediated, by the presence of the symbol, operating under the semantic force of the centrifugal vector. This notion of 'embodiment' of one meaning within another meaning, by the action of the centrifugal vector, thereby constitutes an

intrinsicist account of the relationship between meanings and the symbols that communicate them. There is, then, an ontological distinction between the form and the content of the symbol, but they are noetically united by the centrifugal vector in the event of symbolic communication, and this noetic unity depends upon an antecedent ontological likeness.

This account of the somersaulting vector is developed by Polanyi into a theory of metaphor. Polanyi defines metaphor as occurring "when a symbol embodying a significant matter has a significance of its own and this is akin to the matter that it embodies".[93] Metaphor is a category of dynamic symbolic meanings that characteristically involve the "integration of incompatibles",[94] the 'saying of one thing, whilst meaning another'. A metaphor is the enactment of a 'somersaulting' vector that effects the embodiment of the meaning of a tenor (subsidiary) within the meaning of a vehicle (focal), thus nesting of one meaning within another. The necessary and sufficient conditions of metaphor, according to Polanyi, are:[95] (1) the elements "are significant idea[s] or expression[s] in themselves" (that is, both poles of the integration have intrinsic interest, *+ii*);[96] (2) there is a degree of semantic discontinuity between the meaning of the tenor and the meaning of the vehicle, which necessitates active engagement of the intellect in the embodiment of the meaning communicated; and (3) where, notwithstanding this necessary discontinuity, the capacity to communicate meaning is secured by a degree of inherent likeness between vehicle and tenor that

[93] M: 78.
[94] M: 86-97, M: 125.
[95] M: 79*ff. cf* PK: 107.
[96] M: 78.

enables the integration of their incompatible elements.[97] A Polanyian account of metaphor can be schematically presented as follows:

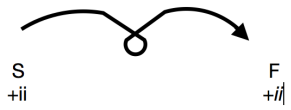


Figure 5: Metaphoric Integration

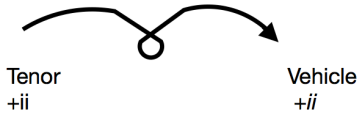


Figure 6: Metaphoric Integration

Crucially, in this schematic, the somersaulting vector that integrates the tenor and vehicle provides an account of the metaphysical status of the metaphor itself, and not the subject's appropriation of it. The diagram therefore shows the status of a metaphor as it is artificially dissociated from the knowing subject. This integration—and, importantly, not just the product of this integration—is the focal term of the event of metaphor, in which the knowing subject, together with her own +*ii* subsidiaries, is 'carried away' into the integration of the metaphor itself:

[97] M: 78.

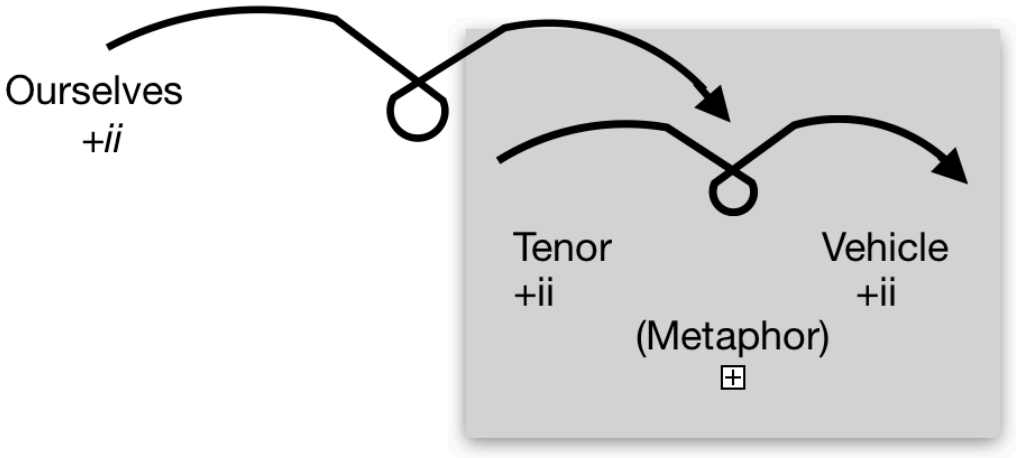


Figure 7: Integration into Metaphor

When a subject achieves metaphoric meanings, then, the self-giving semantic mechanism is involved in a two-fold iteration: firstly, in the integration of a tenor and vehicle; secondly, in the appropriating subject's giving themselves over to integration with this metaphoric integration itself. By this two-fold iteration of the somersaulting vector, meaning is carried across incompatible semantic registers. As a result of the intrinsically dynamic character of the integration—the subject is integrated into an integration—the metaphor, even once it has been established, only endures by an active engagement of the subject. Polanyi is not, here, attributing semantic agency to the metaphor, but emphasising that metaphoric artefacts cannot be analysed in isolation from the intelligent semantic agents that produce and receive them. When the subject interpolates themselves into a metaphor, they come to indwell the dynamic integration that is effected by the work of another mind.

In summary, the development of the centrifugal vector allows Polanyi to account for meanings that arise through symbolisation and metaphor, in which meanings are 'embodied' within other meanings, which are then used to mediate the embodied meaning in a more tangible form.

§3.3.2: Imagination, Transnaturality and Framing

The capacity that enacts the 'integration of incompatibles' is, on Polanyi's account, the imagination. According to Polanyi's analysis, the imagination is not primarily engaged in the fashioning of fictional meanings, or in the projection of subjective dispositions into fantasy worlds, but rather to the discovery of new meaning by fusing incompatible portions of reality together in a creative integration. The imagination, then, enables the meaningful importation of non-native particulars into new semantic registers, as well as the exploration of realms of meanings that are uncertain or unexplorable by conventional observation. As such, the imagination enables scientists to explore the coherence of areas of reality that currently lie beyond their mastery. "[W]orks of science, engineering and the arts are all achieved by the imagination".[98]

Related to this account of the imagination is the second innovation that Polanyi introduced in *Meaning*: the category of the 'transnatural'.[99] The distinction of 'transnatural integrations' from 'natural integrations' allows Polanyi to differentiate the

[98] M: 85.
[99] M: 125-126, 150.

role of the imagination in creative domains from its role in the empirical sciences. In the natural sciences the imagination serves to integrate incompatibles which, whilst remaining incompatible, nonetheless emerge from the natural, as descriptions or models of the hidden processes of the natural world.[100] Although first achieved by great labours of the imagination, these integrations of incompatible elements are quasi-natural, in that they come to be functional for the knower as if they were natural. Natural imaginative integrations, then, do not require great labours of the imagination for their continued use. By contrast, the knower cannot grow accustomed to transnatural integrations, which govern the creative arts, and which consequently "do not enter into our ordinary lives".[101] The incompatibles integrated by the transnatural integration "must be joined together by a new act of our imagination every time we contemplate them. […] [They] appear to us to be meaningful and coherent, but nevertheless have meanings that go quite beyond the natural".[102]

The addition of the 'somersaulting' vector enables Polanyi to extend his fiduciary epistemology into domains of greater cultural complexity by moving through the realm of the transnatural: representational and abstract art, drama, poetry, affective metaphor and so on. Indeed, an account of the somersaulting vector is, in Polanyi's view, necessary as a result of the complexities that inhere within cultural artefacts themselves. Whereas the *use* of a technological invention (itself a production of the creative scientific imagination) does not require the reproduction of the imaginative

[100] Jha, 'A New Interpretation of Michael Polanyi's Theory of Tacit Knowing: integrative philosophy with 'intellectual passions'', George A. Miller, 'Images and Models, Similes and Metaphors', in Andrew Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 357-400.
[101] M:125.
[102] M: 125-126.

processes of the inventor, the *use* of works of art do: "the meanings [the artist] can create for his public are limited by the requirement that they provide a basis for their re-creation by the imaginations of other viewers or readers".[103] This is the essential feature of the achievement of transnatural meanings.

This characteristic need of transnatural meanings to be continually reappropriated by imaginative labours leads Polanyi to develop a third conceptual innovation in *Meaning*: the notion of a noetic 'frame'.[104] Polanyi presents the 'frame' as that which sustains the incompatibility of those incompatible elements even as they are united into a transnaturally integrated comprehensive entity, by constituting both a semantic space in which they can be imaginatively integrated and yet simultaneously preventing those incompatibilities from being understood literally or being identified by a centripetal vector. The dramatic frame of the stage, for instance, provides a semantic context within which dramatic action (an on-stage murder or love affair) can be accredited as meaningful and yet necessarily deprived of a literal truth-value (it cannot be read as 'really' occurring as an event in standard history). The frame encodes the contents with an inescapable transnaturality:[105] the frame induces the subject to automatically read the frame's contents as a unity, by way of imaginative integration. The 'frame' operates then, by isolating its artistic content from the surrounding world, amplifying the sense of artificiality and thereby making more accessible the semantic integration of the artist's creative intelligence. The frame and its content, however, are related in a bi-directional fashion, with each embodying the other and neither

[103] M: 85.
[104] M: 102, 85-88
[105] M: 150.

symbolising nor unilaterally surrendering to the other.[106] The frame, however, is not arbitrarily related to the contents, but rather embodies it in a dynamic fusion:[107]

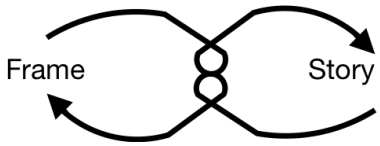


Figure 8: Framing Mechanism

The relationship of embodiment that obtains between the frame and its contents is, then, governed by the dynamic of the centrifugal vector. For this reason, I have adopted the term 'framing mechanism' as a means of narrating the ways in which the frame operates in Polanyi's account of transnatural integrations as an active principle, emphasising the dynamic character of the frame's actions, which cannot be reduced to the status of a static artefact.[108]

In summary, three conceptual innovations facilitate Polanyi's extension of his epistemology in *Meaning*: the somersaulting vector; the category of the transnatural; and the frame. These are embedded within an account of the imagination and shift Polanyi's epistemology in an intrinsicist direction. To emphasise the dynamic character of Polanyi's metaphysics of knowing (now deeply rooted in his biosemiotics ontology), two of these have been rearticulated in more active terms: the 'centrifugal vector' and

[106] M: 86.
[107] M: 86.
[108] "No instance of tacit knowledge is truly static", M: 57. See also M: 171.

the 'framing mechanism'. The next subsection identifies the application of these intrinsicist principles to religious articulate frameworks.

§3.3.3: *Meaning*'s Intrinsicist Account of Religion

The three innovative features of Polanyi's *Meaning* operate to generate an intrinsicist account of the mediation of meaning across semantic boundaries: by the implementation of these three principles, the knower effects the embodiment of one meaning within another meaning, allowing meanings to cross the boundaries between otherwise discrete semantic registers. This sub-section identifies the ways in which Polanyi develops an intrinsicist account of religious articulate frameworks, seeing religious articulate frameworks as 'embodiments' of transcendent meanings.

In *Meaning*, Polanyi defines religion as a "sprawling work of the imagination".[109] This does not imply, as it has sometimes been taken to, that Polanyi is committed to a non-realist account of theological language. As a work of the imagination, religious articulate frameworks involve the integration of non-contiguous—but nonetheless objective—points of meaning. As a result of this imaginative character, religion is a form of knowledge that emerges from "the type of acceptance that we grant to works of art" rather than being related "directly or indirectly to observations".[110] Indeed, this is a necessary feature of any discourse that concerns a reality that is not only unobserved

[109] M: 152.
[110] M: 149.

but intrinsically unobservable (having no physical extension).[111] According to Polanyi's account of imaginative knowledge, any attempt to narrate spiritual realities must necessarily be a work of the imagination. These realities can never be observed directly but are only observed in their effects.

The crucial content of religious meanings, according to Polanyi's analysis, is the affirmation of the world as an inherently meaningful comprehensive entity, existing in a structured form rather than as a merely "meaningless heap of inchoate things".[112] Religious meanings are the zenith of creaturely meanings because they are intended to be maximally integrative, drawing the world together in a comprehensive account of the origin and the character of its inherent meaningfulness. Religion offers a way of "expressing the whole significance of life and the universe in genuine universal and feeling terms".[113] It is these religious frameworks that enable the subject to know the world as a semantic habitat. Consequently, religious articulate frameworks are not the preserve of a select few: any subject who has an understanding of the world as a comprehensive semantic habitat—whether tacitly or more explicitly—indwells some form of (quasi-)religious articulate framework that is implicitly operative within their semantic activity and rational exploration of the world. This provides a further ground to undermine the scientistic myth of natural reason. Polanyi's account of religion in *Meaning* concerns more explicitly narrated forms of religious meanings: those that

[111] Esther L. Meek, *Contact with Reality: Michael Polanyi's Realism and Why It Matters* (Eugene OR: Cascade Books, 2017): 202ff.
[112] M: 159.
[113] M: 159.

involve “rites, ceremonies, doctrines, myth and”—most importantly—“something called worship”.[114]

Much of Polanyi’s account of religion is inchoate and tentative. Likewise, his analysis of concrete religious practices is not adequate to the task of supporting his theoretical account of religion. Polanyi’s account of religion, however, depends upon much more well-developed and solidly established features of Polanyi’s later synthesis. In particular, the account of religion deploys two of the three distinctive features that Polanyi introduced in the *Meaning* lectures: the centrifugal vector and the framing mechanism. The third distinctive features, the category of transnaturality, is not directly used in Polanyi’s account of religious articulate frameworks but serves as an essential point against which the unique status of religious knowledge can be triangulated.

Like metaphor, with its two-fold instantiation of the somersaulting vector,[115] religious meanings invoke multiple iterations of the centrifugal vector. The first of these relates to the way in which Polanyi understands mythic narratives to embody the meaningfulness of the world in a comprehensive vision: “a daring speculation, transcending all observable object and extending the imagination far beyond any possible experienced horizon”.[116] Myths are not concerned with reaching for “further observable facts”,[117] but rather attempt to embody an account of the semantic basis of all possible observations. Polanyi’s account of myth focusses on somewhat formalised

[114] M: 152.
[115] See §3.3.1.
[116] M: 121.
[117] M: 121.

mythic accounts of the origins of the world, particularly accounts of the primordial and cosmic history of our existence. The 'sacred time' of origins, the proto-history of the emergence of creaturely meaning, is embodied within these myths, which are then made accessible in the rituals that embody those myths. A second iteration of the centrifugal vector, then, governs the embodiment of myth within ritual. The relationship between myth and ritual is, on Polanyi's account, more complex than that of a single centrifugal vector: according to Polanyi, myth and ritual are mutually embodying.[118] Rituals do not only embody myths; myths have no 'body' aside from their self-embodiment within the rituals that sustain and communicate them. Myth and ritual are related by a bidirectional centrifugal vector, into which the subject integrates themselves by a further centrifugal vector:

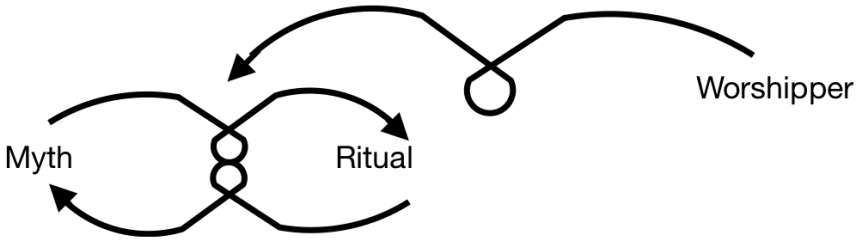


Figure 9: Worship

The complexities and problems of this account are discussed in Chapter 6, which systematises a Polanyian account of worship within the perspective of a semantic doctrine of God. This account of religious meaning, animated by the centrifugal vector, is, however, intrinsicist: myth 'contains' an account of primordial origins; myth is, in turn, really mediated by ritual.[119] The bilateral centrifugal vector functions in such a

[118] M: 154.
[119] M: 152-155.

way that ritual is not merely a tool used to attend to another reality distinct from it, but rather 'contains' the myth that it mediates—and thus the primordial time that myth embodies—in such a way that there could be no access to that myth aside from the ritual in which it embodies itself. By participating within the ritual, then, the subject comes to participate in the primordial history that myth mediates: "we dwell for a moment in [these primordial times] and are one, not only with one another and with our fathers, but also with the All. We participate in an ultimate meaning of things."[120] This enables us to "pull the scattered droplets of our lives together in a single sea of sublime meaning".[121]

The second key innovation evident in *Meaning* is Polanyi's development of the category of the transnatural, which narrates those integrations of incompatibles to which we do not become habituated, but which remain always outside of the quotidian and natural, requiring a significant labour of the imagination in each moment of their use. Given that religious meanings involve such an integration of incompatible elements by the centrifugal vector and refer themselves to a semantic domain distinct from the natural, the question arises as to whether religious meanings are properly *transnatural*. Here, Polanyi's account of religion seems to pull in two directions. On the one hand, religious meanings—because they facilitate a participation within the primordial time of origins—necessarily retain a sense of disconnection from the quotidian flow of time and space, and thus share in some of the features of the transnatural. On the other hand, Polanyi explicitly states that "religious conceptions differ in significant ways from the

[120] M: 153.
[121] M: 157.

transnatural achievements of poetry and art".[122] This is for two reasons: firstly, religious meanings are universal, "speaking of the entire universe and of our destiny as human beings within this boundless perspective";[123] secondly, they have a sacred character, communicating (albeit in a fragmentary way) something of the infinite *tremendum*.[124] The crucial point at which Polanyi differentiates religious meanings from transnatural meaning then, is located on the fault line between intrinsicism and extrinsicism.

Polanyi gives content to this intrinsicism by affirming that religious articulate frameworks seek to 'recollect'. Whereas transnatural integrations serve to represent (pointing to meanings beyond themselves), religious meanings serve to recollect (making the past moment of primordial origins present within themselves).[125] Whereas transnatural integrations tend towards the artificial and simulated, religious meanings do not simulate an absent or extrinsic meaning by re-enactment (a relationship governed by similitude); ritual embodies the meanings that it recollects (governed by *anamnesis*). It is, then, the intrinsicist character of religious meaning that differentiates it from transnatural integrations, even as it shares some dis-embedding features of the transnatural. Like transnatural integrations, then, religious meanings are 'framed' by ritual practices.[126] The framing mechanism of religious knowledge, however, does not function to constitute a zone of equivocity and discontinuity (as it does in the case of transnatural meanings) but constitutes a space in which mediation (recollection) can

[122] ME: 126.
[123] ME: 126.
[124] ME: 130-131.
[125] This is central to the Polanyian understanding of ritual *anamnesis*, which is explored in Chapter 6.
[126] *Cf* M: 154.

occur in accordance with the doctrine of analogy: real similarity within ever greater degrees of dissimilarity. Chapter 6 argues that the combination of intrinsicism within detachment results in a 'connaturality', to which we are habituated in worship.

This account of religion as an intrinsicist integration of incompatibles (an 'embodiment' of one meaning within another meaning) develops Polanyi's earlier account of religious frameworks: Polanyi no longer identifies religious articulate frameworks in terms of their capacity to generate an intrinsically frustrated desire. In Polanyi's earlier account of religion, the 'inbuilt contradiction'—the generation of an intrinsically unfulfillable desire—indicated the essential incapacity of religious frameworks (and the correlated need for a divine in-breaking). In the intrinsicist account governed by the centrifugal vector, however, these inbuilt incompatibles are indicative of the capacity of religious articulate frameworks to embody 'mystical' meanings in an imaginative fusion of incompatibilities. Consequently, Polanyi's account of religious articulate frameworks has shifted from an equivocal register to an analogical register. Whereas for the early Polanyi religious language was merely propaedeutic to authentic contemplation (being negated by the divine in-breaking), the intrinsicism of *Meaning* gives religious articulate frameworks an active role in mediating religious truth as analogical instruments indwelt as conceptual tools.

Section §3.2 identified three major Ernstian critiques of Polanyi's early extrinsicist account of religion: the bifurcation of authentic theological knowledge and religious articulate frameworks; the absence of an account of historical mediation of theological meaning; and the undue priority given to the subjective principle of

religious affectivity (at the expense of the objective content of the articulate frameworks). The role played by the centrifugal vector in Polanyi's later account of religion allows Polanyi to develop an intrinsicist structure in which to answer these Ernstian critiques. Firstly, the centrifugal vector of embodiment resists the bifurcation of religious articulate frameworks from authentic theological knowledge. The time of primordial origins is accessible only as myth; myth is inaccessible without its embodiment in ritual. Without identifying these articulate frameworks with the theological realities they communicate—these always remain ontological 'incompatibilities'—*Meaning* asserts the authentically communicative character of religious discourse. On the intrinsicist picture of *Meaning*, religious articulate frameworks render accessible the theological realities that they communicate. Secondly, because of this intrinsicist embodiment of theological realities within religious meanings, these religious articulate frameworks—which are culturally and socially embedded—provide a form of historical mediation that Polanyi's earlier account of religion was unable to accommodate. Thirdly, the account of religion offered in *Meaning* secures a much more significant role for the 'objective' pole of theological knowledge, without sacrificing the full involvement of the subject. On the intrinsicist picture, the subject embodies themselves within the dynamic relationship of embodiment that obtains between myth and ritual. As such, the act of faith—the interpolating vector—is realised only by its enclosure within the antecedent myth-ritual embodiment. The nature of the interpolating vector, as a movement of self-embodiment, is thus determined by the character and content of the object as mediated by the articulate framework. To use theological terminology, *fides quae* and *fides qua* are inextricably woven together. This renewed sense of theological objectivity is discussed in more

detail in Chapter 5, in connection with Cornelius Ernst's account of 'ontological metaphor'.

Although Polanyi's account of religion has shifted in an intrinsicist direction, thereby bestowing greater value on the content of religious articulate frameworks as actively involved in the mediation of ultimate truth, Polanyi remains somewhat ambivalent to the *specific* content of religious frameworks. Religious *mythos* serves to embody the antecedent meaningfulness of the world, through an embodiment of the primordial time of origins. Consequently, the specific truth-claims of these myths (whether explicitly articulated or implicit within the myth) are only second-order claims that mediate the first-order reality of primordial time. Polanyi does not, therefore, need to accredit the contents of the myth with anything more than a general plausibility. What is essential is that the mythic truth-claims are not manifestly unbelievable, but have a certain fitting conformity to reality, such that if the contents are not taken to be literally truth, they are accepted as in some way proximate to the truth.[127]

To the theological reader, this makes Polanyi frustratingly agnostic. Polanyi's later intrinsicist account of religion binds neither to theological realism, nor to theological non-realism: the contents of the myth need not be actually true, but they cannot be total fabrications either, nor can they be merely symbolic expressions. This indicates a point of continuity between Polanyi's earlier and later accounts of religion: in both phases, Polanyi is not directly concerned with the actuality of religious truth-

[127] M: 160.

claims but with the *capacity* of those claims to serve a particular instrumental function. In the earlier account of religion, this function was affective (generating and sustaining certain types of desire), whilst in the later account Polanyi stresses the intellectual and ontological capacity to embody the primordial source of the world's inherent meaningfulness. From an Ernstian perspective, this represents a defective commitment to intrinsicism: the truth-value of the claims embedded within religious articulate frameworks cannot be dissociated from the ultimate truth that they mediate. This is explored in more detail in the analysis of the objectivity of faith as an ontological metaphor in §5.3.3.

§3.4: The Meaning Controversy

This section responds to a possible objection to the use of *Meaning* to generate a Polanyian response to Ernst's simulated critique, drawn from the so-called '*Meaning* controversy'. This objection proceeds not by challenging the intrinsicist reading of *Meaning*, nor by suggesting that *Meaning* is plagued by conceptual problems, but by challenging the status of *Meaning* as an authentically Polanyian text.

The so-called '*Meaning* Controversy' was a debate within Polanyi scholarship in the 1980s, between those who questioned the extent to which *Meaning* authentically mediates Polanyi's later views (particularly, although not exclusively, on the question of religion), and those who affirmed its authenticity. The two extremes are reflected in the

thought of Prosch (who affirms the complete authenticity of the text of Meaning)[128] and Torrance (who asserts its almost complete inauthenticity).[129] The text of *Meaning* has an undeniably curious provenance and took a circuitous route into publication, as noted below. Aside from the conceptual novelties that it introduces, to anyone familiar with Polanyi's previous publications, *Meaning* is characterised by a noticeable difference in argumentative style and the texture of prose. *Meaning* simply doesn't 'feel' intuitively Polanyian to those who had seen nothing of Polanyi's ongoing theoretical development for a decade or more.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Polanyi used various lecture series to extend his epistemology into the arts and humanities, including a new account of religious meaning. Whilst this material had reached a relatively stable form (repeated and refined in numerous iterations over several years), Polanyi would not have been able to bring it into a publishable form but for the assistance of Harry Prosch. By 1972, an elderly Polanyi—recently diagnosed with dementia—felt unable to bring such a significant work to completion without considerable assistance. In 1974, when the manuscript of *Meaning* was finalised, Polanyi's intellectual capacities were severely compromised. Whilst many scholars have identified a decisive shift in Polanyi's thought between *Tacit Dimension* and *Meaning*, Polanyi's literary executor, Thomas Forsyth Torrance, adopted a much more trenchant critique, claiming that Polanyi himself had

[128] Harry Prosch, 'Polanyi contra Torrance', *Michael Polanyi: A Critical Exposition* (New York: SUNY Press, 1986a): 248-57.

[129] On Prosch's contribution to Polanyi's Meaning Project, and his contribution more generally to post-critical philosophy, see: Phil Mullins, 'Harry Prosch: 1917-2005', *Tradition & Discovery,* 32/2 (2005), 5-7, Phil Mullins and Marty Moleski, 'Harry Prosch: A Memorial Re-Appraisal of the Meaning Controversy', *Tradition and Discovery,* 32/2 (2006), 8-12.

told him that *Meaning* should not be accepted as an expression of Polanyi's thought.[130] According to Torrance, the text of *Meaning* substantially misrepresents the religious views that Polanyi articulated in the lectures upon which *Meaning* is based.

Torrance's rejection of the text of *Meaning* has always been a minority view in Polanyi scholarship, but gained currency due to Torrance's close friendship with Polanyi and his work as Polanyi's literary executor. The nub of Torrance's objections is not immediately clear from his published remarks, but seems to primarily concern Polanyi's location of religious knowledge within the ambit of the 'imagination', which he takes to be indicative of a theological non-realism.[131] As noted in §3.3.2 above, however, no such conclusion can be drawn from Polanyi's distinctive use of the category of imagination as involved in all semantic integrations that bring together otherwise incompatible semantic domains.

Archival evidence confirms that Polanyi's prepared material on worship required very heavy editorial emendation and supplementation by Prosch. The

---

[130] T. F. Torrance, 'The Place of Michael Polanyi in the Modern Philosophy of Science', *Ethics in Science and Medicine,* 7 (1980b), 57-95, T. F. Torrance, 'Letters to the Editor: Torrance Answers Prosch', *Tradition & Discovery,* 14/1 (1986), 30, John V. Apczynski, 'Torrance on Polanyi and Polanyi on God', *Tradition and Discovery,* 24/1 (1997), 32-34, Torrance, 'Michael Polanyi and the Christian Faith', Colin Weightman, 'Polanyi and Mathematics, Torrance and Philosophy of Science', *Tradition and Discovery,* 24/1 (1997), 35-38, Mullins and Moleski, 'Harry Prosch: A Memorial Re-Appraisal of the Meaning Controversy'.

[131] This is the subject of a distinct, but nonetheless related, dispute amongst Polanyians. See, for instance: Cannon, 'Some Aspects of Polanyi's Version of Realism', Hammond, 'Polanyi's 'Ontological Equation': A Response to Recent Discussions of Polanyi's 'Realism'', Sanders, 'Science, Religion and Polanyi's Comprehensive Realism', John V Apczynski, 'Truth in Religion: A Polanyian Appraisal of Wolfhart Pannenberg's Theological Program', *Zygon,* 17/1 (1982), 49-73, Richard Gelwick, 'Michael Polanyi's Daring Epistemology and the Hunger for Teleology', *Zygon,* 40/1 (2005), 63-76, Walter B. Gulick, 'Polanyi on teleology: A response to John Apczynski and Richard Gelwick', *Zygon,* 40/1 (2005), 89-96, Phil Mullins, 'The Spectrum of Meaning: Polanyian perspectives on science and religion', *Zygon,* 17/1 (1982), 3-8, William Taussig Scott, 'The question of a religious reality: commentary on the Polanyi papers', *Zygon,* 17/1 (1982), 83-87.

Hungarian Polanyi society has recently transcribed and published the six extant transcripts used by Polanyi in the Chicago lectures on which *Meaning* was largely based.[132] It is clear from these texts, and from others in the Polanyi archive,[133] that the three key features that generate the intrinsicist framework—the centrifugal vector, the framing mechanism and the transnatural—are original to Polanyi's thought as it was expressed in those lectures. In other words, whilst Torrance was correct to express some reservations about the content of the Polanyi-Prosch collaboration, the consensus of Polanyi scholarship that *Meaning* is authentic is sound. This is sufficient to establish the necessary supposition of the argument of this chapter: that the intrinsicist theory of religion expressed in §3.3 is a systematic extrapolation from principles present with Polanyi's own later thought. Appendix A explores the historical evidence—and the detailed specifics of Torrance's claims—in more detail than is necessary for this point to be affirmed.

Evidence from Torrance's own *Nachlass* indicates that, even before the publication of *Meaning*, Torrance was concerned about the potential of Polanyi's fiduciary programme to develop along intrinsicist lines. In a letter written to Polanyi in 1973, although never sent, Torrance writes:

> "*It does not seem to me sufficient simply to rely as Einstein does on a form of pre-established harmony between the human mind and the intrinsic comprehensibility of the universe, or to have recourse to the assumption that our minds are part of reality and constituted finally in the same basic way as the rest of the universe, as Heisenberg does. In the last resort both of these views rely upon some sort of*

[132] See: 'From the Polanyi Archives', *Polanyiana*. 15.1-2 (2006): pp. 66-162.
[133] See especially the material in PP 40 and PP 36. Likewise the notes on religion found in PP 12.6 and PP 36.2

> *latent ontological identity, some analogia entis, whereas what we are really concerned with is the relation between the heuristic activity of the human mind and the intrinsic relations and operations in the universe. I like your notion of 'heuristic vision' very much which you set out in Personal Knowledge, but I am concerned to probe more deepy [sic] into the relation between the subliminal clues and the patterns of reality to which they direct our understanding, within the context of intrinsic intelligibility in the universe to which we ourselves also belong*."[134]

Torrance's concern to avoid an (onto)logical point of connection—some logical participation—between mind and the reality that it knows is explored in §5.2. As Torrance puts it earlier in the letter, he is concerned to push Polanyi to reinforce the principle—that Torrance sees as Einsteinian—that the "connection between our concepts and experience is purely intuitive and not of a logical nature".[135] The intrinsicist development of *Meaning,* with its affirmation of a dynamic of embodiment operating between mind and reality, moves in a way contrary to Torrance's concerns to secure a non-logical isomorphism ('intuitively') between mind and reality. The unfinished and unsent letter in Torrance's *Nachlass* suggests that Torrance was aware of a possible intrinsicist *analogia entis* underlying Polanyi's earlier work.

§3.5: Towards the Doctrine of God

Using Ernst's theology as a critical heuristic, this chapter has identified a fundamental shift in Polanyi's account of religion, from an extrinsicist to an intrinsicist understanding of the relationship of religious articulate frameworks to the divine

[134] TFTP, §165, Letter to Michael Polanyi, 2nd October 1973.
[135] *Ibid.*

reality that they seek to communicate. Historical evidence from the Polanyi archive demonstrated that this intrinsicist shift was already indicated in Polanyi's lectures in the late 1960s. According to the late Polanyi, religious articulate frameworks embody the ultimate religious Meaning that they communicate, albeit in partial, fragmented and imperfect ways. This allows Polanyi to develop a much more Ernstian account of religious language and ritual as actually mediating the eternal Truth in-and-through the historical and cultural particularity of articulate frameworks.

For all the scholarly debate that Polanyi's account of religion has engendered, however, religious articulate frameworks are not themselves the highest and most pervasive meanings of Polanyi's synthesis, but serve to make accessible by embodiment and communication an ultimate Meaning that simultaneously lies beyond them and is embodied by them. This gives ultimate Meaning as peculiar ontological status as both transcendence and immanent to creaturely meanings: ultimate Meaning dynamically transcends the articulate frameworks that communicate it. Meaning is in-and-beyond meanings.

The next chapter considers the metaphysics of this ultimate Meaning that Polanyi understands to be embodied by religious articulate frameworks. In theological terms, this is the domain of the doctrine of God, articulating a theological ontology of the ultimate Meaning which is made accessible in religious frameworks. Although Polanyi has little to say about these doctrinal issues directly, his account of how the ultimate Meaning is embodied within religious frameworks nonetheless contains implicit

metaphysical claims, which the next chapter develops with the assistance of Cornelius Ernst's doctrine of God as the 'Meaning of meaning'.

IV
A Semantic Doctrine of God

Polanyi's later intrinsicist account of religion, identified by the previous chapter, raises a further question: what is it that religious articulate frameworks embody and mediate? Although Polanyi affirms that religious meanings are the highest level in the hierarchy of creaturely meanings, embodying the most comprehensive integration of reality, their intrinsicist character indicates their embodiment, within the biosemiotics hierarchy, of a reality that transcends the biosemiotic hierarchy (and, indeed, integrates it as a comprehensive entity). Religious meaning occupies the highest level on the hierarchy of creaturely meanings, but the transcendent meaning that religion embodies is ontologically ultimate. This chapter examines this ontologically ultimate meaning, which is embodied by religious articulate frameworks: the God who, literally, is the last word of *Personal Knowledge.*

The argument of this chapter demonstrates that Cornelius Ernst's doctrine of God as the Meaning of meaning provides an account of the ontologically ultimate meaning that is embodied by religious articulate frameworks, which Polanyi's work otherwise lacks. The argument proceeds in seven stages. Fristly, Polanyi's account of God is located at the implicit level, rather than as explicitly articulated. Secondly, with the help of Richard Allen's analysis, the central problem of Polanyi's implicit doctrine of God is identified as the need to reconcile the transcendence of ultimate reality with its immanent accessibility in religious articulate frameworks. Thirdly, the key features of

Polanyi's implicit doctrine of God are excavated, through an analysis of Polanyi's account of religion. These ontological markers are seen to cohere around an account of God as an infinite integration and not a comprehensive entity. Fourthly, Ernst's explicitly articulated doctrine of God is found to correspond to Polanyi's implicit theological ontology. The remaining sections of the chapter develop this correspondence. Firstly, §4.5 argues that Ernst's explicitly Trinitarian doctrine of God strengthens a Polanyian account of God as an infinite integration. The unity of the world of meaning is always already the triunity of Meaning. Secondly, §4.6 demonstrates how the proposed Polanyian-Ernstian doctrine of God provides an account of the creatureliness of quotidian meanings. Finally, §4.7 suggests that the proposed relationship between created and uncreated meanings offers an account of the relationship between nature and grace.

§4.1: Polanyi's Absent Doctrine of God?

This section argues that an inchoate doctrine of God is embedded within Polanyi's account of religion. The operation of this theological ontology at the tacit level impedes Polanyi from bringing his doctrine of God to explicit articulation. Indeed, in his book offering a critical assessment of Torrance's theological development of Polanyi's thought,[1] Colin Weightman criticises Polanyi for relying upon an "absent doctrine of God".[2] Weightman's work has been criticised for exaggerating the extent to which

[1] Torrance's assessment and critical development of Polanyi's epistemology is examined in the next chapter.

[2] Colin Weightman, *Theology in a Polanyian Universe: the theology of Thomas Torrance* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994): 33-36. Much of Weightman's monograph is concerned with a critical examination of Torrance's use of Polanyi. The first ten chapters, however, offer a self-contained evaluation of Polanyi's religious epistemology as the basis on which to develop his critique of Torrance's alleged Polanyianism.

Torrance adopted a Polanyian epistemology without emendation:[3] whereas Weightman suggests that Polanyi's epistemology is foundational to Torrance's *Theological Science*, Torrance regarded his use of Polanyi as more illustrative than determinative.[4] Aside from its value as a critical examination of Torrance's theological epistemology, however, Weightman's work offers a detailed examination of Polanyi's religious epistemology in its own right. According to Weightman's analysis, Polanyi does not develop a doctrine of God that is adequate to the task of supporting a robust account of theological knowledge. As a result, Weightman suggests that Polanyi's value to theologians is as a pre-apologist for religious faith, rather than as offering a direct engagement with Christian theological concerns.[5] For Weightman, Polanyi's systematic revaluation of fideistic commitment from within a philosophical and scientific framework provides a pre-apologetic space in which the intellectual integrity of theological faith can be reaffirmed by religious apologists.[6]

As Weightman acknowledges, however, Polanyi's religious concerns go beyond such a 'pre-apologetic' level.[7] Polanyi himself indicated that the metaphysics generated as a development of his epistemology inherently demands, or at least moves towards, a theological expression.[8] For all that theological ends were peripheral to Polanyi's primary concern as a philosopher of science and social critic, theology is by no means a merely secondary adjunct to his epistemology. Polanyi intuited that his philosophy

[3] Alister E. Mcgrath, *T.F. Torrance: An Intellectual Biography* (London: T&T Clark, 1999): 228-32, Elmer Coyle, *The Nature of Doctrine in T.F. Torrance's Theology* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001): 48.
[4] Torrance, 'The Place of Michael Polanyi in the Modern Philosophy of Science'.
[5] Weightman, *Theology in a Polanyian Universe*, 32.
[6] The need to safeguard an account of the unicity of theological faith is examined in Chapter 5.
[7] See particularly: Weightman, *Theology in a Polanyian Universe*, 43-69.
[8] See, for instance: Tony Clark, 'Polanyi on Religion', *Tradition and Discovery,* 32/2 (2005), 25-36.

cohered around a theological fulcrum, seeing the affirmation of the world as a comprehensively meaningful entity as intrinsically religious in its character.[9] Consequently, the richer perspective of meaning that Polanyi sought to recover as a perspective for science was "the sort of world that religious myth represents—a meaningful world".[10] If specific religious truth-claims are to be rejected, it was nonetheless necessary to say that "something like this is how all things are put together":[11] the question is not so much whether 'religious myth' is possible, but rather an interrogation of what mythology is embedded within our account of rationality (and thus what sort of theological or quasi-theological claims are smuggled into our putatively 'neutral' accounts of reason).

Polanyi's reference to all things being 'put together' according to a pattern determined by the religious principle is suggestive of the ways Polanyi's implicit theology operates. As noted in Chapter 2, comprehensive entities are holistic realities that are formed by an intelligent integration of their parts: construing the world as an integrated *systema mundi* governed by the principle of meaning is, in Polanyian terms, to posit the world as a comprehensive entity that is integrated by an intelligent principle that transcends it. "This [intelligent principle] all people speak of as God".[12] This amounts to a form of natural theology: if the world is a comprehensive entity (as science often presupposes it to be), there must be something that transcends it, which effects that integration.

[9] M: 159-160.
[10] M: 159-160.
[11] M: 160.
[12] ST I, q2 a3.

Consequently, theological readings of Polanyi are faced not only with the possibility of deriving theologically useful insights from Polanyian thought; if the lines of Polanyian reasoning are consistently followed to their conclusion, they will be found to terminate in the realm of the theological.[13] Indeed, it is notable that all of Polanyi's early epistemological works end with references that transgress into the domain of theology. These theological conclusions are, however, highly abstract and allusive, indicating the limits of Polanyi's competence. The resultant impression is that Polanyi falls silent when it comes to the religious domain, in part—as Weightman suggests—because of an absent or inadequately developed theological ontology.[14] Nonetheless, the points at which Polanyi falls silent are highly suggestive. In *Science Faith and Society*, Polanyi seems to locate the ontological ground for human sociocultural and political ideals in God himself:

> "*I would express my belief that modern man will eventually return to God through the clarification of his cultural and social purposes. Knowledge of reality and the acceptance of obligations which guide our consciences, once firmly realized will reveal to us God in man and society*."[15]

[13] Weightman develops his account of Polanyi's religious epistemology in dialogue with R. T. Allen, whose monograph on the subject is investigated below. There is, however, something of an unresolved tension within Weightman's reading of Polanyi. On the one hand, he suggests that Polanyi's epistemology *requires* something like a theological development (as in the section on the 'religious vision of a meaningful universe', 113-128); on the other hand, he makes the weaker claim that Polanyi's epistemology is merely consistent with religious developments (as in the section of extrapolation, 83-92). This is correlated with the development between *Personal Knowledge* and *Meaning*—the 'religious vision of a meaningful world' is identified by Weightman as the distinctive contribution made by *Meaning*—but Weightman does not deal at sufficient length with these metaphysical developments. Likewise, he is not attuned to the metaphysical developments that emerge in the concluding part of *Personal Knowledge*. Thus in his (somewhat truncated) exploration of Polanyi's biosemiotic 'field theory', he treats emergence more as a clue to the existence of God than in terms of a semantic ontology.

[14] The difficulties in establishing a consistent doctrine of God from Polanyi's work are highlighted by Scott, 'The question of a religious reality: commentary on the Polanyi papers'.

[15] SFS: 84.

Polanyi articulates a strong version of natural theology and an immanent understanding of theological meaning: a study of the innate impulses of nature and conscience will reveal God to us. Modernity, when it is developed with maximal self-referential consistency, seems inevitably to lead itself through atheism and back to theism, and modern man could well be adjured to become more thoroughly modern, so as to hasten that orthogenetic process. However, this does not seem to be a fixed view to which Polanyi was committed. Perhaps the difficulties that Polanyi himself encountered in attempting to articulate a theological ontology pushed him to reconsider the extent to which God could be found within the ambit of creaturely possibility. As noted in §3.1, *Personal Knowledge* places far greater stress on the radically extrinsic alterity of God. The final passage of *Personal Knowledge*—where Polanyi falls silent with 'God' as his last word—sees the ultimate liberation to which all immanent meanings push as a transcendent and unspeakable consummation:

> *"For all these centres […] may be seen engaged in the same endeavour towards ultimate liberation. We may envisage then a cosmic field which called forth all these centres by offering them a short-lived, limited, hazardous opportunity for making some progress of their own towards an unthinkable consummation. And that is also, I believe, how a Christian is placed when worshipping God."* [16]

The final paragraph of *Tacit Dimension* strikes something of a middle point between the immanentism of *Science Faith and Society* and the transcendentalism of *Personal Knowledge*. Immanent meanings are capacious to a resonance with theological meaning,

[16] PK: 405.

once the philosophical work of ridding us of an "absurd vision of the universe" has been completed:

> "*[We] need a purpose which bears on eternity. Truth does that; our ideals do it; and this might be enough, if we could ever be satisfied with our manifest moral shortcomings […]. Perhaps this problem cannot be resolved on secular grounds alone. But its religious solution should become more feasible once religious faith is released from pressure by an absurd vision of the universe, and so there will open up instead a meaningful world which could resound to religion*." [17]

In this later work, religious meanings do not automatically emerge from within the universe as seen with eyes freshly decontaminated from critical prejudices, but nor do they appear from outside of the semantic universe in such a way as to be utterly alien and incomprehensible, interrupting or overriding immanent meanings.[18] The world resounds with divine meaning, thus embodying a resonance of the divine within the creaturely. To develop the analogy of resonance, it is the constitution of the creaturely that leaves it open to the impulse of the resonant frequency of divine meaning. This language of the reverberation of the natural with the supernatural is reminiscent of Ernst's language of a 'multiple echo' of the supernatural within nature, hinting towards a theology of mediation that remains latent but undeveloped.

Notwithstanding these theological leitmotifs, Weightman is correct in his assessment that Polanyi did not adequately face up to the demands of formulating the doctrine of God that his epistemological project indicated, particularly after his metaphysical turn.

---

[17] TD: 92.

[18] These reasons, and others, lead Apczynski to locate Polanyi within the Augustinian tradition: 'Polanyi's Augustinianism: A Mark of the Future?', *Tradition and Discovery,* 20/1 (1993), 27-41.

Indeed, it would have been an extremely unrealistic expectation to anticipate such a development in a work with the already extensive scope of Polanyi's. It is, however, hard to agree with Weightman's suggestion that Polanyi's doctrine of God is *absent*. Firstly, whilst it is seldom developed in a way that resembles either philosophy or dogmatic theology, Polanyi says a great deal about God. Secondly, a key axiom of Polanyi's epistemology affirms that the inarticulate aspects of knowing are nonetheless presupposed and operative in the formulation of explicit knowledge. This is the meaning of Polanyi's axiom that 'we know more than we can tell': not everything we know can be brought into explicit articulation. As such, even whilst it is not the focus of explicit articulation, Polanyi's doctrine of God is operative throughout his work, not only in the sections where he investigates religion. It is possible, then, to locate a Polanyian doctrine of God that is embedded within the metatheoretical 'background' to Polanyi's formalised epistemology, and not only to *extrapolate* a doctrine of God from Polanyi's otherwise atheological philosophy.

If this understanding is correct—that Polanyi's doctrine of God is primarily operative at the tacit level of his metaphysics—then it was not principally a lack of theological concepts that hindered his efforts to formulate a robust doctrine of God, but rather his dependence upon them. On this reading, Polanyi's difficulties in explicitly articulating a doctrine of God emerge, in part, because his theological ontology is embedded within his account of the tacit dimension itself and is therefore resistant to explicit re-examination. Like all subsidiaries (as noted in §2.3, above) drawing these particulars into focal knowledge disrupts the functional relationship in which they stand, but they are, nonetheless, essential to the overall functioning of the system. It

was, then, an impossible task for Polanyi to explicitly locate the doctrine of God within the focal system that depended upon it. Consequently, theologians should not only be invested, as Avery Dulles has suggested,[19] in determining the 'transfer value' of Polanyian epistemology from its proper context to a theological context, but also in excavating the tacit assumptions about the nature of God that Polanyi inscribes into his fiduciary epistemology.

The first challenge that such an excavation must address is the question of the 'location' of the ontologically ultimate meaning that is embodied by religious articulate frameworks. A Polanyian theology must balance the transcendence of God as beyond the world of meanings with God's immanence, historically accessible and temporally mediated. This concern is examined in the next section.

§4.2: Transcendence and Immanence in the Polanyian Universe

Developing Richard Allen's work, this section argues that the transcendence-immanence dialectic is maintained in a Polanyian doctrine of God by positing God's immanent life *in se* as an infinite integration, which integrates the world as a comprehensive entity. Crucially, this means that, whilst the world *is* a comprehensive entity, God is not.

[19] Avery Robert Cardinal Dulles, 'Faith, Church, and God: insights from Michael Polanyi', *Theological Studies,* 45/3 (1984), 537-50.

§4.2.1: Richard T. Allen's Analysis

The relationship between the transcendence and immanence of ultimate meaning in Polanyi's account of religion was the subject of the first British doctorate investigating Polanyi's epistemology: that of Richard T. Allen[20] at King's College, London.[21] Allen approached the problematic from the perspective of the doctrine of God, identifying three ways in which Polanyi could have[22] negotiated the task of relating God (and theological meaning) to the world (and its creaturely meanings).[23] The first approach would seek to identify God and the world in some way; the second approach posits the divine as the highest, integrating, level of the world as a comprehensive entity, modelling God's relationship to the world by analogy to the soul's relationship to its body. In the third approach, God stands over-and-against the world, existing

[20] Although Allen and I offer divergent theological implications of Polanyi's synthesis, I am deeply grateful to Dr Allen for taking an interest in this project and for stimulating discussions of post-critical philosophy. His bibliographic work in assembling lists of Polanyian literature has proved enormously helpful in developing both a topography of theological appropriations to Polanyi's epistemology, and an awareness of personalist developments of *Personal Knowledge*. See: Richard T. Allen, *Michael Polanyi: an annotated bibliography of publications on society, economics and philosophy* (2nd ed edn.; Loughborough: Private Printing, 1994), Richard T. Allen, *Polanyi* (London: Claridge, 1990).

[21] Allen, *Transcendance and Immanence*. I have consulted two copies of Allen's monograph, which, although in every other way identical, have page numberings that differ by 3 pages. Several works—including Weightman—cite Allen's PhD thesis itself, rather than his monograph (which includes rather more material than the thesis).

[22] Although Allen cites several of Polanyi's unpublished papers, his work does not demonstrate an intimate familiarity with Polanyi's *Nachlass*. Allen seems unware, for instance, of Polanyi's theological correspondence with Bruno Manno and Joan Crewdson, and he does not identify the dependence of Polanyi's religious thought on Mircea Eliade or his philosophical work on Marjorie Grene, *inter alios*. As a result, the argument presented in Allen's monograph depends almost entirely upon a small cluster of Polanyi's published papers (and then, as noted below, with a reluctance to engage with *Meaning*), and demonstrates no awareness of the ways in which Polanyi actually did attempt to negotiate these questions, albeit in ways that he was not able to bring to publication. On the one hand, this is a strength of Allen's work, allowing a tight focus on an agreed and uncontroversial text with which Polanyi himself was settled. Negatively, it means that Allen's account departs from some of the richness of the historical record, and in particular misses the significance of themes present in Polanyi's publications (like myth and biosemiotics) which could not have been missed had he engaged in a more sustained way with the Polanyi *Nachlass*.

[23] It is notable that in his investigation of Polanyi's account of language, Allen appeals to the Thomistic division of univocal-analogical-equivocal. This is somewhat disjointed from his ontological evaluation of 'God's transcendence of Tacit Integration'. See: Allen, *Transcendance and Immanence*, 76-93.

independently of it and yet possessing, in an undetermined way, the capacity to interact with it.

The first of these options is not a viable extrapolation from Polanyian ontology.[24] To paraphrase Allen's dense argument, the stratification of knowledge and reality simply precludes the identification of a higher level with a lower level (even with the combined totality of the lower levels). Each new semantic level has its own proper integrity, which is derived from a distinctive *novum* that defines it: new levels do not simply emerge automatically, by necessity from the combination of lower levels of meanings; each new level enacts something new and irreducible. Allen also finds the second approach to be inadequate, on intra-Polanyian grounds.[25] According to Allen, modelling the divine transcendence in terms of God as world-soul, violates the integrity of human agency and, consequently, the divine innocence. If God is related to the world as a soul is related to a body, then, according to Allen, it must 'dominate' all the human souls that are part of the world.[26] Here, Allen is concerned to prevent the divine omnicausality collapsing into a divine sole causality that eliminates the reality of human agency (and, therefore, human moral responsibility, to which Polanyi was indubitably committed). Once an account of divine agency eliminates human moral responsibility in this way, God becomes both morally responsible and accountable for the evils perpetrated by human beings.

[24] Ibid., at 111-17.
[25] Ibid., at 132-40.
[26] See: ibid., at 140-46. Allen's argument here seems to loosen.

Allen is correct to assert that Polanyi's commitment to the moral responsibility of the human person would prevent him from accepting a totalitarian account of theological causality. The omnipresence of divine causality, however, does not necessarily exclude the presence of dependent creaturely causes. Classical accounts of the relationship between created and uncreated agency have sought to articulate thicker causal ontologies, in which God can be active in free human action, as the first cause. On these accounts, God causes human beings to be authentically causal. In particular, Aquinas's synthesising of neoplatonic ontology and Aristotelian noetic was concerned to safeguard the sovereignty of God as the first cause without violating the real integrity of causality in nature, which he took to be the *sine qua non* of the intelligibility of the universe.[27] Such a thick ontology of causation, which resists the reduction of causality to a single identifiable cause, is consistent with the reasons that Allen has for rejecting the first of his three identified options: the Polanyian stratification of being has as its axiom that the higher levels do not violate the integrity of the lower levels.[28] There is no reason to suppose that being intelligently causal could be a distinctive property only of the highest ontological level.

The world-soul model that Allen evaluates is one instance of a more widespread approach to the problem of transcendence and immanence, which relates God and the

[27] Here Aquinas was attempting to safeguard (with Averroes *contra* the Kalam Aristotelians) the autonomous intelligibility of nature, without sacrificing the principle of *creatio ex nihilo*. This is particularly evident in the protological section of the Commentary on Lombard's *Sentences*. See: William E. Carroll, 'Divine Agency, Contemporary Physics, and the Autonomy of Nature', *Heythrop Journal,* 49/4 (2008), 582-602, James A. Weisheipl, 'The Celestial Movers in Medieval Physics', *The Thomist,* 24/2-4 (1961), 286-326.

[28] The axiomatic integrity of each semiotic level leads Polanyi to occasionally talk of the lower levels as 'restricting' the higher levels (e.g., TD: 41). There is, however, no violation of the higher levels by the lower levels: the restriction is more that certain segments of reality are 'made available' to the higher semiotic realms, by the semantic 'boundaries' that are built into reality.

world according to the model of a higher level of meaning integrating lower levels of meaning. From Ernst's perspective, the fundamental metaphysical problem with this account is its ontotheological tendency to unite God and creatures within a single metaphysical continuum: both are the same 'type of thing', namely semantic levels, albeit operating at different points in the ontological hierarchy. Consequently, the world-soul unavoidably binds God and creation together as a single comprehensive entity. This moves in two directions. On the one hand, it posits creation as a necessary expression of the divine nature, rather than a gratuitous divine act of love in freedom. If God is understood to relate to the world as a soul relates to the body, then the world must necessarily bear some—or all—of its features: as a formal cause, the same soul could not animate another body; the formal cause determines the identity of the matter that it animate. By extension, God *qua* world-soul could only be the God-soul of one world, and not the God of any other world. The act of creation therefore becomes an expression of nature (governed by necessity) rather than free volition (governed by love). Secondly—moving in the opposite direction—it makes God's being dependent on the lower levels of reality, even as God remains their cause. If God and the world are bound together as a comprehensive entity like body-soul, then God is 'incomplete' without the world that God integrates.

The third possibility that Allen considers is that God remains ontologically independent from the world, but remains able to interact with it.[29] Treating God as an infinite act of integration in God's own right—an act of self-integration that stands over-

[29] Allen, *Transcendance and Immanence*, 132-35.

and-against the world[30]—secures the transcendence of God over the world, but leaves Allen with the problematic task of developing a complex speculative account of how God and the world are structurally related, whilst ontologically divided.

§4.2.2: God as Integration but not Comprehensive Entity

Although a useful heuristic, Allen's three-fold typology of approaches to the transcendence-immanence aporetic risks devolving into a Procrustean bed. Allen does not investigate, for instance, the considerable shades of grey between these identified approaches, nor the very considerable diversity that it homogenizes. Nonetheless, Allen's analysis isolates with precision the central question of Polanyi's account of theological meaning: that of harmonising the transcendence of God over the semantic hierarchy with God's semantic accessibility within that hierarchy by way of articulate frameworks. In so-doing, Allen makes two decisive determinations concerning Polanyian theological ontology. Firstly, Allen articulates God's reality as, in Polanyian terms, that of an infinite integration rather than an infinite comprehensive entity. Secondly, he establishes the third of his identified approaches to theological ontology—that which seeks to balance transcendence and immanence—as the only viable route for the development of a Polanyian doctrine of God. However, two significant questions remain unresolved. Firstly, although Allen seeks to develop an account of God's relationship to the world in terms of both radical transcendence and immanent involvement, he does not develop a systematic account of how this relationship between God and the world can be modelled in a Polanyian universe. Secondly, whilst

[30] Ibid., at 146-51.

Allen determines that the world is possessed of a semantic integrity such that it can be conceived as a comprehensive entity,[31] he neither makes any theological use of this principle, nor does he develop an argument to support it. Against the background of his systematic contention that God is not a comprehensive entity but an integration, the distinction between 'integration' and 'comprehensive entity' comes to assume a foundational significance for Allen, which demands a more developed account of the metaphysical status of comprehensive entities than Allen himself offers.

In part, these weaknesses of Allen's account emerge from his failure to identify the biosemiotic development of Polanyi's ontology as the Ariadne's thread that unites Polanyi's work from *Personal Knowledge* to *Meaning*. As a result, Allen does not adequately stress the ways in which the boundary conditions of 'dual control'[32] give rise to inherently semiotic relations between ontological strata, and that, through these relations, the world is unified as a semiotic hierarchy. The world and the semiotic hierarchy are, then, convertible terms: the semiotic hierarchy does not integrate the world but *is* the world. As a result, since nothing (except God) can integrate itself, the ultimate integration of the world cannot come from a level within the semiotic hierarchy ('the highest level of meaning') but must come from without. God as the intelligent being that constitutes the biosemiotic hierarchy in its integrity is therefore necessarily transcendent over the world even as its principles animate and operate in and through the semiotic hierarchy itself.

[31] There is no discrete demonstration in Allen's monograph about why this should be so. See, for instance: ibid., at 16-28.
[32] Allen tends to use the term 'dual control' whereas Polanyi prefers 'marginal control'.

§4.2.3: Divine Knowledge and the Tacit Dimension

This problematic can be seen most clearly from the perspective of accounts of the divine knowledge. Attempts to develop the paradigm of tacit knowledge 'upwards' into an account of God's own knowledge—firstly of Godself and, derivatively, of the world—face considerable difficulties. Firstly, if the paradigm of tacit knowing is applied in totality to God's self-knowledge, then God could never logically have an eternal focal knowledge: tacit knowledge is always vectorial,[33] and there can be no metaphysical 'gap' between a hypothetical 'from' and 'to' in God.[34] Secondly, if this were taken to mean that God could come to focal knowledge of the world, where there is such a vectorial gap between knower and known, then God Godself would effectively 'gain' something from creation, *viz.* both the content of focal knowledge of the world, and, indeed, focal knowledge itself.[35] Thirdly, like all focal knowledge, this focal knowledge would depend upon a foundational reality—the most basic ontological level—that could never be known focally, but would only ever be known through being integrated into knowledge of focal realities. Some level of reality would, therefore, necessarily stand outside of God's explicit knowledge.

The most obvious candidate for this 'excluded noetic' would be God's knowledge of Godself. This inverts the traditional Thomistic ordering—that God knows the world through knowledge of God's own essence—and reverts to something of a world-soul

[33] See §2.4, above. PK: 59.
[34] ST I, q3, a8.
[35] See below. ST I, q14 a1. On the necessity of God knowing things other than himself, see: ST I, q14 a5. In Thomistic terms, the hub of the argument is the divine simplicity: God as *actus purus* cannot know by the perfection of a *species,* which is the actualisation of a potentiality, but rather knows the world through knowledge of God's own essence (which is identical with God's act of existence).

model: Godself is known only in knowledge of focal realities, just as the human body is known only in its knowing other realities. In the end, Allen concedes the necessity of constituting God in a state of exception from the hierarchy of tacit knowing; theological ontology is, then, adapted to accommodate the necessary divine transcendence over tacit-explicit relationality.[36] This issue is revisited in §4.6.2, below.

§4.2.4: Allen on Christology and Mediation

Allen's failure to develop the God-creature relationship in terms of the integration of the biosemiotic hierarchy as a comprehensive entity contributes to a number of further weaknesses in his synthesis, which largely cohere around questions of mediation. The first of these weaknesses concerns the mediatorial activity of God Godself in the person of Jesus Christ. Viewed from the perspective of Christology, an internal tension marks Allen's theological ontology. On the one hand, Allen avowedly works with a narrowly pre-determined set of theological presuppositions—which he terms 'Christian theism'—that govern his approach to Polanyi's account of religion.[37] In his treatment of the immanent Trinity, [38] Allen's 'Christian theism' resembles 'classical theism', affirming divine simplicity and eternal triune relationality. On the other hand, when it comes to the economic Trinity, Allen's theological ontology considerably diverges from that of classical theism. In particular, Allen rejects classical metaphysical accounts of the incarnation, seeing dyothelite Christology as an unnecessary

[36] Allen, *Transcendance and Immanence*, 125-31.
[37] This is something that Allen himself acknowledges to be embedded within the stated aims of his project, see: ibid., at 1.
[38] Ibid., at 155-70.

'hypostatisation' of the will.[39] Allen's difficulty in affirming the non-competitive hypostatic union of created and uncreated agency in Christ suggests that his theological ontology has not adequately moved away from a contrastive account of divine transcendence. Likewise, because Allen moves primarily by extrapolation towards 'Christian theism', he does not consider—as Crewdson does—whether Polanyi would have rejected divine simplicity in favour of a process account of divine becoming.[40]

Secondly, Allen does not adequately assess the contribution made by the category of the 'transnatural', which he broaches only as an epistemological (and not metaphysical) theme.[41] As a result of the controversy surrounding the publication of *Meaning,* which was much more active in the 1980s when Allen was developing his thesis, Allen is notably cautious in his approach to Polanyi's later thought, and makes no explicit use of the centrifugal vector of embodiment in the development of either a theological epistemology or ontology. Consequently, Allen does not adequately attend to the intrinsicist shift in Polanyi's later metaphysical thought (as identified in §2.5.3) and remains within the earlier extrinsicist framework of commitment, in which faith always involves a 'noetic gamble'.

Thirdly, although Allen briefly develops an account of grace as the indwelling of God and the human person,[42] he offers no developed account of worship, which—as will be seen in Chapter 6—Polanyi understands as the distinctive mode of Christian

[39] Ibid., at 171-82, at 81.
[40] Joan Crewdson, *Christian Doctrine in the Light of Michael Polanyi's Theory of Personal Knowledge: a personalist theology* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1994), Joan Crewdson, 'The Relevance of Michael Polanyi's Thought for Christian Faith and Life', *Tradition and Discovery,* 9/1 (1981), 6-12.
[41] Allen, *Transcendance and Immanence*, 70-76.
[42] Ibid., at 155-67.

inquiry.[43] Indeed, Allen's difficulty in negotiating the shift to intrinsicism is particularly evident in two foci of his monograph, where he acknowledges significant hermeneutical hurdles: firstly, his difficulty parsing Polanyi's critique of Paul Tillich's account of the relationship of theological meaning and history;[44] secondly, the challenge of establishing a realist ontology of the sacraments.[45] Allen's proposed Polanyian doctrine of God falls short, then, at precisely the point that Cornelius Ernst was most concerned to stress: the theology of mediation.

§4.3: Polanyi's Embedded Doctrine of God as Ultimate Meaning

The previous section argued that an analogical account of God as an infinite integration, rather than as a comprehensive entity, represented the most viable route towards a Polanyian doctrine of God. This section moves beyond the foundational work of Richard Allen by addressing a key weakness of Allen's approach. Whereas Allen failed to take due account of the biosemiotic dimensions of Polanyi's ontology, the analysis in this section locates Polanyi's implicit doctrine of God within the broader horizon of his semantic ontology. Polanyi's understanding of God is, therefore, seen to be embedded within the horizon of his concern to resituate epistemology within a holistic framework of meaning. From this reading of Polanyi's implicit theology, a set of characteristic features of Polanyi's theological ontology is generated, which explicitly delimits the contours of Polanyi's doctrine of God. Six ontological features of Polanyi's semantic doctrine of God are identified (designated O1-O6), along with five epistemological

[43] PK: 281.
[44] Allen, *Transcendance and Immanence*, 40-44.
[45] Ibid., at 168-76. Allen does not consider the possibility of instrumental causality.

criteria derived from these ontological determinations (designated E1-5). Whilst this chapter engages Polanyi and Ernst on the ontological criteria, the next chapter turns to a consideration of the epistemological consequences of this ontology, in the light of this ontological analysis developed here.

§4.3.1: Polanyi's Account of Religion as 'Ontology of Meaning'

A hint towards this semantic approach to Polanyi's doctrine of God can be found in the gnomic remark of Colin Weightman that the most adequate way of reading Polanyi's treatment of religion is as a quest for an "ontology of meaning".[46] Indeed, something like an ontology of meaning is more explicitly indicated by Polanyi in his unpublished reflections on his conversation with Paul Tillich:

> "*The hopes of Tillich to see a divinity beyond any coherent entity corresponds to my own perspective. […] The vision of an indeterminate meaning, which floats beyond all materially structured meanings, exists on the lines of a stratified sequence of meanings ultimately pointing at an unsubstantial existence. […] I would follow this aspect of religion by a theory of mythical experience. […] The link is unmade, but I believe its traces can be seen in vision within a stratified universe.*"[47]

This comment is, however, scarcely developed by Weightman,[48] and its precise meaning is unclear.[49] Weightman, however, emphasises that the essential content of

[46] Weightman, *Theology in a Polanyian Universe*, 216 .
[47] PP 12.3: Edited Notes 2nd March 1971', p. 4
[48] The recognition that, on Polanyi's account, 'being' and 'meaning' are somewhat convertible is not, of course, unique to Weightman. See, for instance: Phil Mullins, 'The Real as Meaningful', *Tradition and Discovery,* 26/3 (1999), 42-50.
[49] In support of his suggestion, Weightman cites M: 157-169, a section that straddles the conclusion of Polanyi's chapter on the acceptance of religious meaning and the start of the chapter on 'order'. It is

religion, according to Polanyi, is the affirmation of an inherently meaningful cosmos,[50] a reality that is hinted at by the intuitive way in which we presuppose that there is a coherence— a meaning to discover—in the world that we investigate.[51] In other words, according to Weightman, Polanyian religious frameworks provide an account of the meaningfulness of the meanings that we discover in the world.

Weightman's phrase is immediately suggestive of Cornelius Ernst's own quest for an 'ontology of meaning', which—as Chapters 1 and 2 demonstrated—shares with Polanyi a concern to re-orientate contemporary epistemology within the perspective of meaning. Weightman and Ernst, however, use the phrase 'ontology of meaning' in decidedly different ways. For Weightman, the ontology of meaning emerges from reflection on the ontological status of the meanings we encounter in the world (the 'of' is an objective genitive, and the question is what ontology—or indeed theology—must be affirmed if these meanings are to be given their full metaphysical integrity). For Ernst, the 'ontology of meaning' is indicative of an ontological picture of the world generated and governed by the category of meaning, as an alternative to the category of 'being' as used in scholasticism (the 'of', here, is a subjective genitive, the ontology is built out of an account of meaning). The subjective genitive of Ernst's 'ontology of meaning', however, encompasses the objective genitive of Weightman: constructing a thematic ontology using the category of meaning contains within itself the task of

hard to know precisely what Weightman intended to indicate with this citation, but it seems suggestive of the ways in which Polanyi's account of religious knowledge coheres with a vision of the world as ordered in intrinsically meaningful ways, which Polanyi sees as inherently religious. Weightman has not consulted the Polanyi archive, and so does not differentiate between the Proschean editorial additions and the original Polanyi lectures.

[50] M: 160.

[51] M: 159-160.

providing an ontological account of quotidian meanings. Reading Weightman's suggestive hint in the more extensive terms of Ernst's subjective genitive, however, opens intriguing possibilities for understanding the Polanyian doctrine of God.

God, for Polanyi, is the point of 'unthinkable consummation' of the semantic world:[52] religion, which points towards this instance of unthinkable consummation, is the highest meaning within the hierarchy of creaturely knowledge, because it has the most comprehensive integrative scope:[53] religious articulate frameworks seek to integrate the whole of the world of meaning, to provide an account of the inherent meaningfulness of the world itself. The answer to this question lies in God, who is known by the indwelling of religious frameworks, which attend from the meaningfulness of the world to the infinite source of that meaning, which is itself embodied in those meanings. The foundational principle of Polanyi's implicit account of God, then, is that it is developed in irreducibly semantic terms (O1).

Given Polanyi's intentional re-location of epistemology within an ontology of meaning, this semantic account of divine being is unsurprising. Importantly, however, God's semantic status as the ultimate point of consummation of meanings is not merely one aspect of Polanyi's doctrine of God, positing 'ultimate meaning' as one divine perfection alongside others. Rather, when read from within his semantic ontology, God's semantic perfection is foundational to Polanyi's understanding of the divine identity, and God's other perfections are refractions of it. This is consistent with Polanyi's

[52] PK: 428.

[53] The distinction between God as the point of unthinkable consummation and religion as the *highest* meaning in which the human mind can dwell is discussed in principle O6, below.

emphasis on the coinherence of knowing and being, which is a foundational axiom of his semantic ontology itself. A semantic doctrine of God developed in Polanyian terms is not only advancing an epistemological claim, but necessarily an ontological one (O2).

Understood as the ultimate meaning identified by O1 and O2, God is the privileged and primordial semantic domain that gives coherence to all the levels of the biosemiotic hierarchy as a hierarchy, and which, therefore, constitutes the world in a created coherence as a comprehensive entity. The combined force of O1 and O2 posits God *qua* absolute meaning as the definitive unitive point of the hierarchy of creaturely meanings, whether that hierarchy is considered under its noetic or ontic aspects. Although religion is primarily ordered towards the indwelling of this infinite integrating reality *per se*, religious frameworks nonetheless necessarily affirm an intrinsically meaningful world, as Polanyi recognises.[54] The characteristically religious affirmation of the world as inherently meaning is, however, a secondary affirmation. Whilst Polanyi sees this affirmation as the distinctive feature of religious discourse, within the logic of religion itself this affirmation of the semantic status of the cosmos depends upon a prior intuition of the primordial source of that meaningfulness.

§4.3.2: Semantic Ontology and Ontotheology

The semantic doctrine of God designated by O1 and O2, whilst talking of God as 'meaning', affirms that God cannot strictly exist as a level or instance within the

[54] M: 160.

creaturely biosemiotic hierarchy of meanings (O3). The divine Meaning and creaturely meanings are in some way related, but they are not united in a common genus. Just as the intellectual blueprint of a machine (its 'formal cause') is located in the mind of the designer (outside of the machine itself),[55] so God, as the integration of the hierarchy of meanings, necessarily transcends it.[56] Thus, in a way analogous to the principle of boundary conditions of marginal control, the relationship between the divine meaning and the biosemiotic hierarchy of meaning is not reversible. This means that although God can be said to be the meaning of the world, the world is not the meaning of God. The absoluteness of the divine Meaning is only unilaterally related to hierarchy of meaning, and is not generated from within, or generated by, that hierarchy, but is nonetheless an expression of it. The hierarchy depends upon God as the ultimate Meaning, but God does not depend upon or presuppose the hierarchy. In other words, Polanyi does not succumb to the temptation of ontotheology by locating God within this semantic hierarchy, whether as the alpha or omega.

The account of God as the semantic reality that integrates the hierarchy of creaturely meanings, as described in O1-O3, narrates a relationship of essential dependence intrinsic to creaturely meanings. The divine 'integration' of the creaturely meanings that depend upon it must necessarily be ontologically distinguished from the new integration that is brought about by knowledge of God (O4). Whilst religious meanings are enacted within the hierarchy of meaning, they are not simply embedded into the world, to be discovered and uncovered: the animation of religious meanings by

[55] PK: 257; PK: 346-347.
[56] TD: 38-39.

the centrifugal vector carries the subject beyond the world of creaturely meanings, into a new ontological register. To articulate this in the idiom of Cornelius Ernst, religious meanings 'dynamically transcend' the world: they are simultaneously in-and-beyond the world. The semantic integration that enacts divine meaning within the world endows creaturely meanings with a new meaning that is beyond the autonomous reach of the capacities embedded within the biosemiotic hierarchy itself, but both the transcendence of the ultimate meaning and the reality of the endowment are safeguarded by the centrifugal vector.

The real ontological change in the biosemiotic hierarchy that is worked by the enactment of theological knowledge does not, however, imperil the anti-ontotheological principle O3. Although human meanings are integrated in the enactment of theological knowledge, a similar integration does not apply in reverse: the centrifugal vector that brings about theological knowledge in the subject does not also constitute a change in God, just as the centrifugal vector of symbolisation does not constitute a change in the objective characteristics of the flag.[57]

Two further ontological principles can be extrapolated from this. Although God transcends the biosemiotic hierarchy, the enactment of religious meaning by the semantic integration of creaturely meanings into ultimate meaning constitutes a real change within the creaturely domain (O5). In other words, ultimate meaning really does 'make contact' with the levels of meaning in the creaturely hierarchy of meanings, and by so doing changes them, without violating their integrity (O6). Without loss of

[57] M: 72*ff.*

divinity, God really makes Godself known within the world, without ever violating the world *qua* world. This is a further consequence of the centrifugal vector, by which a real embodiment occurs within the integrity of another meaning. There is, then, no sense that the divine meaning—either ontically or noetically—annihilates or interrupts the quotidian flow of creaturely meanings, even as it gives them a new integrity and configuration. The dialectical tension between O5 ('real supernatural impact') and O6 ('real natural integrity') is a semantic refraction of the dialectic explored by Allen under the rubric of transcendence and immanence, and an iteration of the dynamic that Ernst sought to articulate with his account of dynamic transcendence.

§4.3.3: Theological Epistemology as a Function of Ontology

These ontological features of Polanyi's implicit doctrine of God govern his account of how God is known in God's dynamic transcendence of religious articulate frameworks. In accordance with Polanyi's emphasis on the coinherence of knowing and being, theological ontology and theological epistemology are intimately related. From the ontological aspects of Polanyi's implicit doctrine of God, designated by the principles O1-O6 above, a number of epistemological implications can be derived.

The first cluster of these epistemological consequences relate to the intrinsic knowability of the divine 'object' of theological knowledge. The unique status of the ultimate meaning vis-à-vis the hierarchy of creaturely meanings gives theological knowledge a unique metaphysical position. Firstly, because God infinitely transcends the biosemiotic hierarchy of meaning (O1-3)—because God is not a comprehensive

entity—Polanyi necessarily gives a certain priority to the *via negativa* (E1).[58] Nonetheless, whilst the ontic relationship of dependence does not imply a reverse relationship of epistemic access (O3-6), theological knowledge really does make contact with creaturely meaning, through the mediating role of religious articulate frameworks (O5). Polanyi, then, allows a limited space for 'natural theology' in the innate desire of the subject to integrate the diversity of the world in a single religious vision (E2). This natural theological impulse can, however, only reach consummation by the divine meaning making itself known within the hierarchy of meaning: by God's self-revelation (E3).[59]

This inherently limited character of natural theological knowledge resembles the inherently frustrated nature of Polanyi's early understanding of religious affectivity. This is balanced, however, by the second set of epistemological consequences of Polanyi's implicit theological ontology, which relate to the full involvement of the subject in theological knowledge, secured by the centrifugal vector. Firstly, as an imaginative integration of incompatibles, through which the subject embodies themselves in the object by the centrifugal vector, theological knowledge is always an event of communion with God (E4). Secondly, because the centrifugal vector carries the subject into the object of knowledge, the encounter described by E4 is necessarily personally integrative of the subject who comes to knowledge of God (E5). In religious knowledge, the subject (re-)embodies themselves in the infinite and primordial point of their own origins. This dynamic is analogous to the way in which the subjective

[58] PK: 210-211. Polanyi's remarks on the apophatic have been developed by: Harold Kuester, 'Polanyi on Religion', *Faith and Philosophy,* 1/1 (1984), 77-88.
[59] PK: 298.

meanings of a knower are re-embodied within a flag, without changing the constitution of the flag itself. The subject who encounters the divine object finds their personal life history, their memories, their desires and their intellectual affectivity to be fulfilled and confirmed—integrated in a new way—by their being drawn into religious knowledge.

In summary, this section has identified Polanyi's implicit doctrine of God as ultimate meaning and indicated the epistemological consequences that follow from this underlying theological ontology. God is the infinite semantic integration that constitutes the world as a meaningful comprehensive entity, without Godself becoming a comprehensive entity.

§4.4: Cornelius Ernst's Doctrine of God as the 'Meaning of meaning'

The previous section identified the key features—both ontological and epistemological—that characterise Polanyi's implicit theological ontology. This section demonstrates the correspondence of Polanyi's implicit doctrine of God with Cornelius Ernst's explicitly articulated doctrine of God as the Meaning of meaning. It is argued that Polanyi's and Ernst's doctrines of God share the ontological features (O1-5) identified in §4.3. Additionally, Ernst is able to provide a necessary supplement to Polanyi's synthesis in the form a doctrine of creation that safeguards the principles of transcendence and immanence.

Whereas Polanyi writes without formal theological training, Ernst's doctrine of God is explicitly developed in the language of speculative philosophical theology. As outlined

in Chapter 1, Ernst's doctrine of God is stands in continuity with a particular strand of English Dominican Thomism,[60] albeit refracted through the language of contemporary philosophy. These generic differences between Polanyi and Ernst problematize any straightforward comparison of their theological ontologies.

Ever cautious in theological terrain, Polanyi only alludes to the ways in which his understanding the world of meaning as a comprehensive entity implies an infinite integrating meaning that transcends it; Ernst, on the other hand, labours the point. The heart of Ernst's conceptual reorientation of ontology is its explicit coherence around his doctrine of God as the Meaning of meaning.[61] Although Ernst moved towards this semantic re-articulation of Thomistic metaphysics from epistemological (and pedagogical) concerns, the theological logic of his synthesis moves in the opposite direction. Securing an account of God as the Meaning of meaning is a means of articulating a worldview in which theology is not preceded by an atheological epistemology or ontology but is always already derived from his doctrine of God. Ernst's semantic ontology is, therefore, deeply theocentric. Whereas Aquinas grounded his metaphysical account of contingent being in the primordial divine *esse*, so Ernst secures the unity of his semantic *systema mundi* with reference to a primordial and privileged instance of meaning: God, understood as the "meaning of meaning",[62] the source,[63] unification,[64] and possibility[65] of all creaturely meanings. Indeed, creatures exist,

[60] *Viz.* that mediated by Victor White, see: §1.3.
[61] ME: 19-36, 79, 156.
[62] ME: 52-56. In direct quotations, I have adopted Ernst's capitalisation (or lack thereof). Elsewhere, I have capitalised 'Meaning of meaning' to emphasise the ways in which Ernst's use of the phrase (presumably intentionally) parallels Heidegger's Being/beings distinction.
[63] ME: 55.
[64] ME: 79.
[65] ME: 34.

according to Ernst's metaphysical picture, by the gift of a finite semantic participation in the infinite divine semantic being.[66] Ernst's theological ontology, then, explicitly affirms Polanyian principles O1 and O2: the doctrine of God is articulated in explicitly semantic terms (O1), and this always already involves ontological claims about the relationship between the divine Meaning and creaturely meanings (O2). Ernst, however, places more emphasis on O2 than Polanyi, overtly proposing an ontology of meaning (rather than primarily an epistemology). For Ernst, O1 and O2 are dual aspects of a single more basic ontological claim: the ontology of meaning (O2) and the semantic account of divine being (O1) are mutually implicatory.

Polanyian principles O3, O5 and O6 govern the relationship between the ultimate instance of meaning (Ernst's 'Meaning of meaning', i.e. God) and creaturely meanings. These principles seek to balance the real transcendence of God over the created hierarchy of meanings (O3), the 'accessibility' of divine meaning within the world of creaturely meanings (O5) and the integrity of the world of creaturely meanings, even under the impact of the divine meaning (O6). For Ernst, an account of this relationship is provided by the doctrine of creation, about which Polanyi has notably little to say.[67]

---

[66] Ernst's account of human semantic agency as a participation in the divine semantic being anticipates some of John Milbank's concern to see human linguistic agency as participative in the divine linguistic being. The evident affinities conceal, however, a deeper discontinuity. Ernst is concerned to affirm meaning (rather than language) insofar as he intends to unify all of being within a semantic ontology, without prioritising linguistic centres; that is, to emphasise that all being manifests itself in meaning, and that we experience the world as in some way soaked with meanings, even at the most primitive and apparently non-linguistic levels. This expansive concern is also evident in Polanyi's use of semiosis to unite his semantic hierarchy. See: John Milbank, 'The Linguistic Turn as a Theological Turn', *The Word Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997): 84-120.

[67] It has largely been theologians who have posed the question of a doctrine of creation to Polanyian philosophy, see: Celia Deane-Drummond, *Creation Through Wisdom: Theology and the New Biology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2003): 10-14, Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'Theological Questions to Scientists', *Zygon,* 16/1 (1981), 65-77, Durwood Foster, 'Pannenberg's Polanyianism', *Zygon,* 17/1 (1982), 75-81, Crewdson, *Christian Doctrine*, 183-264.

For Ernst, the meanings-Meaning relationship is identical with the relationship between creature and creator, just as the relationship between beings and Being is accounted for by the doctrine of creation. Indeed, a genetic account of Ernst's development of the phrase the 'Meaning of meaning' (which he uses in a highly distinctive way) illustrates the ways in which Ernst negotiates a semantic account of this primordial, protological, relationship between ultimate Meaning and the creaturely meanings that depend upon it.

§4.4.1: A Genealogy of the 'Meaning of meaning'

Ernst appropriates the phrase 'Meaning of meaning' from a philosophical, rather than a theological, source: a response of Claude Lévi-Strauss to Paul Ricoeur in the context of a critical dialogue published in *Éspirit*.[68] By transferring this philosophical concept into a theological context, Ernst transposes it into protological terms and integrates it into his own inherently theological understanding of meaning as a dynamic process and praxis.[69] Although this theological transposition leaves little of the original contextual usage standing, the way in which Ernst differentiates his own use of the phrase from both Ricoeur and Lévi-Strauss is indicative of his own theological priorities.

The dispute between Ricoeur and Lévi-Strauss concerned, *inter alia*, the question of the 'source' of the disparate meanings that are entertained by a linguistic community

[68] ME: 52. See '*un sens du sens*' in: Paul Ricoeur, 'Réponses', *Éspirit,* 31 (1963), 628-53.
[69] ME: 55.

in the spontaneous use of their language. The central question concerns the origin of meaning: from whence does meaning arise, and what constitutes the meaningfulness of meanings? In other words: what makes something meaningful rather than meaningless? The complex positions adopted by Lévi-Strauss and Ricoeur need not detain us: what is important in determining Ernst's appropriation of the phrase 'meaning of meaning' is how Ernst understood their dispute (a reading that is certainly liable to critique). For Lévi-Strauss, as Ernst understood him, meaning emerged through an architectonic assembly of non-meaningful elements into meaningful structures.[70] According to this reading of Lévi-Strauss, meaning is always reducible to non-meaningful elements: behind meanings there is no primordial meaning but only non-meaning, which consequently always threatens the world of meaning with annihilation, or regression by collapse from structured meaning into senseless chaos. In Ernst's judgment,[71] this emphasis on structure as the source of meaning implies the type of 'picturing' (or 'mapping'), together with the systematic closure of language, that the later Wittgenstein's philosophy (and Chomsky's theory of competence)[72] has philosophically and linguistically undermined.[73] Ernst's critique of Lévi-Strauss resembles Polanyi's critique of Laplacean approaches to 'mapping' knowledge within conceptual space, which were discussed in §2.2.2.[74]

[70] ME: 52-53. The extent of Ernst's engagement with Lévi-Strauss is hard to ascertain. The only other reference is located at ME: 11, where Ernst engages with 'structuralism' as a movement rather than with the details of Lévi-Strauss's writings.
[71] ME: 53-54.
[72] ME: 54.
[73] ME: 13-27.
[74] PK: 147-149.

Ernst has somewhat more sympathy with Ricoeur's view (disallowed by Lévi-Strauss) that meaning issues from a primordial saturated source. Ernst understands Ricoeur to be arguing for a metaphysical 'gap' between meanings and their pre-meaningful source:[75] meaning, according to Ricoeur, is disclosed by symbols within particular contexts. These symbols are overdetermined with latent meanings that are cashed out by hermeneutics, as the discipline that renews and unfolds the primary meaning by rendering it as meaning *for* a given subject and context.[76] For Ernst, this risks implying that meaning in its primordial form as symbol is something static, deposited in symbols for appropriation in meanings. The Meaning of meaning would, then, be like a semantic storehouse, or a capital deposit from which we make semantic withdrawals. Although Ernst has more sympathy with Ricoeur, ultimately, Ernst nonetheless finds that Ricoeur, like Lévi-Strauss, errs by positing an extrinsicist relationship between meanings and their source. Ernst seeks a more actualistic understanding of meaning as the irreducible disclosure of being, which is "a disclosure of mind in action, of 'mind' as an indefinitely fluid activity of meaning".[77]

§4.4.2: Meanings as Meaningful by Participation in Meaning

The Polanyian criterion O3 concerns this relationship between the integrative meaning and the diverse world of creaturely meanings, seeking to safeguard the transcendent integrity of the ultimate meaning. In this respect, Ernst's overtly

[75] ME: 54-55.
[76] ME: 55. As we will see in Chapter 6, Ernst also associates this account with Mircea Eliade.
[77] Cornelius Ernst, 'A Preface to Theology', *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford,* 2 (1971), 1-8 at 4.

theological framework can supplement Polanyi's philosophical reflection. For Ernst, it is the relation of participation that obtains between meanings and Meaning that safeguards the dialectic transcendence-immanence of ultimate meaning that Allen's reading of Polanyi identifies. As noted in §1.3, the role that participation plays in Aquinas's metaphysics is a matter of scholarly dispute, partly because the metaphysical principle of participation has more often been invoked in scholarly literature than it has been explicitly defined. Often, 'participation' seems to imply a quasi-mystical construct that somehow subsumes distinctions without violating a proper diversity, resolving creaturely aporiai by appealing to an ethereal world. According to Ernst's usage, however, participation can be more sharply defined as the relationship that obtains between a substance (a) that receives a property (p) that is proper to another substance (b). In particular, it is the relationship that obtains between creatures (a) and God (b) as they are brought to share in God's life of meaning (p). In the Thomistic synthesis, as Ernst mediates it, the Neoplatonic category of participation is fused to a dominant Aristotelian account of causality as the movement of an entity from potency to act in a certain respect: where act is both *actuality* and *activity*. In other words, by a limited participation in God, the creature is moved to act in respect of meaning. The real distinction between p and b—between the subject and its properties—which necessarily obtains in the case of creatures, is not fractures in the case of God, who (because of the divine simplicity) is identical with God's perfections. Whereas creatures have and enact meanings, God is Meaning: the property of Meaning differs from Godself only in mental abstraction and not in ontological reality.[78]

[78] A central axiom of Thomistic metaphysics is the identity of essence and existence in God: God's essential nature is identical with his existence, whilst all creatures are moved to existence by the reception by participation of that existence which is proper to God alone.

According to Ernst, then, for a creature to have meaning is to be given a finite participative share in God's own Meaning: it is, more simply put, to be created. This safeguards Polanyian principle O3: meanings are constituted by a relationship to Meaning, but Meaning is not constituted by a relation to meanings, since the perfection of meaning is proper to God's essence. In the language of the Thomistic metaphysical lexicon, there is a real relation in meanings (creation) to Meaning (creator), but no relation in Meaning to meanings.[79]

This Ernstian supplement of Polanyi's principle O3 is intimately connected with Ernst's disruption of the extrinsicism that he identifies in the accounts of both Ricoeur and Lévi-Strauss. Ernst's version of Polanyi's principle O2—that the transcendent point of ultimate meaning ontologically (and not only epistemologically) unifies the hierarchy of meanings—has two implications. Firstly, meaning is not only a gloss on being, but a mode of being in its historical manifestation.[80] As such, secondly, the hierarchy is structured both from within and from without by the principle of meaning: according to the principle of dynamic transcendence, meaning is in-and-beyond the world.[81] In other words, meaning is not imposed on an antecedent neutral and inert matter from outside, but emerges from the very nature of the world as constituted by a participative share in the divine life. When taken in conjunction with Ernst's understanding of being as a process and a praxis, this situates creaturely meanings *within* the divine meaning. The meanings of creatures emerge within the event of God's continued sharing of his divine

[79] ST I, q. 28, a. 1, *ad* 3.
[80] ME: 11-18.
[81] See §1.2, above.

meaning with creatures. Meaning and meanings are not, then, 'outside' of one another in the way that Hemel Hempstead is outside of the M25 circle but are bound together by the divine act that constitutes meanings by establishing them in a relationship of real dependence on Meaning.

This account of the Meaning-meanings relationship forecloses any conceptual space for a 'meaningless existence': there cannot (*pace* Lévi-Strauss) be an actually existent space of anti-meaning; *pace* Ricoeur, meanings derive their meaningfulness not from something adjunctive to their being, but from their act of being itself. Where meaning is frustrated or destroyed, this is by declension or privation, not by the existence of a neutral space that is antecedent to meaning itself. To transpose this into the Polanyian lexicon, creaturely meanings exist as fragmentary embodiments of the ultimate Meaning. Consequently, the centrifugal vector has a more ontologically basic status than the centripetal vector. The whole world of meanings, including instantiations of the centripetal vector, depend upon an antecedent centrifugal vector, through which all creaturely meanings embody aspects of ultimate meaning.

§4.4.3: Polanyi's Absent Doctrine of Creation

Ernst's doctrine of creation, then, gives a more explicitly theological grounding to the Polanyian principle O6. Similar ontologies of participation have been invoked by contemporary theologians—especially those associated with or sympathetic to Radical Orthodoxy—precisely as a means of undermining the metaphysical basis of an ontotheology that treats God as *a* being within the semantic-ontic hierarchy (albeit the

infinite or highest being).[82] Framing the question of the 'location' of God in these spatial terms therefore already determines the answer to the question. The 'location' of God within Polanyi's biosemiotic hierarchy would imply a univocal understanding of meaning, as if God and creatures were meaningful in the same way, albeit by differing degrees. By emphasising the unilateral dependence of meanings on Meaning within a relationship of participation, Ernst inscribes a doctrine of analogy in which predicates as applied to the divine perfections differ both in kind and degree from the same predicates as they are applied to creatures. The ever-greater degree of dissimilarity within the relationship of analogy commits Ernst to the first of the epistemological principles derived from Polanyi's thought (E1), the prioritisation of the *via negativa*.[83]

The distinction mapped by the Polanyian criterion O4, between the intrinsic dependence of meanings upon the points of absolute integration and the effective integration of creaturely meanings by the action of divine meaning in history, corresponds, in Ernstian analysis, to the distinction between protology (*exitus*) and soteriology (*reditus*). Finite creaturely meanings are, then, not only consummated in God's infinite meaning (*reditus* to God) but are also intrinsically dependent on this infinite meaning for their own inherent meaningfulness (*exitus* from God). From an Ernstian perspective, Polanyi's account of religious meaning tends towards an eschatology without protology: consummation without creation. Consequently, it is

[82] For an analysis of ontotheology vis-à-vis contemporary philosophical theology, see: Milbank, 'Only Theology overcomes Metaphysics'.

[83] See the comparison between the *via negativa* of Aquinas and Wittgenstein in ME: 18-24. Ernst is attentive to the role played by the apophatic thought of Ps.-Dionysius in Thomistic formulations of analogy, see: ME: 57-73. A more developed examination, perhaps stressing the Aristotelian framework of grace more than Ernst, is offered by: Bernhard Blankenhorn, *The Mystery of Union with God: Dionysian Mysticism in Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 2015): 215-442.

more appropriate to talk about Polanyi's absent doctrine of *creation*, rather than his absent doctrine of God. Polanyi's synthesis not only lacks an explicit account of the consummation of all meanings in the transcendent divine meaning, it also lacks an integral metaphysical account of the meaningfulness of the meanings that are encountered within the world.

This section has identified an essential conformity between Ernst's doctrine of God and the principles O1-6 that govern Polanyi's implicit theological ontology, as identified in the previous section. Notwithstanding this general isomorphism between Polanyi's implicit theological ontology and Ernst's doctrine of God as the Meaning of meaning, however, Ernst's theological synthesis develops Polanyi's account in several crucial respects. In particular, Ernst supplements Polanyi's theological ontology with a doctrine of creation, which facilitates a more complete account of the relationship between creaturely instances of meaning and the ultimate divine meaning upon which they depend. On Ernst's account, the act of creation is God's free decision to give creatures a participative share in his own semantic existence. The next two sections give further specification to the two aspects of the proposed semantic doctrine of God: firstly, the nature of God's own immanent semantic life; secondly, the character that is proper to creaturely participation in God's own immanent semantic life.

§4.5: Trinity and Meaning

This section considers the first of these lacunae in Polanyi's implicit doctrine of God: an account of God's own immanent semantic life. This section identifies the

Trinitarian structure of Ernst's semantic doctrine of God, and, in particular, indicates the ways in which it functions as a 'link' between theological ontology and theological epistemology, thus providing a theological account of the Polanyian axiom of the coinherence of knowing and being. The role of Chalcedonian Christology in a Polanyian-Ernstian account is discussed in the next chapter in relation to theological epistemology.

Ernst's doctrine of God as the Meaning of meaning makes a decisive move beyond Polanyi's implicit semantic doctrine of God in developing an irreducibly Trinitarian account of God's immanent life. Whereas Ernst is unequivocally committed to a Trinitarian account of the divine being, Polanyi's implicit theological ontology is 'practically unitarian'.[84] Although Polanyi's evaluation of religious myth draws upon aspects of Christian belief (such as the resurrection[85] and sacramental discipline),[86] he does not refer to the doctrine of the Trinity,[87] nor is it immediately indicated by the Polanyian criteria O1-O6 enumerated in §4.2 above. Likewise, although Polanyi refers to the religious significance of Jesus, he does not address the metaphysical status of Christ, nor does he refer in any way to the doctrine of the incarnation. These material differences reflect the disciplinary difference between the systematic theologian (Ernst) and the post-critical philosopher (Polanyi): whilst Ernst's Thomistic tradition affirms the possibility of philosophical knowledge of God's existence (*an sit*), it denies the

[84] Karl Rahner used this phrase to illustrate the disconnection between the explicitly Trinitarian character of systematic theology and the 'practically unitarian' character of much Christian preaching and spirituality, see: Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* (London: Crossroads Press, 1997): 10-15.
[85] M: 159.
[86] M: 152; PK: 210-12.
[87] Polanyi seems to have been aware of this lacuna in his presentation of the Christian *mythos*. PP 22.1 contains an undated fragment consisting of three pages of handwritten notes on myth that includes some assessment of the Trinity. "The fight against Manicheism and Arianism, culminating in the doctrine of the Trinity at the Council of Trent." Presumably these notes were taken in the mid-1970s, and Polanyi has confused the Council of Trent with the First Council of Nicaea.

possibility of reaching knowledge of the doctrine of the Trinity from outside the domain of revelation.[88] Nonetheless, a development of a Trinitarian account of ultimate meaning gives dogmatic specification to a Polanyian philosophical instinct. By treating God as an infinite semantic integration but not a comprehensive entity, Polanyi's implicit theological ontology anticipates a dogmatic account of God as lacking any form of composition, whilst nonetheless being a pure and dynamic event of relational communion.

§4.5.1: The Procedure of Supplementation

Before considering the specifics of Ernst's Trinitarian account of God's semantic being, it is first necessary to briefly consider the procedure of supplementation that is employed to allow Ernst's doctrine of God to fill the lacunae in Polanyi's implicit theological ontology.

That Ernst's Trinitarian doctrine of God moves beyond Polanyi's implicit theological ontology by generating an explicit Trinitarian account of God's semantic life does not imply that there is a fundamental incompatibility or discontinuity between the two. Polanyi's embedded account, which emphasises the transcendent unity of God as infinite integration, resembles Ernst's Thomistic understanding of God as *actus purus*.[89] In this way, Polanyi's embedded theological ontology emphasises divine simplicity (the treatise *de Deo Uno*), but does not follow Ernst in systematically correlating this with

[88] Thomas Joseph White, *Wisdom in the Face of Modernity: A Study in Thomistic Natural Theology* (Naples FL: Sapientia Press, 2009): 67-102.
[89] ME: 19*f.*

the divine triunity (*de Deo Trino*). Ernst follows Aquinas in relating the dogmatic material concerning the oneness God and the Trinity not as discrete and independent blocks of material, but as inextricably implicated, each entailing the other.[90] In other words, the doctrine of the Trinity is not a second layer within theological ontology, resting atop an otherwise unchanged philosophical account of divine simplicity. Rather, Ernst's account of the divine simplicity is configured by the doctrine of the Trinity, and *vice versa*.

In methodological terms, an Ernstian appropriation of Polanyi's theological ontology will proceed by refinement: firstly, bringing Polanyi's implicit doctrine of God to explicit articulation (as in §4.3, above); secondly (as in this section and §4.5, below), by further specifying and refining the details of this doctrine of God in accordance with the data of revelation. Importantly, this excludes the possibility of establishing 'layers' within the Godhead that resemble the biosemiotic hierarchy, for instance by suggesting that a 'layer' of triunity exploits the boundary conditions of the most basic 'layer' of the divine simplicity. Even in noetic terms, the relationship of Ernst's explicit doctrine of God to Polanyi's implicit theological ontology cannot be modelled in terms of the marginal control of boundary conditions. Ernst not only 'exploits' the indeterminacy of Polanyi's theological ontology along Trinitarian lines, but also reconfigures the Polanyian account of divine simplicity in accordance with the divine triunity.

[90] D. Stephen Long, *The Perfectly Simple Triune God* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 2016): passim, especially 6-63.

§4.5.2: Appropriation and the Trinitarian Mediation of Ultimate Meaning

Although Ernst presupposes a Trinitarian doctrine of God throughout, none of his published essays (nor his extant lectures) are directly focussed on the development of the doctrine of the Trinity. Ernst's published forays into the doctrine of God are generally concerned with God's limited knowability by the light of natural reason.[91] Nonetheless, Ernst develops an explicitly Trinitarian account of the historical availability of ultimate meaning: "the *Deus absconditus* […] is revealed in history and made concrete in a personal revelation of the Father in the incarnate Son, and re-presented in the linguistic community of the Church".[92] This ecclesial re-presentation of ultimate meaning is elsewhere appropriated to the activity of the Holy Spirit as the sponsal presence of Christ, which constitutes the Christian community as the enduring presence of Christ in human history.[93] Ernst's account of theological mediation is, then, irreducibly bound up with his account of the economic Trinity: the ultimate meaning of the Father is revealed in the Son, by the Holy Spirit.[94]

The distinction of 'economic Trinity' and 'immanent Trinity' does not narrate the existence of two parallel but distinct trinities, but one single Trinity, which exists antecedently as God's own innate triune perfection and is known historically through the addition of created effects. As Rahner's rule puts it, the 'immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity and *vice versa*'.[95] An extension of this nascent semantic account of the

[91] See, for instance, ME: 130*ff*.
[92] ME: 27.
[93] ME: 218-221.
[94] ME: 156.
[95] Karl Rahner, 'Oneness and Threefoldness of God in Discussion with Islam', *Theological Investigations, Volume 18* (1984): 105-21.

economic Trinity into the immanent Trinity, however, requires careful analysis of what semantic principles are appropriated to each of the divine persons in the economy and, in particular, the significance of the appropriation of 'ultimate meaning' to the Father (as that which is revealed in the Son, by the Spirit).

'Appropriation' is a theological strategy that ascribes a perfection of the divine essence (which is, therefore, common to each of the three persons that share in the common nature) to one of the divine persons in a special way.[96] Appropriation operates by the existence of an analogy between the relations of origin that constitute the divine persons and the mode of appropriation itself.[97] Importantly, what is appropriated to the divine persons is not the divine essence itself, but a particular perfection that is proper to the divine essence. As outlined in Chapter 1, Ernst seeks to re-articulate the Thomistic synthesis by shifting from Aquinas's register of being into the contemporary register of meaning. The role played by the infinite divine *esse* in classical Thomism is exercised by the category the Meaning of meaning,[98] a phrase which thus refers to the divine nature, coequally and coeternally shared by the three divine persons. Ernst does not, then, appropriate the 'Meaning of meaning' to the Father. To do so would give the Father an undue primacy over the Son and the Spirit:[99] the semantic perfection that is appropriated to the Father (that of 'ultimate meaning') is a perfection that is intrinsic to God's own semantic life.

---

[96] For an account of Aquinas's understanding of appropriation in its development from Albert the Great and in distinction from Bonaventure, see: Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 313-37.

[97] ST I, q32.

[98] ME: 156.

[99] This is a self-correction. In an article published in 2013 I suggested that Ernst did, indeed, appropriate the 'meaning of meaning' to Pateriology. See: Keenan, 'Sacrament of the Dynamic Transcendence of Christianity: Cornelius Ernst on the Church', at 403.

§4.5.3: Meaning and the Innascibility of the Father

Prima facie, this terminological distinction between the Meaning of meaning and the property 'ultimate meaning' seems to risk degenerating into the splitting of hairs. Nonetheless, it offers an important insight into Ernst's semantic understanding of the divine being. As noted in §1.1 and §1.4, Ernst understood meaning to be a dynamic reality, more like an event than a state of affairs. Appropriating the 'Meaning of meaning' to God the Father would risk understanding the divine meaning as being a static deposit of meaning (adhering to the innascibility of the Father), which is eternally shared with the Son and the Spirit. This would more closely resemble a Bonaventurean account of the Trinitarian relations than a Thomistic account. For Bonaventure and the Franciscan tradition that followed him, the paternity of the Father is constituted by the generation of the Son: for Bonaventure, the Father is the Father because he generates the Son.[100] On this is account, there is a metaphysical space for a freely willed decision to be located prior to the generation of the Son, that is, a certain capacity—albeit a merely logical capacity—of the proto-Father to generate and thus realise his identity as the Father. Friedman translates this characteristic of the proto-Father as 'primity'.[101]

For Aquinas, the personal differentiation is brought about in the Godhead only by way of the opposition of relations.[102] The Father's paternity is not, for Aquinas, a pre-

[100] Bonaventure, I *Sent.*, d. 27, *I*, q. 2, *solutio*. [*Opera Omnia,* v1 p. 496].
[101] Russell L. Friedman, *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 27-30.
[102] ST I, q28, a3.

requisite to the relationship of filiation-paternity that obtains between the Father and the Son.[103] Rather, the Father generates the Son because the Father is the Father, and subsists as that Father as a function of the opposing relations of filiation-paternity.[104] The stabilising fulcrum of the ontology of the Trinity is not one of the hypostases, but the relations themselves. In this context, Ernst's account of God's being as the 'Meaning of meaning' amounts to a radical affirmation that there is nothing more primordial in God than the dynamic event of infinite meaning, an infinite self-communication and exchange of meaning that is identical with God's own life. Not only does Ernst cut away the notion of a capital meaning that is located behind the meanings of the world, he also cuts away the notion of a capital meaning within the person of the Father, from which the Godhead is derived.

§4.5.4: Polanyian Trinitarianism(s)

Articulating a Trinitarian account of the divine being in Polanyian idiom requires a considerable extension and emendation of Polanyi's embedded doctrine of God. Indeed, the doctrine of the Trinity has been a point of contention in many scholarly attempts to develop a systematic theology in Polanyian mode.[105] As noted in §4.2, the difficulty arises, at least in part, from the impossibility of fully conforming the divine knowledge (including God's knowledge of Godself) with a Polanyian account of personal knowledge by tacit integration. As noted above, positing God as an infinite integration

[103] ST I, q33, a3.
[104] John Baptist Ku, *God the Father in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Peter Lang, 2013): 79-98.
[105] The wariness of Polanyian theologians to enter into Trinitarian waters is noted in reviews of Andrew Grosso's work (which is discussed below), see: John Apczynski, 'Andrew Grosso on Polanyi as a Resource for Christian Theology', *Tradition and Discovery,* 35/1 (2008), 46-48.

(rather than a comprehensive entity) secures both the divine simplicity and God's transcendence over the hierarchy of meanings. Polanyi's friend, theologian Joan Crewdson, develops a doctrine of God as an infinite integration rather than a comprehensive entity, but emphasises the complementary Polanyian category of 'indwelling' as a more precise specification of the mode of integration. Crewdson models God's relationship to the created subject in terms of a tacit triad of integration between "God, the world and emerging centres of personhood",[106] in which A (God) integrates B (the world) to bestow meaning on C (created persons).[107] This triadic model is abandoned in the case of the immanent life of God Godself, where the doctrines of perichoresis and circumincession come to the fore,[108] to affirm the complete mutual indwelling of the three divine persons.

This leads to paradox at the heart of Crewdson's post-critical theology. On the one hand, the appeal to indwelling-perichoresis as a means of articulating the semantic life of the immanent Trinity points in the direction of an account of the divine simplicity as *actus purus*, in which God, as an infinitely actualised event of communion, cannot be subject to change or the contingencies of finitude. On the other hand, Crewdson's use of the tacit triad to account for the doctrine of creation suggests that God and the world are related by an act of integration, thereby imperilling the independence of God from the world that the notion of *actus purus* affirms. Indeed, Crewdson's suggestion that

[106] Crewdson, *Christian Doctrine*, 216-17.
[107] The notion of the 'tacit triad' is of particular importance in the essays collected in *KB.* See also: Polanyi, 'Sense-Giving and Sense-Reading'.
[108] Crewdson, *Christian Doctrine*, 191-94.

creation be modelled in terms of *tzimtzum*[109]—God 'retracting' to make metaphysical space for creation[110]—inscribes this latter principle into protology, and explicitly violates Polanyian principle O3 with its affirmation of the unilateral relation of creation to God. By so doing—affirming that the world is both immanent to God and yet transcends God—Crewdson makes God subject to the contingencies of finitude and thereby imperils principles O1 and O2, with their affirmation of an infinite divine meaning that stands outside of the principles of marginal control of boundary conditions that govern the biosemiotic hierarchy.

The most extended attempt to generate a Polanyian account of the immanent Trinity, however, is that of Andrew Grosso.[111] Grosso seeks to locate a Polanyian theology within a renaissance of Trinitarian theology: the metaphysics implied by Polanyian epistemology situates, Grosso argues, personhood as the fundamental category for understanding reality. Grosso therefore reads Polanyi as developing a personalistic cosmology that coheres around a Trinitarian account of the divine being.[112] Like Crewdson, Grosso primarily deploys the Polanyian category of 'indwelling' to model the perichoresis of the three divine persons. In an important respect, however, Grosso's analysis resembles a Franciscan, rather than Thomistic, Trinitarian ontology. Grosso appears to affirm the appropriation of the 'Meaning of meaning' (or, in more classical idiom, the divine being) to the Father, a move that was rejected above. The foundational

[109] Crewdson prefers the spelling 'zimzum', see: ibid., at 183-93. This is a principle drawn from the Lurianic Kabbalah. See: Jacob Chinitz, 'Creation and the Limits of the Creator', *Jewish Biblical Quarterly,* 34/2 (2006), 126-31.
[110] This, at least, is Crewdson's understanding of the principle: Crewdson, *Christian Doctrine*, 186-88.
[111] Andrew T. Grosso, *Personal Being: Polanyi, ontology, and Christian theology* (New York: P. Lang, 2007): 127-66.
[112] Ibid., at 163-66.

principle of Grosso's account of the divine triunity is what he terms (following a hint from T. F. Torrance)[113] "the correlation between the divine nature of God and the person of the Father", rather than "the consubstantiality of the Son and the Father".[114] The paternity of the Father is identified as the actualisation of "and interiorization of the personalising dynamics of the Godhead within himself as well as […] the acquiescence to the 'boundary conditions' of the transcendent divine Being".[115] This reference to 'boundary conditions' indicates a residual sense in which the divine being is, for Grosso, a comprehensive entity,[116] compromising the divine simplicity and *actus purus*. By identifying the divine essence and the person of the Father, Grosso has established a two-layered deity in which a divine being can logically (but admittedly not ontologically or chronologically) be thought apart from the integration of triune identity. In some sense, then, God is not irreducibly an act of integration, but there is a logically antecedent Godhead that eternally integrates Godself in a tri-personal manner.

---

[113] Grosso cites Torrance's T. F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996b): 140-41. Although it is true that Torrance here, as elsewhere, seeks to follow the Cappadocians in positing the Father as *arche* or 'uncaused cause' or 'unprincipled principle' of the Godhead, it is by no means clear that Torrance would have been comfortable with the extraction of this principle from his argument, nor with the use that Grosso makes of it, especially the notion of a *passivity* in the Godhead and the attendant risk of subordination. Barth used an analogical form of 'obedience' of the Son in the immanent Trinity in CD IV/1, but Torrance's application of quasi-causal language to the immanent Trinity is much more qualified than Grosso's. Indeed, it is not clear why Grosso thinks that a focus on the consubstantial identity of the Father and Son is in anyway in competition with the 'correlation' he affirms between Father and Godhead, nor with the interchangeable use in scripture of 'God' and 'Father'. Grosso clearly favours the (putative) Eastern tendency to secure the unity of the Godhead in the person of the Father rather than the divine nature, but in conjunction with his use of Polanyi's account of personal indwelling, this seems to make subordinationism inevitable. These questions, however, fall beyond the scope of the present argument. For a deeper account of Torrance's use of the Cappadocians, see: Paul D. Molnar, *Thomas F. Torrance: Theologian of the Trinity* (Edinburgh: Ashgate, 2013): 66-78. For similar uses of the Cappadocians in British Orthodox theology, see: John D. Zizioulas, 'The Father as Cause', *Communion and Othernness* (London: T&T Clark, 2006): 113-54.

[114] Grosso, *Personal Being*, 150.

[115] Ibid., at 153.

[116] This is acknowledged by Grosso himself. "[T]he notion that the divine being can be characterised as a 'comprehensive entity' subsuming levels of varying complexity seems to compromise God's simplicity." See: ibid., at 157. Grosso seems most concerned to establish that his model does not leave God 'liable to dissolution'. However, any notion of composition in the Godhead, even a composition that is not liable in the relevant sense, compromises the divine simplicity and consequently subject the divine being to the vicissitudes of spatiotemporality in a way incompatible with principles O1-O3.

Transposed into the terms of a semantic ontology, Grosso makes precisely the appropriational move opposed above: positing a privileged locus of meaning in the Father's paternity, the dynamic event of meaning is derived from that primordial capital, and not *vice versa*. Consequently, Grosso posits a quasi-extrinsicism within the Godhead, according to which the divine Meaning is conceptually (if not actually) independent of its communication in the perfect communion of the three persons. The result is that the dynamism that characterises the ontology of meaning reaches a static point in the paternity of God the Father: communication-semiosis goes all the way down, but not all the way up; the coinherence of meaning and being is consequently disrupted.

From this foundational principle, Grosso derives an understanding of divine personhood not primarily as relations but as "signifying a mode of relation".[117] Grosso does little to explicate this conceptual distinction and it is unclear whether he intends to derive divine personhood from the mode of procession (the distinction of generation from spiration) or with oppositional relations of origin (paternity, filiation, common spiration, and procession). As noted above, for Aquinas the relations of opposition are definitionally prior to the differentiation of generation (from one person) and spiration (from two persons).[118] By contrast, Franciscan approaches to the Trinity have tended to emphasis the mode of relation as the most basic distinction in God, and to derive the personal identity of Son and Spirit from this irreducible distinction in their modes of generation.[119] As such, whilst Franciscan and Thomist theologians both accept that the

[117] Ibid., at 153.
[118] ST I, q. 29, a. 4.
[119] Friedman, *Medieval Trinitarian Thought*, 21-30.

three persons are in fact differentiated by opposition of relations (they share a common commitment to the *filioque*), Thomists see this as necessarily so (if the Spirit proceeded from only one person, there would be no way to differentiate Spirit from Son), whilst Franciscans argue that they would be adequately differentiated by a more basic difference in the mode of their procession (generation correlated with intellection, and spiration correlated with volition).

Prima facie, it seems that Grosso intends to locate himself on the Thomistic side of the argument. Firstly, he affirms the necessity of oppositional relations of origin for the differentiation of the divine persons: "were the spiration of the Spirit to follow in the same manner (i.e., from the Father), there could not but be two Sons".[120] Indeed, the Spirit's mode of emanation is differentiated by the fact that the Spirit proceeds from two persons (a necessary *filioque*). The Father is understood as the active indwelling principle, the Son as the passively indwelt principle, and the Spirit as the actualisation "of a form of personal being that is grounded in the mutuality of participation between the Father and the Son in their shared giving".[121] Combined with Grosso's correlation of the divine essence with the Father, however, this affirmation of the necessity of oppositional relations of origins veers into subordinationism. Grosso posits an inequality between the active Father and the passive Son, and a formal priority of Son over Spirit, which is expressed in terms of a real passivity of the Son to the Father, and

[120] Grosso, *Personal Being*, 153. Grosso gives reasons for this in an endnote, where he states that by virtue of the transcendent perfection and simplicity of the Godhead, the divine nature does not admit 'multiple recipients': the Father could not, then, communicate his own nature to two persons in the same way, without one of them being inferior to the other. Grosso comes to a Thomistic conclusion by a non-Thomistic route, appealing primarily to the personal agency of the Father, rather than thinking the logic of the Trinity through from the intrinsic relationality of the Godhead. See: ibid., at 218-19.

[121] Ibid., at 153-54.

the Spirit to both Father and Son, which are both determined by the superordinate action of the Father.

§4.5.5: A Polanyian-Ernstian Trinitarianism

Reading Polanyi's embedded account of God in terms of Cornelius Ernst's Meaning of meaning hints at a way of salvaging Grosso's concern that the identity of the three divine persons, including the innascible Father,[122] are not "*a priori* to their relation[s], but grounded in the relation itself".[123] As noted above, on an Ernstian account, there is nothing more primordial in God than the event of infinite meaning, which is identical with the communion of the three persons. To borrow a phrase from Torrance, Ernst's doctrine of God is fully onto-relational:[124] understanding God as meaning highlights the way in which the being of the Godhead is always already being-in-relation and therefore being-in-act. On Ernst's account of the Meaning of meaning, then, the immanent divine act and the immanent divine being are absolutely ontologically identical, being only formally and artificially distinguished by an act of human understanding. Integrating this identity of act and being in God with an account of God as an infinite Polanyian integration amounts to an affirmation of the identity of knowing and being in God. Whilst in creatures being precedes acts of knowledge—we need to exist in order to do things—the divine being is identical with its immanent act of intellection, and thus the being of God is as much brought about by the act of God as

[122] Note that innascibility is not a privation: Ku, *God the Father in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 87-91.
[123] Grosso, *Personal Being*, 153.
[124] Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, 102-03.

the act of God is brought about by the being of God.[125] As Robert Jenson puts it, "the phrase 'the one God' directs us finally to the sheer perichoresis of Father, Son and Spirit, and that is to their communal music."[126] Ernst and Polanyi would, perhaps, change only the last word, transposing 'music' into 'meaning'.

Far from being a 'bourgeois theological accretion' lacking practical or philosophical significance, Ernst's doctrine of the Trinity exercises a decisive function, bridging both the immanent life of God *in se* and God's economic activity *pro nobis*. The Trinitarian account of God's being as the Meaning of meaning provides an event in which the order of being and the ordering of knowing are integrated in the immanent life of God. Although in creatures knowing and being are never exactly coincident, even in the case of the pure spiritual intellection of the angels, these exist in perfect identity in the Godhead's infinite existence. Likewise, as noted above, Ernst's Trinitarian account of the mediation of ultimate meaning renders impossible any theological epistemology that is dissociated from theological ontology. The way in which creatures come to know God is inextricably enmeshed with the eternal Trinitarian life of God.

Three important implications follow from Ernst's deployment of a semantic doctrine of the Trinity as a 'link' between ontology and epistemology. The first relates to God's status as infinite integration. Even as God eternally transcends the created order, the divine Trinity is the fulcrum that stabilises the world of creaturely meanings. In the

[125] For a medieval account of the divine being as grounded by the divine act of intellection, see Meister Eckhart's First Parisian Question. Cf.: Oliver James Keenan, 'Theological Epistemology in Eckhart's First Parisian Question', *Medieval Mystical Theology,* 22/1 (2013a), 27-44.

[126] Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1: The Triune God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997): 236.

Metaphysics, Aristotle had argued that goodness and truth belonged to fundamentally different orders:[127] there could, for instance, be no moral judgment of mathematics (whilst there could be question of truth).[128] Accordingly, goodness measured the order of being, whilst truth was said to reside in the order of knowing.[129] Meaning, however, cuts across both domains: the Meaning of meaning, is eternally identical with both the being and the knowledge of God. As such, there can be no sense in which meaning lacks a secure fulcrum in reality: there can be no ontologically ultimate cleavage of the 'good' and the 'true'. As Eleonore Stump indicates, Aquinas's account of the divine simplicity undermines the dilemma of the *Euthyphro,* which questioned whether something was good because it was commanded by God, or commanded by God because it was good.[130] In God's own life, decree, goodness and the being of Godself are absolutely identical, only becoming fractured in the semantic life of creatures.

Secondly, this emphasises Polanyi's trenchant personalism. Meaning is primordially located within the triune communion of persons, and the presence of ultimate meaning within human history is borne by the being of a person: Jesus Christ is ontologically identical with the infinite divine meaning that he communicates. Christ is personally the Trinity's self-declaration, the disclosure of a supernatural register of meaning that is accessible in faith.[131] The personalist form of this "transcendental disclosure of meaning to and for men"[132] is both epistemological and ontological. Noetically, it is the mapping of an absolute semantic beginning onto a human person,

[127] Aristotle, *Metaph.* VI.4, 1027b, §25.
[128] Aristotle, *Metaph.* II.2, 996a, §§27*ff.*
[129] Aristotle, *Metaph.* VI.4, 1030a, §26.
[130] Stump, *Aquinas*, 92-130.
[131] ME: 75.
[132] ME: 79.

from which the diverse "meanings entertained and exchanged in the community"[133] of the Church flow and have their unification. The incarnation has, however, an ontological (and not only epistemological) character as a Heideggerian *Ereignis* ('coming into view' or 'appropriating event'),[134] which brings about transfiguration,[135] not only bestowing on creatures a new meaning within the existing framework of meanings, but radically (i.e., ontologically) re-configuring that framework itself.

Thirdly, by understanding infinite meaning in inherently relational (i.e., Trinitarian) terms, Ernst provides a means of articulating a Trinitarian ontology of creation. Whereas the divine self-communication of meaning in the processions of generation and spiration could be considered as an act of univocal formal causality (the intellectual event of the Father's generation of the Son in Spirit as the sharing of identical reality by and in communication), creation can be modelled as an act of analogical formal causality (in which the intellectual event of the Father's generation of the Son communicates to creatures something that is analogically related to the infinite meaning of the Godhead).

§4.6: Semantic Theological Ontology and the Doctrine of Creation

The previous section addressed the first of two identified lacunae in Polanyi's implicit theological ontology, by developing an account of God's own immanent semantic perfection in Trinitarian terms. This section turns to address the second of the

[133] ME: 79.
[134] Daniel O. Dahlstrom, *The Heidegger Dictionary* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013): 17-19.
[135] ME: 236.

two lacunae, that of the metaphysical status of creaturely participation in God's own semantic life that is enacted by creation. As such, this section develops a Polanyian-Ernstian account of creation and creatureliness, both as a supplement to Polanyi's theological ontology and as a way of deepening Ernst's theological account of the 'vocation of nature'.[136] In particular, this extends the distinction mapped by Polanyian principle O4, differentiating protological and soteriological integration, by connecting the distinction with 20th century theological debates concerning the relationship between grace and nature.

§4.6.1: Divine Knowledge and Creatureliness

As noted in above, the problem of situating divine knowledge vis-à-vis tacit knowledge plagues Polanyian theologies. Put simply, God does not—as humans do—know more than God can tell.[137] In Ernstian perspective, this indicates the problematic absence of protology in Polanyi's synthesis. The Thomistic tradition locates divine knowledge at the heart of the doctrine of creation:[138] the relationship between the creator and creation is modelled in terms of God's knowing creation into existence.[139] Whereas human knowledge is understood to be caused (moved from potency to act by the object that is known), God's knowledge is understood to be causal, bringing about the reality that it knows into existence. As such, God's knowledge of creatures is the very basis of their existence; each created thing is a manifestation of a divine idea.

[136] See the rather fragmentary essay on the question at ME: 225-238.
[137] ST I, q14, a15.
[138] ST I, q14, a8.
[139] See: ST I, q14, a8 and *passim*.

Meister Eckhart radicalises this intellectualist account of creation by developing a distinction between *esse virtuale* and *esse formale*. The true identity of the things that we encounter in the world is their status within the divine mind (*esse formale*), which is then refracted in the *esse virtuale* that is encountered in the senses.[140] Whilst Eckhart's distinction is not unproblematic, his affirmation that what is encountered in the senses is a manifestation of the divine mind underlines the intrinsicism of Aquinas's intellectualist doctrine of creation.

Assessing divine knowledge from a Polanyian perspective, there are features of both tacit and focal knowledge that would be analogically applicable to God's knowledge of the world. On the one hand, God's knowledge, in its unthematic, non-discursive and immediately 'intuitive' character, appears infinitely tacit in character, not requiring mediation of language or other semantic tools.[141] On the other hand, God's knowledge is infinitely focal in being an explicitly focussed knowledge that is equally present at every level of the semantic hierarchy, with no detail falling into the background.[142] One approach to this dilemma would attempt to harmonise the two dimensions in the infinity of the divine being, as a conjunction of opposites (arguing that in creatures the tacit and the focal are mutually exclusive, but God's infinity is not limited by the principle of non-contradiction).[143] An alternative strategy, as developed by Allen, abandons the framework of tacit knowledge in the case of divine knowledge.[144]

---

[140] Eckhart, *In Gen.* II, §62. See: Bernard Mcginn, 'Do Christian Platonists Really Believe in Creation?', in David B. Burrell and Bernard Mcginn (eds.), *God and Creation* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1990): 198-205.
[141] ST I, q14, a7.
[142] ST I, q14, a11.
[143] This is the strategy of Johannes Hoff's contemporary appropriation of Nicholas of Cusa. See: *The Analogical Turn* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013).
[144] This strategy of exception was adopted by R. T. Allen, as noted in §4.2 above.

Indeed, there is no necessity that emerges within the Polanyian synthesis itself to conform God to the structures of tacit knowing.

Indeed, there are good reasons to suppose that treating God as the primordial infinite integration, but not a comprehensive entity, places God outside of the tacit dimension by philosophical necessity. The tacit dimension was developed by Polanyi as a way of establishing the subject's metaphysical status as enmeshed within the biosemiotic hierarchy. This enabled Polanyi to minimise his dependence on the fiduciary category of commitment, by establishing an ontological correspondence between the subject and the world of meaning that they inhabit. As such, the very existence of the tacit dimension is a function of our mediated participation and ontological embeddedness within the biosemiotic hierarchy: the hierarchy is precisely composed of comprehensive entities. Consequently, outside the biosemiotic hierarchy, there is neither a logical function, nor a metaphysical space, for the tacit dimension.

§4.6.2: The Vectorial Character of Divine Knowledge

This intimate relationship between the biosemiotic hierarchy and metaphysics of comprehensive entities can be seen by an examination of the vectorial character of tacit knowing. The tacit dimension of subjectivity enables the knower to 'embody' aspects of the world within themselves, so as to attend focally to higher and more complex meanings, within a relationship of dependence on the lower levels. For example, the tacit dimension allows the subject to assimilate certain linguistic frameworks, so as to know more complex realities like metaphor and poetry. By contrast, God's knowledge

moves in the opposite direction: God does not embody the world within Godself so as to know something other than Godself, but rather embodies Godself within the world so as to be known.

This vectorial 'embodying' of Godself in the world is the act of creation. A necessary caveat much be entered at this point. The notion of God 'embodying' Godself in the world is reminiscent of the world-soul model that Allen (correctly) rejected as incompatible with Polanyian metaphysics.[145] On the account offered by the model critiqued by Allen, God and the world relate as a soul relates to a body: as the formal cause, the intelligent principle that animates and integrates. The type of analogical embodiment suggested by this proposed Polanyian doctrine of creation differs from the world-soul model as a centrifugal vector differs from a centripetal vector. Whereas the world-soul model articulates God's relationship to the world as a centripetal vector, the proposed Polanyian doctrine of creation deploys the centrifugal vector. Whereas the centripetal vector moves towards identity, the centrifugal vector constitutes symbolization.

The use of vectors to model the divine knowledge of the world is, by metaphysical necessity, governed by the doctrine of analogy, and, as noted above, the direction of causal pressure is reversed in the case of divine knowledge. Whereas human vectors are caused, divine vectors are causal. In particular, whereas in human symbolization relationships, the change is effected within the subject as they re-embody themselves in a symbolic space that remains ontically unchanged, in the divine

[145] See §4.2, above.

'embodiment' of Godself in the world, it is the world that is 'changed',[146] by being summoned into existence. By analogically embodying Godself in the world, God constitutes the world as a biosemiotic symbol of Godself. Such a doctrine of creation as a relation of divine symbolization provides the fulcrum of unity that Polanyi's biosemiotic ontology requires, if the world is to be understood as a comprehensive entity (a *systema mundi* governed by the theme of meaning).[147] The act of constituting the world as a symbol of Godself (of the Meaning of meaning) inscribes creation with semiosis at the core of its being: meaning and being *convertuntur*.

Understanding creation as the act of constituting the world as a symbol of Godself has two important metaphysical implications. Firstly, it emphasises the dynamic nature of the world of meaning as inherently relational and semiotic. Secondly, it provides a metaphysical basis from which to affirm the cosmos as a comprehensive entity. Symbolization is, on Polanyi's account, inherently relational: symbols do not exist as static objects that await our semantic appropriation of them (as Ernst thought Ricoeur and Eliade argued).[148]

As noted above, the direction of causal pressure in divine knowing is inverted. Whereas in human symbolisation, there is a real relationship in the subject to the object that they take as a symbol, in the case of the vector by which God embodies Godself in the world, the real relationship is in the symbol and not in the subject. In other words,

---

[146] Creation is, in fact, not a change at all (*creatio non est mutatio*), as will be argued below. The phrase is used here only to emphasise the ontological asymmetry that obtains between divine and human vectors.

[147] That the world was a comprehensive entity was assumed, but never demonstrated, by R. T. Allen. See §4.2, above.

[148] ME: 55.

an implication of this understanding of symbolization as an active and enactive relationship is that God's freely will constitution of the world of meaning as a 'symbol' of God's own ultimate meaning constitutes the world in an irreducible reverse relationship to Godself. It is this 'reverse vector' which constitutes the creature *qua* creature.

Although there are, *prima facie*, similarities between this schema and the *exitus-reditus* structure of the *Summa Theologiæ* as identified by M.-D. Chenu,[149] it is necessary to distinguish the reverse vector from the *reditus* of creation to God, as we will see below. Nonetheless, this proposed metaphysical account of creation generates the type of sacramental ontology that Chenu sought (and perhaps failed to adequately generate) as a means of supporting the *Ressourcement* project of *Nouvelle Théologie*.[150] From an Ernstian perspective, this account of creation in terms of vectors of symbolisation has two notable merits. Firstly, it provides a protological ground on which to affirm the dynamic transcendence of meaning in-and-beyond the world: the world is a real symbol of a meaning that infinitely transcends the totality of the world's meanings. Secondly, it provides a way of accounting for non-meaning or un-meaning (the presence of factors within the world that destroy and distort meaning), which is always parasitic upon, and relative to, an antecedent meaning of which it is a privation. Non-meaning, i.e. sin, thus arises by a transgression of the semiosis through a failure to 'read' the cosmos as a symbol of God, distorting the 'reverse vector' of creatureliness.

[149] Chenu, 'Le plan de la somme théologique de saint Thomas'.
[150] See: Boersma, *Nouvelle théologie and sacramental ontology : a return to mystery*.

Two significant challenges to integrating this model into an Ernstian perspective remain, however. Firstly, it is necessary to clearly affirm the analogical nature of the vector of creation, so as to distinguish it from creaturely centrifugal integrations. Secondly, there is a need to clearly distinguish the reverse vector, which is intrinsic to the nature of meaning in its protological determination from the vector of grace that soteriologically and eschatologically re-embodies the world of meanings in the return to God. Each of these concerns is now taken in turn.

The first of these challenges concerns the vector that originates in God and constitutes the biosemiotic hierarchy (i.e., the vector that moves from left to right in the above schematic). *Prima facie*, the challenge is to avoid positing a change in God, at the point of the vector's origination: in creaturely symbolisation, the object remains ontically unchanged but receives a new meaning as the subject embodies herself in the object in a new way. Strictly speaking, however, this vector effects no change, either at the proximate or distal pole. As Aquinas emphasises, *creatio non est mutatio* (creation is not a change):[151] the category of change involves the movement of potency to act, or the animation of matter by new form, and thus presupposes the existence of something that is acted upon and caused to change. Creation properly so-called, however, does not act upon or presuppose something that is antecedent to it, but is an act of God that communicates existence and essence, matter and form, in a single unthematic act of *esse*-communication.[152] For this reason, Aquinas prefers to model creation in terms of knowledge and relationship, rather than in terms of physical change. It seems likely,

[151] ST I, q45 a2.
[152] See: Booth, *Aristotelian Aporetic Ontology in Islamic and Christian Thinkers*, 227ff, Matthew Levering, *Engaging the Doctrine of Creation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017): 38-49.

however, that Polanyi would have found a more adequate model of creation in the category of the imagination, which directly invokes the centrifugal vector. This Polanyian approach models the creative vector in terms of an efficacious act of transnatural imagination, in which that which is 'imagined' by the divine mind is actually brought about. Whereas created centrifugal vectors are always conjoined to a semantic integration that they effect, the protological vector is best modelled as a centrifugal vector without an associated integration (thus safeguarding its transcendent causal character as well as maintaining the real distinction of creator and creature), the primary effect of which is the enactment of the reverse vector of a semantic reality that corresponds to the antecedent divine vector.

§4.6.4: The Integration(s) of Nature and Grace

The second of these two identified challenges concerns the status of this 'reverse vector' (moving from right to left in the above schematic): what 'work' does it do, in the life of the creature? The task here is to differentiate the reverse vector constituted by creation from that of the soteriological *reditus* of creation to God. This is demanded on two distinct levels. Firstly, it is necessary to avoid a determinism that posits the salvific return of all things to God as an inevitable orthogenesis of a process already inscribed into creation.[153] Such a view would risk reducing the tragedy of sin to the status of a

[153] This view is often associated with Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, see, for instance: Pierre Teilhard De Chardin, *The Future of Man* (London: Collins, 1964). Polanyi acknowledges Teilhard's concept of the 'noosphere' as having exercised an influence over his thought, PK: 382-390. Polanyi submitted a review of *The Phenomenon of Man* to the *Saturday Review* [PP 34.8, 1960]: he finds himself in general agreement with Teilhard's rejection of reductively materialist accounts of evolution, but also finds Teilhard's position too vague to allow significant engagement. The published version of the review moderates these critiques: Michael Polanyi, 'An Epic Theory of Evolution', *Saturday Review,* /January 30th (1960), 21-4. Ernst's engagement is more cursory and dismissive, see ME: 84.

merely harmless *intermezzo* in world history, as something that would inevitably be overcome by processes that were always already immanent to creation itself. As such, the incarnation and the paschal mystery would have only a *de minimis* ontological significance, serving rather an epistemological role in making visible the reverse vector.

Secondly, the reverse vector invokes the notoriously vexatious question of the relationship between nature and grace.[154] This is a problematic that characterised many conversations within twentieth century Thomistic theology, but about which Polanyi (quite understandably) had nothing to say.[155] *In nuce*, the *Surnaturel* debate concerns whether, by nature, the human person has a supernatural orientation toward communion with God, or whether that supernatural end is bestowed on the human creature in addition to their natural end (although without competing with it). The *Surnaturel* controversy has proved notably entrenched, in part due to an avowedly counterfactual strand in its argument: all Thomists are agreed that, in the actual world as we have it, God has in fact bestowed upon the human person a supernatural end, and the question partially concerns the logical possibility of a naturally identical creature without such a supernatural end, and the question of whether the human person has a single end or a two-fold end corresponding to nature and grace.

---

[154] For general accounts of the controversy (although more sympathetic to Cajetan than to de Lubac) see: Serge-Thomas Bonino, *Surnaturel: A Controversy at the Heart of Twentieth-Century Thomistic Thought* (Ave Maria FL: Sapientia Press, 2009), Steven A. Long, *Natura Pura: On the Recovery of Nature in the Doctrine of Grace* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), For the problem as an aporetic within Aquinas's texts, see: Lawrence Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God according to St Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters* (Naples FL: Ave Maria Press, 2010). See also: John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle: Henri De Lubac and the Debate Concerning the Supernatural* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), Aidan Nichols, 'Henri de Lubac: Panorama and Proposal', *New Blackfriars,* 93 (2012), 3-33.

[155] This is not to say that Polanyi was entirely unaware of the dispute. His library contained a copy of Henri de Lubac's *The Drama of Atheist Humanism* (1949), see index of Polanyi's library available at PP 54.3.

In the latter case, the supernatural end is extrinsic to human nature (whilst nonetheless fulfilling its natural telos and expanding it), whereas in the former case the supernatural end is intrinsic to human nature (which, without the gift of grace, therefore remains fundamentally frustrated).[156] Neither position seems fully adequate, nor does Aquinas himself clearly subscribe to one view at the exclusion of the other. An intrinsic supernatural end gives the creature a right in justice to receive that grace which can alone bring about their natural fulfilment, with the consequence that God's free decision not to bestow grace becomes equivalent to a punishment of the creature. The notion that God intentionally creates a creature that is intrinsically frustrated is equally unproblematic. In an extrinsicist account, by contrast, supernatural fulfilment seems unduly disconnected from natural flourishing, like the icing that sits on top of a cake but leaves the cake itself unchanged.

Ernst is notably reluctant to be drawn into this dispute. His essay on the 'vocation of nature'[157] is among the least completely executed of his published papers, barely straying beyond an allusive collection of 'hints and guesses'.[158] Ernst tended to approach the issue somewhat obliquely, from the perspective of an analysis of the possibility of philosophical knowledge of God by the unaided light of natural reason

[156] Long, *Natura Pura*, 10-52.

[157] This is perhaps the closest Ernst comes to a foray into the philosophy of science and might have been the most likely of his essays to engage significantly with the thought of Michael Polanyi. See ME: 225-238.

[158] I am grateful to David Goodill OP for a fruitful disagreement concerning Ernst's reasons for caution here. Goodill's Fribourg PhD thesis (as yet unpublished) raises questions of the adequacy of the concept of nature within Wittgenstein's moral philosophy. See: David Goodill OP, *Moral Theology after Wittgenstein*. (Fribourg PhD, 2017). This is available online at: http://doc.rero.ch/record/304966/files/GoodillD.pdf

operating apart from revelation.[159] Throughout, Ernst is concerned to excavate a thoroughly theological account of nature as an always already theonomic category.[160] Nature is governed by intrinsically theological categories, rather than something to which theological concerns arrive as a secondary consideration. Nature properly so-called is, for Ernst, emphatically not synonymous with that which is investigated by the empirical ('natural') sciences.[161] Rather, 'nature' emerges as a dynamic process and praxis: true knowledge of nature, like the doctrine of creation, is an article of faith.[162]

In this analysis of nature, Ernst sounds remarkably Barthian: nature has covenantal reality as its 'internal basis'.[163] Ernst invokes Schillebeeckx to argue that, like existence, nature is always already dependent upon the "eternally actual deed of salvation in Christ".[164] Consequently, nature is embraced and enclosed within the order of grace (a view, however, that leaves open both an intrinsicist and extrinsicist account of the nature-grace relation). Grace, as the unmerited sharing of God's own life with creatures, provides the very reason and internal basis for creation, which finds its fullest realisation within the actual economy of grace and glory. Ernst therefore implicitly distinguishes between different orders within which the grace-nature relationship can be appraised: an objective sense in which grace presupposes nature,[165] which it perfects;[166] an historically contingent sense in which nature is realised in

[159] ME: 126*ff*, 134*ff*.
[160] Long, *Natura Pura*, 10-52.
[161] ME: 134.
[162] ME: 227, 231-232.
[163] CD III/1, 231*ff*.
[164] ME: 128.
[165] ME: 131, 235-237.
[166] ME: 231-235.

grace;[167] and a theological sense in which nature only exists because of an orientation towards grace.[168] By reading grace as a communication of meaning, Ernst implicitly suggests that priority be given to the actuality of grace, such that the relationship between grace and nature be understood as grace-nature, not nature-grace. In other words, nature can only be known *qua* nature within the economy of grace.

Ernst is, here, asserting the theological priority of the divine initiative in grace, without eliding nature into grace and without reducing nature to the status of a mere vacuole for grace.[169] As a result of this mutual—although asymmetrical—implication of nature and grace, Ernst attempts to adopt what he calls the 'trans-position',[170] in which theology embraces an awareness of the mutually reciprocal priority of grace and nature according to the order of their investigation. This trans-position, however, sacrifices a great deal of the conceptual clarity that the Thomistic tradition has prized, and risks undermining the quest for an integral theological account of nature as an always already theonomic principle, by implicitly devaluing the integrity of nature that it seeks to affirm by saying nothing of nature without invoking the order of grace as its *explanans*.

Locating the Polanyian 'reverse vector' of creatureliness within this nature-grace problematic is complex: Polanyi simply does not operate within the conceptual framework provided by the distinctions of Thomistic metaphysics, upon which the

[167] ME: 133*ff*.
[168] ME: 131-134.
[169] ME: 132.
[170] ME: 132.

debate depends. Nonetheless, the proposed Polanyian account of creatureliness provides a degree of concrete specificity that supplements Ernst's under-developed sense of nature as a theonomic principle. Nature is not an empty vacuole, nor reducible to empirically observable facts, because it is constituted as bound up in the process and praxis of symbolisation, as a semiotic totality that depends upon ultimate meaning for its integration. Whilst individual existents are directly created and inserted into the world of meaning, no individual existent constitutes the symbolic world. There is, here, a cosmic perspective, in which God constitutes the universe as an entire process of semiosis. This invokes a trenchant and irreducible theocentrism: no entity within the world can fully embody the world as a symbol; it is God who symbolises Godself in the world. The world of meanings, then, does not, under its own steam, effect the reverse vector, but this is worked on the cosmos by God in the event of its constitution. In other words, the focus here is not on either a reified grace or a reified nature, but on creaturely action as it analogically corresponds to divine action.

A partial solution to the two-fold problematic of creatureliness within the proposed Polanyian protology can be achieved, then, by treating the reverse vector as, like the divine vector to which it corresponds, a vector without an integration. The reverse vector is constitutive of creatureliness, as a relationship of dependence on the divine vector of creation that really inheres within nature. Grace, however, adds an integration to this vector, conforming and integrating nature in the *reditus* of all things to God. On this account, there is no soteriological determinism embedded within creation: nature does not 'integrate itself' into God, nor does this vector intrinsically tend towards its integration by grace. Equally, by distinguishing the vector from its

integration, both the rigid separation of nature and grace, and the elision of a proper distinction between the two, is avoided. In both the *exitus* and the *reditus* of creation to and from God, grace and nature are mutually involved and implicated. The vector is not an empty neutral space on which grace can operate, like a screen onto which an image is projected.[171] Rather, by treating nature as a vector rather than a comprehensive entity, the nature-vector is a dynamic principle that is actively engaged in and by the grace-integration. As a result, the principle of nature as a theonomic principle is secured: the integration wrought by God's grace is one that corresponds to the nature of the vector as an act, exploiting a latent 'obediential potency' of the vector of nature to being integrated by grace.

§4.7: Towards Semantic Christology

Two features emerge from this account. Firstly, both Ernst and Polanyi emphasise the unique epistemological and ontological status of the human creature and its semantic agency. Marked by a dynamic transcendence—living within and yet oriented beyond the world—the human creature has a limited capacity to transcend the world and to embody it within religious meanings. As such, the human creature plays a unique role in bringing the symbolic reality of the world to fruition but is also haunted by the possibility of (sinfully) mis-reading the world. Secondly, this invokes a semantic Chrisocentrism: Jesus Christ, as the ontological presence of ultimate meaning in the world, is the one who personally embodies both the totality of the biosemiotic hierarchy

[171] *Cf.* Herbert Mccabe, 'The Involvement of God', *God Matters* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1987): 39-53. See the critique of this view offered by Francesca Aran Murphy, *God is Not a Story: Realism Revisited* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 237-92.

in his own semantic agency (who perfectly 'reads' creation as a symbol of Godself) and who simultaneously reveals the fullness of divine meaning within creation.

V

Semantic Christology: Metaphor and Objectivity

The preceding two chapters have established an intrinsicist account of religion and a semantic doctrine of God: *in nuce*, an account of how God, as the Meaning of meaning, is present and accessible ('embodied') in the historical particularity of human articulate frameworks. This chapter develops the epistemological correlates of this theological ontology, addressing the question of how God makes Godself known in God's dynamic transcendence of creaturely meanings.

Christology plays a decisive role in answering the question of how God is knowable in-and-beyond the meanings of world. In declaring himself to be the Truth,[1] Christ identified his own personal being with the ultimate divine Meaning of meaning. The meanings enacted in the person of Jesus are not only meanings that bear upon or narrate ultimate meaning, but rather identical with that meaning itself. As the definitive entry of ultimate Meaning into the world of contingent meanings, Jesus is the personal concentration of God's self-disclosure, a self-authenticating meaning that is communicated in-and-through the creaturely meanings that he dynamically transcends. This chapter proposes a semantic Christology derived from the critical dialogue of Polanyi and Ernst that provides the ontological basis for establishing the unicity of theologal Faith.[2] In particular, a semantic Christology is developed, in which Jesus Christ

[1] John 14:6. See ME: 74.

[2] The term *theologal* as used in the Thomistic tradition (and differentiated from theological) refers to the act of the theological virtue of faith. Whereas theological knowledge implies a discursive—even

is affirmed as the personal ground of Christian Faith,[3] personally the semantic centre of the ontology of meaning,[4] and the personal integration of the diverse world of creaturely meanings.[5]

The Chapter begins by identifying a weakness in Polanyi's account of religion: his homogenisation of theological and philosophical faith. The remainder of the chapter proposes a remedy in the form of a Christology derived from a dialogue between Polanyi and Ernst. An irreducibly theological account of the centrifugal vector of religious Faith (differentiated from the more generic philosophical faith by a capitalised initial)[6] is developed in terms of 'ontological metaphor', the category which Ernst deploys to narrate both Faith and the hypostatic union.

This argument is developed in four stages. The first section identifies the problem: the need to differentiate, in both kind and degree, theologal Faith properly so-called from the more general 'faith' that Polanyi argues is a coefficient of all knowledge. The second section identifies Torrance's account of the unicity of Faith that is evident in his critically realist appropriation of Polanyi and his Christological affirmation of Jesus's vicarious humanity. Consistent with his rejection of the intrinsicist shift in *Meaning* (see §3.3), Torrance's account of revelation is patterned by a moderated form of

---

academic—form of knowing, theologal implies no such articulate or specialist knowledge. Whereas the *theologal* is necessary for salvation, the *theological* is not. See: Romanus Cessario, 'Capreolus on Faith and the 'Theologal' Life', in Carl N. Still (ed.), *Essays in Medieval Philosophy and Theology in Memory of Walter H. Principe* (London: Routledge): 135-42.

[3] The capitalization of Faith is intended to indicate the differentiation of theological and theological Faith, in both kind and degree, a more philosophical faith associated with the person fiduciary commitment argued for in *Personal Knowledge*. This distinction is developed in §5.1, below.

[4] ME: 74-79.

[5] ME: 205.

[6] For Cornelius Ernst's account of the metaphysics of Faith, see ME: 103*ff*.

extrinsicism. Section three develops an intrinsicist alternative to Torrance's solution, using the category of 'ontological metaphor' derived from Ernst. The incarnation is presented as an ontological metaphor, through which divine meaning is transferred into the world of human meanings; theologal Faith is the non-identical repetition of this Christological metaphor. In view of the dispute concerning the theological (non-)realism of Polanyi's account of religion, the fourth section argues for the truth-capacity and objectivity of metaphor (particularly ontological metaphor), according to the theory of metaphor presented by Polanyi in *Meaning*. The concluding section points forward to the pneumatology of Chapter 6, indicating the ways in which an account of Faith as an ontological metaphor depends upon a particular account of the agency of the Holy Spirit in Christian worship.

§5.1: The Problem of the Unicity of Theologal Knowledge

The heart of Polanyi's post-critical proposal is his emphasis on the coinherence of knowing and being and thus the integration of tacit epistemology and biosemiotic ontology:[7] the mode of knowing is not determined *ex parte* the intellect, but by the being of the object in its confrontation of the subject that also belongs to the biosemiotic hierarchy, pro- and e-voking the subject's active engagement.[8] Consequently, in the event of divine self-revelation, as the subject is confronted by the objective presence of ultimate Meaning in the person of Jesus Christ, a noetic response is elicited from the subject that corresponds to—and is determined by—Jesus Christ. The intrinsicist shift

[7] See §2.6. KB: 123-137.
[8] See PK: 133.

in Polanyi's thought, identified by Chapter 3, strengthens this prohibition against the dissection of form and content in the event of knowledge: form not only follows content, but is actively involved in the mediation of that content. In the case of knowledge governed by the centrifugal vector, including religious knowledge, this involvement has a special intensity.[9]

Developing this account of the dependence of the mode of knowledge on the object of knowledge, Chapter 4 identified five epistemological criteria that are correlated with the unique ontological status of the ultimate Meaning that is made accessible in religious articulate frameworks. As a result of Polanyi's emphasis on the essential harmony between the nature of the object and the mode by which it is known, the mode of authentic theological knowledge necessarily shares in the uniqueness of its object. Three fundamental principles of Polanyi's understanding of creaturely knowledge of ultimate Meaning can be identified. Firstly, Polanyi is fundamentally committed to an apophaticism that acknowledges the radical unknowability of God and the commensurate provisionality of religious articulate frameworks (E1), notwithstanding their involvement in the mediation of ultimate meaning.[10] Consequently, for Polanyi, if God is to be known beyond the rather meagre strictures of natural theology,[11] God must make Godself known within the hierarchy of creaturely meanings, by revelation (E3).[12] This Polanyian appeal to a tacit doctrine of revelation indicates two further features of a Polanyian understanding of authentic theological

[9] M: 66-81.
[10] PK: 210-211.
[11] PK: 222-298.
[12] PK: 298; M: 180.

knowledge. Firstly, God's self-revelation both confronts the human subject and yet really makes noetic contact with the world of creaturely meanings (E2). The radical alterity of the divine Meaning is not lost or subdued as it is embodied within the meanings of religious articulate frameworks but protected by the framing mechanism's 'zone of analogicity'.[13] In theological terms, the elements of dialectic and analogy are both sustained within the event of revelation (E1-3). Secondly, knowledge of God's divine Meaning brings about a change in the knowing subject, giving a new coherence to their semantic world and a new integration to their person (E4).

This need for a unique *mode* of theological knowledge, whilst derived from Polanyian principles, is not provided for by Polanyi's own account of religion. Polanyi's analysis locates all knowledge in a single epistemological continuum governed by degrees of fiduciary indwelling that are determined by the complexity of the object of knowledge. At one end of the spectrum, in the case of forms of knowledge close to basic perception or observation, the degree of dependence on faith and indwelling is relatively small (although not entirely eliminated). At the other end of the spectrum, in cases of knowledge derived from imagination and complex articulate frameworks, the degree of fiduciary indwelling is increased. In the case of religious articulate frameworks, which seek to articulate a maximally integrative account of the ordered meaningfulness of the world, the degree of fiduciary indwelling is maximally increased. On this picture, religious faith, complex faith and the faith of the empirical scientist differ in degree, but not in kind.

[13] See §3.3.2, above.

The unbroken linearity of this fiduciary continuum is problematized by the introduction of a distinction between centrifugal and centripetal vectors, which differ from one another in both kind and degree.[14] The centrifugal vector makes the object of knowledge integral to the act of knowledge. Notwithstanding this distinction, however, the two forms of integrating vector—centrifugal and centripetal—both belong to the common ground of the tacit dimension, interacting with each other in complex ways to give rise to knowledge that fuses elements of perception with elements of imagination. Even if the centrifugal-centripetal distinction did constitute a major rupture in the fiduciary continuum, religious faith would have no formal difference from abstract art or profane metaphors. Ultimately, both the centrifugal and centripetal vectors arise from noetic capacities that are innate to the human person.[15]

This raises a significant problem for theological appropriations of Polanyi's synthesis, particularly those committed to intrinsicism. Theologically, the salutary act of Faith is a mode of knowledge that does not arise from within the inherent noetic capability of the human person but rather extends their natural intellectual capacities into the otherwise unknowable realm of the supernatural.[16] The divine bestowal of Faith on the subject is the gift of both *fides quae* and *fides qua*, both the content of the faith—knowledge of the otherwise unknowable divine perfections, including the divine

[14] M: 72-73.
[15] M: 114-115. Polanyi even suggests that non-human animals might have a primitive form of imagination, M: 120.
[16] ST II-II, q. 6, a1. For Aquinas's account of Faith as emerging from outside of human possibilities, see: ST II-II, qq. 1-4, 6-7. The complexities of Aquinas's account of faith have been explored by Stump, *Aquinas*, 361-88. For a more general account of Faith's supernatural character, see: Avery Dulles, *The Assurance of Things Hoped For: A Theology of Christian Faith* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 185-200, 24-34.

triunity—and the gift of Faith, by which that *fides quae* is known.[17] In other words, God's self-revelation does not simply insert naturally unknowable facts about divine mysteries into an otherwise unchanged epistemological framework (revelation is not reducible to 'cognitive-propositional' data),[18] but the gift of divine knowledge is a holistic communication of both form and content.

As noted in §1.2, Ernst, like many twentieth century Catholic theologians, was concerned to emphasise the necessary unity of *fides qua* and *fides quae* as part of an intrinsicist account of revelation. The Thomistic tradition more generally, however, differentiates 'natural faith' in the existence of God from theological Faith associated with the life of sanctifying grace and the theological virtues (known as the 'theologal' life).[19] The natural knowledge of God derived from a philosophical reflection on the world that is (at least hypothetically)[20] unguided by the light of revelation and grace, is not yet theologal Faith properly so-called.[21] Faith, a theological virtue that inheres in the soul,[22] cannot be generated by human effort, but is infused into the soul by God as a gift (made living by the sanctifying grace of charity).[23] Whilst Faith is the supernatural elevation and perfection of the intellect,[24] hope operates in an isomorphic relation with

---

[17] This distinction is operative in ST II-II, q. 6, a1, *respondeo.*

[18] This phrase is taken from Lindbeck's study on the nature of doctrine, with its rejection of cognitive-propositional and experiential-expressive accounts in favour of a cultural-linguistic alternative, see: George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (London: SPCK, 1984).

[19] Romanus Cessario, *Christian Faith and the Theological Life* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1996): 1-13.

[20] Some Catholic theologians read Vatican I's *Dei Filius* as establishing this only hypothetically, with the actual world never being so un-graced. See the discussion in §4.6, above. See also ME: 131-134.

[21] For an account of philosophical knowledge of God and its intrinsic, but distinct, relation to theologal Faith properly so-called, see: Ralph Mcinerny, *Praembula Fidei: Thomism and the God of the Philosophers* (Washington: CUA Press, 2006).

[22] ST II-II, q4, aa. 5-6.

[23] *In ad Rom.* 5, Lect 1 (§603); ST II-II, q. 23 a. 6 and a. 8.

[24] ST II-II, q4, a2.

the faculty of volition.[25] Theologal Faith 'connects' the intellect with the divine mind in a new way, making knowledge of the transcendent *scientia Dei et Beatorum* connatural with the created intellect.[26]

This theologal understanding of Faith is particularly important in soteriological perspective.[27] If Pelagianism is to be avoided, the salutary act of faith cannot be derived from creaturely capacities but is located within the domain of grace that ennobles and enlarges those capacities. To suggest that the first act of faith is a human response to a supernatural revelation that confronts the subject is to articulate a semi-Pelagian position that renders the first act of justifying faith as essentially a natural noetic response to supernatural revelation.[28] An unmodified Polanyianism veers in precisely this direction: homogenizing the act of theological faith as one among many different iterations of the centrifugal vector.

This leaves theologians who are sympathetic to Polanyi's epistemological analysis, but dogmatically committed to the unicity of theological Faith, with two fundamental options. One approach uses Polanyi's fiduciary epistemology to provide 'motives of credibility' for belief in supernatural and non-empirical realities, but not to actually model theological Faith properly so-called. Polanyi's rehabilitation of the category of faith as always already involved in scientific exploration secures an account of the

[25] ST II-II, q18, a2.
[26] ST II-II, q1, a2, *ad* 2. On the role of 'connaturality' in Aquinas's epistemology, see: Jacques Maritain, 'On Knowledge through Connaturality', *Review of Metaphysics,* 4/4 (1951), 473-81.
[27] ST II-II, q2, a3.
[28] On semi-Pelagianism, see: Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (Dublin: Mercier, 1963): 229-33. The standard monograph exploring the semi-pelagian controversy is: Rebecca Harden Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency: A Study of the Semi-Pelagian Controversy* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1996).

rationality (and, indeed, necessity) of believing something prior to understanding it, and thus challenges the myth of a 'neutral' rationality. An alternative approach, however, accepts the broad contours of Polanyi's noetic, but supplements it with a fully theological account of the mode of theologal Faith: developing, beyond Polanyi himself, a *Polanyian* account of theological knowledge within the contours delimited by Polanyi's own fundamental ontology.

Many theologians have taken the first of these paths, reading Polanyi as essentially offering an epistemological account of cognitive dynamics. By contrast, it is the second pathway that is indicated by a reading of Polanyi as developing a semantic ontology. In the proposed semantic ontology, it is meaning that provides the unifying locus through which the world can be read as a comprehensive entity. In this perspective, the cognitive dynamics of faith emerge from a more basic and determinative ontological picture, upon which the various modes of integration depend. Although Polanyi developed his account of the biosemiotic ontology after establishing the fiduciary continuum, it is the semantic ontology that is *logically* antecedent to cognitive dynamics: epistemology conforms to ontology, not *vice versa*. Accordingly, it is the ontology of meaning, rather than the fiduciary continuum, is the Ariadne's thread of Polanyi's thought.

§5.2: Torrance's Critical Realism

This section identifies and critically assesses Thomas Forsyth Torrance's attempt to develop a Polanyian account of the unicity of theologal Faith. Although a key

protagonist in the *Meaning* Controversy (see §3.4), Torrance did not claim to be a 'Polanyian theologian'.[29] Torrance does not take his starting point from Polanyi's synthesis, but rather used *Personal Knowledge* to buttress and more clearly articulate his already established theological convictions; Torrance's thought is more noticeably Barthian than it is Polanyian.[30] Nonetheless, Torrance's *kataphysic* account of faith, metaphysically grounded in the hypostatic union, is articulated in Polanyian language and makes extensive use of characteristically Polanyian themes.[31] This section identifies the ways in which Torrance integrates Polanyian epistemology with his own theological commitment to the realism of Christian revelation, arguing that Torrance's use of Polanyi inscribes a dialectical extrinsicism that is incompatible with the proposed semantic ontology. The task of assessing Torrance's use of Polanyi is complicated by both the breadth of conceptual engagement that is compressed into Torrance's writing and by Torrance's mode of appropriating Polanyi, which is more allusive than exegetical. Torrance invokes and develops Polanyi's *oeuvre,* often indicating Polanyi by name, but does not extensively cite Polanyi's publications.

The argument of this section is developed in three subsections. The first subsection presents Torrance's account of theology as a Polanyian science, governed by the *kataphysic* principle of the conformity of mode of knowledge to the nature of the object, and his consequent development of a critical realism. The second subsection identifies the way in which Torrance's account of Jesus's vicarious humanity secures the

[29] Mcgrath, *T.F. Torrance: An Intellectual Biography*, 228-31.
[30] See: ibid., at 133-46, D. Densil Morgan, *Barth Reception in Britain* (London: T&T Clark, 2010): 218-34.
[31] Torrance presents his understanding of Polanyi most systematically in: 'The Place of Michael Polanyi in the Modern Philosophy of Science'.

mode of rationality proper to theological knowledge. The concluding subsection argues that the critical realism of Torrance's Christocentric account of revelation is patterned by a residual extrinsicism.

§5.2.1: Kataphysic Theology as Polanyian Science

Torrance conceives of theology as a Polanyian science in that it is a *kataphysic* discipline: it has a proper object, made accessible by Faith in Jesus Christ, and a mode of investigation that corresponds to that proper object and is determined by it. Like other sciences, theology is the "rigorous and disciplined extension of ordinary ways of knowing",[32] operating obediently "under the determination of its given subject matter".[33] Theology, however, "differs from other sciences by the uniqueness of its object which can be apprehended only on its own terms and from within the actual situation it has created in our existence in making itself known".[34] Unlike any other science, then, theology is the science of God's self-revelation, dependent upon God's creating and sustaining its possibility and actuality in the event of God's gracious self-revelation in Christ.

In accordance with his identification of theology's proper object as God's self-revelation, Torrance does not argue that Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge* provides a basis on which to affirm human epistemic access to God. Rather, Polanyi's fiduciary epistemology is applied *a posteriori*, from within the locus of Christian dogmatics as

[32] T. F. Torrance, *God and Rationality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971): 9-10.
[33] ThSc: 281.
[34] ThSc: 281.

determined by God's self-revelation. Torrance, then, does not strictly adopt either of the two pro-Polanyian theological pathways identified above. He moves beyond the first pathway, using Polanyian epistemology as more than a propaedeutic offering motives of credibility for reversing the modern inversion of *fide quaerens intellectum*. Nonetheless, whilst it is intrinsically dogmatic considerations that drive Torrance's appropriation of Polanyi, he does not fully embrace the second pathway, making no explicit emendation of Polanyi's synthesis. Polanyi is, for Torrance, more a signal resource than a dialogue partner.

For Torrance, the only ontological basis for authentic God-talk is the hypostatic union, which provides the noetic fulcrum upon which to stabilise theological discourse.[35] "Everything depends upon the way God in His transcendent objectivity makes Himself the object of our knowledge within the objectivities of our creaturely existence".[36] In the incarnation, the unknowable God has inserted Godself into the domain of knowability.[37] For Torrance, it is the hypostatic union that serves as a 'semantic bridge', through which God self-objectifies, positing Godself as an object of knowledge within the realm of subjective apprehension, which is re-presented to contemporary subjectivities by the action of the Holy Spirit.[38]

Torrance's understanding of the *kataphysic* character of theology leads to a kind of positive determinism. The object of knowledge places certain limits upon the

[35] Torrance uses the image of the hypostatic union as 'nucleus' in: *Reality and Evangelical Theology: The Realism of Christian Revelation* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1982a): 91-95.
[36] ThSc: 299.
[37] *Cf,* ThSc: 136.
[38] T. F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconstruction* (London: SCM Press, 1965): 228-38.

subject's intellect, but these limits are seen by Torrance to positively enact rationality. It is from the tacit capacity of the intellect to be limited by objects that trans-subjective realism can be derived and human rationality realised:[39] belief is always grounded by the disclosive force of the object.[40] According to Torrance the "core of rationality" in Polanyian science is "being bound and determined by what is objective".[41] To the extent that the theological language is limited by obedience to its proper object, it too can—and must—claim the status of a Polanyian science.

Like the empirical sciences, then, theology must repeatedly submit to the priority of the object, so as to avoid the pitfalls of 'artificiality'.[42] Torrance understands artificiality as a kind of noetic rebellion of the subject against the object, brought about by the imposition of *a priori* categories. 'Artificiality' is the process through which the intellect imposes categories of subjective construction, attempting to investigate the object in ways other than the mode of rationality afforded by the object itself. As a result, Torrance has a tendency to speak of the subject-object relationship in terms of a relationship of power or the collision of forces: in particular, knowledge of God is "thrust upon us from the side of objectivity".[43] The degree of confrontation of the subject by the object is at its most acute in theologal Faith, in which an otherwise unknowable reality confronts the subject. In theological knowledge, "the Object takes us under its commands and directs our being and existence in relation to it, in a measure

[39] Torrance, *Evangelical Theology*, 45-46, T. F. Torrance, *Reality and Scientific Theology* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985): 112.
[40] Torrance, *Scientific Theology*, 73.
[41] ThSc: 303.
[42] Elmer M. Colyer, *The Nature of Doctrine in T.F. Torrance's Theology* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001a): 18.
[43] ThSc: 289.

that obtains in no other field of knowledge".[44] Nonetheless, the self-objectification of God in Christ does not place the divine Object "under man's command, [therefore we] cannot put Him to the test or bring Him under the power of our controlled scrutiny".[45]

Truth, according to Torrance, hangs on the object and not the subject. As Hardy puts it, for Torrance, there is "an *actual* correspondence between reality and thought [in the event of meaning…] *if* [and only if] the thinker is conformed to the mode of rationality afforded by reality".[46]Torrance argues that this object-oriented approach to epistemology allows him to generate a non-foundationalist account of Faith. To avoid constituting the innate capacity of the mind to be positively determined as an epistemological foundation, Torrance emphasises the Polanyian principle of the active engagement of the subject in all acts of knowledge. As noted in §2.2, this principle differentiates Polanyian epistemology from the Gestalt view of spontaneous equilibration.[47] In being determined and constrained by the external object, the intellect is not merely passive. Rather, the mind actively responds to the object with the mode of knowing that is actively given to it by the disclosive force of the object's reality itself.[48] There is, then, no neutral intellect—no *tabula rasa*—that provides the epistemic foundation point for structures of knowledge: there are no culturally-invariant *a priori* categories (*pace* Kant). Nonetheless, Torrance is emphatic that the ultimate object under which rationality is constrained (a sort of *principium*, if not foundation, of

[44] ThSc: 37.
[45] ThSc: 38.
[46] Daniel Hardy, 'Thomas F. Torrance', in David Ford (ed.), *The Modern Theologians* (1; Oxford: Blackwell, 1989): 47, at 77.
[47] See §2.3, above.
[48] Colyer, *Nature of Doctrine*, 17-18. Colyer's work carries a foreword from Torrance, endorsing the interpretation that it offers.

authority) is neither constructed nor projected, but simply received, almost as a *brutum factum*.[49] Torrance derives this account of the transcendent and simply given authority from his moral philosophy professor from the 1920s, Alfred Edward Taylor.[50] Taylor placed considerable stress on 'the given',[51] arguing that if subjective individualism is to be escaped, authority cannot be ultimately located in either the interiority of individual subjectivity or the consensus of the community, but in an external reality that is wholly given, and simply and patently authoritative in its impression upon the subjectivity of the knower.[52] This is an "ontological act of recognition and assent which cannot be further analysed".[53] As Torrance notes:

> "*…during [the Gifford Lectures of 1927-28] my revered teacher A. E. Taylor called for the locating of authority, neither in individualism nor in some institutional seat, but in a reality that is wholly given and trans-subjective, and simply known and absolutely authoritative through its givenness. If knowledge is to be more than personal opinion, he argued, there must be control of our personal intellectual constructions by something which is not constructed but received*." [54]

The conceptual novelty (and complexity) of Torrance's proposal lies in the way in which this Taylorian principle is integrated with the Polanyian notion of the mind's active engagement. Torrance's epistemological synthesis coheres around his account of the way in which the disclosive force of reality brings about response of knowledge in the

---

[49] ThSc: viii, 27.
[50] Torrance refers to Taylor as his 'revered teacher' in ThSc: xii. Torrance finds Taylor's realism, flavoured by a dash of idealism, congenial.
[51] See, for instance, the published version of his Giffords: A. E. Taylor, *The Faith of a Moralist* (London: MacMillan, 1930).
[52] Colin Gunton likewise noted the influence of Taylor on Torrance's theological epistemology, see: *Revelation and Reason* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2008): 50.
[53] Colyer, *Nature of Doctrine*, 74.
[54] ThSc: viii.

subject, in a way that is both active and free. This account allows him to present the mind as essentially receptive to the givenness of the object, but not passive in its receptivity. The key principle that facilitates this is Torrance's affirmation that the positive determination of the subject by the object occurs by compulsion, but not by causation: the subject is compelled to believe by the disclosive force of reality, but the object does not actually *cause* the subject to believe in a strict logical sense. "[B]elief is a basic conviction that arises in our minds compulsorily but not necessarily".[55]

This distinction between 'causation' and 'compulsion' is extremely fine-grained and carries a considerable conceptual burden. It is hard to define compulsion without appearing to render it as a species of causation, or as in some way involved in logical causal pathways. Indeed, Torrance does not want to deny that it is the nature and quality of the object that is responsible for the subject's disposition (and, in that limited and strictly non-logical sense, Torrance could admit that the relationship is causal, at least analogously). Although Torrance does not use the analogy himself, it seems that compulsion is akin to a person who falls in love with another: there is nothing about the beloved that logically requires the lover to fall in love with them, but nor does the lover simply decide arbitrarily that they will fall in love with this person, as if the beloved's qualities and characteristics were irrelevant. The lover's love is inexplicable without the beloved that elicits it, but there is no strictly logical relationship between the beloved and the love of the lover: put modally, there is a possible world in which the beloved and lover are identical in every respect, but do not fall in love.

[55] T. F. Torrance, *Belief in Science and in Christian Life: the relevance of Michael Polanyi's thought for Christian faith and life* (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1980a): 13.

Torrance maintains the distinction between compulsion and causation for three reasons. Firstly, by denying logical causality to the indubitable certainty of that which is known under compulsion, Torrance refuses it the stability necessary to generate a foundationalist account of knowledge. In this regard, narrative theologian Ronald Thiemann—who accuses Torrance of foundationalism—either fails to recognise the distinction between compulsion and causality, or thinks that compulsion is synonymous with "causal imposition",[56] an objection to which Torrance struggles to articulate a decisive response. Torrance's second reason for sustaining the causality-compulsion distinction, however, relates to the noetic freedom of the subject. As compelled but not caused, the subject remains free in the event of knowledge; knowledge is in no way causally determined, with the subject a mere stenographer or observer of causal relations that play out in her mind. By noetic compulsion, "God does not override us, but makes us free",[57] and freedom in respect of an end is in some relevant sense incompatible with being caused in respect of that end.

The third argument narrates a particular account of the relationship between language and reality. As emerging as an *a*ffect of compulsion, but not the *e*ffect of strict causation, there is no inherent logical pathway between our concepts and the realities that they narrate, or *vice versa*. The continuity between subject and object that is established by the correlation of language and reality is one that is *possible,* and *actual* in the event of knowing, but it is not *necessary*. The event of knowledge enacts a real

[56] Ronald F. Thiemann, *Revelation and Theology: The Gospel as Narrated Promise* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1985): 32-42, at 40.
[57] ThSc: 217-218.

relationship between the world and the mind, but this relationship is 'trans-logical' or 'extra-logical'.[58] This explains, Torrance thinks, why descriptive language is open to indefinite revision. If a logical relationship between mind and reality necessarily obtained, the knowledge caused would be identical in every case as the outcome of a logical deduction. The extra-logical character of the relationship between mind and reality brought about by objective compulsion establishes a space in which truthful linguistic description can still be indefinitely revised in accordance with further compulsion by the disclosive force of reality. Torrance's epistemology is thus seen as an example of 'critical realism':[59] he affirms the full reality and autonomy of the thing known ('realist'),[60] but admits that this can only be known through the enactment of a critical relationship between the knower and the known ('critical').[61]

Although strictly philosophical principles, these arguments are inscribed by Torrance's theological convictions. Firstly, the distinction between 'compulsion' and 'causation' is derived from a particular theological account of causality, in which direct causality equates to determinism and thus excludes the free involvement of the subject. The difficult in differentiating compulsion and causality would be obviated if a thicker causal ontology were generated, through which multiple causes can be seen to co-exist with the integrity of human agency, without compromising human freedom. This is the

[58] T. F. Torrance, *Transformation and Convergence in the Frame of Knowledge: Explorations in the Interrelations of Scientific and Theological Enterprise* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984): 77.
[59] Torrance finds himself 'forced to accept' the epistemology of critical realism, see: Torrance, *Scientific Theology*, 132, Nonetheless he accepts the label with some discomfort, see: Torrance, *Evangelical Theology*, xiv-xv.
[60] see: Douglas F. Kelly, 'The Realist Epistemology of Thomas F. Torrance', in Gerrit Scott Dawson (ed.), *An Introduction to Torrance Theology: Disocvering the Incarnate Saviour* (London: T&T Clark, 2007): 75-102.
[61] N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (London: SPCK, 1992): 35.

approach taken by Aquinas, for whom God is the first cause of all free action, and thus all free human actions are, in this sense, caused.[62] Secondly, the denial of a logical pathway between mind and reality—together with the affirmation of a possible but not necessary correspondence between the two—cuts away an *analogia entis,* or ontic point-of-connection, between the knower and known outside of the event of the *analogia fidei*. This gives Torrance's account of knowledge an occasionalist hue, and a basically extrinsicist character: even if, in noetic terms, Torrance is a quasi-intrinsicist (affirming a possible relation between concepts and reality enacted by knowledge), in ontic terms he is an extrinsicist (denying any logical relation between concepts and reality). Extrinsicism is only bypassed by emphasising the event character of the knowledge relation, which cannot be stabilised into an ontological intrinsicism, as argued in §5.3.3 below.

Likewise, the distinction between causality and compulsion is so fine-grained that Torrance's proposal does not fully escape the impression of a quasi-foundationalism located in the capacity of the mind to be so-impacted by mind-independent objects. Even some of Torrance's most sympathetic commentators have acknowledged the possibility of a 'soft foundationalist' reading of his epistemological project.[63]

[62] The precise mechanism of this causality was disputed amongst twentieth century Thomists, particularly the two Dominican theologians Garrigou-Lagrange and Marín-Sola, see:Michael D. Torre, *Do Not Resist the Spirit's Call: Francisco Marín-Sola on Sufficient Grace* (Washington: CUA, 2013): ix-xxxi.
[63] Colyer, *Nature of Doctrine*, 50.

§5.2.2: Critical Realism and the Vicarious Humanity of the Son

This subsection identifies the way in which Torrance's Christology functions within his critical realism to safeguard the unicity of theologal Faith. Consistent with the general principle that rationality is determined by the conformity of the mode of apprehension with the mode given in-and-with the disclosive force of the object of knowledge, Torrance affirms that the subjective response of Faith in Christ is provided by Christ himself. Jesus alone, in his confrontation of the believer, provides both the objective and subjective basis for authentic knowledge of God.[64] In a two-fold but nonetheless unitary action, Christ mediates to humanity both God's freely-willed self-disclosure and the human response to that self-disclosure in Faith.[65] This element of human response to divine self-disclosure is governed by Torrance's distinctive Christology, which emphasises the vicarious character of Jesus's humanity.[66] For Torrance, by the hypostatic union of humanity and divinity in Christ, God has taken up both sides of the mediating relationship; both Christ's divine and human activity issue from the unity of his personhood. Christ is both God-towards-man and man-towards-God,[67] instantiating both God's full self-disclosure and the authentic human response that corresponds to it.

---

[64] Torrance, *Evangelical Theology*, 88-90.
[65] T. F. Torrance, *Mediation of Christ* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1983): 92-93, Torrance, *Theology in Reconstruction*, 95-98.
[66] Torrance, *God and Rationality*, 145, T. F. Torrance, *Incarnation: The Person and Work of Christ* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008): 205.
[67] Torrance, *Mediation of Christ*, 73.

For this reason, Torrance emphasises that in the incarnation God has identified Godself with alienated and sinful humanity.[68] Torrance argues that the divine *logos* assumes a sinless but nonetheless fallen humanity (a principle that he developed from his teachers Hugh Ross Mackintosh and Karl Barth).[69] The fallenness of Christ's humanity has important noetic implications for Torrance:[70] "the holy Son of God assumed […] our twisted, distorted, bent mind, but […] in assuming it right from the very beginning, Our Lord converted it".[71] In being claimed by Christ through the event of Christ's veiled unveiling of the Father, the knower is joined to Christ's own subjectivity, incorporated into the noetic communion of Father and Son, without violating the sovereignty of God. "Our knowledge of God involves right from the start a union and not a disjunction between subject and object, and yet a union in which God is not entangled in our subjectivity."[72]

The mode of knowing that God's self-revelation in Christ produces by compulsion in the believer is one of cognitive capacities that have been redeemed in and by Christ. "Jesus Christ constitutes in his own self-consecrated humanity the fulfilment of the vicarious way of human response to God […] on the ground of his atoning self-sacrifice once for all offered as a vicarious way of response which is available for all

[68] Several recent monographs have explored Torrance's account of Christ's vicarious humanity, see: Elmer M. Colyer, *How to Read T.F. Torrance* (New York: Wipf and Stock, 2001b): 98-119, Kevin Chiarot, *The Unassumed is the Unhealed: The Humanity of Christ in the Christology of T. F. Torrance* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock, 2013): 103-64, Alexandra S. Radcliff, *The Claim of Humanity in Christ: Salvation and Sanctification in the Theology T.F. and J.B. Torrance* (Eugene OR: Pickwick, 2016): 48-83.

[69] For Torrance's role in popularising this view in anglophone theology in the 20th Century, see: E. Jerome Van Kuiken, *Christ's Humanity in Current and Ancient Controversy: Fallen or Not?* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018): 31-44.

[70] Gerrit Scott Dawson, 'Far as the Curse is Found: The Significance of Christ's Assuming a Fallen Nature in the Torrance Theology', in Gerrit Scott Dawson (ed.), *An Introduction to Torrance Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark): 55-74.

[71] T. F. Torrance, *Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ* (Downers Grove IL: IVP Academic, 2009): 440.

[72] ThSc: 307.

mankind".[73] The hypostatic union establishes a "correlation and correspondence between God's self-giving and man's receiving within which alone God's revelation could be actualised in man".[74] In order that Christ should vicariously provide the subjective basis for human apprehension of the divine, it is necessary that he have the faith that he communicates to those he claims in revelation.[75] This distinguishes Torrance's Christology from that of contemporary Thomists who have affirmed Christ's possession of the beatific vision in his human nature, and thus the absence of acts of faith.[76] According to Torrance, it is not enough for Christ to know that which he communicates to the believer in faith, he must also know it in the way that he communicates to them. Thus, for Torrance, "Jesus provides us freely with a faithfulness in which we may share",[77] since "[i]f we think of belief, trust or faith as forms of human activity before God" then it must follow from the *kataphysic* principle that we are to "think of Jesus Christ as believing, trusting and having faith in God the Father on our behalf and in our place".[78] This is the mode of knowing that Jesus as the subjective possibility and actuality of human knowledge of God makes accessible to the subject whom he confronts in revelation.

[73] Torrance, *Mediation of Christ*, 76-77.
[74] Torrance, *God and Rationality*, 144-45. T. F. Torrance, *Reality and Evangelical Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982b): 88.
[75] Torrance, *Theology in Reconstruction*, 95-98. See: R. Michael Allen, *The Christ's Faith: A Dogmatic Account* (London: T&T Clark, 2009): 17-19. Torrance's brother James gives further expression to this view in: James B. Torrance, *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace* (London: IVP, 1996a): 74-77.
[76] For a contemporary defence of this view, see: Simon Francis Gaine, *Did the Saviour See the Father: Christ, Salvation, and the Vision of God* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).
[77] Torrance, *Mediation of Christ*, 92.
[78] Torrance, *Theology in Reconstruction*, 95-98.

Consequently, although Torrance affirms that the mind is not passive in its reception of divine self-revelation, he nonetheless prioritises the confrontation of the subject by the object. As a result, Torrance's account of Faith emphasises the way in which the divine object enters into communion with the subject, rather than the subject's own act of ecstatic communion, thus avoiding any hint of Pelagianism. To schematise this relation of Faith in terms of a Polanyian account of knowing, Torrance constitutes the dominant vector of faith as a 'reverse centripetal vector', with the object impacting itself on the subject and giving rise to an analogous, but derived (if not caused), centripetal vector *ex parte* the subject.

§5.2.3: Torrance's Extrinsicism: Doctrines as Disclosure Models

This subsection argues that Torrance's dependence on the vicarious Faith of Christ is marked by a residual extrinsicism. As would be expected, given Torrance's rejection of *Meaning* as outlined in §3.3, this schematisation of Torrance's account of Faith differs from Polanyi's later account of religion by adopting only centripetal vectors and avoiding the 'embodying' force of a centrifugal integration. It also differs, however, from the account of religion developed in *Personal Knowledge*, by absolutely grounding the act of Faith in the object of Faith, rather than in the ontological *prius* of the subject's affectivity.[79] Torrance's proposal, then, occupies a mediating position between the 'hard' extrinsicism of *Personal Knowledge* and the intrinsicism of *Meaning*. For *Personal Knowledge,* authentic theological knowledge occurs at the end of a linguistic process that generates a desire that it cannot fulfil, awaiting the in-breaking of revelation.[80] For *Meaning*, theological Faith occurs in-and-with the articulate frameworks that embody the ultimate Meaning that they mediate.[81] According to the *via media* that Torrance traces, Faith emerges as a response evoked under compulsion by the manifesting presence of the object, and is thus posterior to the object's disclosive force. Nonetheless, Faith, as a response, is itself logically distinct from the object, even as it is necessarily derived from it.

As noted above, Torrance's view depends upon a particular causal ontology and a distinctive Christology. Theological objections to either of these necessary correlates

[79] For Polanyi's early dependence on affectivity, see §3.1, above.
[80] PK: 198. See also the account of Polanyi's early views on religion in §3.1.
[81] M: 69. See the account of Polanyi's intrinsicist turn developed in §3.3.

of Torrance's critical realism of revelation—those, for instance, who question whether Christ's possession of faith is compatible with a fully developed Chalcedonian Christology, or who argue that dyothelite Christology demands a thicker causal ontology—could undermine the overall cohesion of his system. Leaving aside these possible dogmatic objections, as well as the difficulty of making the necessary differentiation of compulsion from causality, from within the perspective of semantic dogmatics, Torrance's epistemological picture has several problematic consequences. These cohere around three central features: the privileged status of the first-person perspective as the locus of theological knowledge; the occasionalist nature of the relationship enacted between mind and reality; and the hard exclusivism that adheres to truth-claims that arise from within this enacted relationship.

Firstly, Torrance is largely satisfied to affirm the facticity of the occurrence of this theological correspondence between mind and reality but gives relatively little attention to the mechanism by which this correspondence is actually brought about. Indeed, owing to the trans-logical nature of the relationship of mind to reality, "it is impossible to say precisely how concepts are correlated with experience, or to devise a clear-cut systematic method for that derivation".[82] As a result of his non-essentialist and non-foundationalist account of rationality, Torrance rigidly demarcates those who correctly perceive the truth (with their redeemed intellects) from those who do not (with their unredeemed intellects). As a result, sooner or later, theological truth-claims become immune to extra-systematic critique: the theologian can inevitably have

[82] Torrance, *Transformation and Convergence*, 77.

recourse to the defence that their critics are labouring under mis-apprehensions arising from their yet-to-be-redeemed intellectual faculties.

Secondly, notwithstanding the object-orientated nature of Torrance's critical realism, the non-logical nature of the relationship between mind and reality effectively privatises the response of Faith.[83] The correspondence between mind and reality enacted in Faith has no indubitable external markers and so is knowable only from within the relationship of Faith itself. In the end, the subject knows they authentically know only because they know it (and confirm this in the resonance of what they know with the knowledge of others). Torrance is, then, still vulnerable to the critique that meaning is reduced to an essentially mental event, distinct from the reality that gives rise to it.

Thirdly, by remaining within the circle of the occurrence of this enacted correspondence between mind and reality, the significance of history in the mediation of revelation is somewhat downplayed. Torrance does affirm that, by the hypostatic union, the divine Word assimilates the world of human words to itself, becoming the nucleus of a linguistic community that transmits the *witness* to God's self-revelation.[84] Despite this, and despite the profound historical consciousness of Torrance's work,[85] the subjective appropriation of Faith remains curiously ahistorical, buried within the privileged interiority of the detached subject (for all Torrance's disavowal of dualism).[86]

---

[83] This concern is alluded to in Rodney D. Holder, 'Thomas Torrance: "Retreat to Commitment" or a New Place for Natural Theology?', *Theology and Science,* 7/3 (2009), 275-96.
[84] Torrance, *Evangelical Theology*, 137-41. Colyer, *Nature of Doctrine*, 141.
[85] Torrance was appointed to a Professorial Chair in Church History prior to that in Christian Dogmatics.
[86] Torrance, *Evangelical Theology*, 31-34.

As a result, the redemption of subjectivity that is contingent upon the 'mediated immediacy'[87] of God's self-revelation in Christ is largely independent of the historical contingencies that appear to mediate the conditions of faith.

Fourthly, although Torrance takes a step away from the 'hard' extrinsicism of *Personal Knowledge* by emphasising the primacy of the object, the act of Faith retains an extrinsic integrity aside from its object, as it is brought about in the subject by the object's power, as a response under compulsion whilst lacking logical connection. As a result, Torrance's account tends towards a 'competitive' account of the relationship between created and uncreated agency, in which divine action excludes human action, leaving little space for creaturely mediation.

These weaknesses of Torrance's account of Faith indicate his deployment of a moderated form of extrinsicism. The essentially extrinsicist character of Torrance's theological epistemology is evident in his treatment of the social coefficient of theological knowledge (in which he develops an account of the mediatorial significance of the ecclesial community)[88] and his account of doctrines as 'disclosure models'.[89] Torrance develops his account of the social coefficient of theological knowledge—the ineliminable contribution made by the empirical Church community—through an extrinsicist reading of Polanyi's early understanding of art. For Torrance, art is

[87] This is a phrase used by John Baillie and Karl Rahner, see: Rahner, *Foundations*, 275. Although not used by T. F. in the context of Christ's vicarious humanity, it was used by J. B. to give voice to the view he shared with his brother T. F.: James B. Torrance, 'Christ in Our Place: The Joy of Worship', in T. F. Torrance, James B. Torrance, and David Torrance (eds.), *A Passion for Christ: The Vision that Ignites Ministry* (Edinburgh: Hansel Press, 1999): 35-52, at 42.
[88] Torrance, *Scientific Theology*, 98-130.
[89] Torrance, *God and Rationality*, 45.

characterised by a 'semantic intentionality',[90] that gives rise to an "orientation in the human consciousness as it is pointed in this way to the intelligible ground of reality".[91] Art is possessed of what Torrance calls a 'suggestive form'[92] that points away from itself, towards the inarticulable facets of reality that it suggests to the knower.[93] This semantic intentionality is, Torrance argues, the foundation upon which the meaningfulness of culture can be secured.[94] Torrance's understanding of art—and, by extension, the 'suggestive form' of culture—thus differs in a fundamental way from that articulated by Polanyi in *Meaning*: what Torrance sees as embodied within art is a vector of semantic intentionality, rather than (as for the later Polanyi) aspects of the meaningfulness of the world *per se*. Coherences governed by Torrance's 'suggestive form' are always images, but never symbols.[95]

Applying this to theology, Torrance understands the articulate frameworks of theology to be 'disclosure models' that point the subject towards the internal coherence of the mystery of God's self-revelation.[96] Doctrines are not "picturing models with some kind of point to point correspondence between [themselves] and God, but disclosure

---

[90] Torrance, *Scientific Theology*, 69.
[91] Ibid., at 99.
[92] Torrance makes this connection explicit at: ibid. Jesuit theologian Martin Xavier Moleski has developed a theological reading of Polanyi along the lines suggested by Newman's 'illative sense', see: Martin Xavier Moleski, *Personal Catholicism: the theological epistemologies of John Henry Newman and Michael Polanyi* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2000). Moleski does not, however, stress the Polanyian principle of the coinherence of knowing and being, partly because he inadequately attends to the biosemiotic aspects of Polanyi's thought and thus does not develop a Polanyian ontology of meaning.
[93] Torrance, *Scientific Theology*, 98-102.
[94] Ibid., at 102-04.
[95] Torrance identifies symbolic thought with 'self-expression' and immanence, see: Torrance, *Evangelical Theology*, 26-30.
[96] This is Torrance's characteristic category of 'onto-relations', see: ibid., at 42-51, Gary Deddo, 'The realist and onto-relational frame of T. F. Torrance's Incarnational and Trinitarian theology', *Theology in Scotland,* 16 (2009), 105-33.

models through which God's self-revelation can impress itself upon us".[97] The culturally embedded practices of the Christian community, including their discursive expression in formalised doctrines, whilst important, mediate only an orientation to reality, rather than aspects of reality itself. Torrance is, here, close to Barth's distinctive category of witness,[98] but far from Polanyian 'embodiment'.

As a result of this moderated form of extrinsicism, Torrance understands the 'framing' of religious articulate frameworks to constitute a realm of abstraction and disconnection,[99] operating by an intentional estrangement from the reality to which it points. Indeed, Torrance argues that "the inadequacy of our [doctrinal formulations] is an essential element in its truth and precision":[100] this essential inadequacy of doctrinal formulations is isomorphic with the inherent frustration of religious frameworks in the extrinsicist picture of *Personal Knowledge*.[101] Whereas for Ernst (and for the later Polanyi), religious articulate frameworks find their meaning in-and-beyond themselves (according to the principle of dynamic transcendence), for Torrance, the meaning of doctrines are found simply in-the-beyond: the social coefficient of Faith is meaningless, aside from its relationship of intentionality to a transcendent object.[102]

§5.3: An Intrinsicist Alternative: Metaphysics of Ontological Metaphor

[97] Torrance, *Mediation of Christ*, 32.
[98] See, for instance, the Christological outworking in CD IV/4.3.1, pp. 425*ff.* For Torrance, see: Torrance, *Evangelical Theology*, 121-56.
[99] Torrance, *Scientific Theology*, 101.
[100] Ibid.
[101] See §3.1 above.
[102] Torrance, *Scientific Theology*, 102.

This section develops an intrinsicist alternative to Torrance's Christocentric account of the unicity of theologal Faith, by developing Ernst's category of 'ontological metaphor'. Accepting, with Torrance, the essential Christological determination of Faith, the proposed intrinsicist semantic Christology affirms Jesus's humanity as primarily instrumental, rather than vicarious. As a result, the act of Faith itself corresponds (albeit analogously) to the actuality of the incarnation, both being governed by ontological metaphor.

This proposal is developed in four stages. The first prolegomenal subsection distinguishes a Polanyian-Ernstian account of metaphor from ambient substitutionary understandings. The second subsection identifies the distinctive way in which metaphor functions within the perspective of Cornelius Ernst's semantic ontology. Thirdly, Ernst's category of 'ontological metaphor' is given a fully Christological development, moving beyond the fragmentary and tentative treatment that Ernst himself gives it. The incarnation is, then, presented as an ontological metaphor that enacts divine Meaning within the world of human meanings. Fourthly, it is argued that theologal Faith is itself an ontological metaphor that non-identically, and analogously, repeats the ontological metaphor of the incarnation. This establishes an account of the unicity of theologal Faith that is both Christocentric and intrinsicist.

The use of metaphor as a heuristic requires the deployment of a standardised terminology for its component parts. According to the account offered by Ivor Armstrong Richards, a metaphor is a rhetorical trope comprised of two elements: a tenor, which is the subject of the predication, and a vehicle, whose predicates are

'borrowed' and applied to the tenor.[103] In the metaphor 'time is a thief', for example, time is the tenor and the thief is the vehicle. As will be argued in §5.3.1, although Polanyi deploys this terminology,[104] it is not the most adequate to capturing the dynamic character of metaphor as it operates in his thought. Nonetheless, due to their widespread use in scholarly literature, these terms are used in the following analysis, except where they actively obscure the distinctively Polanyian contribution.

§5.3.1: Metaphor as Embodiment rather than Substitution

As a prolegomenon to the identification of a semantic Christology governed by the category of ontological metaphor as derived from the thought of Polanyi and Ernst, this subsection distinguishes a Polanyian account of metaphor from the substitutionary account developed by Aristotle and popularised by Quintilian.[105] The substitutionary account defines metaphor as a linguistic trope in which one (usually decorative) word or phrase takes the place of a more ordinary one. According to Black, the key feature of the substitutionary account is that metaphors can be 'translated' into more literal language, and so eliminated by a reduction to literality:[106] the meaning of a metaphor is explained by the literal phrase for which it substitutes. Two features emerge from this substitutionary account of metaphor: firstly, metaphors are principally understood in

[103] Ivor Armstrong Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937).
[104] M: 75-78.
[105] Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, trans. Robert Czerny, Kathleen Mclaughlin, and John Costello (London: Routledge, 1977): 8-48, especially 26-30, John T. Kirby, 'Aristotle on Metaphor', *American Journal of Philology,* 118/4 (1997), 517-54.
[106] Max Black, 'More About Metaphor', in Andrew Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979): 19-40, at 22, This builds upon Black's earlier defence of an 'interactive' theory of metaphor, for which see: Max Black, 'Metaphors', *Models and Metaphors* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962).

terms of nouns, designating particular objects;[107] secondly, literal use of language is affirmed to be the most 'proper' form of language, with metaphor seen as parasitic upon the literal sense of the involved words.[108] In many cases, the 'literal' sense is identified with the truth of ontological correspondence, whilst metaphor is only true in the degree to which it corresponds with that literal correspondence (which is necessarily always partial).

Despite the influence that the substitutionary account has exerted over Western philosophical theories of metaphor, its adequacy as a reading of Aristotle has been subject to critique.[109] Aside from the question of exegetical fidelity, the idea that metaphor can be converted into literal propositions without semantic loss lacks *prima facie* plausibility. It is deeply counterintuitive to suggest that all the meaning lost in a reduction of metaphor to literal speech is 'only' an aesthetic surplus of meaning over description.[110] Philosophically, such attempts to reduce metaphors to literal statements not only sacrifice economy of expression, but necessarily also eliminates a residue of communicated meaning that can be captured only by the metaphor itself: the aesthetic *qualia* of metaphor are not extrinsic to its reception as meaningful. As Polanyi observes, contemporary scholars have struggled to isolate the nature of the cognitive content that is communicated by metaphor. Max Black, for instance, advocates an 'interaction'

---

[107] The work of George Miller has demonstrated that 'nominal metaphors' are only one species of metaphorical language-use, see: 'Images and Models, Similes and Metaphors'.

[108] This aspect of the substitutionary view is dismantled in: George Lakoff, 'The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor', in Andrew Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (1993): 201-51. See also: George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (2nd edn.; Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003).

[109] Janet Martin Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1985): 8-11.

[110] The notion of literality is more problematic than it may appear *prima facie:* some philosophers have questioned whether *any* conveyed meaning could be irreducibly literal. See: David A. Rumelhart, 'Some problems with the notion of literal meanings', in Andrew Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 71-83.

theory, in which meaning is constituted in the interplay and mutual collision of the tenor and vehicle.[111] Black is, however, unable to schematize this interaction, allowing the integrative fusion of elements to devolve almost entirely onto the subject's intelligent reception.[112]

Despite these weaknesses, the substitutionary reading of the Aristotelian-Quintilian trajectory captures three crucial features of metaphor. Firstly, metaphor involves a dual-aspect, bringing together (in some as yet unspecified way) the two semantic realities of tenor and vehicle in a fusion that balances the strange and the familiar. Secondly, there is a 'mechanism' through which metaphor is achieved (in which a word or phrase is moved over from one context to another). Thirdly, as a result of these principles, metaphor introduces an element of linguistic novelty, in which a familiar word is used in a fresh and unfamiliar way (the element of *catachresis*). These three features of metaphor can be adequately affirmed, however, without accepting either the principally nominal character of metaphor or the prioritisation of literal over metaphoric language use.

Despite this, accounts of metaphor as a declension from the proper linguistic task of reality depiction have considerable currency. Linguistic custom, for instance, continues to juxtapose 'literal' and 'metaphorical' in dialectical antithesis.[113] This has been given systematic expression by some contemporary philosophical accounts of

[111] Black, 'Metaphors'.
[112] Black, 'More About Metaphor'.
[113] It is not uncommon, for instance, to hear it claimed that something is "only metaphorically true", see: Nicholas Lash, *Theology on the Way to Emmaus* (London: SCM Press, 1986): 158.

metaphor—particularly those in the analytical tradition—that posit metaphor as 'semantic deviance'.[114] J.L. Austin, for instance, groups metaphor (together with jokes) as 'non-serious' language use.[115] These 'non-serious' uses of language are, for Austin as they are for Searle,[116] parasitic upon the more basic 'ordinary' use of language for literal description, thus accepting both the fundamentally nominal character of metaphor and the prioritisation of the literal over the metaphoric (the key features of classical substitutionary views).

Nonetheless, contemporary philosophers of science, including Polanyi himself, have indicated the ways in which metaphors function in empirical science as cognitive tools that facilitate the investigation of aspects of reality inaccessible to observation.[117] Similarly, philosophers in the Continental tradition have developed accounts of metaphor that diverge in significant ways from the foundational claims of the substitutionary account,[118] challenging the classical view in two ways. Firstly, they reject the straightforward opposition of metaphorical and literal, as well as the idea that denotation is a 'more proper' linguistic function than metaphorical communication. In our intellectual encounter with empirical actuality, our descriptive quest demands more than that which can be provided by the literal sense alone: description, paradoxically, demands the metaphoric.[119] Secondly, these philosophers tend to extend the category of

[114] Mark Johnson, 'Metaphor in the Philosophical Tradition', in Mark Johnson (ed.), *Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor* (1981): 3-48, at 21.
[115] J.L. Austin, *How to do things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962): 104.
[116] John R. Searle, *Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969): 78.
[117] Michael Bradie, 'Science and Metaphor', *Biology and Philosophy,* 14/2 (1999), 159-66. Thomas S. Kuhn, 'Metaphor in Science', in Andrew Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 533-42.
[118] See: Clive Cazeaux, *Metaphor and Continental Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2007).
[119] ME: 74.

'metaphor' beyond its enactment in figures of speech:[120] metaphors are not taken to be primarily particular artefacts, but the activity that leads to their production, *viz.* a skilled practice or a human capacity. Linked to this is an awareness of ostensive definition as a highly artificial form of language use, rather than its most basic constituent.[121] Ostensive definition depends upon an antecedent capacity for metaphor, which enables the learner to recognise what the teacher is doing in the act of ostensive definition. Developing the emphasis on metaphor as the activity of meaning transfer, rather than the product of such transfer, many of these contemporary accounts present metaphor in dynamic terms as a skilful human practice, a process of investigating reality or the intellectual fusion of diverse sensate data. Writing in 1928, Herbert Read anticipates this strand of contemporary thought, defining metaphor as "the synthesis of several units of observation into one commanding image":[122] the determining principle is not the produced artefact, but the skilled practice of integration.

Polanyi and Ernst share this awareness of metaphor as a distinctively human practice that is irreducible to a species of predication. Polanyi's account of metaphor, as developed in *Meaning*, was presented in §3.3. *In nuce*, Polanyi understands metaphor to be a particular type of symbolisation relation, through which a meaning is embodied in an intrinsically meaningful element, by establishing it in a new semantic relationship to another intrinsically meaningful element. This can be represented schematically:

[120] Cazeaux, *Metaphor and Continental Philosophy*, Ch. 8.
[121] Richard Boyd, 'Metaphor and Theory Change', in Andrew Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973): 481-532.
[122] Herbert Read, *English Prose Style* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1928): 24-6.

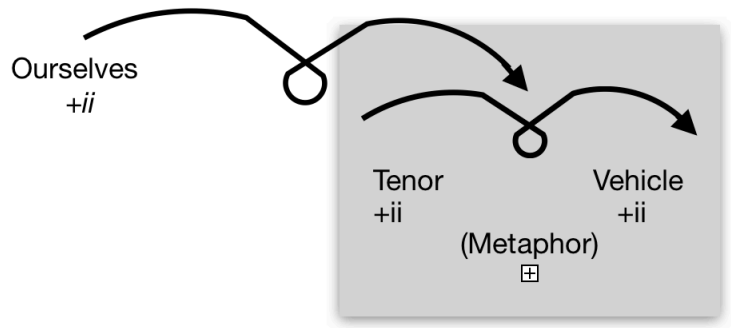


Figure 10: Metaphor and Centrifugal Vector

The key dynamic of Polanyi's account of metaphor is, then, 'embodiment', rather than 'substitution'. The metaphor does not stand in the place of a more literal phrase but operates so as to make one meaning accessible *within* another meaning. There is, according to Polanyi, an intrinsic relationship between the two poles of the metaphor. Polanyi could have more clearly articulated his account of metaphor by establishing a terminology distinct from that of Richards.[123] Whereas a 'vehicle'-'tenor' relationship suggests an extrinsic relationship governed by predication, Polanyi's language of 'embodiment', provides an alternative framework in which the 'embodiment'-'embodied' cannot be reified from the relationship of 'embodiment' that enacts the metaphoric transfer.[124]

As a result of this paradigm of embodiment, Polanyi asserts that the significance of the vehicle (*qua* 'embodiment') must have a certain likeness to the tenor that it embodies.[125] Whereas in metonymy the significance of symbol and matter is

[123] M: 74-79.
[124] M: 78.
[125] See the second schematic at M: 78.

continuous, in metaphor it is merely a proportional similitude, having some fitting likeness with the embodied matter but operating within a broader horizon of dissimilarity that necessitates the two-fold iteration of the embodying centrifugal vector.[126] The semantic relationship enacted by metaphor introduces a degree of 'imaginative' univocity between two otherwise equivocal realities; this is, however, necessarily grounded by an antecedent similarity. Whereas in the abstract arts the framing mechanism establishes a domain of equivocity,[127] the framing mechanism of a metaphor establishes what might be termed a 'domain of analogicity', suspended between the equivocal and the univocal.

Consequently, Polanyi's use of the centrifugal vector of embodiment necessarily distinguishes his account of metaphor from substitutionary accounts. The centrifugal vector operates by embodying one meaning within another meaning, rather than simply deploying one meaning as an *ersatz* substitute for an otherwise absent meaning. Meanings generated by the centrifugal vector are necessarily received by the centrifugal vector: centrifugal vectors unavoidably involve a reverse movement of embodiment, in which the knower's subjectivity is in some way re-embodied within the object. Such a reverse embodiment is a necessary component of the meaning of the metaphor but cannot be reproduced by any number of nested centripetal vectors, which, by definition, do not admit of such a subjective reconstitution. As a result, Polanyi's account of metaphor is irreconcilable with substitutionary accounts of metaphor.

---

[126] *Cf.* Andrew Ortony, 'The Role of Similarity in Similes and Metaphors', in Andrew Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 342-56.
[127] M: 81-87.

§5.3.2: Ernst's Metaphysical Theory of Metaphor

This subsection identifies the way in which Ernst's semantic ontology develops a non-substitutionary account of metaphor similar to Polanyi's account of metaphoric embodiment. Unlike Polanyi, who distinguishes between metaphor and symbol on the basis of the intrinsic interest of the proximate pole,[128] Ernst strongly associates metaphor with symbolism.[129] Theologically speaking, symbols are those created 'fictions' that participate with the divine reality, so as to communicate that reality to the subject.[130] Symbols are—for Ernst, unlike Polanyi[131]—possessed of an inherent interest, which in certain ways detaches them from the "continuous hierarchical chain of participation"[132] that Ps.-Dionysius articulated. Symbols are productions of the intelligent human culture (under the influence of divine grace), which actively mediate Meaning through the diverse ways these symbols are appropriated by the believing community.

Whilst noting the ways in which Aquinas identifies the categories of 'symbol' and 'metaphor',[133] Ernst differentiates metaphor from symbol by reading it as a semantic praxis, "the mental operation proper to symbolism",[134] which 'carries meaning over' from one semantic domain to another. Although the semantic transfer of metaphor can involve the 'translation' of meanings within the same semantic domain, it more properly

[128] M: 71-72.
[129] ME: 66-68.
[130] ME: 64.
[131] ME: 66.
[132] ME: 66.
[133] ME: 64.
[134] ME: 68.

refers to the transference of meanings between the sensible-material domain and the higher order of the immaterial-intelligible, through the semantic mediation of some aspect of the sensible realm.[135] As Marie-Dominique Chenu observes in his account of the symbolist mentality of the middle ages, "metaphor is obedient to the necessities imposed by transcendent realities":[136] metaphor is not, then, the simple projection of immanent human meanings, but rather these human meanings labouring under the intense pressure of determination by the transcendent object that they communicate. Metaphor pushes the limits of our words, making them more communicatively capacious.

According to Ernst, metaphor is not fundamentally about the application of predicates, nor sharply differentiated from literal speech.[137] Likewise, metaphor is not primarily understood as a decorative feature of language that indicates an aesthetic excess over description. Rather, metaphor refers to a skilful practice by which an intelligent agent negotiates their semantic habitat. Central to this practice is the skilled recognition of the similarities, proportions and relations that are inherent to reality and which allow for the semantic transfer of metaphor to be enacted.

The primary 'direction' of transference that is enacted by metaphor is, according to a *prima facie* reading Ernst's analysis, upwards: concepts derived from the sensible world are transferred, by the elevating and ennobling process of metaphor, to operate

[135] ME: 67.
[136] Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1968): 138.
[137] ME: 71-74.

within the transcendent domain. There is, however, a movement in the opposite direction that is correlated with this translation, which Ernst does not treat explicitly, but which is a component of Polanyi's notion of embodiment. The participation of the symbol in the transcendent reality, which is enacted by the process and praxis of metaphor, empowers the symbol to communicate something of the transcendent Meaning within the immanent sphere to which it belongs. By this movement, then, the transcendent meaning finds a point of entry within the lower sphere of meaning: metaphor has a descending character, inserting a higher meaning into a lower plane, by raising part of the lower plane to participate in the semantically transcendent plane.

An awareness of this descending, *katabatic*, movement of metaphor, with its incarnational resonances, is not absent from Ernst's account of metaphor. Ernst suggests that Aquinas's preference for *metaphora* over *translatio* emerges from a profound awareness of the human conditions of religious language:[138] metaphor functions only within a particular given human 'world', a concrete context demarcated by a shared symbolic grammar.[139] Indeed, the *katabatic* movement is determinative of the correlated *anabatic* upwards transfer of lower realities into a transcendent realm: the mediating agency of the sensible reality must be 'obedient' to the transcendent reality that it communicates. In other words, the tenor does not cut itself down into the structures determined by the vehicle, but the vehicle is brought into conformity with the tenor, by a semantic agency that embodies the tenor's meanings within the vehicle.

[138] ME: 68.

[139] ME: 69. A similar point is made in: Eberhard Jüngel, 'Metaphorische Wahrheit: Erwägungen zur theologischen Relevanz der Metapher als Beitrag zur Hermeneutik eine narrativen Theologie', in Paul Ricoeur and Eberhard Jüngel (eds.), *Metapher* (München: Kaiser Cop., 1974): 71-122.

As such, the transcendent integrity of the tenor is safeguarded as the *sine qua non* of the vehicle's elevation, and the descending movement in metaphor depends upon the logically antecedent elevating movement, by which the vehicle is brought into conformity with the tenor.

Although the semantic agency that brings about metaphor is often conceived (even by Ernst) as a *mental* act,[140] Aquinas's arguments affirm that theological metaphor is an inherently bodily practice (a point that Ernst alludes to,[141] but does not explicitly develop). This affirmation of the bodily character of metaphor emerges in Aquinas's thought indirectly, in his response to Boethius's argument that, since there can be no comparison of similitude between creature and God, there can be no metaphorical *translatio* of creaturely categories by *anabasis* to the divine.[142] In his response, Aquinas differentiates two types of similitude.[143] The first and proper sense is the common participation of the same form (a likeness which could never obtain between creatures and God). The second, more analogous species of similitude is a proportional similarity (*quaedam similitudo proportionalitatis*) between relationships (something Aquinas returns to in the *prima pars* discussion of analogical predication).[144] This second form of similitude allows the likening (*transumptio*) of the physical world to God.[145] Since all metaphorical transfer between creatures and God

[140] The 'mental operation' proper to symbolism, see: ME: 67.
[141] ME: 67.
[142] *De Veritate* q. 10, a. 7, *ad.* 10.
[143] See also *De Veritate* q. 2, a. 11, ad. 2.
[144] ST I, q. 13, a. 6. See also: Steven A. Long, *Analogia Entis: on the analogy of being, metaphysics, and the act of faith* (South Bend: Notre Dame University Press, 2011), Bernard Montagnes, 'La doctrine de l'analogie de l'être d'après saint Thomas d'Aquin', (Thèse Louvain, 1963), John R. Mortensen, *Understanding St. Thomas on Analogy* (Rome: Gregorian University, 2010).
[145] ME: 67.

must involve the relational similitude of proportionality, and since proportionality must always come from that which is evident to the senses, there can be no upwards metaphorical transfer between the separated substances of the celestial hierarchy and God.[146] The practice of metaphor therefore depends upon an embodied engagement with the sensory world.

Ernst develops an account of a particular form of metaphor, which he calls 'ontological metaphor', to narrate various aspects of the Christian *musterion* that communicate divine and human realities, including the incarnation itself and the dependent act of Faith. Problematically, however, Ernst never explicitly defines this concept, nor does he provide any account, by way of example or otherwise, of how it differs from the more general category of metaphor. Indeed, the role played by the category of 'ontological metaphor' in Ernst's thought has often been overlooked.[147] The most extensive use of the concept is found in a version of his '*Meaning and Metaphor*' essay that was not included in *Multiple Echo*, but was subsequently published in *New Blackfriars* in 1980.[148] Even in this essay, however, Ernst's presentation of the concept is sporadic and unclear, evident more from highly suggestive use than from established definition. Ernst reworked the essay *Meaning and Metaphor* many times for various academic occasions, suggesting that he never finally settled on an account of ontological metaphor with which he was content.[149] The following development of Ernst's thought

[146] Ernst does not fully develop this point, see ME: 69.
[147] It receives only very scant treatment, for instance, in: Roy, 'Cornelius Ernst's Theological Seeds'.
[148] Cornelius Ernst, 'Meaning and Metaphor in Theology', *New Blackfriars,* 61/718 (1980), 100-12.
[149] See: EDA, Ernst §4.

proceeds along lines suggested by his writings, deploying a systematic form that cannot be found in Ernst himself.

Linguistically, ontological metaphors are those metaphors that represent an abstract and intangible reality (like an emotion or an activity) in terms of something that is concrete and tangible (like an object or person).[150] For example, the question 'how did you get into systematic theology?' uses spatial language, derived from experience of containers, to articulate the process of becoming interested in the otherwise abstract concept of the discipline of systematic theology. These sorts of ontological metaphors are deeply intuitive to a native speaker and might only be recognised as metaphors after philosophical reflection. Indeed, many ontological metaphors are concealed within quotidian patterns of expression. The statement 'there was much joy', for instance, uses quantifiers drawn from experience of extended objects to narrate the intensity of an experience that has no physical extension *per se* (but which does have proportionate affects within the observable world). The essence of an ontological metaphor, then, is to communicate an unboundaried reality by the use of a mediating boundaried reality that is drawn from empirically observable actuality.

This section has identified Ernst's account of ontological metaphor as a semantic transfer of meaning from one semantic domain to another. The next section develops

[150] As Boers puts it, developing the typology presented by Lakoff and Johnson, "ontological metaphors allow us to conceive of abstract concepts as concrete entities", see: *Spatial Prepositions and Metaphor* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1996): 21. The literature on 'ontological metaphors' is vast. See: Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 25, Cazeaux, *Metaphor and Continental Philosophy*, 197.

Cornelius Ernst's application of the category of ontological metaphor to the incarnation into a systematic and coherent semantic Christology.

§5.4: Hypostatic Union as Ontological Metaphor

This subsection identifies the Christological basis upon which to establish, in the next subsection, the unicity of theologal faith.

Ernst grounds theologal Faith in the person of Christ but does not develop a vicarious account of Christ's humanity. Ernst presents Christ as himself a personal ontological metaphor, a living process and praxis of transference of one semantic domain (the unboundaried realm of ultimate Meaning) into another semantic domain (the boundaried realm of creaturely meanings). Within the perspective of the proposed semantic ontology that emphasises the historical self-disclosure of being in meaning, this Christological claim follows from Chalcedonian Christology. Christ is the unity of two natures in a single hypostasis; therefore, in the terms of a semantic ontology, Christ is two otherwise discrete meanings united in a single ontological metaphor. To use Polanyian idiom, Jesus Christ is the human embodiment of divine Meaning and the divine 'embodiment' of human meanings.

In the case of the incarnation, the union of the two elements of the ontological metaphor is perfect. Whereas in metaphors of human artefaction there is an inevitably imperfect degree of integration between the two poles (some way in which the vehicle disrupts the task of mediating the tenor), in the incarnation there is no such lack—no

aspect of disintegration—and thus a perfect communication. The union established by ontological metaphor in Christ is such that it is not two perpetually uniting meanings but a real union: a coherent semantic event that simultaneously communicates uncreated Meaning and creaturely meanings, in a way that is both without confusion or mixture, but equally without division or separation. This theological principle of the union and unconfused integrity of the natures is provided for by ontological metaphor, in which both domains retain their semantic integrity, and the transcendent domain retains its superiority as it exercises ontological determination of the metaphor. As a result of this perfect integrity, the ontological metaphor of the incarnation cannot be adequately represented in a Polanyian schematisation, which would posit an untenable degree of separation between the natures.

Notwithstanding this emphasis on the union enacted by metaphor, Polanyi's account of metaphor distinguishes this semantic Christology from monophysite Christologies that emphasise the unity of the natures at the expense of the distinction of the natures, or Eutychean Christologies that posit the emergence of a new *tertium quid* through the synthesis of divinity and humanity. As metaphors appear as single comprehensive entities possessed of concrete unity, an account of the incarnation of ontological metaphor risks failing to adequately affirm the integrity of the two natures. In the case of habitually used ontological metaphors (like the 'passage of time'), the existence of the metaphor, let alone the distinction of the elements, may only be apparent after a considerable dissociative labour of the intellect. Nonetheless, Polanyi's intrinsicist account of metaphor stresses the integrity of the reality at both poles of the metaphoric integration. The enacted unity of a metaphor, on Polanyi's account, depends

upon the imaginative integration of two at least partially incommensurate semantic horizons: for this reason, no single word can be a metaphor in its own right.[151] Whereas on an extrinsicist picture a lower reality can only communicate higher meanings by pointing to them or by becoming identical with them, Polanyi's later intrinsicism allows for a lower reality *qua* lower reality to embody a higher level of reality. The work of communication is established by the embodying centrifugal relationship between the two, which, in the case of Christology, is a perfected relation of union without confusion or distinction.

§5.4.1: Ontological Metaphor and the Hypostasis of the *Logos*

A full development of this semantic Christology appears, *prima facie*, to suggest an identification of Jesus's *person* with the ontological metaphor, as that by which his two meanings (uncreated and created) are united, just as, in classical Christology, Christ's two natures are united in a single person. Importantly, however, Ernst does not propose the replacement of a two-natures Christology with a two-meanings Christology: the point of Ernst's semantic ontology is not to replace classical metaphysical categories like *hypostasis* and *substantia*, but to lead into a renewed and deepened sense of their significance.[152]

The proposed semantic Christology cannot eliminate the full hypostatic reality of the *logos* (the personhood of the Word) as distinct from, and antecedent to, the

[151] Eberhard Jüngel, 'Metaphorical Truth', *Theological Essays* (London: Bloomsbury, 1989): 16-71.
[152] ME: 133-140.

ontological metaphor.[153] According to Polanyi's analysis, metaphors are intrinsically personal acts: they are things that persons do, requiring the imaginative action of a personal agent, but they are not persons themselves. Notwithstanding these intra-Polanyian grounds for affirming the priority of person over metaphor, the reasons governing the antecedence of the divine *logos* over the hypostatic union are theological. As will be argued below, although Polanyi is correct to affirm that in human agency personhood is always antecedent to intentional action, there are nonetheless grounds for identifying *human* persons as living ontological metaphors. Paradoxically, in the case of divine persons, in which person and act are absolutely identical in the divine simplicity of God's immanent triunity, it is necessary to affirm an infinite priority of personhood over the ontological metaphor of the incarnation.

The determinative feature of ontological metaphor is that it unites two semantic domains. Ontological metaphor therefore presupposes the existence of at least two semantic domains, and thus the possibility of semantic composition. In the case of the ontological metaphor of the incarnation, this is the creaturely domain of humanity and the uncreated domain of God Godself. If the ontological metaphor that unites humanity and divinity is allowed to take the place of the personhood of the Word, then the

[153] As I have argued elsewhere, an affirmation of a *logos asarkos* need not be taken to imply a perpetually 'discarnate *logos*' but an eternal *logos incarnandus*; a Christ-*logos* 'dissociation' and 'conflation' are not antithetical either/or, but neither/both: 'Divine Antecedence and Pretemporal Election', *New Blackfriars,* 98 (2017), 264-84. See also: Paul D. Molnar, *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2002), Paul D. Molnar, 'Can the Electing God be God Without Us?', in Michael T. Dempsey (ed.), *Trinity and Election in Contemporary Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011): 63-90. For an opposed view, see: Bruce L. Mccormack, 'Grace and Being: the role of God's gracious election in Karl Barth's theological ontology', in John Bainbridge Webster (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 92-110, Bruce L. Mccormack, 'Election and the Trinity: Theses in Response to George Hunsinger', in Michael T. Dempsey (ed.), *Election and Trinity in Contemporary Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011): 115-37.

humanity of Christ is effectively projected 'backwards' into the pretemporal eternity of the trinity:[154] a creature is posited before creation. Indeed, the hypostasis that grounds Jesus's human nature is the second divine person.[155]

Consequently, the person of the Word cannot be identical with the ontological metaphor of divinity and humanity in Christ, for two reasons, one theological and the other philosophical. Firstly, as the essence of an ontological metaphor involves movement across disparate semantic domains, identifying a divine person with an ontological metaphor would tether the divine identity to a non-divine identity, thus positing something coeternal that stands over-and-against God. Since the *translatio* of ontological metaphor is a form of change, this would disrupt the divine aseity and subordinate the Son to the Father.[156] Paradoxically, this would make an ontological metaphor philosophically impossible: as noted above, in ontological metaphor, the transcendent principle remains the dominant principle that is mediated by conditioning the vehicle. God cannot, therefore, be both determined by the vehicle that mediates Godself, and yet be transcendent over it, conditioning it in a relationship of ontological metaphor: this would collapse into a nihilistic circularity in which all meaning perpetually deconstructs itself. Ontological metaphor, therefore, articulates not the divine person of the Word, but the hypostatic union of divinity and humanity that is

---

[154] Edwin Christian Van Driel, 'Karl Barth on the Eternal Existence of Jesus Christ', *Scottish Journal of Theology,* 60/1 (2007), 45-61. See also the response of Bruce Lindley McCormack: 'Seek God Where He May Be Found: A Response to Edwin Chr. van Driel', *Scottish Journal of Theology,* 60/1 (2007), 62-79.

[155] ST III, q. 3. The peculiar status of Jesus's hypostasis is discussed in: Michael Gorman, 'How Does Christ's Human Nature Not Ground Its Own Person?', *Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017): 73-100.

[156] Similar objections have been raised against Bruce McCormack's development of Karl Barth's account of Jesus as the subjective agent of divine election, see: George Hunsinger, 'Election and the Trinity', in Michael T. Dempsey (ed.), *Election and Trinity in Contemporary Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011): 91-114.

effected by the Word in the Word's assumption of a human nature (an effect not of the *logos* alone, but of the three divine persons acting as one common principle). *In nuce,* the ontological metaphor of the incarnation is not identical with the second divine person but is rather borne by the second person in the economy.

§5.4.2: Ontological Metaphor and Sacred Humanity

This identification of the hypostatic union, rather than Christ's divine personhood, as the ontological metaphor carefully negotiates the vexatious question of how Jesus's human nature is related to the divine person that grounds it.[157] On the one hand, there is nothing more basic in Jesus Christ than this ontological metaphor. Whereas in metaphors of creaturely artefaction the lower pole of the metaphor exists prior to the subject's appropriation of it in faith, this is not the case in the ontological metaphor of the incarnation. The human nature of Christ has no existence outside, or prior to, the ontological metaphor of the incarnation (it is '*anhypostaton*') and exists only within its belonging to the ontological metaphor of the incarnation (it is '*enhypostaton*').[158] This follows from the perfection of the union established between the two meanings: there is no moment of dis-integration between Christ's human meanings and the divine Meaning that they mediate. Jesus is identical with the divine

[157] Gorman, 'How Does Christ's Human Nature Not Ground Its Own Person?'.

[158] The *anypostasis-enhypostasis* formula is an essential part of Barth's mature Christology and theological method, see: Bruce L. Mccormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995): 327ff. Although Aquinas does not use the formula, recent studies have suggested its broad compatibility with Thomistic Christology's *impersonalitas*: James P. Haley, *The Humanity of Christ: The Significance of the Anhypostasis and Enhypostasis in Karl Barth's Christology* (Princeton: Princeton Theological Monographs, 2017): 45. Haley could develop further the connection of Aquinas's Christology and the Damascene's explicit use of the formula: why does Thomas not adopt this from John of Damascus, given the proximity of *impersonalitas* that Haley establishes?

Meaning that he communicates and can be seen as personally an ontological metaphor. On the other hand, the ontological metaphor of the incarnation is expressive of (and not constitutive of) the antecedent divine nature. To borrow terminology, there is, here, an *extra Calvinisticum*:[159] Jesus is identical with God, as God's own perfect self-communication, but God remains infinite and is not 'contained' within Christ's finite creatureliness.

According to an analysis of the incarnation in terms of Richards' parts of metaphors, Jesus's humanity is the vehicle and his divinity the tenor: the creaturely meanings of his humanity embody and communicate the perfection of the divine nature. Such an analysis inevitably fails in the case of the incarnation, where the degree of integration is perfected without mixture or confusion. Likewise, Richards' terminology cannot establish an adequate role for Christ's hypostasis: according to the *communicatio idiomatum*, the communicable attributes of the natures are predicated of the person, but not *ipso facto* exchanged by the natures.[160] In Christ, the hypostasis provides a third principle, not captured by Richards' model of metaphor. There are further complexities in applying the analysis to Jesus, who also 'embodies' in an upwards direction, manifesting a glorified humanity and establishing himself as the unique mediator between humanity and God.

---

[159] The Calvinist '*extra*' affirms that Jesus's humanity does not share in the ubiquity of God. As such, God is substantially wherever Jesus's humanity is to be found, but Jesus's humanity is not wherever God is to be found. On the importance of this principle in establishing adequate accounts of divine antecedence, see: Andrew M. Mcginnis, *The Son of God Beyond the Flesh* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014). Myk Habets, 'Putting the 'extra' back into Calvinism', *Scottish Journal of Theology,* 62/4 (2009), 441-56. Thomas Joseph White has suggested Aquinas might be seen as affirming an 'extra Calvinisticum', see: Thomas Joseph White, *The Incarnate Lord: A Thomistic Study in Christology* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2015): 211.

[160] Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, 160-61.

Indeed, the humanity of Jesus is not only a passive vehicle but a full human nature, possessed of the faculties of intellect and will. Jesus makes human acts of knowledge and love. The Thomistic tradition, following Aquinas's use of the Damascene's notion of the *organon*, establishes Jesus's humanity as the conjoined instrument of his divinity.[161] The divine Word acts as the primary agent, through the Sacred Humanity of Jesus that is assumed by what Polanyi would term indwelling. This was a unique affirmation of Aquinas among his high medieval contemporaries, and one that he settled upon only late in his theological development (after *de Veritate*). The implications of this instrumental account are two-fold, moving in both an ascending and a descending direction. Firstly, as will be argued below, the voluntary actions of Jesus are assumed as the acts of the divine Word as primary agent, without any violation of the creaturely integrity of Christ's human acts. Secondly, opposing views that locate no 'proper' causality with regard to acts that are salvific in Jesus's human actions, Aquinas can affirm the divine Word as causing human redemption in-and-through the causal agency of Jesus's human nature.[162] To transpose this into the terms a semantic ontology: the incarnation embodies divine Meaning in-and-through the instrumental meanings of Jesus's humanity. From the perspective of the proposed semantic Christology, then, Jesus's humanity is primarily instrumental—enacting real semantic change in the subject—rather than primarily vicarious.

[161] On instrumentality, see: Reginald M. Lynch, *The Cleansing of the Heart: The Sacraments as Instrumental Causes in the Thomistic Tradition* (Washington: CUA Press, 2017): 1-9.
[162] *Cf* Ivor J. Davidson, 'Theologizing the Human Jesus', *International Journal for Systematic Theology,* 3/2 (2001), 129-53.

The incarnation, to extend Ernst's definition of meaning, is a divinely enacted event, a process and a praxis occurring within human history, by which the world to which man belongs becomes the world that belongs to the God-man. This instrumental account of Christ's humanity emphasises the integral relatedness of both the person and work of Christ, as well as the acts and events of his earthly life. As ontological metaphor, the incarnation is definitively enacted within the womb of Mary of Nazareth and expressed in the cultural and historical particularity of Jesus's life. The human acts of Jesus's life, according to the principle of the communication of operations, are themselves ontological metaphors. Jesus does human things in a divine way, and divine things in a human way. Consequently, Jesus's human acts are constituted as ontological metaphors in their own right (albeit ones nested within the ontological metaphor of the hypostatic union).[163]

§5.4.3: Ontological Metaphor and *Communicatio idiomatum*

Articulating the hypostatic union in terms of ontological metaphor offers a complementary perspective to the *communicatio idiomatum*. The hypostatic union, as an ontological metaphor, is not reducible to the ontological basis for certain types of predication, as fulcrum upon which human language about God can be epistemically justified, nor is the soteriological significance of the hypostatic union merely the extrinsic communication of certain divine attributes (like eternal life or holiness) to the

[163] ST III, q. 56. Paul G. Crowley, 'Instrumentum Divinitatis in Thomas Aquinas', *Theological Studies,* 52/3 (1991), 457-75, Thomas Joseph White, 'The Voluntary Action of the Earthly Christ', *The Thomist,* 69 (2005), 497-534. See also: Dominic Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017): 187-209.

human sphere.[164] Rather the incarnation *qua* ontological metaphor is a dynamic and historically realised process of semantic exchange between creature and creator, a priestly act of mediation that ontologically re-configures creation.[165]

The incarnation is therefore a semantic horizon along which the world is transfigured into a new and glorified ontological reality,[166] in anticipation of the final eschatological glorification. Ernst develops a much more 'cosmic' account of Christ's human semantic agency than Torrance's account of Jesus's vicarious humanity. The significance of the ontological metaphor of the incarnation is not limited to its reception in Faith.[167] These cosmic dimensions to Ernst's Christology emphasise the radical implications of the hypostatic union, not only for the subjective domain of intelligible creatures, but objectively for the whole of creation.[168] As the ontological presence of ultimate Meaning in history, Jesus is possessed of a 'semantic magnetism' that draws together the fragmentary meanings of the world and re-embodies them in his own person.[169] There is, then, a centrifugal vector by which the Holy Spirit enfolds creation into the ontological metaphor enacted in Christ.

The instrumental account of Jesus's creaturely meanings in the ontological metaphor of the incarnation has implications for the metaphysical status of his human nature and its

[164] ME: 86.
[165] ME: 159-161.
[166] ME: 236.
[167] ME: 86.
[168] ME: 49*ff*. See also the connection of incarnation and cosmic transfiguration, ME: 236.
[169] Ernst does not provide a particularly well-developed account of how this occurs. In some places it seems somewhat generic, as in ME: 75, 159-161, elsewhere it is more explicitly correlated with the resurrection, see ME: 49*ff*.

operations. On the one hand, ontological metaphor excludes a *genus tapeinoticum*:[170] the transcendent divine meaning, as the higher pole of the metaphor, does not transpose itself in assuming a human nature, but rather communicates Godself—in the intrinsic integrity of Godself—through the mediating elevation of creaturely nature. The rejection of the *genus tapeinoticum* is, however, the *sine qua non* of the correlated affirmation of a *genus maiestaticum* in which the human nature of Christ, as an active mediating principle, is brought to share in the glory and perfection of his divine nature,[171] so as to be a fitting instrument. This places an account of the hypostatic union as ontological metaphor in tension with Torrance's account of the fallenness of Christ's human nature. The principle of *anhypostaton*—that Jesus's humanity has no reality outside of, or prior to, its assumption by the divine Word—means that the ontological metaphor of the hypostatic union is logically—although not chronologically—prior to the existence of Jesus's humanity. Jesus's humanity thus exists only as the mediating reality of the divine Meaning: it is, therefore, necessarily an ennobled and sinless humanity, by its very definition and constitution. This does not immediately exclude Torrance's view: Torrance's account of Jesus's fallen but sinless humanity does not allow any moment prior to its complete sanctification.[172] Nonetheless, ontological metaphor more trenchantly stresses the active instrumentality of Christ's human nature in the divine act of mediation, rather than its vicarious status. The fallenness doctrine is,

[170] A formula found predominantly in Lutheran scholasticism to refer to a 'mode of humility' by which properties of Jesus's human nature are predicated of the divine nature itself. See: Mark Warwick Elliott, 'Christology in the Seventeenth Century', in Francesca Aran Murphy (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Christology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015): 297-314, For notes on its reception in 20th Century Theology, particularly in Barth, see: Paul Dafydd Jones, *The Humanity of Christ: Christology in Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics* (London: T&T Clark, 2008): 146-50.

[171] ST III, q7, particularly a 9.

[172] T. F. Torrance, *The Doctrine of Jesus* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002): 162-63.

therefore, not necessary, and could be affirmed only in a certain degree of tension with the overall emphasis on the mediatorial *genus maiestaticum*.

§5.4.4: Ontological Metaphor and the Grace of Christ

The proposed semantic Christology implicitly aligns itself with one side of a dispute concerning the mode of sanctification of Christ's humanity. Historically, Thomists have agreed that Christ's humanity is sanctified not only by its union with divinity (known as the grace of union),[173] but also habitually (through the infusion of sanctifying grace into Christ's human soul).[174] This latter, created, grace of Christ's is an endowment of superabundance, but it is not infinite:[175] Christ's human soul, as a creaturely reality, has no capacity for an infinite sanctification. The dispute, however, concerns whether this accidental holiness of Christ's humanity follows by strict necessity from the grace of union, or whether it is merely 'supremely fitting'.[176] In other words: could the hypostatic union have been enacted *without* the sanctification of Christ's humanity by habitual grace? The problem crystallizes around readings of ST III, q7, a. 1, *respondeo*, where Aquinas begins by appearing to affirm necessity ('it is necessary to place habitual grace in Christ') and ends by affirming fittingness ('it was supremely fitting that his soul would receive the influx of divine grace').

---

[173] ST III, q2, a. 12.
[174] ST III, q7, a. 13.
[175] ST III, q7, a. 11.
[176] Accounts of the controversy can be found at: Philippe-Marie Margelidion, *Études thomistes sur la théologie de la rédemption: de la grâce à la résurrection du Christ* (Perpignan: Artège spiritualité, 2010). Rohof notes the dependence of this controversy on a shift effected in later scholasticism that somewhat reduced the effects of grace to 'sanctification', thus eliding 'habitual grace' with 'sanctifying grace'. See: Jan Rohof, *La sainteté substantielle du Christ dans la théologie scolastique* (Fribourg: Editions of St. Paul, 1952). For Scotus's view on the accidental holiness of Christ, see: Richard Cross, *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002): 140-41, et passim. The most prominent contemporary opponent of the substantial holiness position is Jean-Pierre Torrell OP, see: Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Jésus le Christ chez saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: CERF, 2008). For a non-Thomistic perspective, see: David Coffey, 'The Incarnation of the Holy Spirit in Christ', *Theological Studies,* 45 (1984), 466-80.

Within the perspective of the incarnation as an ontological metaphor, the habitual sanctification of Christ's creaturely Meanings follows by necessity from the grace of union, and not only by supreme fittingness. A constitutive feature of ontological metaphor is the elevation and ennobling of the lower component (the 'vehicle') within its own proper domain, without violation of its immanent integrity, so as to enable semantic embodiment. The human soul of Christ is, then, ennobled not only by union with the transcendent divinity, but by created sanctifying grace, within the plane of immanent meanings, as a necessary consequence of its intrinsic inclusion with the ontological metaphor of the incarnation. To use Barth's terminology, the proposed semantic Christology affirms a *communicatio gratiarum*.[177] Even if readings of ST III, q7, a. 1 are irresolvable, the logic of the proposed semantic Christology nonetheless tracks the structure of Aquinas's Christology. Aquinas locates his treatment of the *grace* of union not in question seven (on the grace of Christ as a human individual), but as part of his earlier analysis of the hypostatic union.[178] This indicates the logical priority that Aquinas gives to the hypostatic union over its effects and allows a reading of q. 7 as a reduplication of the substantial effects of the grace of union.

§5.5: Theologal Faith as Ontological Metaphor

The previous section established a semantic Christology, developed in terms of 'ontological metaphor', as the basis for the objective pole of theological knowledge. This

[177] CD IV/2, pp. 293*ff.*
[178] ST III q. 2, a. 10.

section develops an account of Faith as an ontological metaphor that depends upon the antecedent ontological metaphor of the incarnation, of which it is a non-identical repetition.

The problem of theological Faith identified in §5.1 concerns the way in which the unique ontological object is received by the knowing subject in Faith. Ernst implicitly proposes an isomorphism between the hypostatic union and the act of Faith: both are characterised as ontological metaphors. Whereas Torrance's Christology develops an account of Christ's subjective consciousness (the vicarious Faith that is mediated to the believer), Ernst's semantic ontology does not require such a speculative account of the operation of Christ's human mind in relation to his divine nature but depends solely on the hypostatic union itself. Rather than modelling the relationship of the ontological metaphor of the incarnation to its subjective appropriation in Faith in terms of the granting of a participative share in Christ's subjective God-ward direction, Ernst develops an account of the way in which the ontological metaphor of the incarnation is non-identically repeated in Faith, which also takes the form of an ontological metaphor.[179] Elsewhere, Ernst refers to this as the 'consecration' of the 'genetic moment' enacted in the incarnation.[180]

The ontological metaphor of Christ's personal praxis of meaning has imbued life with a new (and supernatural) meaning, pre-eminently actualised and manifested in the

[179] Ernst, 'Meaning and Metaphor in Theology', at 112.
[180] ME: 34.

resurrection.[181] This newly transfigured[182] meaning is, however, only accessible in the analogical and non-identical repetition of the ontological metaphor of Faith.[183] Faith is understood by Ernst to be a non-identical repetition of the incarnation because by Faith, the subject's personhood comes to bear the new supernatural meaning first actualised by the hypostatic union.[184] The reconstitution of personhood by the act of Faith elevates and ennobles human nature, by the grace of Christ, to manifest and communicate the supernatural meaning that Christ bestows upon them.[185] Through Faith animated by love, the subject becomes a distal cause of grace in the world, empowered to transfigure the world of their creaturely meanings by applying the ontological metaphor of the incarnation to their own semantic lives.

Importantly, however, the 'repetition' of the incarnation that is enacted by the ontological metaphor of Faith is necessarily both non-identical and analogous: neither identical to Christ's (completely swallowed up by Christ's personal act, in a form of Christomonism), nor dissociated from it (standing over-against or alongside, as eschatological polytheism). Polanyi's account of how subjects appropriate metaphors provides a useful explanation of this. According to Polanyi, as noted in §3.3, what the subject indwells when they appropriate a metaphor fashioned by another human mind is not the artefact produced by the other (in Ernstian terms, the 'symbol'), but the dynamics of the metaphoric integration that produced the artefact in the first place. In appropriating a metaphor, the subject is led down the intelligible pathway opened up by

[181] ME: 215-216.
[182] ME: 236.
[183] ME: 39, 52.
[184] In Ernstian idiom, Faith is the 'consecration of the genetic moment' of the incarnation, see ME: 34.
[185] TG: 62-93.

the imaginative act of another mind. In the theologal case of the ontological metaphor of Faith, what is indwelt is no static reality (nor even the humanity of Christ) but the *dynamic* of Christ's own personal praxis of ontological metaphor, *viz.* the hypostatic union itself.

The hypostatic union, then, is the ontological *prius* of Christian Faith in two ways. Firstly, it makes available, as the paradigmatic instance, the transfiguration that uniquely characterises theological Faith, in which creaturely reality is imbued with a new supernatural meaning. The integration of Faith, however, is not one that is accessible within the natural capacities of human noetic agency. Secondly, therefore, the ontological metaphor of the incarnation relates to the ontological metaphor of Faith as a container to that which is contained.[186] The ontological metaphor of the hypostatic union is not only an external *sine qua non* of Faith, but also the only possible ontological and semantic space in which this derived ontological metaphor of Faith can unfold. By the vector of Faith, the subject re-embodies themselves within a semantic space that is opened up by, and contained within, the ontological metaphor of the hypostatic union. This is, as Ernst puts it, a "space (a meta-space) in which God can reveal himself, a meta-space 'contained' by God and vanishing into him."[187]

This constitution of Faith as a non-identical repetition of the incarnation does not imply that anything is lacking in the incarnation, nor that Christ requires any

[186] I am indebted, here, to Wilfred Ruprecht Bion's notion of contained-contained in psychoanalysis, see: Wilfred R. Bion, *Los Angeles Seminars* (London: Karnac Books, 2013): 33-54. See also: Rafael E. Lopez-Corvo, *The Dictionary of the Work of W.R. Bion* (London: Karnac, 2003): 70-72.
[187] ME: 56.

supplementation from the side of human agency, but rather that, according to the divinely intended order, the ontological metaphor of the incarnation is accessible only in-and-through its non-identical repetition. The relationship between the absolute sufficiency of the incarnation and its multiple non-identical repetition is analogous to the numerical identity of the many Eucharistic sacrifices with the once and definitive sacrifice of Calvary. The Eucharist is not understood as a repetition of that sacrifice, but its re-presentation in bloodless manner.[188] Similarly, the ontological metaphor of Faith, whilst sharing the non-supplementary character of Eucharistic re-presentation (*anamnesis*) is to be considered a repetition (albeit one that is limited by the 'analogous' and 'non-identical') in that it repeats and makes accessible the *effects* of the ontological metaphor of the hypostatic union: *viz.* the elevation and ennobling of a human nature and the bringing of personhood to carry a supernatural meaning that bears on divine life.

The qualifiers 'non-identical' and 'analogous' require, however, more explicit articulation, in order to balance intrinsic relatedness and dependence with distinctness and autonomous integrity. The repetition is 'analogous' in that it is related to the antecedent ontological metaphor by participation: the act of Faith does not establish a substantial hypostatic union between the subject and God but enacts the effects of that union by participating within it. Secondly, the repetition is non-identical in that it is a free human act of a distinct person, derived from the antecedent ontological metaphor, but lacking its absolute perfection. The ontological metaphor of Faith thus differs from

[188] B. V. Miller, 'The Eucharistic Sacrifice', in George D. Smith (ed.), *The Teaching of the Catholic Church* (London: Burns and Oates, 1948): 880-918.

the incarnation in both kind and degree but is nonetheless entirely dependent upon it and isomorphic with it. The content and consequences, as well as the formal structure of the act of Faith, are of a different kind from the ontological metaphor of the hypostatic union, even as they correspond to it. This creates a capacious semantic space for a degree of plurality, in a similar way to Torrance's distinction between compulsion and causality. The non-identical repetition iterates across every historical moment and sociocultural context; the non-identity relates not only to the antecedent metaphor but also to the other historically contextualised acts of Faith that are present within the life of the believer and the Christian community.

This section has outlined an Ernstian account of the unicity of theologal knowledge. Whereas Torrance sees the relation of Faith to the incarnation primarily in terms of the appropriation of an antecedent reality, Ernst develops an intrinsicist account of Faith as a non-identical repetition of the antecedent ontological metaphor of the incarnation, which occurs only by interpolating itself *within* that antecedent metaphor. This provides a Christocentric account of the unicity of theologal Faith, as grounded in, initiated, and sustained by, the hypostatic union.

§5.6: Metaphor and Theological Realism

This section defends the suitability of metaphor as an ontological category for Christian theology, against possible objections that challenge its capacity for articulating theological realism. Two such objections are examined, the first concerning metaphor's capacity to be a vehicle of truth; the second concerning the objective character of

metaphoric language. These objections could be raised by those who affirm metaphor as a necessary feature of theological language: the question is whether metaphor is an adequate *ontological* category, in particular questioning whether the proposed semantic Christology compromises the literal sense of the incarnation. These objections locate the emergence of metaphor in the incapacity of human language to articulate the transcendent divine *mysterion*, rather than as a feature of the ontological structure of the *mysterion* itself (as the semantic Christology affirms). They rightly affirm that no Christology should blunt the ontological shock of the 'is' that literally predicates divinity of Jesus Christ. For Ernst, however, metaphor is appropriate to linguistic language because of its isomorphism with the process of transfer enacted in Christ: the metaphoric structure of the ontological *mysterion* literally discloses itself only in the ontological metaphor of faith.

§5.6.1: Catachresis and Truth in Ontological Metaphor

This subsection investigates the relationship between truth and metaphor. In particular, it affirms the compatibility of the proposed semantic Christology governed by ontological metaphor with Christ's claim to be personal Truth.

From the perspective of a literal reading, metaphor seems to involve a necessary falsehood. As Herbert McCabe puts it, in metaphor "we know what we mean, but we do not mean what we say":[189] there is an unavoidable element of *catachresis*, in which one reality is 'used' to mean something partially irreconcilable with its literal use. For all of

[189] McCabe did not use this phrase anywhere in print, but it has been reported to me by a number of his students, including Richard Conrad OP and Timothy Radcliffe OP.

its evident meaningfulness, the metaphor that 'someone has a heart of gold' is also, in one sense, an intentional and necessary lie: not only is it untrue as a description of the substance of the person's heart, a literally golden heart could never have the properties of the human personality that are communicated by the phrase, which are inconsistent with its internal literal sense. It therefore seems at best unfitting, and at worst metaphysically impossible, that the identity of the personal presence of infinite truth and ultimate Meaning should be articulated using a category that inscribes a necessary falsehood. Such an account of the ontological metaphor of the incarnation would see the humanity of Christ as having an element of deception: concealing rather than revealing the fullness of Truth, thus tending towards Docetism.

On a Polanyian account, the principle that prevents the element of *catachresis* devolving into deception is the framing mechanism.[190] As noted in §3.3.2, the framing mechanism (a distinctive feature introduced by Polanyi in the *Meaning* lectures) inscribes the artefacts produced by certain types of centrifugal integrations with inherent incompatibilities, so as to determine their reception by imaginative integration. The framing of dramatic action by the stage dis-embeds the drama from quotidian time, preventing the reader from accrediting the staged events as 'real' occurrences within the temporal flow of daily life. In the case of metaphor, the framing mechanism is partly provided by contextual factors and partly provided by the inherent aspect of *catachresis* which encodes the metaphor with the dialectic of familiar-unfamiliarity. As a result of this metaphoric frame, raising the question of the literal correspondence of the

[190] M: 81-87.

metaphor requires a volition to 'suspend' metaphoric significance.[191] This is particularly evident in cases of linguistic ontological metaphors like 'much joy': the metaphoric meaning has a clear intuitive and semantic priority over the somewhat artificial, but nonetheless more 'literal', reading of 'much' as a physical quantifier. In this sense, the most literal reading, which corresponds most accurately to the linguistic utterance, demands metaphoric reception: any other reading is an artificially contrived insistence upon literality.

As Eberhard Jüngel has argued, the account of metaphor as descriptive failure depends upon a theory of truth as determined by correspondence with reality. The conjunction of a substitutionary view of metaphor and an account of truth as *adequatio mentis ad rem* renders metaphor unable to satisfy the conditions of truth because it does not involve a like-for-like, literal description of mind-independent reality. This application of adequation theory of truth to metaphor invokes the kind of extrinsicism associated with representationalism that Ernst and Polanyi sought to undermine. As noted above, the intrinsicist account of metaphor developed from the work of Polanyi and Ernst understands metaphor as a particular semantic skill, a process and praxis rather than a species of predication.[192] In this perspective, in which truth is not determined by a like-for-like representation of reality, metaphor is not opposed to literality, nor is it reducible to equivocal language, but is rather a species of the literal, a mode of living within a semantic world that enables a deeper semantic penetration of the 'given-ness' of reality. Indeed, metaphor conforms to the semantic-ontological

[191] M: 109.
[192] ME: 55.

structure of the world, affirming the capacity of the human intellect to integrate otherwise disparate elements of the semantic cosmos: the use of metaphor is, then, demanded not only by the task of reality description, but by historical existence embedded within a semantically charged cosmos.

Nonetheless, even if a correspondence theory of truth as an adequation of metaphor to reality were accepted, there would remain theological grounds on which to defend an understanding of the incarnation as ontological metaphor, even if every other metaphor failed to fulfil its truth conditions. The essential condition determined by correspondence theories is that the world and the mind (and, by extension, the linguistic utterance) are in correspondence: a statement is true when it corresponds to the mind-independent state of affairs that is its intention. This truth condition can be satisfied in one of two directions. Normatively, the mind or linguistic utterance is brought into conformity with the world. Alternatively, if a mind or linguistic utterance had the power to bring the world into conformity with itself, then it too would satisfy the truth-conditions of the correspondence theory, by a direction of change that moved in the opposite direction. Whilst metaphors of creaturely construction are held to be resistant to the first mode (metaphor brought into correspondence with the world), the truth that is proper to the ontological metaphor of the incarnation satisfies the second mode (world brought into correspondence with the metaphor). Rather than seeking to narrate the world, the ontological metaphor of the incarnation configures the world to itself. Similarly, the non-identical repetition of this ontological metaphor in the act of Faith is a performative act that brings about the conformity of a segment of the world's meanings with the ultimate Meaning that it announces.

The thrust of Polanyi's epistemological project was invested in a philosophical and phenomenological undermining of representationalist epistemology and of the adequation theories that accompany it. It is, in particular, unclear that theological language could ever satisfy the truth-conditions of a strongly representationalist account of adequation: of its nature, Christian Faith involves the *translatio* of one semantic domain by embodiment within another. Theological language thus inevitably moves beyond the realm of the empirical and of like-for-like 'literal' description:[193] its truth claims are expressed in metaphor because this language corresponds to its object's metaphysical status as belonging to an uncreated, rather than creaturely, domain. The perspective proposed by the ontology of meaning challenges the tacit assumption that truth is pre-eminently literal.

Moreover, the metaphysical character of Truth shares certain fundamental features with metaphor. Truth, as the perfection of mind that occurs as the being of reality—disclosed historically in meaning—unfolds within the subject's mind, involving a process of *metabasis*, as the meaning of the world is realised and unfolded within the mind. According to the intrinsicist picture, coming to the truth involves the active engagement of mind and body in the appropriation of meaning, rather than a passive mirroring of reality. Truth, therefore, involves precisely the type of active and relational *metabasis* that characterises ontological metaphor: the *translatio,* by indwelling and participation, that 'embodies' objective meaning of the world in the subject's own meanings.

[193] ME: 14-21.

The ontological metaphor of Faith is, however, the type of semantic integration that does more than actualise the potential of creaturely meanings. Faith introduces an actuality that is more than, and different to, the actualisation of an antecedent potential. The new actuality exceeds the possibilities of the domain in which it is enacted, expanding not only that domain's actuality but also its possibility, issuing in a total reconfiguration. The semantic increase effected by the ontological metaphor of Faith, then, expands the subject's field of meaning in both kind and degree, not only adding more knowledge but effecting semantic change. Consequently, Faith cannot be reduced to an epistemological reality: Faith involves the insertion of a new reality into the subject's semantic world, and, through their semantic agency, into the public sphere. In this ontological metaphor, the divine Meaning creates for itself a point of entry into the world of meanings by means of the world itself.[194]

Likewise, this metaphoric understanding of truth corresponds to the ontological constitution of the human person as the rational animal that belongs to both the hierarchy of spiritual creatures and that of material creatures.[195] Thus straddling two metaphysical and semantic domains—the sensible and the intelligible—the human creature is constituted in processes of *metabasis*, as a form of living ontological metaphor. Understanding truth in this way, as realised by a quasi-metaphorical process, is consistent with an account of the human person as the historically enacted centre of a

[194] Jüngel, 'Metaphorische Wahrheit: Erwägungen zur theologischen Relevanz der Metapher als Beitrag zur Hermeneutik eine narrativen Theologie'..
[195] *De Spiritualibus creaturis,* §5 *ad* 11.

process and praxis of semantic transfer through which spiritual meanings are realised ('embodied') in corporeal life.

These considerations qualify the sense in which the catachresis of metaphor involves a necessary falsehood. Importantly, the semantic novelty of the metaphor presupposes the instrumentality of the original meaning of the vehicle, rather than nullifying it. Indeed, metabasis is made possible by qualities that are inherent to the vehicle, which makes its appropriation a semantic possibility. Consequently, these inherent meanings of the vehicle are not side-lined, but are actively affirmed as they are assumed as instruments of metaphoric integration. This distinguishes metaphor from falsehood: in falsehood, there is a denial of some element of inherent meaning, rather than its instrumental use. Metaphor is therefore not only truth-sparing but truth-affirming.

The appeal to the framing mechanism as the Polanyian principle that prevents the *catachresis* of metaphor degenerating into falsehood raises the question of how the ontological metaphor of the incarnation is framed. Although metaphor is usually only partially self-grounding, the incarnation could be seen as a perfectly self-grounding ontological metaphor. On this reading, the visible, tangible, particularity of Jesus's humanity, as the concrete form by which divine meaning is embodied within the creaturely sphere, serves as the framing mechanism by inscribing the dialectic of familiar-unfamiliarity. This would make the incarnation in no way dependent upon anything outside the circle of hypostatic union for its perfection *qua* ontological metaphor. Nonetheless, the framing mechanism is not primarily concerned with the

perfection of the metaphor *per se*, but with its reception. The framing mechanism is a component that contributes to the recognisable objectivity of the metaphor (that is, to its being received as an object of a certain type).[196] The full historical mediation of the ontological metaphor of the incarnation demands that it be—in some remote way—framed by a reality that stands outside of itself.

As the framing mechanism contributes to the objectivity of the object, a full assessment of the incarnation's frame must be deferred until after the next subsection (which addresses the question of metaphor's objectivity). By necessity, however, the framing mechanism of the incarnation must underscore its absolute uniqueness, albeit with some relation to the familiar, so as to enable recognition and apprehension. The narratives of scripture frame the unicity of Jesus in terms of his unique position within salvation history, narrating the complex ways in which he is the fulfilment of Jewish messianic expectation and the covenantal history of Israel by which that expectation was habituated.

§5.6.2: Metaphor and Objectivity

The previous subsection defended the capacity of metaphor to communicate truth and argued that certain features of metaphor are inherent to the character of truth as understood within the proposed ontology of meaning. This subsection addresses a related objection: that metaphorical truth lacks the precision of more literal truth and is possessed of a degree of semantic valency that makes it less suited to the communication of 'objective' truth than to the evocation of subjective affectivity. On this

[196] M: 87.

objection, ontological metaphor is an inappropriate category by which to account for the incarnation, as it reduces the sense in which Christ is the *objective* presence of ultimate meaning within human history or skews religious faith in the direction of a relativism of subjective response.

A key feature of metaphor is its character as targeted speech, governed primarily by the determinative force of the object that is communicated but also accommodated to the culturally determined capacity for subjective apprehension. For the communicative success of the metaphor 'heart of gold', a number of cultural suppositions are necessary: an association of the heart with affectivity and moral responsiveness, and an association of gold with extreme value and precious scarcity, *inter alia*. In a culture where gold was merely one metal amongst many, the meaning of the metaphor could be inverted: 'heart of gold' becoming akin to 'heart of stone'. Without this necessary cultural and semantic context into which it is targeted, the metaphor fails to communicate, with the lack of an obvious presenting sense preventing the question of its truth-value from being raised and instead highlighting the element of communicative failure. Metaphor is, therefore, fitted both to the transcendent reality that it communicates and to the immanent reality of those to whom it is to be communicated.

This vocative character of metaphor gives the speaker or architect of the metaphor a position of some semantic privilege over the recipient. Whereas pure description seeks to define what is the case, metaphors necessarily address the target recipient(s) and are therefore always already relational semantic transfers. As a result,

whereas in literal speech an assessment of the semantic context of the recipient is by no means inscribed within the utterance or proposition, in metaphor the speaker must necessarily attempt to embody something of the recipient subject's world within their own linguistic act. This does not compromise the sovereignty of the transcendent pole as determinative of the metaphor, but rather affirms the instrumental integrity of the immanent pole as essential to the communication of transcendent meaning. The skill of metaphor lies in the selection of an appropriate vehicle that can be conditioned by the transcendent meaning, without violation its own integrity. Metaphor is conditioned *to*, but not conditioned *by*, the receiving semantic domain.

The vocative character of metaphor, then, plays an important role in the determination of the objectivity of the metaphor, in the sense of its determination as a coherent object of a certain type in its appearance to the subject. As noted in the previous subsection, the dialectic of familiarity and unfamiliarity that is sustained by metaphoric integration serves to partially self-frame the metaphor itself. The successful targeting of a metaphor that is appropriately conditioned to the social, cultural and linguistic capacities of the hearer allows the metaphor to appear as a coherent comprehensive entity that is structured by an inherent meaning, rather than simply as a disjointed collection of dis-integrated meanings. The vocative dimension of metaphor therefore 'inserts' the metaphor into the subject's semantic field in such a way that it appears as an object that it is necessarily indwelt by the centrifugal vector.

In theological terms, the vocative character of the ontological metaphor of the incarnation secures the objectivity of God's self-revelation in Christ. The success or

failure of a communicated metaphor does not primarily depend upon the subject's role in its reception, but the role of the speaker in successfully finding a point of connection with the semantic world of the target audience. The ontological metaphor of the incarnation establishes that point of connection perfectly, for two related reasons: firstly, because the architect of the metaphor is the omniscient and omnipotent divine mind, which infallibly knows all future contingents by *scientia visionis,* the targeting of the ontological metaphor of the incarnation is perfected by an exhaustive—indeed creative—knowledge of the context. Secondly, the ontological metaphor of the incarnation not only meets an antecedent target, but, as the divine vocative that always enacts the reality that it proclaims, actually creates the target that it addresses. Understanding the incarnation as ontological metaphor, then, amounts to predicating the objectivity of theological knowledge within the event of God's self-disclosure understood as the divine address to humanity. This affirms the character of the theologian as one who is actively addressed by the divine word that is the object of their study.

Two features of this vocative objectivity of the ontological metaphor of the incarnation must be emphasised. Firstly, its targeted character secures a distinctive role for the Holy Spirit in the mediation of ultimate meaning: the incarnation occurs within the particularities of a given culture and tradition, at a particular moment of history, and is brought into connection with the historically remote believer by the conjoined mission of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirits serves as the particularising principle,[197] the

[197] The notion of the Spirit's work as particularising is taken from, Colin Ewart Gunton, *The Christian Faith* (Edinburgh: Wiley-Blackwell, 2001): 14.

mediator that 'brings home' the definitive divine self-manifestation in Christ to each successive historical era and cultural context.[198] The Holy Spirit is thus God's continued re-targeting of the divine address that was definitively enacted in the ontological metaphor of the incarnation. The Holy Spirit, therefore, continually re-frames the ontological metaphor of the incarnation, by addressing it to the unique sociocultural setting of each Christian community.

Secondly, as noted above, the character of the divine address as ontological metaphor secures a space for Faith as its *non-identical* repetition. Whereas the 'literal' like-for-like definition restricts, demanding a response or a reception that is identical, metaphor is more capacious, allowing for—and requiring—a depth of engagement and diversity of responses that violate neither the integral veracity of the ontological metaphor of the incarnation, nor the objectivity of the knowledge attained by its non-identical repetition in the act of Faith. This diversity of responses is created and sustained in unity by the Pentecostal Holy Spirit.

§5.7: Vocative Faith: Towards Semantic Pneumatology

This chapter has supplemented a weakness in Polanyi's account of religious Faith—its tendency to homogenize philosophical and theological faith—by developing a semantic Christology in dialogue with Polanyi and Ernst. Whereas Torrance's account of the unicitiy of theologal Faith was seen to inscribe a residual extrinsicism, the account

[198] Ernst connects this very strongly with ecclesiology, as will be seen in the next chapter. See, ME: 217, 124, *et passim.*

of the incarnation as ontological metaphor and Faith as its non-identical repetition, is thoroughly intrinsicist. This account of the incarnation as an ontological metaphor is provocative, but its capacity to avoid monophysitic readings, and to communicate objective truth, has been defended.

As seen in §5.6.2, a key feature of metaphor is its vocative character as language that addresses a target. Whilst this has been assessed in relation to the ontological metaphor of the incarnation, as constituting an aspect of its objectivity, this vocativity is a characteristic not only of the incarnation, in which God addresses humanity, but also of the non-identical repetition of that ontological metaphor in Faith, by which humanity addresses God with its own ontological metaphor. In Faith, then, God becomes the 'target' of creaturely language: knowledge of God in Faith is necessarily connected with prayer and worship. An account of the vocative character of Faith is presented in the next chapter, which develops an account of worship that is embedded within a semantic pneumatology.

VI

Worship as Meaning: Semantic Pneumatology

The argument of the previous chapter identified Faith—the vector of theologal knowledge—as an ontological metaphor that non-identically repeats the antecedent ontological metaphor of the hypostatic union. Like all ontological metaphors, the vector of Faith has a vocative quality: it is 'targeted' at a particular recipient. Consequently, the knowledge of Faith is always already enacted within an intellectual attitude of worship that embodies the subject in a motion of address to and before God. As this vocative dimension is intrinsic to the dynamic that characterises Faith itself, there is no metaphysical space in the proposed semantic ontology for authentic theologal knowledge that does not embody this element of worship, whether in an implicit or an explicit mode.

This Chapter provides an account of this second-person, vocative, aspect of theologal Faith. It argues that, in the proposed semantic ontology, theologal meaning and divine worship are dual aspects of a single reality, an ontological metaphor that is framed by the action of the Holy Spirit. The argument proceeds in four phrases. Firstly, Polanyi's disparate remarks about worship are drawn together into a systematic account, using his theory of metaphor as the architectonic principle. Whilst Polanyi's account is somewhat generic, the second section draws the Polanyian account into dialogue with Cornelius Ernst's Thomistic theology of worship. This allows for the development of a thoroughly Christocentric account of worship, grounded in the

Ernstian-Polanyian theory of ontological metaphor identified by the previous chapter.[1] The third section explores the implications of this proposed intrinsicist account of worship for theological pedagogy, in particular noting the formative character of the liturgy, and the character of doctrinal frameworks as tools that are indwelt in worship. The concluding fourth section notes the coherence of Ernst's account of worship around a close identification of semantic pneumatology with ecclesiology. This compensates for a lacuna in Polanyi's analysis: whilst Polanyi generally emphasises the importance of conviviality in knowledge, his account of worship is somewhat individualistic, eliminating the significance of the worshipping community's particularity.

The foundation of this Ernstian-Polanyian account of worship developed is a common commitment to an intrinsicist epistemology that coheres with the proposed ontology of meaning. As previous chapters have indicated, Polanyi and Ernst both conceive knowledge as a self-involving praxis in which things are known by ecstatic communion (a noetic 'being-with' that which is known). In the case of God, the form that this noetic being-with necessarily takes is doxological: there is no mode of being-with God that is not always already worship. Consequently, worship is not an act that is entirely subsequent to Faith, nor is it epiphenomenal. Rather, worship is a description of this mode of being-with that characterizes the centrifugal vector of Faith. This is the central claim of this chapter: Faith is inherently doxological.

[1] See §5.3.

Likewise, both Polanyi and Ernst see the individual's Faith-worship as dependent upon, and ordered towards, the communal.[2] Worship is fundamentally the practice of a specifically identifiable community. As a result of their intrinsicism, the semantic ontologies proposed by Polanyi and Ernst give a privileged status to this community worship, as the distinctive form that the communal quest for authentic religious knowledge takes. For both Polanyi and Ernst, the practice of worship and the quest for theological knowledge are coterminous and are somewhat coextensive (although, as suggested below, not entirely overlapping). In other words, communal disciplines of worship not only witness to an antecedently received set of theological meanings, nor do they mediate theological knowledge by opening up a neutral fistula through which faith passes, but rather enacts the meanings to which it bears witness: worship *is* meaning.[3] Worship is not just practice of Faith, but the performance of Faith.

Scholarly investigation of the phenomena of religiosity—whether theological, philosophical or sociological—has often been problematized by terminological imprecision. 'Worship' can be used to indicate anything from very specific and tightly controlled sets of communal practices (like burial rituals and rites of passage), to a more general set of affective or conative experiences (Schleiermacher's feeling of radical dependence or Ott's *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*). 'Worship' is more often a bounded set of practices than it is a precisely controlled concept. A standardised set of Polanyian-Ernstian terms is developed below, but from the outset the term 'worship' is

[2] M: 190-1, 202, 210. ME: 27*ff*.

[3] Graham Hughes offers an intrinsicist liturgical theology in his Graham Hughes, *Worship as Meaning: A Liturgical Theology for Late Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Hughes makes extensive use of Peircean semiotics, which are notably similar to Polanyi's tacit triad. See: Phil Mullins, 'Peirce's abduction and Polanyi's tacit knowing', *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy,* 16/3 (2002), 198-224.

used (following Polanyi) to refer to the vocative dimension of divine address, which inheres within the theologal vector of Faith.

§6.1 Polanyi's Intrinsicist Account of Worship

This section gathers the disparate elements of Polanyi's theoretical account of worship within the perspective of his semantic ontology, using the category of metaphor as an architectonic key. Polanyi's account of worship is seen to exhibit four distinctive features: firstly, metaphor is understood as a form of metaphor 'transposed into active terms'; secondly, worship is framed by the praxis of ritual; thirdly, this ritual framing mechanism facilitates a participation in what Mircea Eliade terms 'Great Time'; fourthly, this locates worship as a form of ritualised *anamnesis*, in which a primordial time is recollected and, in being so-recollected, actually made contemporaneous with the worshipper.

Polanyi frequently invokes the category of worship—in both his earlier and later work—as the form religious meanings take in their historical enactment.[4] Nonetheless, his theoretical account is plagued by both terminological imprecision and incompleteness. The Chapter on the 'Acceptance of Religion' in *Meaning* was generated

[4] PK: 405. Given the highly significant place that Polanyi gives to worship in his later religious epistemology, it is surprising how few monographs and articles are dedicated to exploring this aspect of his thought. See, for instance, the rather thin account of worship in standard monographs on Polanyi's thought: Prosch, *Michael Polanyi: a critical exposition*, 165-74, Jerry H. Gill, *The Tacit Mode: Michael Polanyi's Postmodern Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000): 137-55, Stefania Ruzsits Jha makes almost no reference to worship in her work: *Reconsidering Michael Polanyi's Philosophy*. The sociologist of religion Kieran Flanagan has made use of Polanyi's thought in his work on ritual, see: Kieran Flanagan, 'Liturgy, Ambiguity and Silence: The Ritual Management of Real Absence', *British Journal of Sociology,* 36/2 (1985), 193-223.

by Prosch from seminar notes (the earlier chapters were taken from Polanyi's more complete lecture scripts).[5] Polanyi seems to have been continually revising his account of worship until the very end of his career. Consequently, the sections in *Meaning* that directly explore religion have received the heaviest input from Prosch's editorial hand.[6] Prosch himself reported that he found 'The Acceptance of Religion' to be the section of *Meaning* that was hardest to bring into a satisfactory shape for publication.[7] Consequently, Polanyi's understanding of worship—as expressed in *Meaning*—is more nebulous than other aspects of his synthesis, but conforms with the foundational ontological principle of his epistemology: that the person knows by way of an ecstatic communion with the known,[8] reflected in the centrifugal vector of embodiment.

Prima facie, this appeal to *ecstasis* might suggest that Polanyi developed a 'mystical' understanding of worship, associating it with particularly intense religious experiences, or with a more general pre-experiential 'divine illumination' of the intellect. In fact, Polanyi has almost nothing to say about such mystical phenomena or introverted practices, although he does emphasise—particularly in his earlier thought—the noetic role by religious experience and affectivity. Nonetheless, without excluding private devotion from his synthesis, when Polanyi talks about 'worship' he primarily intends the public activity of ritualised worship and only derivatively relates this to private acts of devotion.

[5] Prosch identifies his sources in a document at PP 40.2.
[6] PP 16.13, Handwritten letter of Harry Prosch to Michael Polanyi, June 7th 1973.
[7] PP 16.12, Letter of Harry Prosch to Michael Polanyi, October 16th 1973.
[8] PK: 7.

§6.1.1: Worship as 'Metaphor Transposed into Active Terms'

Foundational to Polanyi's account of worship is an actualistic[9] insight drawn from his theory of metaphor as skilled practice: intelligently determined human actions (and not just objects and artefacts) can themselves be governed by the centrifugal vector of symbolisation. In other words, a human action can lack innate intrinsic interest, but comes to be charged (or cathected) with such interest when it serves as an 'embodiment' for an action that *is* intrinsically interesting. By extension, a symbolic action governed by the centrifugal vector can be said to be metaphoric when it meets the criteria established in §5.1 above: *viz.* they are (1) imaginative productions that (2) embody truths, (3) are governed by a double iteration of the centrifugal vector between (4) intrinsically meaningful relata.[10] By extending this actualistic insight, an action can be considered to be an ontological metaphor when it embodies a meaning proper to one metaphysical domain within another metaphysical domain (fulfilling the criteria identified in §5.4).

Polanyi's lectures on religious meaning do not make this foundational principle as explicit as they might have done. Nonetheless, handwritten notes from Polanyi's *Nachlass* demonstrate that he used such an actualistic understanding of metaphor to negotiate the take of developing a ritual epistemology. He wrote that ritual was

[9] I am borrowing the notion of 'actualism' from Barth Studies, where it is used to emphasizes Barth's tendency to think in terms of events, actions and happenings, rather than static objects and states of affairs. It affirms that metaphors are not only enacted, but that an action can be 'metaphoric' just as well as its artefact can be. See: George Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth: The Shape of His Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991): 30-34.

[10] M: 78.

distinguished by having "the structure of a metaphor transposed into active terms",[11] as an "imitative embodiment of the action that it symbolises".[12] Here, Polanyi is using the language of symbolisation in a properly Polanyian way, to denote an integration governed by the centrifugal vector. In other words, the structural nature of a ritual is that the participant does one thing (the empirically identifiable elements of the ritual), whilst understanding themselves to be doing another thing (the supernatural meaning that is embodied by the ritual action). In the case of worship, the two actions are located in discrete semantic spheres, and the event of worship is the enactment of an ontological metaphor.

A great deal of weight is carried by the verbal 'understanding' in this definition, which leaves open both the possibility of realism (that they are actually doing the supernatural act) and of non-realism (that they only understand themselves to be doing the other thing). At this point, however, the intrinsicism of Polanyi's centrifugal vector is essential: the activity performed is not only the attestation of another action being performed in a different domain, but rather 'contains' that action. The ritual relationship cannot be enacted without an accrediting belief in the reality of the supernatural action it embodies. If the participant does not accredit the reality of the supernatural—if they do not actually believe what they are doing to effect a supernatural embodiment—the integrations of worship and ritual do not occur: there is only an empty sociological play-acting.

[11] PP 21.1, 'Notes on the Bellagio Meeting', pp. 2-3.
[12] PP 22.1, 'Theology, Truth, Imagination', Handwritten manuscript, p. 4.

§6.1.2: Ritual as Framing Mechanism for Myth

Whilst the category of metaphor provides the unifying principle of a Polanyian account of worship, it is necessarily supplemented by a category developed in his analysis of the representative and abstract arts: the framing mechanism.[13] Importantly, as in all metaphors, the human aesthetic reality—that which constitutes the frame of ritual—is itself intrinsically interesting. As noted in §3.4 above, the framing mechanism serves to 'disconnect' or 'disembed' a semantic domain from the quotidian flow of space and time. The segmenting effect of the framing mechanism allows the framed 'area' to be charged with meaning that confront the ordinary.[14] Polanyi understands ritual to instantiate such a framing, requiring the participant to divest time from ordinary activities of quotidian import, so as to perform the rituals themselves.[15] Polanyi, then, understands ritual as contributing to the establishment of a dynamic framing mechanism for the metaphors that are proper to religious knowledge. The conjunction of metaphoric embodiment and framed enactment allows Polanyi's account of worship to be both genuinely mediatorial (analogical) and also dialectically interruptive: both dialectic and analogy as sustained.

Before assessing the particular features of a systematised Polanyian account of worship, it is helpful to impose upon Polanyi's texts a standardised terminology. A degree of terminological slippage was inevitable in Polanyi's work on ritual, as he only gradually reached the rich account of worship that is contained in his mature thought and did so by layering semantic integrations on top of semantic integrations, weaving a

[13] M: 81-88.
[14] See, M: 85; for the particular case of religious framing, see M: 154-155.
[15] M: 85, *cf*., M: 122-123.

complex vectorial tapestry. In the end, Polanyi's account of worship emerges as an extremely complex web of nested relationships, enacted between centrifugal integrations and persons. In the most general sense, 'worship' can be said to be a semantic integration by which we embody cognitive tools (*viz.,* religious articulate frameworks), through which we extend our bodily practices 'into' a knowledge of God that becomes connatural to us.

As noted above, the event of worship is 'framed' by the performance of ritual. Here, Polanyi's use of terminology elides an important distinction. The 'frame' for worship is itself constituted by a complex bilateral integration, in which 'ritual' and 'myth' are mutually embodying. Two preliminary clarifications are necessary so as to avoid distorting the ways in which Polanyi's account of worship coheres in holistic unity. Polanyi refers to both the comprehensive entity of the liturgical frame and to a component part of that frame by the same term 'ritual'. This allows Polanyi to secure a holistic intrinsicism, advoiding an extrinsicism that sharply dissociates the 'form' and 'content' of ritual. On account of this intrinsicism, there is no agreement between the believer and the non-believer as to what actually occurs in worship: for the believer the supernatural act that is embodied in external form defines that external form; for the non-believer, there is no such embodiment and the observed phenomenon is consequently accredited with a different kind of reality. For the sake of clarity, in the following analysis I reserve the term 'ritual' for the features that would be acknowledged as 'actually done' within the time and space of creatureliness, even by external and non-believing observer (*viz.* the empirically observable phenomena). The term 'liturgy' (broadly absent from Polanyi's analysis) is introduced to refer to the

dynamic integration of ritual and myth, that is to the unity of the 'ritual' and the transcendent content that it embodies.

This qualified use of the term 'liturgy' in a Polanyian context is somewhat broader than the highly specified usage the term receives in theological discourse. Indeed, the use of the term 'liturgy' also requires qualification on the Polanyian side. The distinction of ritual from liturgy cannot become a dissection: the notion of a not-yet-liturgical ritual is, in Polanyian terms, a reified abstraction that can only be established by a dissociative labour of the intellect. As we will see, Polanyi's synthesis does not admit of a metaphysical space for the existence of pure ritual aside from its 'liturgical' embodiment; they are related, for Polanyi, in an almost hylomorphic way. Equally, in the refined Polanyian terminology, 'liturgy' and 'worship' are not identical. Distinguishing 'worship' from 'liturgy' avoids confusing the integration that enacts the liturgical framing mechanism (liturgy as myth-ritual) with the integration that constitutes the subject in the posture of worship. In other words, the framing mechanism is not the 'dominant' interpolating vector—the point at which the subject 'fits in' to theologal Faith—but is indwelt by the subject as part of the tacit 'background' to their act of worship. The subject's act of worship is the noetically interpolating vector, propelling the subject to indwell the divine life.

§6.1.3: Worship in Eliadean 'Great Time'

The two components of liturgy are the 'ritual' and the 'myth' that it embodies; of these two components, myth is the dominant and determinative element, which is

embodied in ritual, determining its form. Polanyi juxtaposes a two-phase exploration of myth between his investigation of abstract art and his examination of religious meaning.[16] The first of the two phases examines the essential structure of myth,[17] whilst the second examines its capacity to bear truth.[18] In his account of myth, Polanyi depended heavily upon the Chicago-based theorist Mircea Eliade[19] and—in less explicit ways—the theoretical insights of Ernst Cassirer[20] and the anthropological studies of Evans-Pritchard.[21] In places, Polanyi's analysis of myth is thinned out by his hermeneutical decision to focus predominantly on archaic myths that do not have significant independent literary development,[22] particularly those concerned with cosmological origins.[23]

---

[16] M: 120-148.
[17] M: 120-131.
[18] M: 132-148.
[19] See, in particular, M: 122-126, 129-131; 145-147. Polanyi seems to have attended at least one of Eliade's lectures in Chicago, and otherwise to have relied upon his printed publications rather than personal correspondence and knowledge. Notes on Eliade's lectures are preserved in PP 23.10. One letter to Polanyi from Eliade is preserved, dated January 24th 1969, in PP 7.8; it contains no philosophical discussion. From Polanyi's notes, it is clear that the following publications were of particular interest to him: Mircea Eliade, 'Cosmogonic Myth and 'Sacred History'', *Religious Studies,* 2/2 (1967), 171-83, Mircea Eliade, *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1969), Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1964), Mircea Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries: the encounter between contemporary faiths and archaic reality* (London: Collins, 1968), Mircea Eliade, *The Two and the One* (London: Harvill, 1965). These works were all present in Polanyi's personal library at the time of his death, as can be seen from PP 57.1-5.
[20] Polanyi cited Cassirer's *Language and Myth* (M: 122) and the *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (ME: 122-124; 136-137; 144). However, none of Cassirer's books were in Polanyi's library at the time of his death. Polanyi's notes on his *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* are preserved in PP 23.5.
[21] From the perspective of a comparison with Cornelius Ernst, any significant connection with Evans-Pritchard would be of great interest. Ernst and Evans-Pritchard were friends, and often met in Oxford to discuss philosophical issues, see, for example, ME: 189-191. Polanyi attended one of Evans-Pritchard's seminars in Oxford (notes are preserved in PP 21.6); PP 23.10 contains notes that appear to correspond to: E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles And Magic Among The Azande* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937).
[22] *Cf.* M: 120.
[23] M: 147. See also: Eliade, 'Cosmogonic Myth and 'Sacred History''.

Central to Polanyi's account of myth is his development of the notion of 'Great Time', developed from Eliade's distinction of 'sacred time' from 'profane time'.[24] Profane time is the type of time that we are intuitively familiar with and which we subject to empirical investigation: a chronological sequence that is measurable and irreversible, a duration chronographed in terms of hours, seconds, months, weeks and so forth. Our familiarity with such time-as-temporality does not indicate the existence of a settled and commonly established philosophical account of it. There are deeply entrenched disputes about the fittingness of container-v-relational theologies of time,[25] of the philosophical nature of temporal indexicals, as well as the best categories to narrate temporal change.[26] Even before the introduction of the complexity of time in its relationship to eternity, temporal change is often the object of only imprecise, metaphoric, narration.[27] Despite this diversity of metaphysical speculation, amongst empirical scientists (and to a lesser degree philosophers) there is a consensus that temporality can be measured (and thus involves some form of measurable change).[28] It is this common experience of temporality that Eliade termed 'profane time'.

---

[24] In M: 122-123, Polanyi differentiates between primordial and chronological time. Eliade often distinguishes 'profane' time from 'sacred' time in that the former is irreversible whilst the latter is not so bound, a distinction that is very closely related to Polanyi's distinction. See also M: 152-156. See also Eliade's most explicit presentations of this theme: Mircea Eliade, *Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York: Pantheon, 1954): 73-89, 152-55, Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1961): passim, especially 89ff. Important secondary literature includes: Carl Olson, *The Theology and Philosophy of Eliade* (London: Macmillan, 1992): 139-56, especially 40-45, Douglas Allen, *Myth and Religion in Mircea Eliade* (London: Routledge, 2002): 190-206.

[25] See, for instance: T. F. Torrance, *Space, Time and Incarnation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

[26] Donald Williams, for instance, challenges the philosophical adequacy of common phrases modelling time in terms of movement or passage, arguing they invoke an infinite regress: 'The Myth of Passage', *Philosophy,* 48/15 (1951), 457-72.

[27] Psychoanalytic investigations of time have frequently noted the metaphoric ways in which time is necessarily narrated. See, for instance: Jacob A. Arlow, 'Psychoanalysis and Time', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association,* 34 (1986), 507-28, Stephen A. Kurtz, 'The Psychoanalysis of Time', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association,* 36/4 (1986), 985-1004, André Green, *Time in Psychoanalysis: Some Contradictory Elements* (London: Free Association Press, 2002).

[28] ST I, q 10, a 4.

Sacred Time is, however, of a quite different order from the measurability of profane time. According to Eliade's analysis, Sacred Time is an 'eternal present' that is coincident with the time of origins, the point at which the world came into existence.[29] This Sacred Time is not bound by the limitations of temporal succession, but is repeatable, renewable, and inexhaustibly reversible. Despite this lack of boundedness by measurable change, Sacred Time is nonetheless accessible (and even manifestable) within the contingencies of human history, regenerating itself within the religious rituals that represent and renew the power of a primordial event that took place (or continually takes place) in Sacred Time. Ritual activity, according to Eliade's analysis, empowers the participant to become contemporary with the primordial acts (of creation, etc.) that the myth narrates, by making present a time of both kratophany (an experience of the sacred marked by an awareness of powerful sovereignty) and hierophany (a manifestation of the sacred in the world, as its ontological basis).[30] This ritual re-presentation of the primordial relativizes the significance of quotidian profane time, but it does not absolutely annul it: hierophany, Eliade argues, not only sanctifies 'profane time', but also re-seeds it so as to ensure that the activity of the sacred will endure within in.[31] Whilst Polanyi avoids deploying the full range of Eliadean terminology and conceptual distinctions, he embraces the theory of ritual as the praxis that makes accessible to the participant a share in the primordial temporality of Great Time.[32]

[29] For the way in which Polanyi develops the sense of Great time integrating the knower with the time of their origins, see M: 147.
[30] Eliade, *Myth of the Eternal Return*, 85-86.
[31] Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958): 367-68.
[32] Olson, *The Theology and Philosophy of Eliade*, 129. see M: 126.

§6.1.4: Mythic *Anamnesis* and Analogy

Myth gives an intellectual 'content'—a narrative—to the act of worship, a significance which is embodied by the ritual action that, in a certain way, they repeat or re-enact. The myth is 'performed' by the enactment of the ritual, but this relationship is not principally one of representation but of 'recollection'.[33] This locates Polanyi's analysis of worship close to the Christian theological category of *anamnesis*, according to which an historically past event (the Sacrifice of Calvary) is embodied within a present event (the Sacrifice of the Mass), in a memorial action that actually makes present that which is commemorated.[34] As a framed anamnesis, even when touching radically unfamiliar realities (such as questions of ultimate future destiny), myth opens up a view of the world in which the subject enjoys a felt sense of belonging. The recollected reality is one in which the subject is at home, because it is determinative of the meaning of their being.

The ritual re-presentation of myth locates the person not only within their particular context, but also (or perhaps rather) within the boundless domain of the infinite and the ultimate.[35] As noted above, the relationship between ritual and myth is more complex than a straightforward embodiment of one within another (as if the 'myth' were the form animating the matter of the ritual), but invokes a bilateral vector.[36] As a result of this, the mythic 'recollection' of *anamnesis* situates ritual

[33] M: 126. Here Polanyi seems to be edging towards an account of ritual recollection that approximates Eucharistic *anamnesis*: a type of recollection that actually makes present the realities that to which they witness.
[34] Richard J. Ginn, *The Present and the Past: A Study of Anamnesis* (Eugene: Pickwick Press, 1988).
[35] M: 152-154.
[36] M: 154.

somewhere between the representative and the visionary species of the centrifugal vector, and can only be known in the ritual that embodies it. The 'strangeness' of ritual makes accessible a place of ontological (if not noetic) familiarity. Paradoxically, the ritual both mediates the myth and is generated by it, as from within. The ritual 'embodies' the myth, but the myth embodies itself within a ritual:

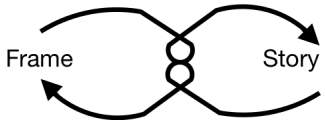


Figure 11: Framing Mechanism and Centrifugal Vector

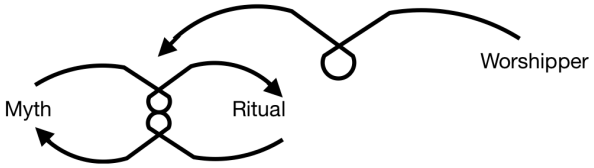


Figure 12: Centrifugally Framed Worship

From this analysis, a number of key features of Polanyi's ontology of worship can be extrapolated. Firstly, worship operates within what I call a framed zone of analogicity. That is, liturgy is framed in such a way that the truth claims it contains are necessarily neither univocal nor equivocal, but analogical. Although Polanyi understands religion as a "sprawling work of the imagination"[37] that reaches out to unrepresentable ultimate reality,[38] he situates it closer to representative than to

[37] M: 152.
[38] PK: 279.

abstract art. The myth that is embodied within the ritual has a definite content, fixed points that are not open to renegotiation.[39] These narratives—and the truth claims that they advance—are at least partially linguistically articulable, and not reducible to immanent experience or subjective imagination. As a result of this inalienable definiteness of content, the narratives embedded within the myth are more representational than they are abstract.[40] Myth makes truth-claims and is justified in so-doing.

This quasi-representational character of worship is a function of its distinctive framing mechanism. In the case of the representative arts, the frame underlines the artificiality of its contents. The dramaturgical frame of a film or play, for instance, protects against a hyperrealism, in which the events of the narrative are seen to be actually unfolding within 'real time'. The frame disembeds a segment of quotidian spatiotemporality, thereby constituting it as a space of equivocity and simulation:[41] the murder that takes place within the frame, however realistic it might appear to be, is known not to *actually* have taken place. Polanyi, therefore, differentiates his understanding of representative art from that of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.[42] Coleridge, as Polanyi understood it, saw the acceptance of a representative performance *qua* performance entailed a "voluntary disbelief":[43] a willed consciousness that the apparently graphically realistic violence is not, despite its appearances, real. By

[39] M: 122, 153.
[40] M: 126.
[41] M: 81-85, 124-125.
[42] M: 92; 109-110.
[43] M: 92. Polanyi's notes on Coleridge, preserved at PP 23.7, suggest that he depended on the following work, which was in his library at PP 57.3: Ivor Armstrong Richards, *Coleridge on Imagination* (London: Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1950).

contrast, Polanyi posits that a voluntary mental act would only be necessary to force the belief in the contrary, that the depicted material was *actually* occurring:[44] the frame that is unavoidably fused to the mimetic representation dis-embeds a segment of quotidian space-time and so deprives its contents of any authentically mimetic content. It is this fusion of incompatibles—mimetic content and the anti-mimetic frame—that makes the meaning of representative art an integrating labour of the imagination.[45]

The framing mechanism of representative art, then, moves in the direction of artificiality and equivocity. By contrast, Polanyi thinks that ritual framing mechanisms move in the opposite direction, towards realism.[46] The whole ritual situation bristles with incompatibilities:[47] whereas in drama what seems to be possible is in fact not actual, in worship what seems to be *im*possible—the congress of finite and infinite—*is* actual. Like the framing mechanism in representative art, then, the frame of ritual serves to differentiate it from the quotidian, preventing it from being read as simple action that is reducible to its contiguity with human social reality, so as to establish it as a space of *anamnesis*. The implication of this is that, unlike the representative arts, the framing of ritual prevents it from being read as *merely* a performance, with only extrinsic truth value. Worship is framed in such a way that it demands to be read as really occurring within quotidian history (as a *real* event) and yet invoking a world of meaning that stands outside of it.[48] In Ernstian terms, this is the liturgical manifestation

[44] M: 109-110.
[45] See M: 149-150, and also M: 125-126.
[46] M: 153-4.
[47] M: 154.
[48] M: 123-124.

of the principle of dynamic transcendence proper to Christianity; §4.6.2 connects this with Ernst's eschatological ecclesiology.

This account of worship as a dynamically framed practice gives Polanyian liturgy a dialectical quality: liturgy is simultaneously both worldly and unworldly, both an impossibility and a human possibility. Consequently, ritual is a human action that must operate under conditions of its own inadequacy. It is both an action and a non-action, something enacted within human history yet not aiming towards the effecting of specific "objectivities"[49] within the frame of quotidian temporality. The liturgical act is simultaneously dependent upon, and yet a negation of the limits of, quotidian temporality. Even as we are actively engaged in the production of them, rites have an interruptive capacity, breaking into the flow of quotidian time and introducing into semantic world something that is simultaneously both familiar and unfamiliar.

Polanyi's account of ritual is rhizomatic, that is to say it moves simultaneously moving in multiple directions, affirming a number of related principles from its central intrinsicist intuition. Firstly, it undermines the chronological logic of time as the absolutised flow of sequentially related happenings, instead opening the possibility that there are meanings which cut across such a linear account of time. Secondly, it negotiates the possibility of an ontologically dense account of causality that is open to a transcendence and a supernatural impulse that cannot be contained within temporal sequence. Thirdly, with this implicit critique of time understood as *chronos*, Polanyi moves towards a more theologically rich sense of time as *Kairos*, the ritualised present

[49] M: 154.

moment as a potentially sacramental moment of encounter, charged at the intersection of time and eternity.

In this account of liturgy as a framed praxis, Polanyi comes close to Joseph Ratzinger and other twentieth century liturgical theologians who emphasise the ways in which worship is akin to play.[50] The analogy with play is intended to highlight the ways in which the more-or-less formalised 'rules' of liturgy have the effect of taking the participant away from the 'serious' task of the pursuit of creaturely ends within quotidian time. Such an abstractive movement is not understood as a form of spiritual escapism, but as a proleptic rehearsal of the eschaton:[51] just as the play of children is formative of ways of communally negotiating adulthood, liturgy is a pedagogy of play that habituates the participant into greater spiritual maturity.[52]

Although resonant with theological potential, Polanyi's account of worship is philosophically generic, emerging as an extension of his pre-determined phenomenology of discovery. Whilst Polanyi's theoretical account of worship emphasises the necessity of indwelling religious frameworks, his actual analysis of myth and ritual seems to be detached and disconnected from the mundane reality of religious practice. Consequently, Polanyi inadvertently instantiates a mild form of the 'disinterested objectivity' that his epistemological synthesis sought to undermine: his

[50] Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. John Saward (London: Ignatius, 2000): 13-21.
[51] John D. Zizioulas, 'The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God', *The Eucharistic Communion and the World* (London: Continuum, 2011): 39-81.
[52] Johan H. Cilliers, ' Liturgie as spel: 'n besinning oor die nie-funksionaliteit van die erediens', *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese* 49 (2008), 40-48.

account of worship lacks the full affective and personal involvement of the subject that is the *sine qua non* of authentic Polanyian investigation.

§6.2: Ernst on Worship as Ontological Metaphor

This section uses Cornelius Ernst's theological account of liturgy as a means of developing Polanyi's generic account of worship in explicitly Christian terms. Two distinctive features of Ernst's account of worship are identified. Firstly, worship is a form of ontological metaphor, involving the transfer of meanings across distinct metaphysical domains.[53] Secondly, Ernst's account of worship is Christocentric, depending upon his account of Christ as the self-disclosure of ultimate Meaning.[54] These foundational principles lead to two distinctive features of Ernst's account. The third sub-section identifies the way in which Ernst constitutes the liturgy as a semantic locus, in which certain types of meanings can emerge. The fourth subsection discusses an idiosyncratic feature of Ernst's account of worship: his affirmation of the resurrection as a paradigm case of worship. This connects worship with the process and praxis of transfiguration and the re-integration of creation by grace.

Unlike Michael Polanyi, Cornelius Ernst had a deep first-hand familiarity with a particular liturgical tradition, into which he was habituated through the course of his priestly and Dominican life. Ernst also engaged within many of the same philosophical

[53] ME: 34, 111.
[54] ME: 153, 111.

sources as Polanyi, including Mircea Eliade and Evans-Pritchard.[55] In particular, Ernst was concerned to explore the relationship of liturgical time to the primordial time of origins,[56] but was more critical of Eliade's tendency to locate the meaning of symbols too much within the static reality of the symbol itself, rather than their active appropriation within the personal praxis of meaning.[57] Indeed, Ernst's theological reflection on liturgy was driven more by his concrete historical context than (as for Polanyi) by a desire to complete the development of his semantic ontology.

Ernst lived and worked as a theologian during the years of liturgical reform following the Second Vatican Council. Like all ecclesiastical office-holders of his day, Ernst was actively involved in implementing the liturgical changes consequent to *Sacrosanctum Concilium*,[58] attempting to negotiate a balance between fidelity to the received tradition and the mandated *aggiorniamento*.[59] The introduction of concelebration into the conventual Eucharistic liturgy, and the need to develop a

[55] Ernst drew directly from the work of Evans-Pritchard, as for instance at ME: 189-190. Ernst enjoyed a long friendship with the Oxford-based anthropologists, Godfrey Lienhardt and Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard, both of whom were Catholics. See: Timothy Larsen, *The Slain God: Anthropologists and the Christian Faith* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): 113-15, Ahmed Al-Shahi, 'Evans-Pritchard, anthropology, and Catholicism at Oxford: Godfrey Lienhardt's View', *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford,* 30/1 (1999), 67-72, Edward Evans-Pritchard, 'Fragment of an Autobiography', *New Blackfriars,* 54 (1973), 35-37.

[56] ME: 111, note the identification of this 'absolute beginning' with the person of Jesus Christ in ME: 79.

[57] ME: 55. In other places where Ernst cites Eliade, it is in illustration of a position that he is criticizing, see: ME: 111 and 120.

[58] See: Jeremy Driscoll, '*Sacrosanctum Concilium*', in Matthew Levering and Matthew L. Lamb (eds.), *The Reception of Vatican II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press): 23-47.

[59] Ernst was by no means alone in attempting to negotiate these contested waters. The post-conciliar liturgical reforms are surely amongst the most intractable of contemporary theological debates. See: Joseph Ratzinger, 'Change and Permanence in Liturgy', *The Theology of the Liturgy* (11 of Ratzinger Gesamtausgabe; Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2014): 519-30, Alcuin Reid, *The Organic Development of the Liturgy: The Principles of Liturgical Reform and Their Relation to the Twenthieth-Century Liturgical Movement Prior to the Second Vatican Council* (London: Ignatius Press, 2005), Thomas M. Kockik, 'The Reform of the Reform', in Alcuin Reid (ed.), *Liturgy in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016): 19-50, Robert Cardinal Sarah, 'Towards an Authentic Implementation of *Sacrosanctum Concillium* ', in Michael Uwe Lang (ed.), *Authentic Liturgical Renewal In Contemporary Perspective* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017): 3-20.

theology of sacramental causality to adequately capture this mystery, particularly troubled him.[60] Emerging at this particular historical moment, and embedded within his broader pedagogical concerns (outlined in the first chapter), Ernst's approach to liturgy came from a particular angle: he was concerned to interrogate the theological principles that ought to determine the place of the Sacred Liturgy within what he called the 'significant life' of a theological community (and, more concretely, Blackfriars in Oxford).[61] Minutes from chapter meetings indicate that these liturgical discussions often evoked the most vociferous exchanges of opinion.[62] Ernst's experience of these discussions was somewhat traumatic: he felt misunderstood and defeated; "much more was lost than has been gained";[63] the wounds that he incurred during these discussions ultimately contributed to his resignation as Regent of Studies.[64]

The highly charged nature of these liturgical disagreements has its basis not only in human psychology and sociology—the reality that all major change in particular communities will challenge and provoke the members; change *qua* change inevitably meets with some human resistance—but primarily from the theological character of the liturgy itself. The form of the community's liturgical celebration embodies in a concrete and tangible way the tacit self-understanding and theological priorities of the particular community. In many situations, these theological assumptions about the community's identity could be assimilated into a task-orientated unity: when collaborating in a specific project, like running the Apostolic School at Laxton, the question of whether the

[60] Simon Tugwell OP reported this to me in private conversation. Certainly as chaplain at Carisbrooke, concelebration would not have been part of Ernst's regular life.
[61] ME: 149-157.
[62] EDA, Oxford Priory Box 1968-68a, 'Chapter Book'.
[63] EDA, Ernst §5, Letter to the Abbot of Quarr, 12th September 1972.
[64] EDA, Ernst §4, Letter of D.M. Darwin of Oxford University Press, dated 21st February 1977.

Order of Preachers is principally a clerical Order would be unlikely to present itself with the acute force that it does when discussing whether non-ordained brethren should wear a different religious habit for the liturgy. The post-conciliar discussions of liturgical principles therefore brought these tacit theological assumptions into an articulable form, serving as a vehicle by which theologies of the religious life could be examined and discussed (but with the attendant risk that it was not always clear precisely *what* was being discussed). Equally, as a communicative action, the liturgy made these implicit theologies of the religious life visible to those outside the community.[65] At stake is the community's credibility as Christian witness and, with it, the Dominicans' identity as preachers.

§6.2.1: Liturgy as Christocentric Ontological Metaphor

Although essentially sharing the same intrinsicist foundation, two principal features differentiate Ernst's account of worship from Polanyi's more generic account. Firstly, worship not only has the structure of metaphor transposed into active terms, but more specifically, the structure of an *ontological* metaphor transposed into active terms. Secondly, this ontological metaphor is intrinsically related to the ontological metaphor of the incarnation, of which it is a non-identical repetition. Consequently, there is no authentic worship that does not have its ontological foundation in the hypostatic union.

[65] On liturgy as communicative action, see: Siobhan Garrigan, *Beyond Ritual: Sacramental Theology after Habermas* (London: Routledge, 2004).

Although the action of a historical assembly, then, the liturgy is not reducible to this historical dimension: worship is, for Ernst, an instance of the more general dynamic transcendence that characterises Christianity, the presence of ultimate Meaning in-and-beyond the creaturely meanings that depend upon it. Ernst, therefore, conceives of worship in terms of an 'ontological metaphor',[66] an act of semantic transference occurring in one metaphysical plane, that embodies the meanings of a transcendent metaphysical plane within it. Pre-eminently this is true of Sacramental liturgy, in which the human meanings of the immanent plane are constituted by God as real causes of the supernatural grace that they bestow.[67]

In places, Ernst's intrinsicist negotiation of liturgical causality resembles Polanyi's use of Eliade's notion of Great Time: the liturgy refers itself to the transcendent source of all meaning,[68] making accessible the new epistemic context that is the proper locus of all theological knowledge.[69] Nonetheless, Ernst's account of worship is differentiated from both Polanyi's and Eliade's by its radical Christocentricity. For Ernst, the liturgy is the presence of ultimate primordial meaning, only because it is the presence of Jesus Christ.[70] The availability of the primordial 'Great Time', with its pregnant infinity of meaning, is not a 'naked' presence, but an availability mediated by the incarnate second person of the trinity, who does not discard his creaturely *organon* after the ascension.[71]

---

[66] ME: 94*ff*.
[67] ME: 109-111.
[68] ME: 111.
[69] Ernst talks of the ecclesial community as the 'ontological *a priori*' of Christian discourse, see: ME: 139*ff.*
[70] ME: 153.
[71] ME: 74-79.

On Polanyi's Eliade-derived account, myth serves to embody Great Time, which is then embodied—as it embodies itself—in the rituals that mediate it through ritual re-enactment. Two implications follow from this. Firstly, the intrinsicism of this embodiment notwithstanding, there is an analogical disjunction between myth and the primordial reality it embodies: the primordial *logos* is in-and-beyond the *mythos* that it mediates. Consequently, there is an asymptotic surplus of *logos* behind *mythos*; *mythos* is always an imperfect embodiment of *logos*. Myth embodies *logos* in ways that are necessarily fragmentary, often with an admixture of disintegration and imperfection, even falsehood. Secondly, this 'gap' between *mythos* and *logos* results in a loss of particularity. This is particularly problematic, as claims to unsurpassable truth and irreducible particularity are often essential constitutive features of the narrative content of religious articulate frameworks. As a consequence of this metaphysical disjunction between primordial *logos* and the *mythos* that mediates it, there is an irreducible and asymptotic pluralism: multiple myths can embody the same *logos* in diverse forms; theologians should promote this diversity as a means of allowing the greatest possible numbers of complementary perspectives on the same primordial *logos*. Indeed, any definitive expression of the *logos* by an embodiment of myth would be foreclosed, and there could be no ontological basis on which to affirm any myth as unsurpassed.

In Ernstian perspective, this disjunction between myth and reality is foreclosed by positing the identity of *mythos* and *logos* in the person of Christ the divine *mysterion*. As noted in Chapter 4, the ontological metaphor of the incarnation, patterned by the *anhypostasis-enhypostasis* dynamic, is an integration of perfect embodiment, without

the admixture of the partial dis-integrations that characterise human metaphors. Notwithstanding the *extra Calvinisticum*, then, Christ's substantial identity with the *logos* constitutes him personally as the perfect embodiment of the primordial Meaning. The humanity of Jesus—as the living *mythos* of the divine *logos*—provides the principle of particularity: liturgy involves 'nothing to do with a disembodied God',[72] in the sense of a *logos* that is reached by bypassing the humanity of Jesus, or seeking to move beyond it. What is embodied in worship (the non-identical repetition of the ontological metaphor of the incarnation) is the dynamic hypostatic union of divine and human, or—to transpose it into liturgical terms—the liturgy actually re-enacts the embodiment of *mythos* and *logos* that characterises the human history of Jesus. Where there are elements of dis-integration of *logos* and *mythos* in the liturgy, then, this arises not from its Christological basis but from the imperfect character of the liturgical re-presentation of the *mysterion*. Although Christ provides a perfected integration of *logos* and *mythos*, thereby securing the ontological basis for divine worship, the re-enactment of that integration does not share in the perfection of its primordial source. In other words, the failure of liturgy arises from the liability of non-identical repetition to stray from the paradigm that it reiterates.

§6.2.2: Ernstian Personalism: Liturgy as 'Being-With'

Jesus Christ's personal identity with ultimate Meaning provides the essential *differentiam specificam* of Ernst's account of worship. Indeed, this Christological

[72] The *logos asarkos* is always already *logos incarnandus*, *cf.,* Bruce L. Mccormack, 'In Memoriam: Robert Jenson (1930–2017)', *International Journal of Systematic Theology,* 20./1 (2018), 3-7.

personalism is an essential feature of Ernst's account of liturgical mediation: the ecstatic knowledge of the liturgy is a communion of persons, a being-with the truth (the Meaning of meaning) embodied. This liturgical being-with is not, however, the end of the story in itself, but is necessarily conjoined with a 'becoming', that is, a progressive self-identification with Jesus Christ, and a reintegration of our personal meanings *within* the embrace of his infinite personal meaning. Here the language of a self-posited divine objectivity as the key to a doctrine of revelation reaches its apotheosis, as the subject-object picture is definitively disrupted by a doxological ontology: the liturgical subjectivity of the individual is finally and completely realised only *within* the divine-human subjectivity of Jesus, and not only through an encounter with the divine meaning of meaning as a radically confrontational external object. By the liturgical communication of grace, the participant is incorporated more-and-more completely into their new life as members of Christ the head.[73]

Whereas Polanyi's presentation of worship moves from below upwards (developing his already established epistemology in the direction of theology), Ernst's moved from above downwards (cashing out the implications of his semantic doctrine of God). Thus, Polanyi's account of worship seeks to articulate how religious discourse can be meaningful, whilst Ernst's gives an account of how the Ultimate Meaning is accessible here-and-now. As a result of this difference of emphasis, Ernst's theology of worship is object-orientated (i.e., derived from that which is worshiped), whilst Polanyi accents the subjective contribution of cognitive dynamics. Ernst is, however, not entirely comfortable with the affirmation of God as the 'object' of worship in an unqualified

[73] ME: 153.

sense, without first clarifying the meaning of objectification. By objectivity, Ernst does not mean a property that is intrinsic to any discrete thing (even primitive physical objects).[74] Objectivity is not synonymous with a Polanyian comprehensive entity, nor with individual portions of matter animated by formal cause. Objectivity emerges only through an intelligent modification of the world (whether by divine or human agency). Something becomes an object by being taken up into a world of human intentionality, by becoming an object to-and-for an intelligent agent.[75] Knowing is 'doing' (and not looking, as we saw in Chapter 1) in part because it involves the movement of 'pre-objects' into the domain of objectivity, thereby activating, by an engagement of the created intellect, a created potency. This enactment of objectivity is a component part of meaning understood as the 'process and praxis through which the world to which man belongs becomes the world that belongs to man'. In affirming that worship has God as its object,[76] then, Ernst is not only affirming that there is a God 'out there'—that that which is worshipped is a reality—but that God can be so assumed into the world of human meanings and intensions.

The objectivity of God is not, however, the domestication of God: human knowledge of God does not actualise anything potential in God (who is *actus purus*); there is nothing in God that is latent, waiting for us to bring it to objectivity. As such, God is not 'pulled down' into the world of creaturely meanings by the intelligent activity of the creature. Rather, the direction of pressure is precisely the opposite: the objectification of God occurs only by God's self-objectification, in the sense that God

[74] ME: 91*ff.*
[75] ME: 103.
[76] ME: 91.

assumes creaturely meanings to Godself in the incarnation. The account of divine objectivity that Ernst advances, then, is one that neutralises the threat of ontotheology: to attribute 'objectivity' to God-in-Christ is not to attribute 'thinghood' to God.[77] Ernst launches a two-fold prophylaxis against ontotheology, both prongs of which seem to cohere around the *analogia entis* understood as dynamic transcendence. Firstly, as the subsistent first cause of all that exists, God is both 'inward' (in) and 'outward' (beyond) to the creature; secondly, God cannot be assumed into human semantic intentionality *simpliciter*, but only by way of creaturely mediation. In the incarnation, there is, antecedent to our assumption of an object into articulate frameworks, an assumption by God of creation to Godself, so as to re-constitute it as a fitting instrument of that mediation. Whilst Ernst provides a strong account of theological mediation, he leaves broadly undetermined the mechanism by which this divine act of objectification comes itself to be objectified within worship. Here, as we will see below, Polanyi can assist.

§6.2.3: Liturgy as Semantic Locus

Ernst's focus on the constituted objectivity of worship is coupled with an affirmation of the role of worship in *constituting* the subjective conditions for theological knowledge. In his essay 'how to see an angel?' (a question that Barth thought was stupid),[78] Ernst explicitly deals with the liturgy as the enacted locus for certain types of knowledge. Liturgy "creates a special kind of state",[79] in which there is a

[77] Although Ernst does not develop this, there is an essential role played here by an implicit account of the metaphysics of Jesus's Sacred Humanity. See ME: 91-100.
[78] CD III/3: 477.
[79] ME: 198.

"transformation of the visible world into something fulfilled that we can call invisible".[80] Ernst sees the liturgy—and more particularly the sacramental liturgy—as an event in which the human and the angelic share a community with one another, a community that is determined by an acknowledgment of a shared practice, that of praising the triune glory. This sort of specific angelology is, of course, a long way from Polanyi's concerns, but it evinces a deeply Polanyian insight: we know by ecstasis, by being-with, and it is this being-with that the liturgy enacts in an intensified form. Crucially, it is a pre-requisite of this knowledge by being-with that the subject *does* something: *viz.* "create a dimension of life that wasn't there until we actually elicited it, by actually doing something by performing something historically".[81] Two important insights are buried within this laconic phrase. Firstly, the choice of verb—'elicited', rather than, for example, 'construct'—indicates a metaphysical limit on the human contribution: the presupposition, here, is of an antecedent action or state of affairs upon which the action of worship depends. Liturgy embodies on earth the transcendent celestial liturgy, by an analogy of tasks between the angels and the saints *in via*. Secondly, the description of the activity performed as 'historical' contains within it two notions that are essential to historicity. The first is the notion of embodiment. The action of worship that is performed and enacted is a bodily activity, a "practice of bodily enlargement".[82] The second contained notion is that of sociality:[83] as historical, bodily, creatures, Ernst understands us to be always already enmeshed in webs of relationships, bound together

[80] ME: 199.
[81] ME: 201.
[82] EDA, Ernst §4, Red Notebook, 'Profound Thoughts &c', p. 4.
[83] ME: 27-28, 79.

in the histories that we make and share. As historical, then, the liturgical assembly is necessarily a *community*.

Liturgy, then, has not only a didactic function in transmitting the data of the Christian religion or in nurturing certain types of religious experience, but a more important formative role in reconstructing the subjectivity of the participant, literally changing their minds by expanding the range of categories and cognitive tools through which they can theologically parse the world of creaturely meanings. This 'constructive' capacity of the liturgy to form our theological competence by expanding our semantic range is conjoined with a 'destructive' aspect that purifies us from residual idolatries. Ernst's choice of scriptural idiom to narrate this deconstruction is somewhat questionable: "the whole complex reality of Christian cult [*sic*] may be envisaged as a destruction of the temple".[84] Ernst finds within the parenthetical remarks of John 2:21, together with the tearing of the temple veil, an intimate connection between the Paschal mystery (liturgically re-presented at the Eucharist) and the destruction of the Second Temple. The scriptural citation first deployed, however, is neither the Johannine prophecy nor the Olivet discourse, but the false witness born against Jesus before the Sanhedrin (Mark 14:58).[85] Ernst thus establishes a somewhat tenuous connection between the Second Temple and the category of false witness, seeing the destruction of the temple as essentially an icon of the negation of false witness. This exegetical manoeuvre will be unconvincing to the vast majority of contemporary exegetes, and the overtly hyper-supersessionist reading of the liturgy—as not only dwelling with the

[84] ME: 87-96. The location of these remarks in a riposte to John Robinson's *Honest to God* exacerbates a sense of their peculiarity.
[85] ME: 88.

space of obsolescence left by the temple cult, but actively repeating its negation—will be unpalatable to most contemporary systematic and liturgical theologians.

The depth reasoning, here is, however, derived predominantly from the Epistle to the Hebrews: the celestial peregrination of the incarnate Lord, breaking through the veil and leading a recapitulated humanity into the eternal and celestial temple not made by human hands, into which we pass by passing through the mediation of Christ's flesh, the 'veil' that no longer primarily conceals but rather reveals (the veiled unveiling).[86] The force of this reasoning is that Ernst understands the liturgically gathered community to be the true and authentic earthly enactment of this celestial temple, and concomitantly the destruction of the false or obsolete 'temples' of human fashioning. This is correlated with a more general anti-systematic impulse in Ernst's thought, which was identified in the description of his ontology as 'thematic' in Chapter 1. In particular, Ernst is resistant to the Church offering approbation or sanctification to any institutional structure of creaturely meanings, such as the public institutions of law and governance.[87] This, Ernst says, seemed to be the vocation of the Church in the Constantinian era, but in the post-Constantinian era, the Church is engaged in the consecration of revolt against false witnesses that pretend to premature systematic closure. This consecration of revolt, grounded in the negation of false witness, need not—and, perhaps, should not—have been called the destruction of the temple. Divine action does not annihilate but transfigures.[88]

[86] For an assessment of the logic of the Hebrews along the lines that Ernst presupposes, see: Richard Joseph Ounsworth, *Joshua Typology in the New Testament* (Berlin: Mohr Siebeck, 2012).
[87] ME: 169.
[88] ME: 236.

§6.2.4: Worship, Resurrection and Transfiguration

The Christological focus of Ernst's account of worship is unusual in the degree of emphasis that it places on the specific event of the resurrection.[89] Whilst it is at the incarnation that the divine nature assumed the world of creaturely meaning to itself, the resurrection has a decisive semantic significance for Ernst, as an event that fundamentally altered the semantic capacity of the creaturely:[90] the resurrection is the decisive victory of Meaning over the ultimate attack on meaning that was manifested in the senselessness of Good Friday and sustained on Holy Saturday. The resurrection not only restores a meaning and a possibility of meaning that seemed to be (and could actually have been) lost on Good Friday, it also 'jolts' the entire realm of creaturely meanings into a new register. The radical intervention that the resurrection makes into the semantic ontology is understood by Ernst as a *Neuheitserlebnis*, an experience of radical novelty that reconfigures the subject's semantic experience and enlarges their capacity for insight, so changing the semantic world that it induces a discernible linguistic shift.[91] The resurrection is the decisive manifestation of the *Neuheitserlebnis* of the incarnation, termed by Ernst the 'genetic moment' of Christianity: an absolute semantic beginning,[92] a pregnant junction which is laid hold of—consecrated—across a lifetime of sacramental worship.

[89] ME: 215*ff,* 49.
[90] ME: 75.
[91] ME: 34.
[92] ME: 215.

Ernst's reasons for connecting the resurrection and worship are not immediately indicated by his text. One basis for this connection is the relationship between liturgy and the forgiveness of sins: the movement from spiritual death to life that is enacted in worship is analogous to the passage through death to life in the incarnate Lord. A more solid connection is suggested by the relationship Ernst establishes between worship and transfiguration.[93] Worship is no "metaphoric dodge, but a trans-figuring of the body, an anticipated resurrection witnessed to in evangelism".[94] The transfiguration of Christ is a "disclosure of divine glory",[95] a manifestation *in via* of the glory of Christ's resurrected humanity. After the resurrection, the human nature of Jesus is not only manifested in a beatific fulfilment of its previously natural capacities, but also as supernaturally glorified nature, a humanity endowed with ontologically new—preternatural and supernatural—semantic capacities. In other words, the resurrection is no semantic resuscitation. It revitalises and reinvigorates, but it does not leave death and the human unchanged: it is a distinctive *novum*, fundamentally modifying the whole semantic ontology.[96] Worship is a proleptic participation in this post-resurrection glorification of the world of human meanings; the glory of divine meaning shines through the creaturely meanings that liturgically embody it. Worship establishes a transfiguring semantic horizon, across which the creaturely meanings are transfigured.

Importantly, Ernst identifies the ontological metaphor of the resurrection as the paradigm case of Christian worship of the Father, and thus as the metaphysical

[93] ME: 153.
[94] ME: 153-154.
[95] ME: 236.
[96] ME: 236.

foundation of the whole Christian *cultus.* Ernst's understanding of Christ's worship differs from those Thomists who argue that Christ adores the Blessed Trinity—the three divine persons—in his human soul.[97] On account of the role that it plays in Ernst's synthesis, Christ's worship must necessarily have a unique character, proper to his hypostasis.[98] As a result of his doxological reading of the resurrection as a paradigm case of the Son's worship of the Father, Ernst locates a metaphysical foundation for worship *within* the Trinitarian communion of Son and Father in the economy of redemption.[99] The Holy Spirit empowers the liturgical assembly to share in the Son's perfected worship of the Father. This does not, however, constitute Christ's worship in a way analogous to Torrance's account of the Son's vicarious Faith: the worship that accrues to the ontological metaphor of Faith differs from Christ's hypostatically unique worship of the Father. Whilst God shares God's self-knowledge (*scientia Dei*) with the believer in Faith, Christ does not worship the Father in our place. The vector of theologal Faith is an authentic human act that non-identically repeats the ontological metaphor of the incarnation. The resurrection is, then, the paradigm case of the *effects* of worship, in which creaturely meanings are transfigured in and by their instrumental embodiment of ultimate meaning.

The event of the resurrection there occupies a place in Ernst's account the place occupied by 'Great Time' in Mircea Eliade's: the resurrection is an event with a transcendent significance, which inaugurates a new temporality and which, despite its

[97] Matthew Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple: Salvation According to Thomas Aquinas* (South Bend: Notre Dame, 2002): 92-93.
[98] R. Jared Staudt, 'Did Christ Worship the Trinity?', *The Thomist,* 76/2 (2012), 233-72.
[99] A similar position is advocated by Torrance, *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace*.

definitive enactment, is made accessible to us liturgically so that the power of its inexhaustible and radical novelty can repeatedly be freshly appropriated. Whereas, in Polanyi's Eliade-derived account, ritual-myth serves to recollect a primordial time of origins, for Ernst the 'recollection' is primarily the remembrance of an eschatological future time of consummation that was definitively revealed in the resurrection of the Son. Worship enacts this proleptic transfiguration through a re-performance of the eschatological act *par excellence*. The liturgy is, paradoxically, a semantic re-performance of the future.

§6.3: Liturgy and the Practice of Dogmatics

The previous section developed an intrinsicist account of worship derived from Ernst's theory of ontological metaphor. This section identifies the implications of this account for theological pedagogy (a key Ernstian concern). Two principle areas are identified. Firstly, liturgy is determined as a theological authority, to which dogmatic discourse must be subordinated. Doctrinal articulate frameworks are designated conceptual tools, which are indwelt by the believer in worship. Secondly, the disciplined practice of the liturgy is the means through which the subject becomes habituated to the skilled use of these tools, thereby making theological knowledge connatural to themselves.

The Polanyian-Ernstian account of worship *as* theologal meaning posits worship as the active mediation of the reality upon which theologians discursively reflect. Theological meaning is always already doxological and comes to consummation in its

inherently liturgical *telos.* If worship, as the historical form that ecstatic communion with ultimate Meaning takes, were eliminated from theology on the basis of *a priori* philosophical assumptions, God-talk would lack both reference (there is nothing for theology to talk about aside from that which is embodied by theologal Faith), but also sense (there would be no context available for theological truth claims to cohere as meaningful).

§6.3.1: Dogmatics as Second-Order Discourse?

Prima facie, the emphasis on liturgy as the native semantic 'habitat' for theological discourse gives dogmatics—the academic discipline concerned to investigate the contents of revelation as mediated by worship—a secondary or derivative status: the primary context for theological language is liturgical; scientific theology can only critically reflect on liturgical usage. Academic theology is thus seen to move by abstracting theological language from its proper context, an abstraction that is inevitably haunted by the possibility of abuse, just as the transfer of theological frameworks into worship is haunted by the possibility of conceptual idolatry.[100] Such an account of doctrine has the merit of recognising the character of doctrine as the grammar of common prayer,[101] but it ought not deprive liturgical language use of its essential 'strangeness'.[102] That the liturgy is the normative context for theological discourse should highlight, and not obscure, the ways in which liturgical praxis forms a

[100] Jean-Luc Marion, *God Without Being* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012): 36-40.
[101] Nicholas Lash, *Easter in Ordinary* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988): 257-65, Nicholas Lash, *The Beginning and the End of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 90.
[102] Milbank, 'The Linguistic Turn as a Theological Turn'.

context in which language operates under an intense pressure that it both invites and sustains. This liturgical context is the semantic space in which the participant must go on speaking, even once their speaking has failed.

The deracination of theological language from its proper liturgical context proceeds, paradoxically, not by de-normalising language, but by normalising it through an attenuation of the linguistic pressure cultivated by the ritual frame. Here it is necessary to confront an ambiguity within the Polanyian-Ernstian framework, that of determining the location of linguistic normativity.[103] The question concerns whether the liturgical use of language is a consummation of a potential that is intrinsic to the character of language (and thus one that manifests something of the nature of language itself), or an artificial extension of language that operates under such a high degree of stress that it is almost a misuse of language rather than a revelation of its own innate teleology.[104]

On the one hand, the intrinsicism of the Polanyian-Ernstian account of worship can allow no violence to be done to language by its deployment in worship: an essential feature of the centrifugal vector is the integrity of the meanings at both poles of the integration. For Polanyi, the human person peacefully extends themselves into religious meanings, in which they can 'happily dwell'.[105] For Ernst, whose participatory reading of analogy can only sustain dialectic *within* an antecedent ontology of peace, liturgical

[103] Kevin W. Hector, *Theology without Metaphysics: God, Language and the Spirit of Recognition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011): 15-22.
[104] ME: 33.
[105] M: 63-66.

use of language is a symptom of the human linguistic being's participation within the divine linguistic being.[106] In this sense, the strangeness of the liturgical use of language draws attention to an underlying strangeness of human linguistic capacities.[107] The 'extreme' case of the ontological metaphors of liturgy serves to underline the ways in which our habitual negotiation of the natural world depends upon our capacity to place language under the stress conditions of metaphor and symbolization.[108] On the other hand, liturgical language use differs in kind (and not just degree) with this more general 'stressed' used of language. Liturgical language use, as linguistic embodiment of the divine *mysterion*, does not actualise meanings that are inherent possibilities within language itself, but enacts a new possibility for creaturely meanings, as they are taken up into the ontological metaphor of the resurrection. This gives liturgy its essential character as the ritualised consecration of the genetic moment of Christological *Neuheitserlebnis.*[109] In other words, language does not consummate *itself* in worship, but rather, by grace, receives a new and additional *telos* by the influx of supernatural power in ultimate Meaning. The fulfilment of this supernatural *telos* includes the fulfilment of the natural *telos* of inherent to language itself: as noted in §4.6, the vector of grace adds an integration to the reverse centrifugal vector that constitutes creatureliness.

Polanyi's account of worship as the form of Christian enquiry gives an important place in theological method to the cultivation of disciplined practices of worship.[110] Although all theologal knowledge, emerging from the ontological metaphor of Faith,

---

[106] *Cf.,* Milbank, 'The Linguistic Turn as a Theological Turn'.
[107] ME: 26*ff*.
[108] ME: 66-70.
[109] ME: 88-90.
[110] M: 36, applied to myth as M: 133.

invokes doxology, the empirical presence of dogmatic reasoning does not directly indicate the presence of the vector of Faith. Theological articulate frameworks are indwelt by the subject as part of the tacit background, which is integrated into the event of Faith-worship by the centrifugal vector. As rational and narratival artefacts, these articulate frameworks can be subject to explicit investigation by both believers and non-believers alike: as is the case with all semantic integrations, when the articulate framework becomes the focal object of attention, its functional relationship as a subsidiary is disrupted. Indeed, this does not exclude the possibility that such rational focal investigation of religious articulate frameworks occurs within the context of a broader 'attitude of worship' but establishes that such an attitude is not necessary for a disciplined reflection on the contents of Christian articulate frameworks that might fruitfully enrich theologal Faith. Nonetheless, this reflection remains partially a second-order reflection; the proper context of theological language and religious articulate frameworks is their use in worship. Consequently, the first-order of liturgy, prayer and worship is constituted with a priority and authority for the discipline of dogmatics.[111] As Wainwright puts it, liturgy "is the primary locus of religious language for the Christian […] Theological language belongs to the second-order [of] reflexion upon the primary experience".[112]

Prima facie, the affirmation that dogmatic discourse has a partially second-order character resembles Lindbeck's postliberal theory of doctrine as a second-order activity

[111] Alexander Schmemann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* (Yonkers NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1966): 9-32.
[112] Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine and Life: A Systematic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980): 21.

that regulates a given community's use of theological language.[113] For Lindbeck, doctrines "assert nothing either true or false about God and his relation to creatures, but they only speak about such assertions":[114] as McGrath puts it, "theology is 'talk about talk about God', not 'talk about God'".[115] Doctrinal assertions consequently have only an intra-systematic truth value,[116] which is dependent upon their coherence with the narratival system of the religious grammar within which they serve as regulative principles.[117] The fullness of ontological truth is enacted by the faithful performance of religious language as it is governed by these principles.[118] In other words, doctrine becomes true as it is used in culturally embedded contexts.

Lindbeck's complex proposal—a linguistic account of doctrine, coupled with a performative theory of truth—is liable to critique for reducing the significance and scope of dogmatic claims, tending to construe doctrinal 'assertion' and 'regulation' as mutually exclusive functions.[119] Even if it is clear that Nicaea is concerned to regulate communal language about Jesus, it is hard to accept that the *homoousion* is not also asserting something to be ontologically true. Lindbeck's postliberal colleague at Yale, Hans Frei, used the category of narrative to develop an account of doctrinal frameworks that appears simultaneously assertive and regulative, playing an important role in constituting the religious community whose grammar it regulates.[120] From within the

---

[113] Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 18-27.
[114] Ibid., at 69.
[115] Alister E. Mcgrath, *Scientific Theology v2: Reality* (London: T&T Clark, 2007): 49.
[116] Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 50-51.
[117] Ibid., at 50.
[118] Ibid., at 49-52.
[119] George Hunsinger, 'Postliberal Theology', *Conversational Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2015): 111-28.
[120] Hans Frei, *Types of Christian Theology* (London: Yale University Press, 1992): 124-30, Hans Frei, 'Remarks in Connection with a Theological Proposal', in George Hunsinger and William C Placher (eds.), *Theology and Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993): 26-44, Hans Frei, 'Epilogue: George

proposed ontology of meaning, Lindbeck's account of doctrine can be seen to inscribe a form of extrinsicism. As Lindbeck develops it, the gap of first-order and second-order is not bridged by the principle of embodiment (the centrifugal vector), but of 'bearing upon' (the centripetal vector):[121] the system of doctrine regulates something that is essentially external to itself, rather than serving to embody first-order doxological claims themselves.

The intrinsicist coinherence of Faith and worship forecloses such a division of first- and second-order 'levels'. As religious articulate frameworks, doctrines are governed by a centrifugal vector, embodying the reality that they mediate to the believer. Within the proposed semantic ontology, the two functions of regulation and constitution are dual aspects of the functional relationship of doctrinal frameworks within the tacit dimension,[122] according to two modes of integration. In worship, doctrinal frameworks are indwelt as part of the tacit dimension, thereby functioning as a constitutive background component of theologal knowledge. This constitutive function is identical with a basically regulative function, in which doctrinal rules operate like the rules of balance that govern the skilled practice of a bicyclist: they are assumed and known in use, but not necessarily the object of detailed focal study.

Whilst doctrine inevitably invokes rules that govern religious discourse, doctrinal frameworks cannot be reduced to rules or theories. Polanyi models articulate

Lindbeck and *The Nature of Doctrine*', in Bruce D. Marshall (ed.), *Theology and Dialogue* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame, 1990): 140ff.

[121] TD: 92.

[122] TD: 10-13.

frameworks by analogy to tools and their skilled deployment. Doctrinal articulate frameworks, then, are primarily conceptual instruments that are indwelt to facilitate the exploration of otherwise concealed sectors of reality. Dogmatics is the scientific discipline that, operating by a degree of artificiality, brings these instrumental frameworks into an articulate focus, so as to refine them. This process of dogmatic refinement is intended to yield articulate frameworks that facilitate a deeper penetration of the divine *mysterion* that they are used to explore. The dogmatic process is always already orientated towards worship, which is the 'skilled practice' for which doctrinal instruments are 'designed'.

Consequently, the use of theological articulate frameworks in liturgy has a normative status for dogmatic reflection. The proposed semantic ontology affirms the ancient principle *lex orandi lex credendi*.[123] Theologoumena must necessarily subject themselves to this 'test case' of their conformity with the community's use of religious language in formalised and communally accredited acts of worship. This does not imply, however, that the theological traffic only travels in one direction. Whilst acknowledging the *lex orandi* as a source of authority, dogmatics has its own integrity as the discipline that subjects the conformity of *lex credendi* and *lex orandi* to a critical assessment; *lex credendi* is informed by *lex orandi*, but dogmatics also indicates the ways in which *lex credendi* can—and must—inform *lex orandi*.[124] Dogmatics must, in other words, assess the degree of fidelity that the non-identical repetition of Christ's personal metaphor

[123] This provides a framework for inter-disciplinary reflection on the liturgy, see: Mary Schaefer, 'Faith, Doctrine and Theology in dialogue', *Studies in Religion,* 26/4 (1997), 467-79.

[124] Aquinas, for instance, identifies way in which developments in Eucharistic theology led to developments in sacramental practice: ST III, q. 83, a 3, *ad* 6. See: Liam G. Walsh, 'Liturgy in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas', *The Thomist,* 38 (1974), 557-83.

enacts, raising the possibility that refined doctrinal frameworks could intensify this act of ontological metaphor. This involves interrogating the degree to which liturgy and theology are resonant with one another, theology vibrating with the impulse of worship, and worship resounding with a credible and faithful theology that serves its embodiment of the ultimate Meaning. Indeed, the theologian can pretend to no privileged position 'outside' of liturgical and devotional use of language—there can be no theological scorn of 'popular piety'. Dogmatics is rather a servant of that usage,[125] by subjecting it to rigorous critique from within the religious grammar of which worship is the privileged and normative expression.[126]

§6.3.2: Liturgy and the Connaturality of Theological Knowledge

The liturgy is not, however, the laboratory of theologians. The doctrinal instruments produced by dogmatic reflection find their use in liturgical worship, which is—in Polanyian terms—a skilled practice for the exploration of theological reality. As noted in §2.3, Polanyi understands tools to be related to their intelligent use in two directions. Firstly, the tools must be fitted to their purpose: as noted above, the task of dogmatics is to refine the articulate frameworks so as to make them more appropriate to their functional relationship in worship. Secondly, however, the subject who uses the tool must become accustomed to the tool's specialist use: the surgical use of a probe requires specialist training in the form of an apprenticeship to a skilled practitioner, in which inarticulable elements of knowledge from experience, as well as the refinement

[125] ME: 150, 43-48.
[126] See Ernst's description of theology as a critical praxis, ME: 43.

of intuition, are communicated to the new practitioner. In the proposed semantic ontology, the formalised liturgy of the community is the context in which the subject is habituated to the use of doctrinal articulate frameworks in an apprenticeship to Christ-the-teacher, through the mediation of the Christian community.[127] As David Ford puts it, liturgical communion is the "condensation of the Christian *habitus*".[128]

The event character of the Polanyian-Ernstian account of worship, then, further subverts the rigid distinction between first-order (liturgical) and second-order (dogmatic) uses of religious language. The liturgy is not an archive of disconnected texts to be mined so that it might yield its conceptual ore, but a skill—a process and praxis—to participate within. The semiotic significance of the worship is, then, not only to make available in a unique and privileged way the 'data' that is necessarily antecedent to dogmatics. Rather, liturgical use of language is a communally mediated practice which 'traditions' its own modes of discourse, and its own domain-specific rationality.[129] The appropriate use of analogical language to narrate the divine action is a doxological skill into which the subject is initiated and habituated by a liturgical apprenticeship. Like all apprenticeships, liturgical formation schools the participant in a holistic way. The work of liturgical formation engages not only ratiocination but also the body, emotions and intuitions, purifying perceptions. In particular, the communal and aesthetic nature of the liturgy locates the subject within a rich associative penumbra, unthematically drawing their own spatial and relational memories into an organic encounter with the

[127] Ola Sigurdson, *Heavenly Bodies: Incarnation, the Gze and Embodiment in Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016): 283-84.
[128] See: David F. Ford, *Self and Salvation: Being Transformed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 107-281, at 140.
[129] This resembles MacIntyre's 'tradition-constituted enquiry', see: Alasdair Macintyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame, 1988).

divine *mysterion*. The repetitive nature of liturgical worship, together with its particular way of framing spatiotemporal experience, constructs a rhythmic pedagogy analogous to the learning of a new language and to the development of skilful artisanal praxis by trial-and-error.

Through this liturgical formation, governed by the centrifugal vector, the subject comes to dwell within the liturgy and the liturgy comes to dwell within the subject. The subject thereby becomes habituated to certain bodily and discursive practices that constitute the skilled use of doctrinal tools that characterises theologal knowledge. Through these practices—tools that extended their bodily capacities—certain types of knowledge and certain ways of speaking become intuitively connatural to them. By participating in the liturgy, the subject's instinct for theological truth is thus deepened and refined, such that even prior to labours of ratiocination they have an intuitively dogmatic 'feeling' for truthful ways of talking about the divine *mysterion*. This is the significance of Polanyi's refusal to locate religious integrations amongst the transnatural:[130] whilst religious articulate frameworks embody forms of knowledge that transcend that which is available to immediate empirical scrutiny, the subject can become habituated to, and functionally deploy, these cognitive tools in a way that does not occur in the case of the abstract arts. *In nuce*, the mediatorial character of the liturgy is not primarily communicative of discursive theological knowledge (this is a secondary feature of its enactment), but inductive of a theological competence. On this account, the liturgy serves an analogous role in theology to that which Polanyi attributes to the

[130] See §3.3.2.

laboratory training that is a normative training in the empirical sciences.[131] Whilst it is theoretically possible to design tools without experience of their use, this relies upon second-hand awareness of the ways in which the tools are used and deployed, including a determination of what tools are required and how well the existing frameworks are functioning under the stresses and strains of contemporary usage. The task of dogmatics is thus affirmed and strengthened by liturgical formation.

One of the most notable features of post-conciliar liturgical development is the increased emphasis on orality.[132] Whilst this has had the consequence of prioritising the spoken word by displacing embodied devotional practices, thereby privileging literacy and linguistic competence (features that are arguably loosely correlated with certain socio-political sectors),[133] it has opened up new perspectives on the linguistically formative character of liturgical language use. Nonetheless, whilst the use of language is prioritised, the skills of analogy are more loosely applied to the embodied praxes of the liturgy: to gestures such as genuflecting, bowing, and so on.[134] Likewise, the liturgical use of language should draw attention to the ways in which language itself is a material practice, in which not only the content but also the mode of utterance is formative of a doxological culture. In the context of the semantic intrinsicism that unites theologal Faith and worship, a doxological culture is always already identical with a doxastic culture that mediates certain types of theologal knowledge, and even the capacities to receive such knowledge. Here, the mode of utterance invokes not only the aesthetic

[131] TD: 63.
[132] Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Wiley, 1998): 24-25.
[133] *Cf.*, Anthony Archer, *The Two Catholic Churches: A Study in Oppression* (London: SCM Press, 1986).
[134] Johan H. Cilliers, 'Fides Quaerens Corporalitatem: perspectives on liturgical embodiment', *Verbum et Ecclesia,* 30/1 (2009a), 50-64.

dimension (tone of voice, contextual beauty) but, more importantly, the ontological significance as refracted by the liturgical context of ontological metaphor. Similarly, within the liturgical regime, the semiotic capacity of the human body functions to signify a different mode of relationship, one that, by ontological metaphor, operates within the supernatural realm of the *communio sanctorum*.[135] At the sign of peace, for instance, the same gesture (an embrace or a handshake) that signifies a natural conviviality (a family bond or fraternal cooperation) embodies a theological significance of common supernatural destiny.

In nuce, the Polanyian-Ernstian subversion of the rigid demarcation of liturgical from non-liturgical theological reflection binds doctrine and liturgy together in a more intimate and integrative way. Polanyi's account lacks any explicit role for the creeds, the authoritative symbolic expressions of faith that have both a use and an origin within a liturgical context. Whereas many of the archaic creation myths were communicated entirely by the ritual that embodies them, the Christian *cultus* has its contents refined and specified by the linguistic protocols that are embedded within the creeds.[136] Like all theology, the creeds are, despite their fixity, bound up in a feedback and feedforward loop with the Sacred Liturgy.[137] They are, in one direction, determined by the liturgy (Nicaea's *homoousion* parsing theologically the worship of Jesus Christ), but in the other direction they determine the ways in which the liturgy must be understood (a shared sense that when we use the word 'God' liturgically, we intend a certain theological

[135] Leonard J. Delorenzo, *Work of Love: A Theological Reconstruction of the Communion of Saints* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017): 223-30.
[136] See: Ward, *How the Light Gets in: Ethical Life I*, 5-24.
[137] See: Christopher Kaczor, 'Thomas Aquinas on the Development of Doctrine', *Theological Studies,* 62 (2001), 283-302.

context and narrative). Theology is, to misuse a Barthian aphorism, *Nachdenken* (thinking after),[138] in that it follows from the liturgical encounter with the genetic moment of which it is the intellectual consecration. In addition to this thinking-from, worship is also necessarily a thinking towards the liturgy, primarily as a spiritual ascesis, submitting itself to the proper provisionality that the liturgy manifests. From the human perspective, however, liturgy is not only a being-done-to but an active *doing*: theological reflection is taken up into the human aspects of liturgical celebration so as to engender a more adequate and faithful ritual framing, a more active engagement on the part of the participant, and a deeper penetration of the divine *mysterion*.

§6.4: Semantic Pneumatology

This chapter has developed an intrinsicist account of worship as coinherent with theologal Faith. This subsection identifies the dependence of this Polanyian-Ernstian account of worship on a semantic pneumatology. Firstly, Ernst makes a strong connection between pneumatology and ecclesiology: the Church exists enhypostatically within the Holy Spirit, making accessible in the concrete particularity of its communal grammar the articulate frameworks necessary for authentic worship. Secondly, as noted in §6.4.2, the Holy Spirit has a distinctive role in framing the ontological metaphor of Faith, constituting its particular orientation to quotidian temporality. This deployment of the Holy Spirit as the framing mechanism of the ontological metaphor of Faith hints towards the eschatological consummation of creaturely meanings in Meaning.

[138] CD I/2: 728.

§6.4.1: Pneumatology and Ecclesiology

Although Polanyi places considerable emphasis on the role of communities of scholarship—affirming the necessary conviviality of scientific discovery,[139] for instance—he develops no theoretical account of the noetic contribution made by the worshipping community to religious knowledge. By contrast, Cornelius Ernst's synthesis coheres around ecclesiology.[140] Like many theologians of the conciliar period, Ernst was faced with the task of constructing a course of studies on ecclesiology, in the light of the explosion of ecclesiological interest consequent on Pius XII's *Mystici Corporis Christi* and Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium* (with its declaration of the Church as '*uti sacramentum*'). [141]

Ernst's interest in ecclesiology was not only contingent on these historical factors, however. The whole impulse of Ernst's Wittgensteinian propaedeutic situates the individual act of faith as depend upon the meanings that are exchanged in the publicly accessible domain of a community's life and common grammar. Theologal meanings, and the forms of life upon which they supervene, are culturally borne and mediated by the historical life of the Christian community.[142]

---

[139] TD: 51.

[140] See my 'Sacrament of the Dynamic Transcendence of Christianity: Cornelius Ernst on the Church'.

[141] Benoît-Dominique De La Soujeole, *Introduction to the Mystery of the Church* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2014): 33-45, Rose M. Beal, *Mystery of the Church, People of God: Yves Congar's Total Ecclesiology* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2014): 1-11. For examples of other efforts to create courses of study in ecclesiology, see: Walter Kasper, *The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality and Mission* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), Hans Küng, *The Church* (London: Burns & Oates, 1968).

[142] On the importance of history within liturgical theology, see: Eamon Duffy, 'Worship', in David F. Ford, Ben Quash, and Janet Martin Soskice (eds.), *Fields of Faith: Theology and Religious Studies for the Twenty-first Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 119-36.

Consequently, Ernst affirms the Church as the "ontological *a priori* of Christian faith".[143] The centrifugal vector of Faith re-embodies the believer not only within the semantic space determined by the Hypostatic Union, but within the concrete historical form that this takes in the community of the Church, as the ongoing manifestation of Christ's life. The existence of the Church, in all of its dappled history and particularity, is the *sine qua non* of the individual's ontological metaphor of faith. It is this community as an empirical phenomenon that makes possible the act of Faith, in the same way that the antecedent existence of a linguistic community is the necessary—but not sufficient—condition for learning a language. This privileged status attributed to the Church is derived, however, not simply from a pre-theological consideration of the structure of belief in general (i.e., not only from Wittgenstein's arguments against solipsistic accounts of language), but from theological principles that are inscribed into the Church's fundamental ontology, derived from the Trinitarian account of the mediation of ultimate meaning outlined in §4.5. The Church is the community that is itself wrought in the ontological metaphor of Christ's resurrection, and which makes possible theologal Faith by its participation in the effects of this event.

At the heart of Ernst's account of the Church is the intrinsicist principle of 'dynamic transcendence'. Indeed, the Church is termed the "sacrament of the dynamic transcendence of Christianity".[144] Ernst's doctrine of the Church serves to generate a prophylaxis against the extrinsicism of an ecclesiological form of Nestorianism, which is evident in accounts of the Church that separate 'mystical communion' from 'institution'.

[143] ME: 139.
[144] Cornelius Ernst, 'Priesthood and Ministry', *New Blackfriars,* 49 (1967), 121-32 at 122.

The inner-outer picture of Cartesian anthropology finds an iteration in accounts of the Church that posit the visible Church as detachable from the 'real' Church that subsists behind these institutional forms. Ernst offers an ontological vision of the Church as integrated institution and communion, developing the rubric of the Church as sacrament and mystical body. The task is "to revalue the institution so as to let it appear as the plausible organ of the Church as mystery":[145] the human life of the Church is not a response to the divine act of self-revelation, but rather the form of God's self-declaration in human history in the interstice between ascension and parousia. In terms of the proposed Polanyian-Ernstian ontology of meaning, this amounts to an affirmation that the relationship between the manifestly human realities of the Church and the divine *mysterion* that it mediates is governed by a centrifugal vector. The Church as an institutionally structured community—with all of its (in)human features—makes present within herself the divine reality that she communicates to believers in Faith.[146]

This account of the Church as embodying the divine *mysterion* by a centrifugal vector depends upon the existence of another centrifugal vector, moving in the opposite direction: God embodies Godself within the Church. In Ernst's account, following the structure of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed, the life of the Church is correlated with the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit, which effects the sponsal union of Jesus Christ and the Church.[147] As an historical community, the "Church is the special object of God's providence in which the Spirit of Jesus Christ is always present".[148] The result of

[145] Cornelius Ernst, 'The Church as Institution', *New Blackfriars,* 47 (1972b), 26-31 at 27.
[146] ME: 218.
[147] ME: 124, 127.
[148] EDA, Ernst §3, 'A note on Fr. Congar's Criticisms', February 1968,

this centrifugal vector, by which God embodies Godself in the Christian community through the instrumentality of Christ's Sacred Humanity, the Church can be said to exist enhypostatically in the Holy Spirit: the Church receives from the Holy Spirit the totality of her existence. On Ernst's account, the Church is herself an ontological metaphor that 'extends' the ontological metaphor of the incarnation into successive historical eras, becoming the semantic domain wherein the ontological metaphor of the incarnation can be non-identically repeated in Christians' acts of Faith.[149]

The place of the Church within an intrinsicist account of the Trinitarian mediation of ultimate Meaning is indicated in diagrams found in Ernst's unpublished notes:

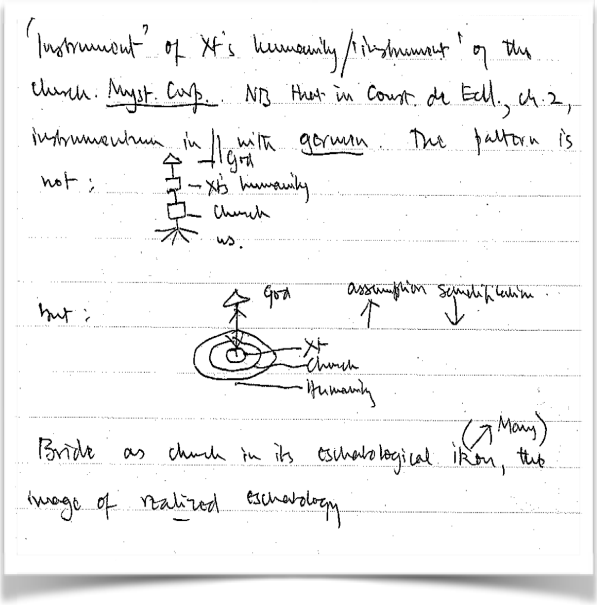


Figure 13: Ernst's Diagram of Ecclesiological Mediation

Ernst's develops his account of the Church in the direction of a theology of ministry and an account of the Petrine primacy. This left many more fundamental

[149] ME: 159*ff*.

questions unanswered, which are ripe for future development. Many of these relate to the ways in which the human vector of Faith are ordered *towards* the Church.[150] Ernst provides a strong account of how the ontological metaphor of Faith is *from* the Church—dependent upon the grammar of that concrete community—but he has relatively little to say about the ways in which the acts of faith and sanctity of the members of the Church 'build up' the Church.[151] Nonetheless, the sacramental-semantic ecclesiology that Ernst generates provides a basis on which to affirm the objectivity of Faith. Milbank, for instance, has indicated the difficulty of accepting the notion of a 'traditioned reason' that is objective, outside of a commitment to the historical guidance of the Holy Spirit.[152] The Holy Spirit serves as a 'guarantor' of the grammar of the Church, further emphasizing the Christological particularity of Ernst's account by foreclosing suggestions that religious grammars are immune to extra-systematic critique (a form of Wittgensteinian fideism).

§6.4.2: Holy Spirit as Framing Mechanism

This account of the Church as the ontological *a priori* of Faith provides a tacit answer to the question, raised in §5.6.2, of what principle serves as the dynamic framing mechanism of the ontological metaphor of Faith.[153] As the semantic locus within which theologal Faith coheres, the Church *qua* ontological *a priori*—*viz.,* as the centrifugal embodiment of the Holy Spirit—provides for the framing conditions of the ontological metaphor of Faith. In other words, it is the Holy Spirit—acting through the mediation of

[150] John Milbank, *Being Reconciled: Ontology and Pardon* (London: Routledge, 2003): 105-37.
[151] ME: 39, 121.
[152] Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 353-54.
[153] Cf., ME: 221, 139.

the institutional Church and its rituals[154]—that frames the individual subject's act of Faith.

As noted in §3.3.2, the framing mechanism functions to constitute its contents in a particular relationship to quotidian spatio-temporality and, by so-doing, to determine its semantic capacity to bear certain types of meanings. To say that the Church serves as the framing mechanism of the ontological metaphor of Faith means, then, that the Church situates the individual believer's faith in a particular orientation to the time and history of the world,[155] so as that they take on a new significance vis-à-vis both God and the world.[156] To belong by Faith to the Church, then, is to belong to a particular history: the saving-history of God's covenantal interaction with the world.[157] As noted above, the paradox of this frame is that the recollected contents are not the past event of the Paschal Mystery, but the future fruits of that mystery: the history into which the Holy Spirit *qua* ecclesial frame locates the believer is the future history of the eschaton.

Indeed, as the community of the continuing unfolding of the divine *mysterion* through the embodying vector of the Holy Spirit,[158] the Church's identity is necessarily understood as eschatologically orientated. As a sacramental prolongation of the incarnation, the Church *in via* is an anticipatory—but nonetheless efficacious—sign of the eschatological 'real-presence' of the Kingdom of God.[159] The Church witnesses, then,

[154] ME: 78, 159.
[155] ME: 151.
[156] Johan H. Cilliers, 'Perspectives on liturgical temporality', *Dutch Reformed Theological Journal,* 50 (2009b), 26-35.
[157] ME: 85.
[158] ME: 218.
[159] ME: 111.

to a pledge of the transfiguration of the Christian community into glory.[160] In accordance with the intrinsicist character of his metaphysics, however, Ernst understands the Church as not only pointing to a future consummation, but actually embodying the mystery to which it points. Ernst understands the Church as basileiological community that effects the Kingdom of God in the here-and-now, as the sacrament of the reign of God.[161] In other words, the Church has an intrinsic orientation toward an eschatology that is itself patterned by dynamic transcendence (it is in-and-beyond the immanent political liberation that it proclaims).[162]

It is the Church's character as dynamic framing mechanism that constitutes it in a particular asymmetrical relationship of dynamic transcendence to the world in which it is manifested. This is evident in Ernst's careful use of pronouns: the Church realizes *itself* within the world but realizes the world within *herself*.[163] This latter usage suggests a personalizing agency, in which the Church consummates the meaning of the world within her dynamic frame; the former 'objective' usage stresses that the Church is a concrete phenomenon within the realm of creaturely meanings. Indeed, realising itself in the world but not absolutely determined by it, the Church's liminality is its 'border' between two worlds of meaning: the horizon of encounter and transfiguration along which human meanings are assumed and sanctified, being authentically realised within the Church. This provides the ontological basis for the engaged character of theologal contemplation described in §1.4.2: it is only by crossing this liminal semantic threshold

[160] ME: 237.
[161] ME: 183.
[162] ME: 170.
[163] Cornelius Ernst, 'Introduction', in Karl Rahner (ed.), *Theological Investigations* (1; London: DLT, 1961): xvi-xx.

that meanings are transfigured; there is no access to ultimate Meaning that does not cross this threshold.[164] The ecclesial framing mechanism embraces sectors of the world, so as to bestow upon them the integration of grace that corresponds to the vector of their creatureliness. By this dynamic framing of the world, the Church constitutes the ontological integration of a culture that organically communicates a way of life that is configured by God's ultimate and transfiguring Meaning.[165]

[164] ME: 151.
[165] ME: 138*ff.*

Conclusion

The central argument of this thesis has been that Cornelius Ernst's doctrine of God as the 'meaning of Meaning' corresponds to the implicit theological ontology around which Michael Polanyi's fiduciary epistemology coheres. The intrinsicism of the Polanyian-Ernstian semantic ontology affirms the value of particular concrete religious practices in their social and historical conditioning but secures the objectivity of ultimate Meaning as in-and-beyond its historical disclosure. God as the Meaning of meaning constitutes the world as a meaningful semantic habit, which the human person occupies in ways irreducibly patterned by communication. There is no neutral *tabula rasa*, no inert matter awaiting our manipulation, but a world that is always already alive with the semantic self-giving of God, disclosing itself historically in the process and praxis meaning. By Faith, God Godself is embodied in this world of meaning in-and-through the use of religious articulate frameworks in worship, which non-identically repeat the ontological metaphor of the incarnation. The deployment of these ritual doxological tools is framed by the Holy Spirit, through the mediation of the Church. To know God is to worship God, and by so-doing to transfigure the world of meaning.

In establishing this argument, the second half of the thesis has offered a 'semantic dogmatics in outline'. This has provoked many as yet unanswered questions and indicated directions for further research, but it has equally demonstrated the value of the proposed perspective of meaning for the practice of dogmatics under the conditions of late modernity. The proposed semantic dogmatics has, in short, indicated

a way of 'going on'[1] that balances the necessity and proper integrity of theological articulate frameworks with their radical provisionality. The ultimate Meaning is infinitely to be approached in-and-through creaturely meanings, by the cultivation of a disciplined practice of worship. Worship proleptically celebrates the final transfiguration, in which all our meanings will be fully realised as they gloriously resound with the Meaning that makes them meaningful. So, the End is Meaning,[2] now with the multiple echo of its desiring. Nothing is so capacious as that echo.[3]

[1] PI: 151; ME: 74.
[2] cf., Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology, Volume 2: The Works of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999): 369.
[3] cf., Jenson, *Systematic Theology, vol. 1*, 236.

A
Appendix A: The *Meaning* Controversy

A central feature of Chapter 3's argument is the contention that Polanyi's later account of religion, as reflected in *Meaning*, develops an intrinsicist account of religion. However, some theological readers of Polanyi—particularly Thomas Forsyth Torrance—have rejected *Meaning*'s significance to Polanyi studies, seeing it as an inauthentic expression of Polanyi's later views on religion. For these scholars, there is no 'late Polanyi' in the sense articulated in §3.3: the extrinsicist picture offered by *Personal Knowledge* is the Polanyian picture *tout court*. Torrance would, therefore, reject the possibility of the critical response articulated in §3.3, not on the basis of its reading of *Meaning*, but based on the compromised status of *Meaning* itself. In other words, Torrance and those who follow his account of *Meaning* flatly deny that the voice heard in *Meaning* (and, derivatively, §3.3) is Polanyi's voice. This section establishes the necessary conditions for reading *Meaning* as a Polanyian response to Ernst's critique, by arguing (against Torrance) that *Meaning* authentically captures the essential features of Polanyi's later account of religion. This will require significant engagement with archival material from the collected papers of both Polanyi and Torrance. By engaging with the archival material of both Polanyi and Torrance (whilst other historical investigations of the *Meaning* controversy have been limited to one or the other) facilitates a more complete assessment of Torrance's claims and the resultant controversy.

As noted in Chapter 3, the so-called '*Meaning* Controversy' is a debate within Polanyi scholarship that questions the extent to which *Meaning* authentically mediates Polanyi's later views (particularly, although not exclusively, on the question of religion). The two extremes are reflected in the thought of Prosch (who affirms the complete authenticity of the text of Meaning) and Torrance (who asserts its almost complete inauthenticity). The text of *Meaning* has a curious provenance and took a circuitous route into publication. Aside from any conceptual novelty, to anyone familiar with Polanyi's previous publications, *Meaning* is characterised by a noticeable difference in argumentative style and the texture of prose. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Polanyi used various lecture series to extend his epistemology into the arts and humanities, including a new account of religious meaning. Whilst this material had reached a relatively stable form (repeated and refined in numerous iterations over several years), Polanyi would not have been able to bring it into a publishable form but for the assistance of Harry Prosch.[1] By 1972, an elderly Polanyi—recently diagnosed with dementia—felt unable to bring such a significant work to completion without considerable assistance.[2] In 1974, when the manuscript of *Meaning* was finalised, Polanyi's intellectual capacities were severely compromised.[3] Whilst many scholars

[1] On Prosch's contribution to Polanyi's Meaning Project, and his contribution more generally to post-critical philosophy, see: Mullins, 'Harry Prosch: 1917-2005', Mullins and Moleski, 'Harry Prosch: A Memorial Re-Appraisal of the Meaning Controversy'.

[2] Polanyi wrote to J.C. Palamountain of Skidmore College, where Prosch was employed: "At the age of 81 such a fairly comprehensive volume seems to become too much for my efforts. As I faced this situation and had another opportunity to meet Professor Prosch, it occurred to me that my work might be saved from loss in my receding hands if I could obtain once more the presence of Harry Prosch in Oxford during the coming academic year." [PP 16.12, 25th May 1972]

[3] Replying to Prosch's draft of the preface for *Meaning*, of which she was notably appreciative, Mrs. Magda Polanyi wrote: "You tactfully avoid mentioning that Michael's mind has been affected. Do add this in the Preface, if you wish; it might explain why Michael's voice no longer appears directly in the book." [PP 40.5, 6th November 1974]. The deterioration in Polanyi's condition between this letter and that of May 1972 is extreme. Polanyi might very well have been concealing difficulties for some years before his diagnosis.

have identified a decisive shift in Polanyi's thought between *Tacit Dimension* and *Meaning*,[4] Polanyi's literary executor, Thomas Forsyth Torrance, adopted a much more trenchant critique, claiming that *Meaning* should not be accepted as an expression of Polanyi's thought.[5] Although Polanyi scholars are almost unanimous in rejecting Torrance's dismissal of *Meaning*,[6] Torrance's claims should be taken very seriously. Torrance enjoyed a well-documented collaboration (and friendship) with Polanyi during the period in which Polanyi was collaborating with Prosch on the text of *Meaning*. Further, Torrance is numbered among one of the most prominent of Polanyi's theological readers and is known to have discussed his theological reading of *Personal Knowledge* with Polanyi directly. Indeed, the appointment of Torrance as Polanyi's literary executor—rather than perhaps the more obvious choice of his sometime collaborator Prosch—would seem to confirm that Torrance, rather than Prosch, should be seen as the authentic custodian of Polanyi's theological thought (something which Torrance did not fail to point out).[7]

---

[4] Polanyi may very well have given the impression that his work was marked by decisive moments of rupture, particularly where his religious views are concerned. In his doctoral dissertation, Richard Gelwick reports that Polanyi had told him that "*[t]he main argument given in the first of the three Terry lectures is wrong. It confuses the unspecifiability of the particulars upon which tacit knowing rests with the indeterminacy of the bearing such knowledge has on reality*." (p. 19). When this was cited in a Yale M.A. dissertation, Polanyi denied that it was an accurate record: "Please disregard your quotation from Gelwick […]. I have no idea what it means!" [PP 11.1, Letter to Daniel Gettens, 18th December 1972]. Gelwick later comes to affirm *Meaning* as authentically Polanyian, even whilst remaining committed to a theological reading of Polanyi, see: Gelwick, *The Way of Discovery: an introduction to the thought of Michael Polanyi*. Gelwick, 'Michael Polanyi's Daring Epistemology and the Hunger for Teleology'..

[5] Torrance, 'The Place of Michael Polanyi in the Modern Philosophy of Science', Torrance, 'Letters to the Editor: Torrance Answers Prosch', Apczynski, 'Torrance on Polanyi and Polanyi on God', Torrance, 'Michael Polanyi and the Christian Faith', Weightman, 'Polanyi and Mathematics, Torrance and Philosophy of Science', Mullins and Moleski, 'Harry Prosch: A Memorial Re-Appraisal of the Meaning Controversy'.

[6] At least those in the two main centres of Polanyi scholarship, the Polanyi Society based in the United States of America and the Hungarian Society cohering around the University of Budapest.

[7] Torrance, 'Letters to the Editor: Torrance Answers Prosch'.

According to Torrance, Prosch had skewed the text of *Meaning* in an atheistic or agnostic direction, downplaying Polanyi's real theological concerns and effectively denying Polanyi's Christian convictions.[8] Although these objections touch upon theoretical issues, and indicate that Torrance reads *Meaning* in a different way from that proposed in §3.3, it is essential to differentiate the '*Meaning* Controversy' properly so-called from a related conceptual debate—in which Torrance also had a stake—concerning whether Polanyi was committed to a realist or non-realist account of theological language. The *'Meaning* Controversy' is a fundamentally textual debate, raising questions about the genealogy of a co-authored text, and the extent to which it is representative of Polanyi's own views. Limiting the debate in this way, Torrance's rejection of *Meaning* is based on three key claims. Firstly, that the text of *Meaning* 'bowdlerises' Polanyi's lectures that it claims to represent. Secondly, that Polanyi himself indicated his dissatisfaction with Prosch's text. Thirdly, that *Meaning* is inconsistent with Polanyi's religious convictions, which led him to endorse Torrance's theological appropriation of his epistemology. The remainder of this section argues that the first plank of Torrance's argument is demonstrably false and that the second and third plank, whilst correctly acknowledging Polanyi's dissatisfaction with the fruits of his collaboration with Prosch, does not succeed in undermining *Meaning* as a representation of Polanyi's later account of religion.

[8] Torrance, 'Michael Polanyi and the Christian Faith'.

§A.1: *Meaning* as a Contested Text

This subsection addresses the first of Torrance's arguments against the authenticity of *Meaning*: Torrance's argument that the text of *Meaning* substantially misrepresents Polanyi's own views. The text of *Meaning* is broadly based on four lectures and two supplemental seminars given by Polanyi in Chicago and Texas between 1969 and 1971. Various copies of the texts used in these lectures are preserved in the Polanyi archive, some of which bear corrections and annotations in Polanyi's own hand. In particular, Chapters 4-12 of *Meaning* are adapted by Prosch from the text of these lectures. Polanyi himself felt that these lectures could only be understood when contextualised by his broader epistemological project, and so they are framed by three introductory chapters (largely written by Prosch, but drawing heavily on Polanyi's earlier published publications);[9] two concluding chapters are adapted from Polanyi's books.[10] Ironically, Torrance finds the first three chapters—which bear the most significant imprint of Prosch's editorial work—to be the most agreeable chapters in the book. Using Prosch's surviving notes, as well as extant copies of the lectures and seminars, it is possible to establish the provenance of the text, which emerges from the following identifiable sources:

Chapter 1	• 'Sixty Years in Universities', Unpublished lecture given at the University of Toronto, November 24th, 1967. • Chapter 7 of *The Logic of Liberty.*
Chapter 2	• 'Sixty Years in Universities'

[9] For Chapter 2, see: Michael Polanyi, 'On the Modern Mind', *Encounter,* 24/5 (1965b), 12-27, and Michael Polanyi, *The Study of Man* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959), For Chapter 3, see: Michael Polanyi, 'Logic and psychology', *American Psychologist,* 23/1 (1968), 27-43.

[10] Chapter 12 is adapted from: Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 63-79, Chapter 13 is heavily edited but based upon excerpts from: Michael Polanyi, *The Logic of Liberty: reflections and rejoinders* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951).

	• 'On the Modern Mind'[11]
	• 'The Study of Man'[12]
	• 'Logic and Psychology'[13]
Chapter 3	• 'Logic and Psychology'
	• 'On the Modern Mind'
Chapter 4	• 'Perception to Metaphor', PP 39.6
	• 'Meaning', PP 40.9
Chapter 5	• 'Works of Art', PP 39.6
	• 'Meaning', PP 40.9
Chapter 6	• 'Works of Art', PP 39.6
	• 'Meaning', PP 40.9
Chapter 7	• 'Visionary Art', PP 39.10
Chapter 8	• 'Visionary Art', PP 39.10
	• 'Myth: Ancient and Modern', PP 39.11 and PP 40.9
Chapter 9	• 'Myth: Ancient and Modern', PP 40.9
Chapter 10	• 'Acceptance of Religion', PP 39.8, 40.1, 40.9 • 'Meaning', PP 40.9
Chapter 11	• 'Expanding the Range', Texas Lecture, PP 41.9
Chapter 12	• 'Honor', Texas Lecture, PP 41.10
Chapter 13	• *Logic of Liberty*, Chapters 3, 8, 9 and 10 • *Personal Knowledge*, Chapter 7.

As we will see below, notwithstanding Prosch's extensive dependence on Polanyi's texts, Polanyi was not satisfied with the text of *Meaning*: the text as we have it is simply not the text that Polanyi would have put before us, had his capacities remained undimmed. Nonetheless, it is clear that Prosch took fidelity to Polanyi's texts with utmost seriousness.[14] A synoptic comparison of *Meaning* with the texts of Polanyi's manuscripts reveals both substantial agreement and significant editorial work. Prosch's emendation of Polanyi's texts mostly takes the form of clarification, occasional addition of explanatory material, overall textual integration and the addition of references. All of

[11] Polanyi, 'On the Modern Mind'.
[12] Michael Polanyi, 'The Study of Man', *Quest,* 29 (1961), 26-35.
[13] Polanyi, 'Logic and psychology'.
[14] See Prosch's extensive notes on the sources he used to write the framing chapters at PP 40.2.

the definitive conceptual innovations—the centrifugal vector, the category of the transnatural and the framing mechanism, together with the augmented role of the imagination—are already key components of Polanyi's lectures, which Prosch reproduces faithfully and without significant adjustment. In general terms, then, the first plank of Torrance's argument—the suggestion that Prosch's text substantially departs from Polanyi's manuscript—fails: the essential innovations of *Meaning,* which give Polanyi's later account of religion its intrinsicist character, are all original to Polanyi's text. At the granular level, where particular details and examples are disputed, the question is complicated by the presence of noticeable Proschean contributions that seem to have no basis in Polanyi's original text. Here, the most appropriate method of assessment is to make a direct comparison between the contested aspects of *Meaning* and the text of the lecture manuscripts, where necessary. Whilst Prosch's editions are interpretative—and thus present Polanyi's work in particular ways—most of his significant additions are examples or other forms of explanation, that serve rather than determine the content of Polanyi's text.

Torrance's shock at reading the text of *Meaning* is, nonetheless, understandable. The circumstances of its publication would have amplified the sense of disruption that the conceptual innovations of *Meaning* introduced. *Meaning* (1975) was the first major publication from Polanyi's pen since *Tacit Dimension* (1966), which was itself a version of the earlier Terry Lectures of 1962. In the period between 1962 and the delivery of the Chicago-Texas lectures (1969/70), Polanyi had given two further series of lectures

in which he continued the development of his thought: firstly, at Duke University (1964)[15] and subsequently at Wesleyan University (1965).[16]

The Duke Lectures shared a title with the Terry Lectures ('Man in Thought') but the Wesleyan Lectures were given under the title 'Man's Place in the Universe'. There is an intimate relationship between these lectures and those of the *Tacit Dimension*, and they have (correctly) been seen as more extensive versions of the Terry Lectures.[17] There is, nonetheless, a subtle shift in Polanyi's thought that is evident at around the time of the Wesleyan lectures, which is reflected in the change of title, and which anticipates some of the concerns of *Meaning*. The titles given to the lectures indicates the shift in Polanyi's perspective:

	Duke Title (1964)	**Wesleyan Title (1965)**
Lecture 1	'Metaphysical Reach of Science'	'Science and Reality'
Lecture 2	'The Structure of Tacit Knowing'	
Lecture 3	'Commitment to Science'	'The Creative Imagination'
Lecture 4	'The Emergence of Man'	'Growth of Science in Society'
Lecture 5	'Thought in Society'	'Levels of Reality'

As had been the case with *Personal Knowledge*, it took Polanyi some years to adapt his lectures for print. At the time that he delivered the Wesleyan and Duke lectures, he had not yet fulfilled his contractual obligations with Yale University Press to print the Terry Lectures (as *Tacit Dimension*). As such, publishers were unwilling to print the Duke-

[15] Polanyi was in residence for a term as the James B. Duke Distinguished Professor in the Department of Religion in February and March of 1964. Transcripts from these lectures are preserved in PP 36.11-17 and PP 37.1.
[16] Transcripts preserved at PP 37.15-16 and PP 38.1-4. Unidentifiable material associated to these lectures is in PP 38.5.
[17] Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 261.

Wesleyan cycle of lectures, as they feared that the resultant publication would overlap considerably with *Tacit Dimension*, inviting allegations of copyright infringement.[18] The effect on the published record, however, is that it skips from the very brief second cycle of lectures to the fifth cycle of lectures, skipping interim developments. As a result, the conceptual shifts of *Meaning* were particularly shocking to those who felt they had mastered the thrust of Polanyi's thought in 1974, but who were yet to engage with his thought as it stood in 1964.

Although Torrance's first argument fails in general terms, it is useful to assess the particularities of *Meaning*'s presentation of Polanyi's account of religion. Indeed, the Chapter 'The Acceptance of Religion' is one of the sections of *Meaning* that is most noticeably augmented by Prosch, in part because it emerged from a supplemental seminar (rather than a fully developed lecture). Prosch himself noted the difficulties:

> "*I have finally got the 'Acceptance of Religion' chapter in some sort of shape. This is one very much reorganised in its actual shape. But it follows the points that you were making. I have supplemented it with examples and what else you have written on religion. From the conversations we had, I think you would approve of the general form of this—and, maybe, I hope, the precise text.*"[19]

[18] PP 38 contains both the text of the Wesleyan lectures and the associated correspondence. The Duke lectures can be found in PP 36. The planned publication can be found in PP 37. The Chapter titles were: 'Destruction of Reality' [PP 37.5]; 'Realm of the Unspoken' [PP 37.6]; 'The Vindication of Reality' [PP 37.7]; 'Emergence' [PP 37.8]; 'Society of Explorers' [PP 37.9]. An unfinished chapter 'Modern Mind' is located in PP 37.10 and the associated lecture in PP 37.11.

[19] Handwritten letter of Harry Prosch to Michael Polanyi, June 7th 1973 [PP. 16.13]

Polanyi wrote in response of "[his] delight about [the] section on Religion. I shall soon have more to tell you from many corners".[20] There is no extant evidence that Polanyi ever followed up with any significant corrections of Prosch's text.

A comparison of the edited text with Polanyi's original indicates that Prosch moved here by way of supplementation, rather than by correction. As such, Torrance's argument fails, but less dramatically. The original material remains intact and essentially unchanged but is framed with examples and substantial explanatory notes. Prosch was, perhaps, trying to tighten the focus of the chapter onto its ostensible subject: in Polanyi's original manuscript, only the last six paragraphs of the text actually deal explicitly with 'religious' matters.[21] By adding illustrative material on Holy Communion, prayer and liturgy, Prosch gives the chapter a more explicitly religious character. The material on Holy Communion and prayer, in particular, seem almost certainly to be of Proschean origination: there are no obviously similar explorations of these themes in Polanyi's published or unpublished work. However, Prosch might very well have derived their content from private conversation and discussions with Polanyi: Polanyi's wife notes in correspondence that she recognises 'every example' as belonging to her husband.[22] Despite these significant additions, the structure of the chapter's argument is original to Polanyi's manuscript. The added material is not determinative of the argument of the chapter, but merely illustrates the original argument; it cannot, however, be taken as a direct account of Polanyi's own religious understanding.

---

[20] Correspondence of Harry Prosch cited in Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 284. Whilst Father Moleski (who completed Scott's biography of Polanyi after his death) was able to confirm this by consulting this correspondence, Professor Prosch died in early 2005 and his papers have not been deposited in a public archive.

[21] PP 40.1, 'Acceptance of Religion', Supplement §6 dated 1969.

[22] PP 40.5, Letter of Magda Polanyi to Harry Prosch, 21st November 1974.

§A.2: The Torrance-Polanyi Collaboration

The second of Torrance's arguments against the authenticity of *Meaning* is based on reported comments made to Torrance by Polanyi about (a) his lack of satisfaction with his collaboration with Prosch; and (b) the conformity of his religious views with Torrance's. As Torrance puts it, "after [Polanyi read] *Theological Science*, in which I argued at length for the scientific objectivity of our knowledge of God, who exists independently of our conceiving of him, he asked me to act as his Literary Executor after he had died."[23] This aspect of Torrance's rejection is more difficult to assess and requires a comprehensive evaluation of correspondence between Polanyi, Prosch and Torrance.

Torrance's first claim is that Polanyi was deeply dissatisfied with the results of his collaboration with Prosch and believed that his work was being fundamentally misrepresented. Any collaboration between an established academic and a younger scholar is inevitably fraught with risk and patterned by an unavoidable power dynamic which, in this case, was complicated by Polanyi's considerable incapacity. An already challenging collaboration was further plagued by difficulties of transatlantic communication.[24] Polanyi oscillated between a deep frustration at his own inability to

[23] Torrance, 'Letters to the Editor: Torrance Answers Prosch'.

[24] On May 14th 1973, Prosch wrote to Polanyi: "I received your last three letters on Saturday. Today I received two more: one written earlier than the first one I received on Saturday, and one written later. One of those I received today was postmarked 3rd May and the other 10th May. So once again, one was very much delayed: the one in which you said you intended to leave the substance of the task to me!" [PP. 16.3]

improve a text with which he was not entirely satisfied,[25] and a profound and enduring gratitude to Prosch for devoting so much time to its completion.[26] Prosch, meanwhile, found Polanyi's letters hard to decipher and felt as if he were managing a collaboration in almost total isolation.[27] These dynamics bound the two together in a collaboration with which neither could ultimately be entirely satisfied.

From an analysis of extant correspondence, it is only possible to reproduce a fractional impression of what was a complicated and extremely confusing situation. A number of things can be concluded with moral certainty. Firstly, it is clear from the tone and content of his letters that Polanyi was greatly dependent upon the active assistance of Prosch, and that this assistance would inevitably have extended far beyond simple editing and redaction.[28] Secondly, that Polanyi actively requested Prosch's help, initially expressed pleasure with his work, and subsequently went to considerable lengths to secure his ongoing availability.[29] Thirdly, that Polanyi became increasingly unhappy with the fruits of that collaboration, but would still oscillate between encouragement

[25] Most dramatically, Polanyi cabled Prosch on 20th July 1974: "have developed grave doubts whether our collaboration feasible. Please await my letter before finalizing Oxford trip." [PP: 16.13] The day before, Prosch had written to Polanyi: "I have not heard anything from you to the contrary, so I have made arrangements to come to see you in Oxford on Tuesday July 30th for about a two-week trip." [PP 16.13, July 19th 1974]. Then on 23rd of July Polanyi cables Prosch again: "Your letter just received. Disregard previous cable. Look forward to seeing you July 30th." [PP 16.14].

[26] Even as he sent the above telegram, Polanyi's gratitude had not abated: "I want you to know how glad I am of having worked with you. May it come back again." [PP: 16.13, 19th August 1974]. The correspondence from late 1973 onwards show clear signs of Polanyi's sadness, confusion and generalized mental deterioration, including a weakening grasp on the English language. I have restrained from quoting from it gratuitously, and only do so where it is helpful or necessary as a means of taking Polanyi's thought as seriously as possible.

[27] "I need to talk with you, since I am not sure I understand fully what you have been telling me in your last letters." [PP 16.14, February 11th, 1974].

[28] There is some evidence that Polanyi's dependence upon external help to complete his writing had grown over the course of the preceding decade. In 1968, Marjorie Grene wrote to assist Polanyi in 'Englishising' his sentences which she said were 'increasingly Magyar-esque'. [PP 16.3, Letter of November 13th 1968, Marjorie Grene to Michael Polanyi].

[29] See the Letter to J.C. Palamoutin, PP 16.12, 25th May 1972.

and discouragement.[30] In part because of this oscillation, Polanyi does not seem to have been able to clearly articulate the nature of his concerns to Prosch. Fourthly, Prosch was highly aware of the need to safeguard Polanyi's status as the primary author of the text, as the one responsible for the ideas it contained. His letters repeatedly seek to reassure Polanyi, to defer to his wishes and respect his rights as the 'senior partner' in the collaboration, even when Polanyi was not able to undertake any of the work or made difficult demands.[31] Prosch makes it clear that Polanyi can exercise a veto over publication and make any adjustments to the manuscript that he deems to be necessary.[32]

Although details are not preserved in the Polanyi archive, from second-hand reports (from Magda Polanyi and from Harry Prosch himself) it is clear that Polanyi signed the contract for the publication of *Meaning* only with serious reservations.[33] It

[30] A note in Magda Polanyi's handwriting makes the confusion and difficulties very clear: "The Preface claims that he [Michael] studied the manuscript until August. He had already rejected Prosch's version outright in 1974, August or September, or so." [PP 40.5, undated fragment].

[31] Polanyi, for instance, wrote several letters to Prosch demanding that the letters FRS be included after his name on the front cover, despite having been informed that the policy of the press required otherwise. Equally Prosch volunteered to personally assume the cost of preparing the index for the work, rather than allowing the cost to be deducted from the royalties shared between Polanyi and himself. [PP 16.14, August 29th 1974]. Polanyi responded with impatience, asking why little progress on the indexing had been made [PP 40.5, 11th November 1974]. When Polanyi demands that he personally be allowed to check the proofs of the dustjacket (thereby delaying publication by several months), Prosch replies to say he will ensure it happens immediately [PP 16.14, September 15th 1974]. Polanyi falls silent, worrying Prosch who writes to ask if all is well and reassuring him that his work is being studied by the brightest young students [PP 40.5, November 27th1974]. Polanyi writes back: "You speak of our challenges and evocations and you speak also in high order about the changes we have passed over. These are my feelings on which I look back and these are my thanks to this world and to its master. […] Let me smile at an end here and let me thank you for sharing it with me." [PP 16.4, 10th December 1974]. Tactfully, Prosch has begun to address his correspondence to both Michael and Magda. Magda makes a number of requests of Prosch, to which he acquiesces in full, such as re-writing the book's acknowledgments [PP 40.5, Letters of November 1974]. Without any obvious provocation Magda writes to Prosch: "You were surprised that I was so experienced in matters of publications. Perhaps I had better explain: in the course of the long years, I have been attached to the editorial offices of three large scientific journals. […] Michael has always relied on me in editorial matters and I know how meticulous he has always been…" [PP 40.5, 21st November 1974].

[32] *Cf.,* PP 16.13 Letter to Michael and Magda Polanyi, 29th March 1973.

[33] Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 280-85.

was clear to both parties at the time both that the text was not entirely satisfactory to Polanyi, but that the manuscript was nonetheless the only realistic possibility that Polanyi's later ideas had of reaching a wider public. It has been suggested that Polanyi felt unable to refuse his consent, given the time that Prosch had invested in the project. According to Prosch's own account, at their final meeting at 22 Upland Park Road in August 1974, when Magda Polanyi stepped out of the room,[34] Polanyi noted that Prosch was 'looking depressed'. Prosch responded "I've done an awful lot of work on this manuscript and I have a contract from the University of Chicago Press, but you are not going to sign it"; Polanyi immediately signed the contract.[35] Prosch was later told that Polanyi had informed Richard Gelwick the next day of his immediate regret at having signed the contract, but Prosch reported to have been unaware of his reservations at the time.[36] Polanyi is likely to have expressed similar reservations to Torrance at around the same time, and to this extent, Torrance's claim that Polanyi expressed dissatisfaction with the text is consistent with the historical record.

Torrance correlates to this negative claim (Polanyi's dissatisfaction with *Meaning*) the positive claim that Polanyi explicitly affirmed Torrance's theological appropriation of his work. Torrance suggests that this approbation is reflected in Polanyi's appointment of Torrance as literary executor. Assessing this claim is difficult: as will be seen in §A..4, Polanyi often gave incompatible impressions of his religious convictions. To deny that

[34] TFTP §164, Letter of Magda Polanyi to Charles Hutt, 3rd July 1975
[35] Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 285.
[36] See PP 13.13, Letter of Richard Gelwick to Magda Polanyi, September 17th 1974. Gelwick notes: "If Michael is very serious about withdrawing from the contract, I think Prosch is the kind of man who would respect that wish. I would, however, want to be sure before making such a suggestion since it is much better to have these last chapters of Michael's published than not published at all."

Polanyi regarded Torrance as the theological custodian of his thought is not to deny that Polanyi gave Torrance the impression that he could be regarded as such.

The primary evidence that Torrance adduces is his appointment as Polanyi's literary executor. Torrance's appointment to this role occurred within a highly charged and contested environment. As Michael's condition deteriorated his role in the administration of his affairs decreased commensurately. From September 1972 onwards, his wife Magda Polanyi played an increasingly important role in coordinating Polanyi scholarship and in the proceedings that led up to the publication of *Meaning* and the finding of a permanent academic home for the Polanyi archive. Notes indicate that Michael's confusion was such that Magda had to censor his incoming and outgoing mail and had instructed the secretary not to post some of his letters.[37] The burdens on Mrs Polanyi in the last three years of her husband's life were enormous.[38] Whilst Michael's letters were always marked by gentility,[39] Magda's could appear brusque and confrontational.[40] Gelwick had begun sending summaries of his visits to Upland Park Road to both Michael and Magda, as an *aide memoire*,[41] but Prosch does not seem to have realised the gravity of the situation so clearly. In this context, it is regrettable that Magda Polanyi or another representative were not present at the contract meeting

[37] Notes to and from the Secretary are found in PP 13.14. In one place, Mrs Polanyi writes: "I would prefer these letters not to the be sent at the moment. I will show them to [the recipient] when [he next visits]."

[38] "With our son in London in the last stages of terminal cancer and with my husband in a psychiatric hospital, I am beset by depression and ill-health." [TFTP §164, Letter of Magda Polanyi to Charles Hutt, 3rd July 1975].

[39] Even, for instance, when his review of a book by George Steiner was rejected by *Nature* as 'gratuitously offensive', see: PP 10.6, Letter to John Maddox, 14th December 1971.

[40] A classic example can be found in her letters to Professor Wiehl, concerning the German translation of *PK*: "My husband has waited patiently all these years, as he was convinced that your translation will be impeccable […] all that waiting has been in vain[.] I wonder what you intend to do with the translation that you have actually carried out? Would you consider letting my husband have it to compensate for the years of his that you have wasted…" [PP 11.5, Dated 5th September 1972].

[41] See, for example, PP 13.5, Letter of Richard Gelwick, January 27th 1974.

between her husband and Prosch (something she would with the benefit of hindsight acknowledge).[42] Likewise, it seems imprudent to have left Prosch to carry the editorial burden alone, without the assistance of a committee.[43] Nonetheless, throughout their collaboration—which was an enormous labour on Prosch's part, marked by a considerable generosity in laying aside his own projects—Prosch had repeatedly reassured Polanyi that Polanyi could call the project off at any moment. Prosch saw the project as Polanyi's, and himself as a mere catalyst: he added his own name to the publication only at Magda's request.[44] However, whereas Torrance enjoyed a warm friendship with Magda Polanyi, there was no similarly warm relationship between Mrs Polanyi and Harry Prosch. Magda seems to have misunderstood Prosch, seeing him as trying to pass off her husband's ideas as his own.[45]

---

[42] PP 13.15, Letter of Magda Polanyi to Richard Gelwick, January 16th 1975.

[43] In November of 1974, Magda Polanyi seems to have assembled something of an *ad hoc* committee: she refers repeatedly to 'my two advisers' in letters in PP 40.5. One of these advisers is almost certainly Torrance, the other is very likely to be W. H. Poteat but might be Elizabeth Sewell or Richard Gelwick. It would certainly not have been Prosch.

[44] Subsequently: "I recognise every example, every basic theory in the book as Michael's—yet I cannot find any general reference to the Lectures which carry the same title as your book. You yourself felt that reference should be made to them and I find that your reasoning in omitting such references are mistaken." [PP 40.5, 21st November 1974]. Prosch explains that he had omitted Polanyi's name from the Acknowledgments because they were intended to be acknowledgments by both Prosch and Polanyi, and not Prosch's alone. Magda's suggestion of a sub-title 'Lectures by Michael Polanyi' was accepted by Prosch, but eventually declined by the press. Prosch produced a 'bibliographical note' and edited the acknowledgments so that Polanyi's name was included eight times. He concludes: "Your husband, Magda, is a great mind, perhaps the greatest mind of our century […] I will never stop trying to bring this fact to more and more people's attention. [PP 40.5, November 27th1974].

[45] The possibility of any fruitful collaboration between Magda Polanyi and Harry Prosch was problematized by a divergent understanding of the nature of the project at hand. Prosch understood himself as primarily bringing a book of Polanyi's to completion; Magda understood Prosch to be primarily working on a project of his own, albeit a project grounded in Polanyi's lectures. As a result Magda instinctively suspected Prosch and could see clearly the benefits he stood to gain from Michael's work, but could not see with equal clarity the sacrifices Prosch was making to assist Polanyi. Magda Polanyi wrote to Prosch in November 1974 to ask for more references to Polanyi's work to be included in the manuscript: "Your 'acknowledgments' do not even include the name of Polanyi! Your preface is admirable, and I am grateful for it, but who reads a preface? […] One is left with the mistaken impression that only Chapters 1-3 and 12 and 13 were 'based' on Polanyi's work." [PP 40.4, 6th November 1974]. It is hard to see how Magda came to this view.

Correspondence of Magda Polanyi[46] indicates that she personally took the decision to appoint Torrance as literary executor,[47] precisely because of Michael's inability to make judgements for himself.[48] The appointment of Torrance allowed the Polanyi family to side-step the disagreement between the two North American candidates for the job, Gelwick and Prosch. In the context of the battle between various American institutions to provide the final home for Polanyi's Papers,[49] the independent advice of an established professional would prove invaluable. Mrs Polanyi indicates that she had solicited the advice of lawyers and publishers as to suitable candidates,[50] and had acted on their advice. She admits that she was largely motivated by Torrance's familiarity with British law, his relative proximity and his considerable familiarity with British publishing practices. *Pace* Torrance, then, it is not possible to attribute any hermeneutical significance to his appointment as literary executor: it is simply not indicative of Polanyi appointing a privileged custodian of his authentic views.

---

[46] PP 40.5, Letter of Magda Polanyi to Harry Prosch, 21st November 1974

[47] PP 13.15, Letter of Magda Polanyi to Richard Gelwick, 16th January 1975: "I am glad you agree with my decision to appoint Tom Torrance to act as literary executor."

[48] PP 13.15, Letter of Richard Gelwick to Magda Polanyi, 15th November 1974.

[49] TFTP §164 contains the correspondence related to the placement of the Polanyi *Nachlass*. The acquisition of the manuscripts by Chicago and their housing at the Regenstein's Special Collections Research Center has certainly proved to be an excellent solution. Today's Polanyi Scholars have much to be grateful for! Nonetheless, the process by which this solution was brought about was convoluted and not without political intrigue. An agreement with Duke University, spearheaded by Bill Poteat, was effectively gazumped by a much more favourable arrangement with Chicago. Poteat wrote to Torrance: "I cannot tell you the pain that this has caused me: Michael promised me *viva voce*, first in 1964 and repeatedly since then that [his papers] would come to Duke. I was unable, and I fully understand why this is so, to get a written commitment from him." "I am frank to say that I see, along with all the understandable confusion for Magda, given her burdens and Michael's state, a certain amount of unscrupulous hanky-panky in all of this." [TFTP, §164, 15th May, 2nd May 1975]. Chicago was the preferred location of the relatively newly formed Polanyi Society of America. Torrance's opposition to Chicago is indicative of the gulf that had opened up between his reading of Polanyi and that of those prominent in the American School, including Bill Poteat, Harry Prosch and Marjorie Grene. See: Letter of Magda Polanyi to Charles Hutt, 3rd July 1975: "Moreover, all or most of the members of the USA Polanyi Society have favoured Chicago for being more central and a more important university. Prof Torrance doesn't share this view; but there has been a lengthy gap in my correspondence with him at the crucial time and I didn't get to his opposition to Chicago until it was too late." [TFTP, §164].

[50] Curiously, these letters of Mrs Polanyi are preserved in the Torrance archive: other letters from Magda are included in PP (e.g., PP 11.5 and PP 40.5). See: TFTP, §164, Letters of 17th July 1974 to David Merton and Charles Hutt.

Aside from the question of the literary executorship, it is difficult to determine the extent to which Torrance and Polanyi were in fact of one mind. Despite an exhaustive survey of Polanyi's *Nachlass*, it has not been possible to locate a single letter exchanged between Torrance and Polanyi. The only evidence in the Chicago archive that Polanyi and Torrance enjoyed anything like a significant correspondence is a handful of references to Torrance in Polanyi's letters written to others[51] and an off-print of one of Torrance's articles that Torrance sent to Polanyi and inscribed to him.[52] The article, however, was sent in 1974, when Polanyi's capacity for long reading had dwindled, and does not appear to have been read.[53] No reference to correspondence with Torrance was recorded in the catalogue produced at the time of the accession of the Polanyi Papers to the University of Chicago Special Collections in 1977. Given the meticulousness with which Polanyi appears to have preserved his correspondence dating back as far as the 1920s, and the clearly significant nature of the Polanyi-Torrance collaboration, the absence of letters from Torrance is an extremely surprising lacuna in the Polanyi Papers.

Some of the Torrance-Polanyi Correspondence is, however, preserved in Torrance's *Nachlass*.[54] Although Torrance's habit of preservation was not as exhaustive

[51] PP 13.4, Letter of Gelwick to Mrs Polanyi, December 20th 1974; PP 13.15, Letter of Bruno Manno, 16th January 1972.

[52] In: PP 56.2. The essay is: T. F. Torrance, 'The Integration of Form in Natural and in Theological Science.', *Science, Medicine and Man,* 1/3 (1974), 143-72.

[53] Almost all of the off-prints preserved in PP boxes 53-56 ('Offprints by Other Authors') bear the marks Polanyi's annotations and underlinings, together with summary notes on the cover page. Torrance's article is completely clean, as would be expected for an article sent as late as 1974.

[54] T.F. Torrance's papers have been deposited at the Special Collections department of the Princeton Theological Seminary Library, where they are open for consultation (subject to certain restrictions on both access and copying). The Seminary's director of Special Collections, Dr Kenneth Henke, provided

or meticulous as Polanyi's, the material preserved, whilst incomplete, is significant in that it locates Torrance's first personal encounter with Polanyi in the years after the *Meaning* lectures and, therefore, after Polanyi's account of religion reached a relatively stable form. From the extant letters, it is clear that Torrance and Polanyi began corresponding relatively late—the first recorded letter is in late 1970.[55] Their correspondence becomes more intense and cordial in late 1972, after a meal together on November 7th:[56] in December 1972, a few months after Polanyi wrote to Skidmore College to supplicate for the assistance of Prosch, Polanyi invited Torrance to "turn to addressing each other by Christian names".[57] Their exchange of letters was not, by the standards of Polanyi's correspondence, notably extensive. Approximately 20% of the available letters relate to Polanyi's efforts to secure remunerated employment for Joan Crewdson,[58] a theologian who had worked on Polanyi's thought.[59] There are only two extant references to Torrance's theology. The first is a characteristic profession on Polanyi's part of gratitude for theological engagement together with an inability to judge the conformity of Torrance's theology to his own philosophy: "your subject is difficult for me".[60] The second falls in a letter predominantly concerned with Crewdson, in which Polanyi writes:

> "*Your high enterprise in linking religion to science and finding them thus mutually revealed is, of course, deeply moving. I am sure you are right, but I would*

gracious assistance during my visits in August 2016 and July 2017. Professor Iain Torrance also granted me permission for me to copy material related to Torrance's use of Polanyi from TFTP §164.

[55] It is, of course, not possible to be certain that this is the first correspondence. The tone of these letters is, however, markedly formal and the speed with which they become more cordial suggests no very significant correspondence occurred before that date.

[56] This seems to have been a key moment in their friendship. See: TFTP, §165, Letter of October 31st 1972; Letter of 16th November 1972.

[57] TFTP, §165, Letter of 28th December 1972. Prior to this, Polanyi addresses the letters "Dear Torrance".

[58] TFTP, §165, Letter of 16th November 1972; 23rd November 1972; 30th November 1972; 1st March 1973.

[59] See her Oxford B.D. Thesis, eventually published as: *Christian Doctrine*.

[60] TFTP, §165, Letter of 30th December 1970.

> *not like to speak of that now; it would take me too far*."[61]

Read against the backdrop of Polanyi's much more extensive and longstanding correspondence with other theologians[62] (particularly Bruno Manno[63] and Joan Crewdson),[64] Polanyi's remarks about Torrance's theological development of his work are insignificant. In 1972 and 1973, Polanyi was frequently approached by graduate students working on theological interpretations of his work:[65] he pointed them[66] to Joan Crewdson (at Oxford), Paul Wilczak (at St Meinrad's) and Harry Prosch (in New York), but did not mention Torrance (or, for that matter, Gelwick), even after his friendship with Torrance was well-developed.[67] *In nuce*, whilst Torrance's credentials as one personally close to Polanyi, and possessed of an intimate knowledge of Polanyi's work

---

[61] TFTP, §165, Letter of 16th November 1972. At this time, Polanyi is still opens his letters 'Dear Torrance'.

[62] Curiously, neither the reasonably extensive correspondence of Bruno Manno and Joan Crewdson, nor the more sporadic correspondence with other theological figures like Bishop Butler, are included in the index of Polanyi's correspondence provided at Chicago, whilst a single letter from Ludwig Ebert in 1933 is. Speaking anachronistically, it seems that a 'Wikipedia test' was applied: if and only if the individual is notable enough to warrant a Wikipedia page is their correspondence included in the index. A notable exception to this rule would be Rt Rev Launcelot Fleming, whose letters in PP 12.6 are not indexed. The result is that is hard to be certain that all of the theological material buried in correspondence with Manno and Crewdson has been excavated. Torrance, who had an entry in 'Who's Who', would surely have qualified for a place on the index, not least as Polanyi's literary executor and the person tasked with liaising with Chicago directly.

[63] PP 10.2, Letter of Bruno Manno, 24th September 1971; PP 10.5, Letter of Bruno Manno, 7th December 1971. PP 13.7, Letter of Bruno Manno, 19th March 1974.

[64] Much of the correspondence with Crewdson is redacted. See, however: PP 11.9, Letter of Joan Crewdson 29th November 1972.

[65] In PP 11 there are letters from August-December 1972, from the following students working in theological fields: Apczynsky, Wilczak, Gettens, Crewdson, Hovath, Milavec, Manno, Brennan and Ratcliffe. There is also correspondence with more established theologians like Gelwick, Allchin, Bishop Butler, and Launcelot Fleming around the same time.

[66] Note that much of this correspondence falls after Polanyi and Torrance developed a warm working relationship. See, for instance: PP 11.11, Letter to Daniel Gettens, 18th December 1972; PP 11.11 Letter to Paul Wilczak 19th December 1972; PP 11.4, Letter to Donald Allchin, 22nd August 1972.

[67] Polanyi may have regarded Torrance as too senior an academic to deal with such requests. Torrance was not perceived to be 'Polanyian' in the way that he was perceived to be 'Barthian'; Crewdson *et al* were much more notably concerned to be Polanyian in their development of systematic theological concerns.

and *Nachlass,* are clearly established, there is nothing to suggest that Polanyi accredited Torrance's theological use of his thought with any particular privilege.

§A.3: Polanyi's own Religious Views

Torrance's final argument against the authenticity of *Meaning* is the claim that it is incompatible with what Torrance knew to be Polanyi's Christian faith. As Torrance puts it: "Prosch is wrong, and very wrong indeed, about Michael Polanyi's convictions about God."[68] Torrance reports that he had learned first-hand "how devout both Michael and Magda were and sensed the deep quiet Christian spiritual affinity between them";[69] Michael in particular was possessed of a "devout Christian commitment and belief, which he never paraded".[70] Such an appeal to Polanyi's religious convictions goes beyond what is evident in his published work. However, implicit within Torrance's argument is the claim that the text of *Meaning* is incompatible with religious belief because the understanding of religion as a 'work of the imagination' implies a rejection of its truth-value. As we have seen above, this does not necessarily follow from Polanyi's idiosyncratic use of the term 'imagination' to narrate the fusion of incompatibles rather than fictional meaning-generation. Nonetheless, there are also historical grounds on which to qualify Torrance's account of Polanyi's religious convictions.

Polanyi's biographers have long grappled with the question of his spiritual convictions. Evidence suggests that Polanyi never finally settled the question of his own

[68] Torrance, 'Letters to the Editor: Torrance Answers Prosch'.
[69] Torrance, 'Michael Polanyi and the Christian Faith', at 29.
[70] Ibid., at 30.

spiritual and religious identity.[71] As a result, there is no consensus on whether Polanyi can be regarded as an identifiably Christian scholar or not. Amongst those who knew Polanyi personally, and those who have engaged most closely with his extensive *Nachlass*, a consensus has emerged that Polanyi was notably reticent when it came to the question of revealing his own religious views (something that Torrance himself acknowledges).[72] Moreover, it seems likely that Polanyi was intentional about not revealing his religious views or entering into religious discussions. The reasons for this are unclear, but from a synoptic overview of Polanyi's correspondence it seems likely to be some combination of a desire for privacy, a lack of any very strong religious convictions, and a degree of general spiritual disorientation. Particularly in the pre-*Meaning* phase of his career, Polanyi might have intentionally not discussed religious faith so as to avoid discrediting his philosophical work in the eyes of its primary intended audience: the often-atheistic world of empirical science. Equally, Polanyi's personal experience of exile and religious persecution was deeply imprinted on his consciousness, making him acutely aware of the ways in which religious misunderstandings and disagreements can prove toxic to even the closest of working relationships.[73] It is equally possible that Polanyi was undecided, or that he felt the draw of different traditions in complex and unnarrated ways, which he opted not to

[71] Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 273-78, Robert T. Osborn, 'Christian Faith as Personal Knowledge', *Scottish Journal of Theology,* 28/2 (1975), 101-26, Kuester, 'Polanyi on Religion', Clark, 'Polanyi on Religion'.

[72] A useful summary of the evidence concerning Polanyi's reluctance to talk about his own religious views, together with some suggestions as to the reasons, is offered in: Scott, 'The question of a religious reality: commentary on the Polanyi papers'. This is something that Torrance acknowledges: "Michael Polanyi was rather reticent about discussing his own religious beliefs, for some of his ardent supporters in the philosophy of science, like Marjorie Grene, were, I learned, rather hostile to religion." See: Torrance, 'Michael Polanyi and the Christian Faith', at 29. Some of the comments that Torrance makes about Grene in this article are regrettable. The anonymous peer-reviews of this paper are located at TFTP §165. One of the reviewers asked Torrance to tone these remarks down.

[73] Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 33-54.

discuss publicly. If the mystery of Polanyi's religious convictions was ever amenable to resolution, the passage of time has put it beyond the reach of contemporary scholarship.

As a result of these factors, those who collaborated closely with Polanyi during the same period of time often formed entirely opposing impressions of his spiritual convictions,[74] just as Prosch and Torrance did. Even as Grene and Prosch assumed Polanyi was practically an atheist, Richard Gelwick, who worked with Polanyi at the same time as Prosch and at greater geographical proximity,[75] wrote to Torrance to confirm that he too had the impression that Polanyi was a devout Christian:

> "*It was clear to me that he accepted the miracle of the resurrection because I heard him tell others that he did; that he believed in the grace of God to aid us in our imperfect quest for truth and good action, and that he saw the Christian story of the 'crucified God' as central to our understanding our calling in history to be a society of explorers.*" [76]

Likewise, there is some limited evidence of Christian practice. Magda Polanyi wrote to tell Torrance that the Polanyi family had attended an Easter service at Exeter Cathedral.[77] For Prosch, by contrast, Polanyi's later view on religion constituted religious myth as that which "are quite obviously not believed by him to be literally true accounts of the intervention in space-time of a transcendent real being of some sort".[78] How Polanyi related himself to the religious claims embedded in the worship services

---

[74] The classic example of such a divergence is Polanyi and Prosch, but there are similar divergences of opinion between Gelwick, Poteat, *inter alios*. See: Mullins and Moleski, 'Harry Prosch: A Memorial Re-Appraisal of the Meaning Controversy'.

[75] Gelwick was living on Queen Edith's Road in Cambridge, see the collection of letters in PP 13.4, especially 21st January 1974.

[76] TFTP, §165.4: Printed e-Mail of Richard Gelwick to T.F. Torrance, 14th September 2000.

[77] TFTP, §164.1: Letter of Mrs Magda Polanyi, 1st April 1975.

[78] Prosch, 'Polanyi contra Torrance', at 248.

he attended remains undetermined. The relatively large number of people who offer apparently conflicting testimony about Polanyi's religious views make it implausible that these differences are entirely reducible to eisegesis or to faulty memory. It appears that, perhaps out of intellectual hospitality to his interlocutors, Polanyi intentionally chose not to reveal his religious convictions. Polanyi seems to have been something of a spiritual chameleon, skilled at giving the impression that he was in agreement with his interlocutors, in many cases without ever explicitly indicating as much.

Given that Polanyi appears to have intentionally not revealed (rather than to have actively concealed) his religious convictions, it can be assumed that Polanyi believed his theoretical account of religion could be read and understood independently of his own religious convictions. It does not, then, seem necessary, or appropriate, for subsequent scholarship to engage in an excessive speculation that violates the privacy that Polanyi cultivated. Polanyi did, however, choose to publicly reveal a number of important facts: that he valued his Jewish heritage;[79] that the literary works of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky awoke within him a religious sensibility;[80] that he converted to Roman Catholicism in 1919;[81] that he never considered himself a communicant of any ecclesial community;[82] and, indeed, that he entertained serious doubts about central dogmatic

[79] Polanyi dedicated a great deal of time in the 1930s and 1940s to writing and lecturing of 'Jewish issues', for sadly obvious reasons. See, for instance: Michael Polanyi, 'Jewish Problems', *Political Quarterly,* 14/1 (1943), 33-45, Paul Knepper, 'Michael Polanyi and Jewish Identity', *Philosophy of the Social Sciences,* 35/3 (2005), 263-93.

[80] See: Jha, *Reconsidering Michael Polanyi's Philosophy*, 11.

[81] Mary Jo Nye, *Michael Polanyi and His Generation: origins of the social construction of science* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2011): 30. It is indicative of the looseness of Polanyi's religious affiliation that Nye reports Polanyi's wife as indicating she did not know for how long her husband had identified as Catholic, and that she suspected his later interest in Christianity ran along 'Protestant lines'.

[82] Scott, 'The question of a religious reality: commentary on the Polanyi papers', at 86, For a discussion of this see: Moleski, *Personal Catholicism: the theological epistemologies of John Henry Newman and Michael Polanyi*, 51-55.

claims of the Christian faith.[83] Rather than indicating any deep Christian conviction, Polanyi's participation at the *Moot* (which was perhaps somewhat looser than 'full' membership)[84] seems to have precipitated—perhaps even exacerbated—his awareness of the ways in which his own philosophical convictions departed from the dogmatic claims of classical Christianity.[85] In the last two decades of his life, Polanyi seems to have had a relatively undogmatic and liberal faith. There is no evidence that he arrived at any consistent dogmatic position, but he nonetheless remained positively disposed towards religion and probably notionally Christian, but with a loose affiliation to Church community and religious practice. Some of the private notes that Polanyi took on religious themes indicate very atypical theological views (comparing God to the location of electrons)[86] and a much deeper interest in 'process theology' and mysticism than in classical theism.[87] In the end, the analysis of Scott and Moleski seems most accurate: "Polanyi never identified himself with any Christian denomination, but he clearly saw himself as one who had a kind of 'faith in the works of Christianity".[88]

[83] PP 15.4, Letter of Michael Polanyi to J. H. Oldham, 31st May 1948.
[84] The Moot was a group of Christian intellectuals convened by J. H. Oldham, flourishing in 1939. A collection of papers and lists of participants are preserved in an archive at the University of Leeds, substantial portions of which have recently been published: Keith Clements, *The Moot Papers: Faith, Freedom and Society 1938-1944* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010).
[85] Letter of Michael Polanyi to J. H. Oldham, 31st May 1948 [PP 15.4]: "Our meetings leave me increasingly with the feeling that I have no right to call myself a Christian. So perhaps I may feel the outsider in our discussions."
[86] PP 22.6, 'God and Electrons'.
[87] PP 22.1, 'Arianism, Myth and Religion'; PP 22.6, 'Religion', undated handwritten fragment.
[88] Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 163.

References

Al-Shahi, Ahmed (1999), 'Evans-Pritchard, anthropology, and Catholicism at Oxford: Godfrey Lienhardt's View', *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford,* 30 (1), 67-72.

Allen, Douglas (2002), *Myth and Religion in Mircea Eliade* (London: Routledge).

Allen, R. Michael (2009), *The Christ's Faith: A Dogmatic Account* (London: T&T Clark).

Allen, Richard T. (1990), *Polanyi* (London: Claridge).

--- (1992), *Transcendance and Immanence in the Philosophy of Michael Polanyi and Christian Theism* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press).

--- (1994), *Michael Polanyi: an annotated bibliography of publications on society, economics and philosophy* (2nd ed edn.; Loughborough: Private Printing).

Apczynski, John (2008), 'Andrew Grosso on Polanyi as a Resource for Christian Theology', *Tradition and Discovery,* 35 (1), 46-48.

Apczynski, John V (1982), 'Truth in Religion: A Polanyian Appraisal of Wolfhart Pannenberg's Theological Program', *Zygon,* 17 (1), 49-73.

Apczynski, John V. (1993), 'Polanyi's Augustinianism: A Mark of the Future?', *Tradition and Discovery,* 20 (1), 27-41.

--- (1997), 'Torrance on Polanyi and Polanyi on God', *Tradition and Discovery,* 24 (1), 32-34.

Archer, Anthony (1986), *The Two Catholic Churches: A Study in Oppression* (London: SCM Press).

Arlow, Jacob A. (1986), 'Psychoanalysis and Time', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association,* 34, 507-28.

Ashley, Benedict M. (1991), 'The River Forest School and the Philosophy of Nature Today', in R. James Long and James A. Weisheipl (eds.), *Philosophy and the God of Abraham* (Toronto: Pontifical Medieval Institute), 1-16.

Austin, J.L. (1962), *How to do things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Beal, Rose M. (2014), *Mystery of the Church, People of God: Yves Congar's Total Ecclesiology* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press).

Bion, Wilfred R. (2013), *Los Angeles Seminars* (London: Karnac Books).

Black, Max (1962), 'Metaphors', *Models and Metaphors* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press).

--- (1979), 'More About Metaphor', in Andrew Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 19-40.

Blankenhorn, Bernhard (2015), *The Mystery of Union with God: Dionysian Mysticism in Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas* (Washington: Catholic University Press).

Boers, Frank (1996), *Spatial Prepositions and Metaphor* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag).

Boersma, Hans (2012), *Nouvelle théologie and sacramental ontology : a return to mystery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Boeve, Lieven (2003), *Interrupting Tradition* (Louvain: Peeters).

--- (2014), *Lyotard and Theology* (London: Bloomsbury).

--- (2016), 'Why Benedict XVI Resigned', *Theology at the Crossroads of University, Church and Society: Dialogue, Difference and Catholic Identity* (London: Bloomsbury), 221-34.

Bonino, Serge-Thomas (2009), *Surnaturel: A Controversy at the Heart of Twentieth-Century Thomistic Thought* (Ave Maria FL: Sapientia Press).

Booth, Edward (1983), *Aristotelian Aporetic Ontology in Islamic and Christian Thinkers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Boyd, Richard (1973), 'Metaphor and Theory Change', in Andrew Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 481-532.

Boyle, Leonard E. (2006), 'The Setting of the *Summa Theologiae*', in Brian Davies (ed.), *Aquinas's Summa Theologiae: Critical Essays* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield), 1-24.

Bradie, M. (1974), 'Polanyi on the Meno Paradox', *Philosophy of Science,* 41, 203ff.

Bradie, Michael (1999), 'Science and Metaphor', *Biology and Philosophy,* 14 (2), 159-66.

Braver, Lee (2014), *Groundless Grounds: A Study of Wittgenstein and Heidegger* (Cambridge: MIT Press).

Bright, Laurence (1954), 'Nature and Natural Theology', *New Blackfriars,* 35, 118–24.

Candler, Peter M. (2006), *Theology, Rhetoric, Manuduction: Or Reading Scripture Together on the Path to God* (Radical Traditions; London: SCM Press).

Cannon, Dale (1999), 'Some Aspects of Polanyi's Version of Realism', *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical,* 26 (3), 51-61.

Carroll, William E. (2008), 'Divine Agency, Contemporary Physics, and the Autonomy of Nature', *Heythrop Journal,* 49 (4), 582-602.

Cazeaux, Clive (2007), *Metaphor and Continental Philosophy* (New York: Routledge).

Cessario, Romanus (1996), *Christian Faith and the Theological Life* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press).

--- (2017), 'Capreolus on Faith and the 'Theologal' Life', in Carl N. Still (ed.), *Essays in Medieval Philosophy and Theology in Memory of Walter H. Principe* (London: Routledge), 135-42.

Chenu, Marie-Dominique (1939), 'Le plan de la somme théologique de saint Thomas', *Revue Thomiste,* 47, 93-107.

--- (1968), *Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century* (Chicago: Chicago University Press).

Chiarot, Kevin (2013), *The Unassumed is the Unhealed: The Humanity of Christ in the Christology of T. F. Torrance* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock).

Chinitz, Jacob (2006), 'Creation and the Limits of the Creator', *Jewish Biblical Quarterly,* 34 (2), 126-31.

Cilliers, Johan H. (2008), ' Liturgie as spel: 'n besinning oor die nie-funksionaliteit van die erediens', *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese* 49, 40-48.

--- (2009a), 'Fides Quaerens Corporalitatem: perspectives on liturgical embodiment', *Verbum et Ecclesia,* 30 (1), 50-64.

--- (2009b), 'Perspectives on liturgical temporality', *Dutch Reformed Theological Journal,* 50, 26-35.

Clark, Tony (2005), 'Polanyi on Religion', *Tradition and Discovery,* 32 (2), 25-36.

--- (2008a), *Divine Revelation and Human Practice* (Cambridge: James Clarke Press).

--- (2008b), 'Michael Polanyi and the Knowledge of Faith', *Anvil,* 25 (4), 269-81.

Clayton, Philip (2002), 'Emergence, Supervenience, and Personal Knowledge', *Tradition and Discovery,* 29 (3), 8-19.

Clements, Keith (2010), *The Moot Papers: Faith, Freedom and Society 1938-1944* (London: Bloomsbury).

Coffey, David (1984), 'The Incarnation of the Holy Spirit in Christ', *Theological Studies,* 45, 466-80.

Colyer, Elmer M. (2001a), *The Nature of Doctrine in T.F. Torrance's Theology* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock).

--- (2001b), *How to Read T.F. Torrance* (New York: Wipf and Stock).

Corrin, Jay P. (2013), *Catholic Progressives in England After Vatican II* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press).

Cottingham, John (1978), ''A Brute to the Brutes?': Descartes' Treatment of Animals', *Philosophy,* 53, 551-59.

Coyle, Elmer (2001), *The Nature of Doctrine in T.F. Torrance's Theology* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock).

Crewdson, Joan (1981), 'The Relevance of Michael Polanyi's Thought for Christian Faith and Life', *Tradition and Discovery,* 9 (1), 6-12.

--- (1994), *Christian Doctrine in the Light of Michael Polanyi's Theory of Personal Knowledge: a personalist theology* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press).

Cross, Richard (2002), *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation* (New York: Oxford University Press).

Crowley, Paul G. (1991), 'Instrumentum Divinitatis in Thomas Aquinas', *Theological Studies,* 52 (3), 457-75.

D'Hert, Ignace (1975), *Wittgenstein's Relevance for Theology* (Bern: Lang).

Dahlstrom, Daniel O. (2013), *The Heidegger Dictionary* (London: Bloomsbury).

Daly, Cahal B. (1968), 'Polanyi and Wittgenstein', in Thomas A Langford and William H Poteat (eds.), *Intellect and Hope* (Durham NC: Duke University Press), 136-68.

Davidson, Donald (1963), 'Actions, Reasons, and Causes', *Journal of Philosophy,* 60 (23), 685-700.

Davidson, Ivor J. (2001), 'Theologizing the Human Jesus', *International Journal for Systematic Theology,* 3 (2), 129-53.

Dawson, Gerrit Scott (2007), 'Far as the Curse is Found: The Significance of Christ's Assuming a Fallen Nature in the Torrance Theology', in Gerrit Scott Dawson (ed.), *An Introduction to Torrance Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark), 55-74.

de la Soujeole, Benoît-Dominique (2014), *Introduction to the Mystery of the Church* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press).

Deane-Drummond, Celia (2003), *Creation Through Wisdom: Theology and the New Biology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark).

Deddo, Gary (2009), 'The realist and onto-relational frame of T. F. Torrance's Incarnational and Trinitarian theology', *Theology in Scotland,* 16, 105-33.

DeLorenzo, Leonard J. (2017), *Work of Love: A Theological Reconstruction of the Communion of Saints* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press).

Driscoll, Jeremy '*Sacrosanctum Concilium*', in Matthew Levering and Matthew L. Lamb (eds.), *The Reception of Vatican II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 23-47.

Duffy, Eamon (2005), 'Worship', in David F. Ford, Ben Quash, and Janet Martin Soskice (eds.), *Fields of Faith: Theology and Religious Studies for the Twenty-first Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 119-36.

Dulles, Avery (1967), 'Revelation in Recent Catholic Theology', *Theology Today,* 24, 350-65.

--- (1980), 'The Symbolic Structure of Revelation', *Theological Studies,* 41 (1), 51-73.

--- (1994), *The Assurance of Things Hoped For: A Theology of Christian Faith* (New York: Oxford University Press).

Dulles, Avery Robert Cardinal (1984), 'Faith, Church, and God: insights from Michael Polanyi', *Theological Studies,* 45 (3), 537-50.

Echeverria, Edward Joseph (1981), *Criticism and Commitment: Major Themes in Contemporary Post-critical Philosophy* (Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V.).

Eliade, Mircea (1954), *Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York: Pantheon).

--- (1958), *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (New York: Harper and Row).

--- (1961), *The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religion* (New York: Harper and Row).

--- (1964), *Myth and Reality* (London: Allen and Unwin).

--- (1965), *The Two and the One* (London: Harvill).

--- (1967), 'Cosmogonic Myth and 'Sacred History'', *Religious Studies,* 2 (2), 171-83.

--- (1968), *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries: the encounter between contemporary faiths and archaic reality* (London: Collins).

--- (1969), *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism* (New York: Sheed & Ward).

Elliott, Mark Warwick (2015), 'Christology in the Seventeenth Century', in Francesca Aran Murphy (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Christology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 297-314.

Emery, Gilles (2007), *The Trinitarian Theology of St Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Ernst, Cornelius (1959), 'Truth and Verification in Theology', *New Blackfriars,* 40 (468), 100-11.

--- (1961), 'Introduction', in Karl Rahner (ed.), *Theological Investigations* (1; London: DLT), xvi-xx.

--- (1962), 'The Gospel and the Church', *New Blackfriars,* 43, 301-13.

--- (1963), 'Words, Facts and God', *New Blackfriars,* 44 (517-518), 292-306.

--- (1967), 'Priesthood and Ministry', *New Blackfriars,* 49, 121-32.

--- (1970), 'The Concilium World Congress: Impressions and Reflections', *New Blackfriars,* 51, 555-60.

--- (1971), 'A Preface to Theology', *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford,* 2, 1-8.

--- (1972a), 'Introduction', in Thomas Gilby (ed.), *Summa Theologiae--The Gospel of Grace [I-II qq. 106-114]* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode), xv-xxvii.

--- (1972b), 'The Church as Institution', *New Blackfriars,* 47, 26-31.

--- (1974a), *The Theology of Grace* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press).

--- (1974b), 'Metaphor and Ontology in Sacra Doctrina', *The Thomist,* 38, 422-25.

--- (1975), 'Theological Method', in Karl Rahner (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Theology: The Sacramentum Mundi*, 1671-78.

--- (1980), 'Meaning and Metaphor in Theology', *New Blackfriars,* 61 (718), 100-12.

Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (1937), *Witchcraft, Oracles And Magic Among The Azande* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Evans-Pritchard, Edward (1973), 'Fragment of an Autobiography', *New Blackfriars,* 54, 35-37.

Feingold, Lawrence (2010), *The Natural Desire to See God according to St Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters* (Naples FL: Ave Maria Press).

Flanagan, Kieran (1985), 'Liturgy, Ambiguity and Silence: The Ritual Management of Real Absence', *British Journal of Sociology,* 36 (2), 193-223.

Flynn, Gabriel and Murray, Paul D. (2012), *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Fogelin, Robert J. (2006), 'Wittgenstein's critique of philosophy', in Hans D. Sluga and David G. Stern (eds.), *Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 34-58.

Ford, David F. (1999), *Self and Salvation: Being Transformed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Foster, Durwood (1982), 'Pannenberg's Polanyianism', *Zygon,* 17 (1), 75-81.

Frei, Hans (1990), 'Epilogue: George Lindbeck and *The Nature of Doctrine*', in Bruce D. Marshall (ed.), *Theology and Dialogue* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame), 140ff.

--- (1992), *Types of Christian Theology* (London: Yale University Press).

--- (1993), 'Remarks in Connection with a Theological Proposal', in George Hunsinger and William C Placher (eds.), *Theology and Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 26-44.

Friedman, Russell L. (2010), *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Gaine, Simon Francis (2000), *Obituary Notices of the English Dominicans from 1952 to 1996* (Oxford: Blackfriars Publications).

--- (2015), *Did the Saviour See the Father: Christ, Salvation, and the Vision of God* (London: Bloomsbury).

Garrigan, Siobhan (2004), *Beyond Ritual: Sacramental Theology after Habermas* (London: Routledge).

Gelwick, Richard (1977), *The Way of Discovery: an introduction to the thought of Michael Polanyi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

--- (2001), 'Heuristic Passion and Universal Intent', *Tradition and Discovery,* 28 (1), 16-22.

--- (2005), 'Michael Polanyi's Daring Epistemology and the Hunger for Teleology', *Zygon,* 40 (1), 63-76.

Gill, Jerry H. (2000), *The Tacit Mode: Michael Polanyi's Postmodern Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press).

Ginn, Richard J. (1988), *The Present and the Past: A Study of Anamnesis* (Eugene: Pickwick Press).

Gleason, Philip (1988), 'Neoscholasticism as Preconcilliar Ideology', *Catholic Historian,* 7 (4), 401-11.

Gorman, Michael (2017), 'How Does Christ's Human Nature Not Ground Its Own Person?', *Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 73-100.

Green, André (2002), *Time in Psychoanalysis: Some Contradictory Elements* (London: Free Association Press).

Grosso, Andrew T. (2007), *Personal Being: Polanyi, ontology, and Christian theology* (New York: P. Lang).

Gulick, Walter B. (1986), 'Michael Polanyi's Theory of Meaning and Reality', *Ultimate Reality and Meaning,* 9 (4), 262-75.

--- (2005), 'Polanyi on teleology: A response to John Apczynski and Richard Gelwick', *Zygon,* 40 (1), 89-96.

Gunton, Colin Ewart (1993), *The One, the Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

--- (2001), *The Christian Faith* (Edinburgh: Wiley-Blackwell).

--- (2008), *Revelation and Reason* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark).

Habets, Myk (2009), 'Putting the 'extra' back into Calvinism', *Scottish Journal of Theology,* 62 (4), 441-56.

Haley, James P. (2017), *The Humanity of Christ: The Significance of the Anhypostasis and Enhypostasis in Karl Barth's Christology* (Princeton: Princeton Theological Monographs).

Hall, Ronald L (1982), 'Michael Polanyi on Art and Religion: Some Critical Reflections on *Meaning*', *Zygon,* 17 (1), 9-18.

Hammond, Percy (2000), 'Polanyi's 'Ontological Equation': A Response to Recent Discussions of Polanyi's 'Realism'', *Tradition and Discovery,* 27 (2), 34-38.

Harden Weaver, Rebecca (1996), *Divine Grace and Human Agency: A Study of the Semi-Pelagian Controversy* (Macon: Mercer University Press).

Hardy, Daniel (1989), 'Thomas F. Torrance', in David Ford (ed.), *The Modern Theologians* (1; Oxford: Blackwell), 47.

Hector, Kevin W. (2011), *Theology without Metaphysics: God, Language and the Spirit of Recognition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

--- (2015), *The Theological Project of Modernism: Faith and the Conditions of Mineness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Hill, Edmund (1982), 'Cornelius Ernst OP: "Multiple Echo", Fergus Kerr OP and Timothy Radcliffe OP (eds.)', *The Thomist,* 46 (4), 631-36.

Hoff, Johannes (2010), 'The Rise and the Fall of the Kantian Paradigm of Modern Theology', in Peter M. Candler (ed.), *The Grandeur of Reason: Religion, Tradition and Universalism* (London: SCM Press), 167-96.

--- (2013), *The Analogical Turn* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).

Holder, Rodney D. (2009), 'Thomas Torrance: "Retreat to Commitment" or a New Place for Natural Theology?', *Theology and Science,* 7 (3), 275-96.

Hughes, Graham (2003), *Worship as Meaning: A Liturgical Theology for Late Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Hunsinger, George (1991), *How to Read Karl Barth: The Shape of His Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

--- (2011), 'Election and the Trinity', in Michael T. Dempsey (ed.), *Election and Trinity in Contemporary Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 91-114.

--- (2015), 'Postliberal Theology', *Conversational Theology* (London: T&T Clark), 111-28.

Innis, Robert E (1973), 'Polanyi's Model of Mental Acts', *The New Scholasticism,* 47 (2), 147-78.

Jenson, Robert W. (1997), *Systematic Theology, Volume 1: The Triune God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

--- (1999), *Systematic Theology, Volume 2: The Works of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Jha, Stefania Ruzsits (1997), 'A New Interpretation of Michael Polanyi's Theory of Tacit Knowing: integrative philosophy with 'intellectual passions'', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science,* 28 (4), 611-31.

--- (2002), *Reconsidering Michael Polanyi's Philosophy* (University of Pittsburgh Press).

Johnson, Keith L (2010), *Karl Barth and the Analogia Entis* (London: T&T Clark).

Johnson, Mark (1981), 'Metaphor in the Philosophical Tradition', in Mark Johnson (ed.), *Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor*, 3-48.

Jones, Paul Dafydd (2008), *The Humanity of Christ: Christology in Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics* (London: T&T Clark).

Jüngel, Eberhard (1974), 'Metaphorische Wahrheit: Erwägungen zur theologischen Relevanz der Metapher als Beitrag zur Hermeneutik eine narrativen Theologie', in Paul Ricoeur and Eberhard Jüngel (eds.), *Metapher* (München: Kaiser Cop.), 71-122.

--- (1989), 'Metaphorical Truth', *Theological Essays* (London: Bloomsbury), 16-71.

Kaczor, Christopher (2001), 'Thomas Aquinas on the Development of Doctrine', *Theological Studies,* 62, 283-302.

Kasper, Walter (2015), *The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality and Mission* (London: Bloomsbury).

Keenan, Oliver James (2013a), 'Theological Epistemology in Eckhart's First Parisian Question', *Medieval Mystical Theology,* 22 (1), 27-44.

--- (2013b), 'Sacrament of the Dynamic Transcendence of Christianity: Cornelius Ernst on the Church', *New Blackfriars,* 94 (1052), 396-414.

--- (2017), 'Divine Antecedence and Pretemporal Election', *New Blackfriars,* 98, 264-84.

Kelly, Douglas F. (2007), 'The Realist Epistemology of Thomas F. Torrance', in Gerrit Scott Dawson (ed.), *An Introduction to Torrance Theology: Disocvering the Incarnate Saviour* (London: T&T Clark), 75-102.

Kennedy, Terence (1979), 'The Morality of Knowledge: Transcendence and the Intellectual Life in the Thought of Michael Polanyi', (Pontifical Lateran University).

Kerr, Fergus (1980), 'Rahner Retrospective: Rupturing der Pianische Monolithismus', *New Blackfriars,* 61, 224-33.

--- (1984), 'Küng's Case for God', *New Blackfriars,* 65, 226-31.

--- (1997), *Theology after Wittgenstein* (2nd edn.; Oxford: Blackwell).

--- (2002), *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (Oxford: Blackwells).

--- (2006), 'A different world: neoscholasticism and its discontents', *International Journal of Systematic Theology,* 8 (2), 128-48.

--- (2007), *Twentieth Century Catholic Theologians* (Edinburgh: Wiley-Blackwell).

--- (2008), 'Ansombe, Ernst and McCabe: Wittgenstein and Catholic Theology', *Josephinum,* 15 (1), 128-48.

Kirby, John T. (1997), 'Aristotle on Metaphor', *American Journal of Philology,* 118 (4), 517-54.

Knepper, Paul (2005), 'Michael Polanyi and Jewish Identity', *Philosophy of the Social Sciences,* 35 (3), 263-93.

Kockik, Thomas M. (2016), 'The Reform of the Reform', in Alcuin Reid (ed.), *Liturgy in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Bloomsbury), 19-50.

Kretzmann, Norman (1993), 'Philosophy of Mind', in Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (eds.), *Cambridge Companion to Aquinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 128-59.

Ku, John Baptist (2013), *God the Father in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Peter Lang).

Kuester, Harold (1984), 'Polanyi on Religion', *Faith and Philosophy,* 1 (1), 77-88.

Kuhn, Thomas S. (1993), 'Metaphor in Science', in Andrew Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 533-42.

Küng, Hans (1968), *The Church* (London: Burns & Oates).

Kurtz, Stephen A. (1986), 'The Psychoanalysis of Time', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association,* 36 (4), 985-1004.

Lakoff, George (1993), 'The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor', in Andrew Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought*, 201-51.

Lakoff, George and Johnson, Mark (2003), *Metaphors We Live By* (2nd edn.; Chicago: Chicago University Press).

Laplace, Pierre-Simon (1886), *Traité de Probabilité* (Paris: Acad. Sc.).

Larsen, Timothy (2014), *The Slain God: Anthropologists and the Christian Faith* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Lash, Nicholas (1980), 'Listening to the Echo', *New Blackfriars,* 61, 89-93.

--- (1986), *Theology on the Way to Emmaus* (London: SCM Press).

--- (1988), *Easter in Ordinary* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press).

--- (1996), *The Beginning and the End of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Latourelle, René (1966), *La Théologie de la Révélation* (2nd edn.; Bruges: Desclée Brouwer).

--- (1990), 'Revelation', in René Latourelle and Rino Fisichella (eds.), *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder), 905-50.

Legge, Dominic (2017), *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Levering, Matthew (2002), *Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple: Salvation According to Thomas Aquinas* (South Bend: Notre Dame).

--- (2017), *Engaging the Doctrine of Creation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic).

Lindbeck, George A. (1984), *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (London: SPCK).

Lonergan, Bernard (1971), *Method in Theology* (London: DLT).

Long, D. Stephen (2016), *The Perfectly Simple Triune God* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press).

Long, Steven A. (2010), *Natura Pura: On the Recovery of Nature in the Doctrine of Grace* (New York: Fordham University Press).

--- (2011), *Analogia Entis: on the analogy of being, metaphysics, and the act of faith* (South Bend: Notre Dame University Press).

Lopez-Corvo, Rafael E. (2003), *The Dictionary of the Work of W.R. Bion* (London: Karnac).

Lynch, Reginald M. (2017), *The Cleansing of the Heart: The Sacraments as Instrumental Causes in the Thomistic Tradition* (Washington: CUA Press).

Macdonald, Scott (1993), 'Theory of Knowledge', in Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (eds.), *Cambridge Companion to Aquinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press), 160-95.

Mach, Ernst (1895), 'The Economical Nature of Physics', in Thomas Joseph McCormack (ed.), *Popular Scientific Lectures* (Chicago: Open Press), 207-14.

Macintyre, Alasdair (1988), *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame).

Margelidion, Philippe-Marie (2010), *Études thomistes sur la théologie de la rédemption: de la grâce à la résurrection du Christ* (Perpignan: Artège spiritualité).

Margitay, Tihamér (2013), 'Polanyi's Ontology from Inside: A Response to my Critics', *Tradition & Discovery,* 39 (2), 42-58.

Margitay, Tihamér (2010), 'From Epistemology to Ontology: Polanyi's Arguments for the Layered Ontology', in Thiamér Margitay (ed.), *Knowing and Being: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Michael Polanyi* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars), 128-40.

Marion, Jean-Luc (2012), *God Without Being* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

Maritain, Jacques (1951), 'On Knowledge through Connaturality', *Review of Metaphysics,* 4 (4), 473-81.

Mascall, Eric L. (1971), *The Openness of Being* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press).

McCabe, Herbert (1975), 'A Note on 'Analogy'', in Thomas Gilby and Herbert McCabe (eds.), *Summa Theologiae: Volume 3, Knowing and Naming God: 1a. 12-13*, 106-07.

--- (1987), 'The Involvement of God', *God Matters* (London: Geoffrey Chapman), 39-53.

--- (2002), 'The Logic of Mysticism', *God Still Matters* (London: Bloomsbury), 13-28.

McCormack, Bruce L. (1995), *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

--- (2000), 'Grace and Being: the role of God's gracious election in Karl Barth's theological ontology', in John Bainbridge Webster (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 92-110.

--- (2007), 'Seek God Where He May Be Found: A Response to Edwin Chr. van Driel', *Scottish Journal of Theology,* 60 (1), 62-79.

--- (2008), 'Revelation and History in Transfoundationalist Perspective', *Orthodox and Modern: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic), 21-39.

--- (2011), 'Election and the Trinity: Theses in Response to George Hunsinger', in Michael T. Dempsey (ed.), *Election and Trinity in Contemporary Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 115-37.

--- (2018), 'In Memoriam: Robert Jenson (1930–2017)', *International Journal of Systematic Theology,* 20. (1), 3-7.

McGinn, Bernard (1990), 'Do Christian Platonists Really Believe in Creation?', in David B. Burrell and Bernard McGinn (eds.), *God and Creation* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press), 198-205.

McGinnis, Andrew M. (2014), *The Son of God Beyond the Flesh* (London: Bloomsbury).

McGrath, Alister E. (1999), *T.F. Torrance: An Intellectual Biography* (London: T&T Clark).

--- (2007), *Scientific Theology v2: Reality* (London: T&T Clark).

McInerny, Ralph (2006), *Praembula Fidei: Thomism and the God of the Philosophers* (Washington: CUA Press).

Meek, Esther L. (2017), *Contact with Reality: Michael Polanyi's Realism and Why It Matters* (Eugene OR: Cascade Books).

Milbank, John (1995), 'Only Theology overcomes Metaphysics', *New Blackfriars,* 76, 325-43.

--- (1997), 'The Linguistic Turn as a Theological Turn', *The Word Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell), 84-120.

--- (2003), *Being Reconciled: Ontology and Pardon* (London: Routledge).

--- (2005), *The Suspended Middle: Henri De Lubac and the Debate Concerning the Supernatural* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).

--- (2006), *Theology and Social Theory* (2nd edn.; London: Blackwell).

Milbank, John and Pickstock, Catherine (2001), *Truth in Aquinas* (London: Routledge).

Miller, B. V. (1948), 'The Eucharistic Sacrifice', in George D. Smith (ed.), *The Teaching of the Catholic Church* (London: Burns and Oates), 880-918.

Miller, George A. (1993), 'Images and Models, Similes and Metaphors', in Andrew Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 357-400.

Moleski, Martin Xavier (2000), *Personal Catholicism: the theological epistemologies of John Henry Newman and Michael Polanyi* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press).

Molnar, Paul D. (2002), *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark).

--- (2011), 'Can the Electing God be God Without Us?', in Michael T. Dempsey (ed.), *Trinity and Election in Contemporary Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 63-90.

Molnar, Paul D. (2013), *Thomas F. Torrance: Theologian of the Trinity* (Edinburgh: Ashgate).

Montagnes, Bernard (1963), 'La doctrine de l'analogie de l'être d'après saint Thomas d'Aquin', (Thèse Louvain).

Morgan, D. Densil (2010), *Barth Reception in Britain* (London: T&T Clark).

Mortensen, John R. (2010), *Understanding St. Thomas on Analogy* (Rome: Gregorian University).

Mullins, Phil (1982), 'The Spectrum of Meaning: Polanyian perspectives on science and religion', *Zygon,* 17 (1), 3-8.

--- (1997), 'Polanyi's Participative Realism', *Polanyiana,* 6 (2), 5.

--- (1999), 'The Real as Meaningful', *Tradition and Discovery,* 26 (3), 42-50.

--- (2002), 'Peirce's abduction and Polanyi's tacit knowing', *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy,* 16 (3), 198-224.

--- (2005), 'Harry Prosch: 1917-2005', *Tradition & Discovery,* 32 (2), 5-7.

--- (2013), 'Tihamér Margitay on Polanyi's Ontology: An Introduction', *Tradition & Discovery,* 39 (2), 9-10.

Mullins, Phil and Moleski, Marty (2006), 'Harry Prosch: A Memorial Re-Appraisal of the Meaning Controversy', *Tradition and Discovery,* 32 (2), 8-12.

Murphy, Francesca Aran (2007), *God is Not a Story: Realism Revisited* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Nichols, Aidan (1997), *Dominican Gallery: A Portrait of a Culture* (London: Gracewing).

--- (2012), 'Henri de Lubac: Panorama and Proposal', *New Blackfriars,* 93, 3-33.

Nielsen, Kai (1967), 'Wittgensteinian Fideism', *Philosophy,* 42, 191-209.

--- (1972), 'The Coherence of Wittgensteinian Fideism', *Sophia,* 11 (3), 4-12.

Norman, Richard (1969), 'Aristotle's Philosopher-God', *Phronesis,* 14 (1), 63-74.

Nye, Mary Jo (2011), *Michael Polanyi and His Generation: origins of the social construction of science* (London: University of Chicago Press).

Olson, Carl (1992), *The Theology and Philosophy of Eliade* (London: Macmillan).

Ortony, Andrew (1993), 'The Role of Similarity in Similes and Metaphors', in Andrew Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 342-56.

Osborn, Robert T. (1975), 'Christian Faith as Personal Knowledge', *Scottish Journal of Theology,* 28 (2), 101-26.

Ott, Ludwig (1963), *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (Dublin: Mercier).

Ounsworth, Richard Joseph (2012), *Joshua Typology in the New Testament* (Berlin: Mohr Siebeck).

Paksi, Daniel (2011), 'Emergence and reduction in Michael Polanyi (II)', *Appraisal,* 8 (4).

Pannenberg, Wolfhart (1981), 'Theological Questions to Scientists', *Zygon,* 16 (1), 65-77.

Phillips, D.Z. (2005), 'Wittgenstein and Religion: Some Fashionable Criticism', in Kai Nielsen and D.Z. Phillips (eds.), *Wittgensteinian Fideism?* (London: SCM Press), 39-52.

Pickstock, Catherine (1998), *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Wiley).

Polanyi, Michael (1943), 'Jewish Problems', *Political Quarterly,* 14 (1), 33-45.

--- (1951), *The Logic of Liberty: reflections and rejoinders* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul).

--- (1959), *The Study of Man* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul).

--- (1960), 'An Epic Theory of Evolution', *Saturday Review,* (January 30th), 21-4.

--- (1961), 'The Study of Man', *Quest,* 29, 26-35.

--- (1962), 'The Unaccountable Element in Science', *Philosophy,* 37 (139), 1-14.

--- (1965a), 'The Structure of Consciousness', *Brain,* 88 (4), 799-810.

--- (1965b), 'On the Modern Mind', *Encounter,* 24 (5), 12-27.

--- (1966), 'The Creative Imagination', *Chemical Engineering News,* 44 (17), 85-93.

--- (1967a), *The Tacit Dimension* (London: Routledge).

--- (1967b), 'Sense-Giving and Sense-Reading', *Philosophy,* 42 (162), 301-25.

--- (1968), 'Logic and psychology', *American Psychologist,* 23 (1), 27-43.

--- (1969), 'On Body and Mind', *The New Scholasticism,* 43 (2), 195-204.

--- (1970), 'Why did we destroy Europe?', *Studium Generale,* 23 (1), 909-16.

Prosch, Harry (1986a), 'Polanyi contra Torrance', *Michael Polanyi: A Critical Exposition* (New York: SUNY Press), 248-57.

--- (1986b), *Michael Polanyi: a critical exposition* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press).

--- (1987), 'Prosch Replies to Torrance', *Tradition & Discovery,* 15 (1), 24-25.

Przywara, Erich (1932), *Analogia Entis: Metaphysik* (München: Kösel).

Radcliff, Alexandra S. (2016), *The Claim of Humanity in Christ: Salvation and Sanctification in the Theology T.F. and J.B. Torrance* (Eugene OR: Pickwick).

Rahner, Karl (1961), 'Concerning the Relationship between Nature and Grace', *Theological Investigations v1: God, Christ, Mary and Grace* (London: DLT), 297-318.

--- (1970), 'Revelation: God's Self-Communication', in Karl Rahner (ed.), *Sacramentum Mundi* (5; London: Burns & Oates), 342-58.

--- (1972), *Theological Investgations* (9; London: DLT).

--- (1978), *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, trans. William V. Dych (London: Herder & Herder).

--- (1984), 'Oneness and Threefoldness of God in Discussion with Islam', *Theological Investigations, Volume 18*, 105-21.

--- (1997), *The Trinity* (London: Crossroads Press).

Ratzinger, Joseph (2000), *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. John Saward (London: Ignatius).

--- (2014), 'Change and Permanence in Liturgy', *The Theology of the Liturgy* (11 of Ratzinger Gesamtausgabe; Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana), 519-30.

Ratzinger, Joseph (1968), 'The Transmission of Divine Revelation', in Herbert Vorgrimler (ed.), *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II* (3; London: Burns & Oates), 181-98.

Ray, T. (2008), 'Rethinking Michael Polanyi's Realism: From Personal Knowledge to Intersubjectively Viable Communication', *Prometheus,* 26 (3), 241-57.

Read, Herbert (1928), *English Prose Style* (London: G. Bell and Sons).

Reid, Alcuin (2005), *The Organic Development of the Liturgy: The Principles of Liturgical Reform and Their Relation to the Twenthieth-Century Liturgical Movement Prior to the Second Vatican Council* (London: Ignatius Press).

Richards, Ivor Armstrong (1937), *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

--- (1950), *Coleridge on Imagination* (London: Routledge, Kegan and Paul).

Ricoeur, Paul (1963), 'Réponses', *Éspirit,* 31, 628-53.

--- (1977), *The Rule of Metaphor*, trans. Robert Czerny, Kathleen McLaughlin, and John Costello (London: Routledge).

Rohof, Jan (1952), *La sainteté substantielle du Christ dans la théologie scolastique* (Fribourg: Editions of St. Paul).

Rothschild, F. S. (1957), *Das Zentralnervensystem als Symbol des Erlebens* (Basel: S. Karger).

--- (1962), 'Laws of Symbolic Mediation in the Dynamics of Self and Personality', *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences,* 96 (3), 774-84.

Rousselot, Pierre (1935), *The Intellectualism of Saint Thomas* (London: Sheed & Ward).

Rowland, Tracey (2017), *Catholic Theology* (London: Bloomsbury).

Roy, Louis (2004), 'Cornelius Ernst's Theological Seeds', *New Blackfriars,* 85 (998), 459-70.

Rumelhart, David A. (1993), 'Some problems with the notion of literal meanings', in Andrew Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 71-83.

Ryan, Fáinche (2007), *Formation in Holiness: Thomas Aquinas on Sacra Doctrina* (Utrecht: Thomas Instituut/Peeters Leuven).

Sanders, Andy F. (1999), 'Science, Religion and Polanyi's Comprehensive Realism', *Tradition and Discovery,* 26 (3), 84-93.

Sarah, Robert Cardinal (2017), 'Towards an Authentic Implementation of *Sacrosanctum Concillium* ', in Michael Uwe Lang (ed.), *Authentic Liturgical Renewal In Contemporary Perspective* (London: Bloomsbury), 3-20.

Schaefer, Mary (1997), 'Faith, Doctrine and Theology in dialogue', *Studies in Religion,* 26 (4), 467-79.

Schmemann, Alexander (1966), *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* (Yonkers NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press).

Schumacher, Lydia (2011), *Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge* (Edinburgh: Wiley-Blackwell).

Scott, William Taussig (1982), 'The question of a religious reality: commentary on the Polanyi papers', *Zygon,* 17 (1), 83-87.

Scott, William Taussig and Moleski, Martin X. (2005), *Michael Polanyi: Scientist and Philosopher* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Searle, John R. (1969), *Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Sherwin, Michael S. (2005), *By Knowledge & By Love: charity and knowledge in the moral theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press).

Sigurdson, Ola (2016), *Heavenly Bodies: Incarnation, the Gze and Embodiment in Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).

Simon, Herbert A (1976), 'Bradie on Polanyi on the Meno Paradox', *Philosophy of Science*, 147-50.

Sorri, Mari (1994), 'The Body Has Reasons: Tacit Knowing in Thinking and Making', *Aesthetic Education,* 1994 (28.2), 15-26.

Soskice, Janet Martin (1985), *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Oxford : Clarendon Press).

Staudt, R. Jared (2012), 'Did Christ Worship the Trinity?', *The Thomist,* 76 (2), 233-72.

Stump, Eleonore (2003), *Aquinas* (London: Routledge).

Szabados, Bela (2005), 'Wittgensteinian Fideism 1967-89', in Kai Nielsen and D.Z. Phillips (eds.), *Wittgensteinian Fideism?* (London: SCM Press), 1-17.

Takaki, Kyle (2011), 'Enactive Realism', *Tradition and Discovery,* 38 (1), 43-59.

Tanner, Kathryn (2013), 'Creation Ex Nihilo as Mixed Metaphor', *Modern Theology,* 29 (2), 138-55.

Taylor, A. E. (1930), *The Faith of a Moralist* (London: MacMillan).

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre (1964), *The Future of Man* (London: Collins).

Thiemann, Ronald F. (1985), *Revelation and Theology: The Gospel as Narrated Promise* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press).

Torrance, James B. (1996a), *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace* (London: IVP).

--- (1999), 'Christ in Our Place: The Joy of Worship', in T. F. Torrance, James B. Torrance, and David Torrance (eds.), *A Passion for Christ: The Vision that Ignites Ministry* (Edinburgh: Hansel Press), 35-52.

Torrance, T. F. (1965), *Theology in Reconstruction* (London: SCM Press).

--- (1969), *Space, Time and Incarnation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

--- (1971), *God and Rationality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

--- (1974), 'The Integration of Form in Natural and in Theological Science.', *Science, Medicine and Man,* 1 (3), 143-72.

--- (1980a), *Belief in Science and in Christian Life: the relevance of Michael Polanyi's thought for Christian faith and life* (Edinburgh: Handsel Press).

--- (1980b), 'The Place of Michael Polanyi in the Modern Philosophy of Science', *Ethics in Science and Medicine,* 7, 57-95.

--- (1982a), *Reality and Evangelical Theology: The Realism of Christian Revelation* (Downers Grove: IVP).

--- (1982b), *Reality and Evangelical Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press).

--- (1983), *Mediation of Christ* (Exeter: Paternoster).

--- (1984), *Transformation and Convergence in the Frame of Knowledge: Explorations in the Interrelations of Scientific and Theological Enterprise* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).

--- (1985), *Reality and Scientific Theology* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press).

--- (1986), 'Letters to the Editor: Torrance Answers Prosch', *Tradition & Discovery,* 14 (1), 30.

--- (1996b), *The Christian Doctrine of God* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark).

--- (2000), 'Michael Polanyi and the Christian Faith', *Tradition and Discovery,* 27 (2), 26-32.

--- (2002), *The Doctrine of Jesus* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock).

--- (2008), *Incarnation: The Person and Work of Christ* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster).

--- (2009), *Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ* (Downers Grove IL: IVP Academic).

Torre, Michael D. (2013), *Do Not Resist the Spirit's Call: Francisco Marín-Sola on Sufficient Grace* (Washington: CUA).

Torrell, Jean-Pierre (1996), *St Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press).

--- (2008), *Jésus le Christ chez saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: CERF).

Tugwell, Simon (1978), 'Cornelius Ernst OP', *New Blackfriars,* 59, 2-4.

van Driel, Edwin Christian (2007), 'Karl Barth on the Eternal Existence of Jesus Christ', *Scottish Journal of Theology,* 60 (1), 45-61.

van Kuiken, E. Jerome (2018), *Christ's Humanity in Current and Ancient Controversy: Fallen or Not?* (London: Bloomsbury).

Vanhoozer, Kevin J. (2010), *Remythologizing Theology: Divine Action, Passion and Authorship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Wainwright, Geoffrey (1980), *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine and Life: A Systematic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Walsh, Liam G. (1974), 'Liturgy in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas', *The Thomist,* 38, 557-83.

Ward, Graham (2016), *How the Light Gets in: Ethical Life I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Webster, John Bainbridge (2005), 'Theological Theology', *Confessing God: Essays in Christian Dogmatics* (2; London: T&T Clark), 11-32.

Weightman, Colin (1994), *Theology in a Polanyian Universe: the theology of Thomas Torrance* (New York: Peter Lang).

--- (1997), 'Polanyi and Mathematics, Torrance and Philosophy of Science', *Tradition and Discovery,* 24 (1), 35-38.

Weisheipl, James A. (1961), 'The Celestial Movers in Medieval Physics', *The Thomist,* 24 (2-4), 286-326.

Weldon, Clodagh (2007), *Fr. Victor White, O.P.: The Story of Jung's "White Raven"* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

Wendlinder, Anastasia (2014), *Speaking of God in Thomas Aquinas and Meister Eckhart* (London: Ashgate).

White, Thomas Joseph (2005), 'The Voluntary Action of the Earthly Christ', *The Thomist,* 69, 497-534.

--- (2009), *Wisdom in the Face of Modernity: A Study in Thomistic Natural Theology* (Naples FL: Sapientia Press).

--- (2013), 'The Primacy of Revelation and the Unity of Knowledge', in Thomas Joseph White and Bruce L. McCormack (eds.), *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 1-39.

--- (2015), *The Incarnate Lord: A Thomistic Study in Christology* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press).

White, Victor (1958), *Holy Teaching: The Idea of Theology According to St. Thomas Aquinas* (London: Blackfriars Publications).

Williams, Anna Ngaire (1997), 'Deification in the Summa theologiae: A Structural Interpretation of the Prima Pars', *The Thomist,* 61 (2), 219-55.

Williams, Donald C. (1951), 'The Myth of Passage', *Philosophy,* 48 (15), 457-72.

Williams, Rowan (1986), 'Trinity and Revelation', *Modern Theology,* 2 (3), 197-212.

--- (2014), *The Edge of Words: God and the Habits of Language* (London: Continuum).

Wittgenstein, Ludwig and Geach, Peter (1988), *Wittgenstein's Lectures on Philosophical Psychology 1946-47* (London: Harvester, Wheatsheaf).

Wolterstorff, Nicholas (1996), 'The Travail of Theology in the Modern Academy', in Miroslav Volf (ed.), *The Future of Theology: Essays in Honour of Jürgen Moltmann* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 35-46.

--- (1998), 'Is it Possible or Desirable for Theologians to Recover from Kant?', *Modern Theology,* 14 (1), 1-18.

Wright, N. T. (1992), *The New Testament and the People of God* (London: SPCK).

Zizioulas, John D. (2006), 'The Father as Cause', *Communion and Othernness* (London: T&T Clark), 113-54.

--- (2011), 'The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God', *The Eucharistic Communion and the World* (London: Continuum), 39-81.