

**Death  
And Anti-Death,  
Volume 14:**

**Four Decades After  
Michael Polanyi,  
Three Centuries After  
G. W. Leibniz**

**Edited By  
Charles Tandy, Ph.D.**

**Death And Anti-Death Series  
By Ria University Press**

DEATH AND ANTI-DEATH  
(VOLUME 14)

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VOLUME 14:  
Four Decades After Michael Polanyi,  
Three Centuries After G. W. Leibniz**

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DEDICATED TO

**Tom Hayden**

(December 11, 1939 – October 23, 2016)  
Lead Author, *The Port Huron Statement*

(November 9, 2016)

I believe we are stronger together and we will go forward together. And you should never, ever regret fighting for that. You know, scripture tells us, "Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season, we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

--Hillary Rodham Clinton





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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Death And Anti-Death, Volume 14:  
Four Decades After Michael Polanyi,  
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Volume 14, as indicated by the anthology's subtitle, is in honor of Michael Polanyi and of G. W. Leibniz. The chapters do not necessarily mention them (but some chapters do). The chapters (by professional philosophers and other professional scholars) are directed to issues related to death, life extension, and anti-death, broadly construed. Most of the contributions consist of scholarship unique to this volume. As was the case with all previous volumes in the Death and Anti-Death series by Ria University Press, the anthology includes an Index as well as an Abstracts section that serves as an extended table of contents.

The editor gratefully acknowledges support and assistance from the following:

- Ria University Institute for Advanced Study (USA)
- Center for Interdisciplinary Philosophic Studies (USA)
- R. Michael Perry, Ph.D., Society for Universal Immortalism (USA)

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Dr. R. T. Allen has published six books and many articles on Polanyi, plus other subjects: the latest book is *Ethics as Scales of Forms* (Cambridge Scholars, 2014), which uses R. G. Collingwood's scheme to build a comprehensive view. His Ph.D. (external: King's College London) was on Polanyi and theology. He taught in colleges of education in England and Nigeria, and at the University of the West Indies, Trinidad. He founded the journal *Appraisal*, now the journal of the British Personalist Forum which developed from it. Now retired, he plans a book, *Identity, Individuality and Value*, to summarise and extend his work on these topics.

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Professor Robert Allinson is the author or editor of seven books and over two hundred and fifty academic papers including *A Metaphysics for the Future and Space, Time and the Ethical Foundations* both with Ashgate Publishers, *Understanding the Chinese Mind*, in its eleventh impression with Oxford University Press and *Chuang-Tzu for Spiritual Transformation*, SUNY, Albany, earmarked as one of two reference sources for the study of the *Zhuangzi* in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. He was Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the Chinese University of Hong Kong for several decades and is Professor of Philosophy at Soka University of America (USA).

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*Utilitarianism* (Acumen 2007), *Ethics for a Broken World the Universe: The Moral and Metaphysical Case for* (Acumen/McGill-Queens University Press 2011), and *Purpose in Ananthropocentric Purposivism* (Oxford 2015).

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Enrico Pasini (1961) teaches History of Modern Philosophy and History of Science at the University of Turin (Italy). He has worked on the connection between history of mathematics and history of philosophy and literature (in the early modern period in general). He is author of books and articles on G. W. Leibniz's philosophy and mathematics; on the logician and mathematician G. Peano and his entourage; on 17th/18th-century philosophy, particularly in Germany; and, on Humanism and Renaissance philosophy. With M. Albertone, he edits the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History of Ideas*.

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Dr. Perry (Ph.D., computer science, b. 1947) has worked at Alcor Foundation, a cryonics organization now in Scottsdale, Arizona (USA), since 1987. In spare time he completed a book, *Forever for All*, which deals with scientific and moral issues connected with physical immortality. He is currently working on a revised edition of his book, and on a deeper investigation of the philosophical and mathematical issues connected with personal identity and survival. Dr. Perry is a cofounder and member of the cryonics-promoting Society for Venturism, and also the Society for Universal Immortalism which is devoted to one day solving the problem of death in its entirety through a scientific approach.

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Dr. Charles Tandy received his Ph.D. in Philosophy of Education from the University of Missouri at Columbia (USA) before becoming a Visiting Scholar in the Philosophy Department at Stanford University (USA). Dr. Tandy is author or editor of numerous publications. He is author of *21st Century Clues: Essays in Ethics, Ontology, and Time Travel* (released in 2010). Philosophy anthologies edited by Dr. Tandy include the ongoing

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ABSTRACTS FOR THIS VOLUME'S CHAPTERS

*Death And Anti-Death, Volume 14:  
Four Decades After Michael Polanyi,  
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Abstract Of Pages 25-42  
CHAPTER ONE

**The Philosophy Of Michael Polanyi And Some  
Contemporary Attitudes To Life And Death**

R. T. Allen

Several attitudes to life and death today assume that the universe and human life within it lack any meaning. The philosophy of Michael Polanyi, while not offering a comprehensive alternative, does at least open the way for venturing to articulate one. The core of his philosophy, the tacit integration of subsidiary details into focal wholes, corrects the errors of rationalism, scepticism, relativism and subjectivism which lie behind the widespread sense of meaninglessness.

**KEYWORDS:** Meanings and meaninglessness of life; Rights; Scepticism; Tacit integration; Value.

Abstract Of Pages 43-56  
CHAPTER TWO

**Leibniz, Infinity, And The Nature Of The Divine**

Robert Elliott Allinson

I consider the logical consequences Hartshorne's theory of actuality possesses for the concept of the infinite. (See: Charles Hartshorne, *Anselm's Discovery*; also see: Robert Adams, 'Theories of Actuality'.) In the course of this consideration, I analyze the incoherence of the concept of the actual infinite from the problem of the impossibility of all possibilities. Finally, I consider that Hartshorne's concept of G-d as process can be enhanced by providing 12 arguments for the existence of the Divine.

**KEYWORDS:** Proof of the Divine; Theistic metaphysics; Ontological argument for the existence of G-d; G-d as finite; Incoherency of the Absolute Infinite; Leibniz; Anselm; Charles Hartshorne.

CHAPTER THREE

Religion's *Gestalt*:

Reflections On Michael Polanyi, Tacit Knowing And Mortality

Giorgio Baruchello

In this chapter, I reflect on some of the existential implications

*vis-à-vis* mortality and religion that can be derived from the

epistemology developed by Hungary's great chemist and

philosopher Michael Polanyi (1891-1976) with regard to tacit

knowing. Polanyi was the first Western thinker to ever cast light in

a persistent and articulate manner on an essentially opaque

dimension of cognition operating at the periphery of explicit

knowledge and serving as its foundation. Polanyi dubbed this

dimension *tacit* (Lat. *tacere*, "to be silent") and contrasted it with

the explicit one, which has been the focus of scholarly and

scientific attention since the dawn of our civilisation.

**KEYWORDS:** Culture; Diagnosis; Faith; Humanities;

Knowledge; Objectivity; Personalism; Rationality; Religion;

Science.

CHAPTER FOUR

Kant's Theory Of Morality Necessitates Personal Immortality

Franco Cortese

Franco Cortese locates Immanuel Kant as a historical

antecedent of the contemporary movement of life-extension,

turning to Kant's theory of ethics to show that, for Kant, personal

immortality is a prerequisite for both freedom and morality, and

serves as the foundation for his Summum Bonum, or "perfect

good". That Kant's means toward immortality is metaphysical

(immortality of the soul) rather than physical is anecdotal, Franco

argues, in that for Kant it is the destination (personal immortality)

that is important, rather than the particular means (e.g. physical vs.

metaphysical) used to arrive there.

**KEYWORDS:** Life extension; Philosophy; Immanuel Kant;

Kant's theory of ethics; Kant's Summum Bonum; Karl America;

Paul Guyer; Marquis de Condorcet.

CHAPTER FIVE

Theism, Leibniz, And The Question Of Immortality

Peter Lopison

In my paper I argue that most philosophical explorations of

religion and theism miss the genuine centre of gravity of their

intended topic. This centre of gravity is the idea, and possibilities,

of an indefinitely continuing personal existence beyond the

familiar human span. Everything we know about the world makes

it extremely unlikely that afterlives occur. However, my paper's

negative conclusions are not meant to be fully decisive. The

second half of my paper focuses on Leibniz's monadological

conception of immortality. This conception is integral to the most

reasonable theism and affords the possibility of conceiving of

immortality in an original and compelling way.

**KEYWORDS:** Religion; Metaphysics; Death; Afterlife;

Monad; Teleology; Theodicy; Problem of evil; Theology.

CHAPTER SIX

Can The Best Possible World Contain Death? Leibniz To

Partit: Optimalism, Axialrarchism, And Ananthropocentrism

Tim Mulgan

Leibnizian optimists insist that this must be the best of all

possible worlds. But could the best possible world involve human

mortality? I argue that, if God cared for individual creatures, and

this is the best world, then it must contain personal immortality, a

cycle of rebirth, and an infinite population. Optimists should

instead abandon anthropocentrism and explore non-human-centred

values. God does not care about us. This raises a new mortality

objection. Could the best world contain a mortal universe?

**KEYWORDS:** God; Leslie; Rescher; Personal immortality;

Rebirth; Utilitarianism; Infinite utility; Extra-terrestrial life; Fine-

tuning argument.



CHAPTER SEVEN

G.W. Leibniz's Anti-Death Perspective: Spontaneity Of Death And Absolute Immortality

Enrico Pasini

Gotfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) is famous for his theory of possible worlds and for a metaphysical view of the universe as composed of immaterial, imperishable simple substances with various levels of sentience and consciousness, each one spontaneously harmonizing with all others. This chapter delineates the relation of metaphysical immortality and ordinary death in such a philosophical setting, and lays out the ingredients of Leibniz's anti-death programme.

**KEYWORDS:** Leibnizian philosophy; Monads; Immortality; Death as slumber.

Abstract Of Pages 187-214

CHAPTER EIGHT

Scientific Divinitism:

A Proposed Immortalist-Transhumanist Life Stance

R. Michael Perry

A proposed transhumanist life stance called Divinitism is offered that, it is argued, could supplement or substitute for traditional religious faith, in particular providing a rationale for addressing the problem of death scientifically. Divinitism is to be grounded in a world-view which, though in some respects highly speculative, is nonetheless rational and secular. Divinitism advocates the transition of humans and other sentient beings to godlike status (divinization) through reason, science, and technology rightly applied. Cryonics is advocated; resurrections of the dead are also claimed to be scientifically feasible in principle and something to be undertaken eventually.

**KEYWORDS:** Resurrection; Afterlife; Identity; Survival; Multiverse; Person instantiations; Timeline cohort; Life stance; Cryonics; Religion; Omega Point Theory.

CHAPTER NINE

Transhumanist Leibniz:

Immortality, God And Panpsychism In The Information Age

Allan F. Randall

The philosophy of G.W. Leibniz has much in common with more recent transhumanist philosophies: a focus on computationalism and immortalist values, for example. At the same time, most modern transhumanists reject the omniscient and omnipotent God that played a central role in Leibniz's system, as well as Leibniz's panpsychism and his literal belief in a supernatural eternal life. I argue, however, that Leibniz distinguishes between a core metaphysical or rational component of his system, and a moral and religious component. Separating these two aspects of his system reveals a core Leibnizian metaphysics that is remarkably consistent with modern transhumanist beliefs and values.

**KEYWORDS:** Metaphysics; AI; Artificial intelligence; Rationalism; Immortality; God; Mind; Quantum mechanics; Pre-established harmony.

Abstract Of Pages 243-266

CHAPTER TEN

The "Death" Of Monads:

G. W. Leibniz On Death And Anti-Death

Markku Roinila

According to Leibniz, there is no death in the sense that the human being or animal is destroyed completely. This is due to his metaphysical pluralism which would suffer if the number of substances decreased. While animals transform into other animals after "death", human beings are rewarded or punished of their behavior in this life. This paper presents a comprehensive account of how Leibniz thought the "death" to take place and discusses his often unclear views on the life after death. I will also present a new, naturalistic reading of Leibniz's views on afterlife.

**KEYWORDS:** Transformation; Afterlife; Substantial form; Substance; Body; Soul; Perception; City of God; Hell; Pre-established harmony.



The main aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that G.W. Leibniz and Michael Polanyi's exemplary intellectual work in multiple fields of attention may serve a twenty-first century in dire need of courageous scholars willing to put daring and speculative imaginative inter-disciplinary risks in play. Such a development would serve to activate a general and cross-cultural sensibility that may salvage an otherwise perilous situation of knowledge work all too often predicated on property and power, instead of on the production of multiple truths that may enliven the world and inspire it.

**KEYWORDS:** General cross-cultural sensibility; Hope;

Imagination; Intersubjectivized; Knowledge work; Polymathic;

Sloterdijk; Society of scholars; Stiegler; Twenty-first century.

This document was released on March 14, 2016. The (non-profit) American Cryonics Society, Inc. (ACS) has the contractual right to inspect the facilities of the (non-profit) Cryonics Institute (CI) to determine if patients coming in under ACS (ACS patients) are being properly cared for by CI. ACS and CI are independent of each other in governance and finances. This document is a report of the January 25, 2016 inspection of the Cryonics Institute located in Clinton Township, Michigan. The inspection primarily concerns physical inspection of the premises and record keeping of patients and cryostat maintenance.

**KEYWORDS:** Cryonics; Cryonics patient; Cryonic; Cryonic hibernation; Suspended animation; Cryogenics; Liquid nitrogen.

Honoring someone's "last wishes" is seen in our culture (and in many other cultures) as a benevolent duty. Here I look at the case of a terminally ill cryonist residing in one of the death-with-dignity states of the USA. A particular cryonist may not be a cryonics expert. Likewise, a particular physician may not be a cryonics expert. Hence, a rationale for this Open Letter is that I seek to educate both the physician and the cryonist with respect to cryonics. For example, most cryonists and most physicians are unaware that all of the biomedical technical papers about cryonics in the PubMed literature speak favorably of its eventual success.

**KEYWORDS:** Aid in dying; Biomedical ethics; Cryonics;

Cryonics patient; Cryonics and science; Cryonic; Cryonic hibernation; Suspended animation; Cryogenics.

More than 300 years ago, Leibniz dreamt of a universal language and reasoning calculus, through which arguments could be stated precisely and controversies could be settled with certainty and mechanically. Today, three centuries after Leibniz's death, it is only natural to wonder how much of Leibniz's dream has been fulfilled so far. To partially answer this question, this chapter gives a brief overview of current automated reasoning technology and its logical foundations, relating them to Leibniz's desiderata.

**KEYWORDS:** Logic; Automated reasoning; Proof theory;

Algebra of concepts; History of logic.

Leibniz's work was profoundly motivated by his religious convictions. He proposed several arguments for the existence of God and sought to develop precise logical languages and deduction systems, in order to rigorously formalize his arguments. This chapter discusses Leibniz's arguments and formalizes one of them within Leibniz's own logical framework (his algebra of concepts) in detail, using modern automated reasoning technology. Surprisingly, the correctness of this argument depends on which notion of God is used.

**KEYWORDS:** Logic; Religion; Automated reasoning; Algebra of concepts; Characteristica Universalis; Calculus Ratiocinator; History of logic; Ontological argument; God.

CHAPTER ONE

The Philosophy Of Michael Polanyi And Some  
Contemporary Attitudes To Life And Death

R. T. Allen

*1. Some contemporary attitudes*

It should not be expected that Michael Polanyi wrote much or even anything directly upon attitudes to life and death, nor that particular thoughts about them can be inferred from what he wrote.<sup>1</sup> But there are some central themes in his work that bear in a general way upon some such attitudes and the intellectual climate in which we now live in what is called Western civilisation. I shall now list some of those attitudes that seem particularly noticeable and to which Polanyi's philosophy has some relevance, starting with the more general and ending with the more specific. After that I shall give a very brief summary of the main elements of Polanyi's philosophy, starting with the fundamental ones and working through to relevant developments of them, and as I proceed I shall apply each of them to the relevant attitudes.

**1.1. Simple acceptance that this life is all there is**

This must surely have been the attitude of most people throughout history and more so prehistory, otherwise the human race would not have survived ages of hardship. Yet archaeology has shown that, across the world, the presence of grave goods at least suggests that those people had a definite belief in another life like the one in this, and possibly better, unlike the Hebrew belief in the shadow world of Sheol and the Greek and Roman one of Hades. Many people today seem simply to accept that this life is the only

<sup>1</sup> See the Bibliography below which gives the usual abbreviations for his books. References to them will be given in the text using those abbreviations.

## Emancipating Forms Of Death With Polanyi And Leibniz

Erik S. Roraback

First, as preamble to the present chapter contribution, let us shine the spotlights on the critical philosophy of the spectacularly wide-ranging thinker, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716). Leibniz was, and is so now more than ever, an illustrious world cultural phenomenon, for his radical mode of cultural production of real worth and real value. In an important late text of Leibniz's from 1714 "The Principles of Nature and of Grace, Based on Reason" the legendary scholar of substance of catholic interests and concerns, duly notes for us that

because the world is a *plenum*, everything is connected and each body acts upon every other body, more or less, according to the distance, and by reaction is itself affected thereby, it follows that each monad is a living mirror, or endowed with internal activity, representative according to its point of view of the universe, as regulated as the universe itself.<sup>1</sup>

This dynamic notion of the intersubjectivized nature of the human subject and of its otherness displays Leibniz's commitment to learning process and environment in a late modern culture in which death and antideath are caught in a kind of confused deadlock, in an era of time that miscalculates the true value and potency of a patient, growing, incubating youthfulness, and of the process and achievement too of an intellectual process of maturation. And let it not go unmentioned that in Leibniz's cultural world each monad is as indexical and representative in a kind of microscopic theater of the whole universe.

<sup>1</sup> "The Principles of Nature and of Grace, Based on Reason" in *Leibniz Selections*, ed. Philip P. Wiener (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951) 523-24.

Lodge, Paul (2016). "Eternal Punishment, Universal Salvation and Pragmatic Theology in Leibniz" (forthcoming in L. Strickland, E. Vynckier & J. Weckend (Eds.), *Universal Genius. Tercentenary Essays on the Philosophy & Science of G.W. Leibniz*, Palgrave Macmillan; preprint available in [https://www.academia.edu/14460597/Eternal\\_Punishment\\_Universal\\_Salvation\\_and\\_Pragmatic\\_Theology\\_in\\_Leibniz](https://www.academia.edu/14460597/Eternal_Punishment_Universal_Salvation_and_Pragmatic_Theology_in_Leibniz))

Phemister, Pauline (2016). "Leibniz's Mirrors: Reflecting the Past", forthcoming in Wenchao Li et al. (Hrsg.), *Für unser Glück oder das Glück anderer. Vorträge des X. Internationalen Leibniz-Kongress*, Bd. VI, Olms, Hildesheim (forthcoming).

Phemister, Pauline (2011). "Monads and Machines", in Justin E. H. Smith and Chad Nacsony (Eds.), *Machines of Nature and Corporeal Substances in Leibniz*. Springer, Dordrecht, pp. 39-60.

Phemister, Pauline (2015). "The Soul of Seeds", in Adrian Nita (ed.), *Leibniz's Metaphysics and Adoption of Substantial Forms*. Springer, Dordrecht, pp. 125-141.

Roinila, Markku (2011). "Leibniz on Emotions and the Human Body", in Breger, Herbst und Erdner, *Natur und Subjekt. Vorträge 3. Teil* (IX. Internationaler Leibniz-Kongress, Hannover 2011). Leibniz-Gesellschaft, Hannover, pp. 927-936.

Roinila, Markku (2013). "Leibniz and the *Amour Pur* Controversy", *Journal of Early Modern Studies*, vol. 2, (2) (2013), pp. 35-55.

Roinila, Markku (2016). "Leibniz's Passionate Knowledge", *Blüty IV* (1-2, 2016), pp. 75-86.

Strickland, Lloyd (2009). "Leibniz on Eternal Punishment", *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 17 (2), pp. 307-331.

Strickland, Lloyd (2016). "Leibniz's Harmony Between the Kingdoms of Nature and Grace", *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 98 (3), pp. 302-329 (forthcoming).

Furthermore, in a dramatically extended visual scene for the universal adventure of thinking, Leibniz writes in another text that appeared following 1690, "The Horizon of Human Doctrine",

The entire body of the sciences may be regarded as an ocean, continuous everywhere and without a break or division, though men conceive parts in it and give them names according to their convenience. And as there are seas which are either unknown or sailed only by a few boats venturing on them by chance, so we may say there are sciences about which something is known only by chance and without a plan. One of them is the art of combinations which for me has as much significance as the science of forms or formulas or else of variations in general [...].<sup>2</sup>

We may say likewise that the opposition between the critical human sciences and the natural sciences merits another look and reorientation, with regard to practices of knowledge work and production, both in and outside of the academy. This would benefit the organization of knowledge. For the spread-outness of knowledge deserves a more capacious stance on things regarding intellectual daring, adventure, curiosity and venturesomeness are to be endorsed. My basic thesis here then to be sure is that we need a more polymathic academic and public sensibility to contest the devastating neoliberal capitalist culture of a delusional perpetual agelessness that conducts a climate of impotent forms of anti-death and death alike due to the ideological climate's profound unreason, anti-intellectualness, and new forms of soul-killing authority and devastating domination. These observations serve as a mere prologue to the present contribution.

Death and Anti-Death. How to approach such an enormous and even cosmic problem, with a grand universalist dimension, in its duality, and for some perspectives, radical unknowability? Our critical analysis sets about the task by engaging the intellectual

<sup>2</sup> "The Horizon of Human Doctrine" in *Leibniz Selections*, ed. Wiener, 73.

work by the twentieth-century Hungarian-British polymath Michael Polanyi (1895-1976), and the notable seventeenth-century German variant of the same remarkable conceptual figure, G.W. Leibniz. Our principal project here then is to unfold a plot leading from Polanyi to Leibniz and back to our present history. In so doing, we aim to construct the notional idea of a civic and private sensibility for the contemporary version of the human; this would be to promote a culture of life with which to wage war against the demolition job currently on offer that is a culture of hyper-death. It is my basic argument in the present piece that we precisely need today such exemplars of first-class wide learning and culture as Polanyi and Leibniz, in order to create an age of potent hope, and even perhaps one of an unfashionable happy and joyful, yet intellectually informed and aware, optimism. This would also be a way to wage a victorious battle against the culture of demise that is so prevalent in many of today's societies of modernity, due to the fatal reification (turning concepts into things) of work in the natural and in the human sciences; this is also ascribable to financial outsourcing of the human subject, mind, body, and soul, under the contemporary world of the false universal of big global finance. Such is the culture of so-called life and thinking, under an increasingly overworn and tired capitalism in need of profound transformation and transfiguration. This is what invites critique for new understandings, and so unleashed and renewed possibilities, for a culture of radical hope and belief for another enlightenment for the twenty-first century.

First of all, we might pause to consider that precisely it is the dazzling intellectual output in our culture in print of Polanyi and Leibniz that gives us to consider their corpus of texts at this point of fulfillment and reception. This proves that as an agent of knowledge, a human subject may survive her or his biological death via the mediating agency of one's cultural work in thinking and in writing. So this will be one line of view for the current essay. This idea is framed by the practical reality of a world in which we are told is itself very much dedicated to a culture of deadness (as against that of natural life and vitality) with its increasing militarization and extreme violence in multiple fields of attention; this takes place in a twenty-first century ostensibly even increasingly addicted to toxic forms of violence. A culture devoted



to and inscribed in death in its multiple guises must be given a kind of counterweight or counterexample in order to show another trail that might be blazed by knowledge producers for our current history. In this way, the trumpets may sound for a culture of lifelong and augmented learning and genuinely radical and liberating hope.

A curiosity-filled culture of creative thinking is instead what our contemporaneity should be aiming at, and this is what Polanyi and Leibniz attest to as exemplars of these cultural value ideals. Their individual disposition and attitude was precisely one toward knowledge endeavors that would be salutary for our own epoch of time. For ours is an age arguably enclosed in the prison house of money and power, both of which are concomitants with the attitude toward knowledge not multifariously mediated by a love of the truth, but rather with control and possession, or put otherwise: property, commodification, and turf. This causes a degradation to knowledge work, and to its ontological status in what could be termed a future-oriented world society in need of the process based trial and error mode of conjectural investigation, and not one predicated on fixed, ideological, and propagandistic doctrines buttressed by notions of fixity, territory, ownership, and control. Instead, we might consider ourselves as propertyless go-betweens of knowledge, and of door openers and introducers of key problems and most searching questions, for others to radicalize, and to extend for their own advancements of bodies of knowledge. In this way, we would do well to encourage an inter-generational research-minded culture of give and take or more precisely of co-operative collaboration and of pointed provocations for the innovation of new forms of ownership and even thereby of global citizenship.

Consider that a form of cognitive death may be something that happens too to one during one's biological existence as citizen and as life unit of the intellect. This is something that Polanyi and Leibniz resisted through their steadfast refusal to be pinned up to one dangerously narrow field of intellectual attention. For it was ostensibly incredibly empowering for these two key thinkers to follow their own curiosities, their self-singularizing sense of adventure, and to take on board the idea that the best research

consists in asking imaginative questions about possible new connections and larger picture problems, and not in proving in a more provincial key established doctrines and hard and fast classical distinctions, but in creating new ones; knowledge also comprises in the idea that the hallowed boundaries between disciplines are both radically and dialectically interconnected and traversable. Thus the problem of the reification of human and natural scientific work and of narrowness (both cognitively and affectively) surfaces here as something to be surmounted and overcome; this is particularly so before one finds one's self-identity reduced to a perfectly fitted academic or intellectual label or headstone. Thought's free development therefore is what interests us here. In this regard, Polanyi and Leibniz's heretical tendencies are pronounced, if not out and out exceptional, for augmenting a culture of genuine interdisciplinary and general scholarship and thinking.

Thus the problem on some level is to lead us back to the continuation of Polanyi's extraordinary imaginative project and also Leibniz's own; it is a question of how to remain faithful to their respective and rich legacies that resist the autocracy of a single-minded and perhaps even in many cases a specialization that runs the risk of training a narrow-hearted subjectivity. The consequences should be exceptional if these two respective bodies of intellectual work (Leibniz's and Polanyi's) were to acquire the exemplary force that they have had in certain contexts hitherto as models of truly productive thinking and of an adventure mentality. "The imagination is a secular form of grace, one which seizes upon the self from some unfathomable depth beyond it, but which in so doing allows it to flourish in its own inimitable way."<sup>3</sup> In this light, what we prefer is a culture where the life asserting and affirming imagination may find a place and a home. This is perhaps increasingly difficult to accomplish in many spaces of public life including pedagogic and publicational work, due to a growing and spreading culture of financial authoritarianism that

<sup>3</sup> Terry Eagleton, *Culture and the Death of God* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2014) 102.

hampers and militates against critical thinking and open forms of genuine culture and debate.

Let us now consider the very real corporate division of knowledge in our academies and universities in life under late capitalism; for this economic system is erecting walls and barriers everywhere one looks, just when it might be the exact reverse of the case. This is another way of speaking about the bureaucratization and financialization of knowledge. The age-old adage about how capital divides and conquer towers up here. And also the crisis of knowledge cultures. In contradistinction, a culture of life would support one of free creativity in the pursuit of knowledge in its radical unity. The brutal treatment of creativity by certain spirits of the society including of scholarship deserves to be challenged. This is because of the terrorism of specialization in many cases, where the general and societal intellect receives a truncheon blow. The environment of an early twenty-first century academic who aspires also to be an intellectual may be much challenged in this regard. For we live in an era of time of increasing specialization with the reification of thought and with the mega corporatization of university cultures. However, a humane kind of synthesis of our raw materials is what is needed to activate new thought processes and corridors of inter-disciplinary communication and knowledge outcomes. The intellectual disempowerment of a reified age of knowledge production arises here stage center. Knowledge labor is badly in need of post-capitalist repair. For the current material conditions may all too easy corrupt one's intellectual judgment about what constitutes true knowledge. Instead: we should construct historical and material conditions that allow us to pursue a desire for knowledge as free agents and to cognize in a more transnational and transdisciplinary way. This would thus extend and amplify knowledge values for a common public sensibility that is so requisite nowadays. A struggle involving intellectual capital in the form of specialized academic knowledge versus a more general inter disciplinary knowledge, at daggers drawn, constitutes one basic antagonism operative today that will decide the outcome of our shared future. It is here that we require a general cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary mentality, and a willingness to fight for higher cognitive and affective values.

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At this point, let us look at the problem of knowledge, or epistemology, for our present history to frame this issue, with the contemporary French writer Bernard Stiegler (1952-) who is also the Director of Cultural Development at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, "knowledge has become the crucial issue in the economic war currently destroying the world."<sup>4</sup> This new high estimation for knowledge, and for knowledge work of the sort that Polanyi and Leibniz accomplished, would thereby evade what Stiegler claims with some exigency constitutes our current historical condition in the twenty-first century, namely, one "based on the reign of stupidity [bêtise], and of what so often accompanies it, namely cowardice and viciousness."<sup>5</sup> This is assuredly not an exclamation of the kind of joy we so want for cultures of vitality and cooperation. Stiegler adds with aplomb about engaging the real hard task that is true thinking, with which to combat this meanness and dearth of intellectual courage:

Thinking, and especially philosophical thinking, is a struggle—and firstly, particularly in philosophy, a struggle against oneself and with oneself, that is, with one's shadow, in reckoning with it, and in counting on it. In this shadow, the social dimension of the unconscious and the collective dimension of psychic individuation are in play [...].<sup>6</sup>

Thus it is at the level of struggle, including with that of the problem of self-problematization, that we might too conceive of how to deal with the destructive, and yet also immensely creative and liberating force of the power of death; for to engage in the institution of death with our whole being that would construct a subject desirous of knowledge and so would mediate one mode of

<sup>4</sup> Bernard Stiegler, *States of Shock: Stupidity and Knowledge in the 21st Century*, trans. Daniel Ross (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2015) 12.

<sup>5</sup> Stiegler, *States of Shock: Stupidity and Knowledge in the 21st Century*, 3.

<sup>6</sup> *States of Shock: Stupidity and Knowledge in the 21st Century*, 74.

reality would be life affirming and life enhancing at one and the same shattering stroke for a system in need of recalibration.

Stiegler thus makes the following large claim, which if true, has immense intellectual-rational and spiritual-existential consequences, both for our present and for a future that needs our charitable assistance:

Whereas the formation and training of the individual, as citizen, producer, designer, inventor (artist, politician, administrator, technician, and so on), is posited as an absolute priority, imperative for any modern society—that is, industrial society—founded on the democratic ideal, the *reality* of the consumerist development of this industrial society has led to the generalized de-formation or reification of knowledge, which can then do nothing but undergo a massive inversion into stupidity, and lead to universal unreason, that is, to the ruin of democracy.

This all speaks to the idea that one real tough problem today has to do with a consumerist system that fails to ask about questions of deep value and duration, versus those of credentialization and an undue emphasis on phenomena of a superficial and ephemeral nature. That also includes the notion of intellectual and knowledge value, and of forms of stupidity and unreason. For what is true knowledge if not something that pertains to forms of being both in theory and in practice and that speaks to questions of value and of reason? In this way, value and reason studies would be two pathbreaking approaches in the construction of an intersubjectivized world society of scholars (there are any number of society of scholars centers in U.S. universities, which is suggestive in showing how social change often first happens on campuses in the U.S. context). Otherwise without the construction of such a society of learners there are any number of deformations of knowledge and reason, and so by extension of life as well, in a cultural climate that witnesses forms of de-democratization with

incubating forms of dominating authoritarianism due to a hegemonic force of big capital in the 2010s.

We may also glean from Stiegler's visionary 2010s study, "knowledge has become the crucial issue in the economic war currently destroying the world."<sup>8</sup> This runs knowledge up the flag pole as the really crucial thing to consider at the level of the economic, the psychological, and so forth. This would also include the idea of emancipation too from forms of economic, existential, and psychological death. What is more, in Stiegler's hand, with regard to our recent history and with the hard and indefatigable work of genuine thought as against that of rather more radically contingent and sectoral points of atomized view, "The technological becoming of knowledge has disrupted the conditions of the transindividuation of that disciplinary knowledge that is reputedly 'rational', that is, the result of critique deriving from logical, public disputation." To which Stiegler continues with uncommon perspicacity,

And this disruption has interfered with the critical faculty itself as the capacity to distinguish between knowledge, opinion and dogma. This new reality, which is as frightening as it is complex insofar as its consequences are immense, is completely ignored—and perhaps repressed—by François Hauter, as well as by most contemporary discourse on the widespread academic malaise that afflicts our age (schools, colleges and universities of all kinds, academies, institutions of 'auxiliary science'—librarianship, archive science, and so on—editorial and publishing functions, administrative science, academic inspections, [...]).<sup>9</sup>

For the present author, this is indeed regrettable in the case. And clearly this seriously deadly "malaise" and atomization of thought is in dire need of a critical corrective, so as to contest the negativity and fatal fatigue that pervades our so-called zombie culture of radical negativity; for today's culture instead needs to

become more sensitively attuned to joyful passions and of their nonesuch agential force. For what we require is a culture of encouragement, discipline, work, radical creativity, civic values, and hopefulness about the future, a culture that revalorizes the notion of value and the value ideals of passionate concern, daring, courage, fresh inspiration, and the radical future-included possibility of intersubjectivized communities of knowledge still to come for a hopeful age of an informed and intellectually clued happy optimism and moral strength.

Stiegler adds regarding the concept of the stupid,

There is nothing to *do*, say or *think* to counter stupidity, which is always the foundering of reason, there is nothing to do, say or think against unreason, reversing and inverting the conquest of majority that for Kant was the whole meaning of the *Aufklärung*, there is 'no alternative' to the pigsty: this is what a herd-become-stupid has been convinced of by an enormous ideological machine. A herd-become-stupid: that is, stunned and stupefied by a shock doctrine that is the properly political dimension of psychopower, of which so many of us, among the academics, have become the 'rationalizers' and the 'shepherds' [...].<sup>10</sup>

These statements may not constitute a shout of affirmation for the contemporary conditions for both spirits of reason and of knowledge production, and of their cultivation and extension, but they do allow us to confront head on the hard ineluctability of this two-sided problem. That is to say: the enormous complications of unreason and stupidity both in and outside the hallowed halls of academe.

Far from being a corrective to the foregoing state of affairs it may be argued in a systems theory account (Niklas Luhmann), among others, that the situation in the academy is perhaps indexical and emblematic of the overall contemporary situation. And in a key idea of Stiegler's, we read of "the blind

establishment of systemic stupidity by psycho-power."<sup>11</sup> The contemporary ideological constellation and universe dedicated to an overdeveloped model of the commodity form as the highest value intensely exploits this problem of stupidity with regard to the psychic system of the individual human subject. At such moments, where indeed are the trumpets of reason and of knowledge to be heard?

Thus, Stiegler poses the question about academic and university power in more general and universalist terms, "does the University in all its components not bear responsibility for this global unreason, if not indeed universal unreason, which seems to have taken hold of us, the latecomer of the twenty-first century, wherever on Earth we happen to be?"<sup>12</sup> These words are something that the work by Polanyi and Leibnitz would ask us to face without flinching. For they were, to their credit, more than willing to defend the cause of reason and of the moral authority of self-direction in the service of a more universal form of reason in their selection procedures, for interpretive and research work.

As for a notion of what constitutes the human subject in today's information age global society, we could do worse than consider Stiegler's notion of "*knowledge performance agents*."<sup>13</sup> The contemporary human subject then, in its performative aspects, enacts the mediating agency of knowledge work. In another formulation that aptly encapsulates what Stiegler is getting at in terms of our current epochalization, it may be considered "a new age of individuation, that is, of knowledge."<sup>14</sup> The ramifications of the current era of knowledge production and of its "industrial grammatization" is precisely what Stiegler is aiming at here when he writes in a big and important claim to note:

It is, however, not *savoir-faire* alone that is destroyed by industrial grammatization—and to the service of which theoretical knowledge is submitted. *Savoir-vivre*, too, is

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 127.



liquidated, through processes that capture attention and reconfigure it by standardizing behavioural patterns.<sup>15</sup>

This is a challenging difficulty with which we must come to terms. In an age of anti-depressants and spreading authoritarianisms, what has indeed happened to "savoir-vivre"? In this context, knowing how to live, itself a supremacy if not the single most important form of knowledge, suffers a grave setback with "industrial grammaticalization". This is all the more reason to construct a newly transformed society based on creative learning atmospheres and milieux. This would offer up an antidote to the thumb of the power of money. And interestingly in a radicalization of the thought of Karl Marx, Stiegler makes the following claim: "Marx did not see that capital brings about the destruction of tastes [savants] and, with them, of desire, as that which engenders them through sublimation."<sup>16</sup> How may we correct this situation of a unilateral attack on our cultivatable forms of desire that in many models (e.g., Spinoza) conduct the primal energies of the life process?

For Stiegler, what is needful is "the abandonment of the discourse that defends purchasing power, in favour of the goal of developing a *purchasing knowledge*, founded on a new *producing knowledge* and a new *conceiving and designing knowledge* in the age of digital grammaticalization [...]."<sup>17</sup> This idea of 'purchasing knowledge' would entail another way of setting up and arranging knowledge production, and the very notion of what constitutes knowledge, both disciplinary and interdisciplinary, for one's knowledge estate, if we wish to put the matter thus in more creditable and current ways. And as Stiegler suggests, such an estate or form of capital, may well have radical emancipatory potentials for a culture of genuine life-augmentation and vitality.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 135.  
<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 138.  
<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 143.

As things stand though, unfortunately, the current state of play involves the mobilization and effectuation for Stiegler of a "generalized proletarianization, that is, to the destruction not only of savoir-faire and savoir-vivre, but also and especially of theoretical knowledge."<sup>18</sup> Personal commitment and intellectual passion to the contrary are what are necessary in order to construct modes of knowledge acquisition that would surmount this general criminalization of the destruction of sterling knowledge work of interdisciplinarity and of theoretical investigative qualities. All the talk of our living in a post-theoretical age also enters the scene here and thus asks to be reconsidered and readjudicated. Consider that for Polanyi and Leibniz's intellectual work, thought needs deep cognitive work that constitutes theoretical work and attempts. For theoretical power also means more cognitive power for human subjectivity, and so too more individual and collective agency for individual and societal transformation.

In a manifesto to intellectual arms, Stiegler advocates that an economy of knowledge must valorize the new social utility of media, cast into the service of a scholarly society that remains in potential, but that hopes to become one in actuality—provided we give it the means of doing so."<sup>19</sup> Here this idea of the possibility "of a scholarly society" remains of paramount importance for the construction of our argument. For it is where so much of our radical hopes lie for a genuine culture of life and of its cardinal value. As for forms of the communal, Stiegler lobbies for the existence of "common objects that found the public Stiegler for the objects of knowledge."<sup>20</sup> This is a valid claim from Stiegler for the present author. The state of play in today's cultural climate? Consider this formulation from Stiegler, which the present writer endorses as an acute one:

This situation is centrifugal, and it expels those who 'profess the truth' and, with them, every form of knowledge, the authority of which finds itself short-circuited in the eyes of the younger generations who suffer

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 174.  
<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 213.  
<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 216.

from this escheat—but who do so much more lucidly than might be imagined.<sup>21</sup>

These are quite damaging claims, which speak volumes to the current cultural and ideological atmosphere, and to what we should concern ourselves.

To move on from the contemporary and cutting-edge thinker of note, Stiegler, and on to the polymathic twentieth-century scholar Polanyi, the current cultural situation is a vitally crucial one. We must in our own words construct a world scholarly society and culture. For Polanyi, the problem of intellectual commitment is crucial. Given the current historical conditions of a society dedicated to a cultural environment of deadness, which contrarwise requires a culture of learning as a new concrete universal (to deploy Hegel's vocabulary) for all of humanity, the risk remains as Polanyi notes that "unorthodox work of high originality and merit may be discouraged or altogether suppressed for a time."<sup>22</sup> For Polanyi, importantly, and correctly, knowledge is always personal, and hence the sort of unorthodox way of being an agent of knowledge production is built into the very procedure of its authentic construction. This angle of vision would be as against the reactionary cultural and academic bureaucracy that prevails in many quarters today. The human spirit and so the notion of community would need a hyper-revalorization of knowledge labor in order to reclaim the power of life. And this is not to endorse the oft-virus of pedantic knowledge. Instead it is to valorize the idea of highly specific, and singularized forms of knowledge, which retain a certain cognitive power precisely because they are so individuated and personal.

An extremely important point that Polanyi would want to insist on is the following one. And I quote it at some length so as to underscore its unusually fertile meaning and value with regard to our concern for a model of knowledge that would be concordant with a world society of scholars, a culture of life-enhancing

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Marjorie Grene, ed., *Knowing and Being: Essays by Michael Polanyi* (Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1969) 57.

learning, for another more cosmic and international-general sensibility to come: "We can account for this capacity of ours to know more than we can tell if we believe in the presence of an external reality with which we can establish contact. This I do." Polanyi continues and then closes with a form of both solidarity and universality,

I declare myself committed to the belief in an external reality gradually accessible to knowing, and I regard all true understanding as an intimation of such a reality which, being real, may yet reveal itself to our depended understanding in an indefinite range of unexpected manifestations. I accept the obligation to search for the truth through my own intimations of reality, knowing that there is, and can be, no strict rule by which my conclusions can be justified. My reference to reality legitimates my acts of unspecified knowledge, even while it duly keeps the exercise of such acts within the bounds of a rational objectivity. For a claim to have made contact with reality necessarily legislates both for myself and others with universal intent.<sup>23</sup>

The above claims are both important and coruscating that resonate with a more supple and nimble-minded notion of knowledge work, and of its activation for the contemporary human experience. Qualities of 'intimation' and the potent energy and faculty of imagination too are incorporated. Imagination is a form of active knowledge after all. And it is of course a classic observation to claim that intuition may be thought the highest form of rationality.

Polanyi adds to this notable above noted extract about his passionate and profound commitment to the category of truth:

I must admit that I can fulfill my obligations to serve the truth only to the extent of my natural abilities as developed by my education. No one can transcend his

<sup>23</sup> Grene, ed., *Knowing and Being: Essays by Michael Polanyi*, 133.

formative milieu very far, and beyond this area he must rely on it uncritically. I consider that this matrix of my thought determines my personal calling. It both offers me my opportunity for seeking the truth, and limits my responsibility for arriving at my own conclusions.<sup>24</sup>

These are inspiring noble words indeed on the vocation of the duties of the scholar and of the individual alike. We do what we can. What else can you do? Notions of self-responsibility here are key.

In some further fascinating aperçus from Polanyi, we read that "true knowledge bears on an essentially indeterminate reality."<sup>25</sup> This valorizes the idea that things are not simply black and white in a certain positivistic take on things. Moreover, in a famous formulation from Polanyi, "tacit knowing is the fundamental power of the mind."<sup>26</sup> Implied understanding then has a certain concordance with the core cognitive powers of the human brain. And in a point that resonates with the work of such twentieth-century continental thinkers as Jacques Lacan and Martin Heidegger, we read the following: "Little of our mind lives in our natural body; a truly human intellect dwells in us only when our lips shape words and our eyes read print."<sup>27</sup> This linguisticization of things thus may also be seen in Polanyi's intellectual vision of view and general cross-cultural sensibility.

Further Polanyi mentions that merit our attention, include the following that tackles the often vexing one of repressive forms of authority, which may lead to regressions in consciousness and authoritarianism: "freedom from authority is demanded so that truth may be discovered."<sup>28</sup> Authority thus in this context proves a wellspring of corruption for the life of the intellect and of the wide-ranging and radically emancipatory imagination. Thus

<sup>24</sup> *Knowing and Being: Essays by Michael Polanyi*, 133.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>28</sup> Michael Polanyi and Harry Prosch, *Meaning* (Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1975) 7.

authority often functions in a discreditable way. Therefore, we need to be skeptical and even wary of those who resort categorically to notional possibilities of what comprises authority, for it may instead have the authority of a veritable fraud. For instead what we require is a courageous love of truth for a more open and free society able to tap into the astonishing vectors of the category and praxis of life. Imagination may help us to get to truths.

What is additional, for Polanyi: "the relation of the scientist to his surmises is one of passionate personal commitment. The effort that led to a surmise committed every fiber of his being to the quest; his surmises embody all his hopes."<sup>29</sup> This is quite true as an index of the meritorious art of conjecture. Thereby, for Polanyi: "All knowledge is therefore either tacit or rooted in tacit knowing."<sup>30</sup> So if we adhere to this notion of tacit comprehension, it will guide us to modes of discovery of various sorts hitherto unreachable in any other way. Is this not an extraordinary opportunity?

As one textual proof of the problem of personal and tacit knowledge, it is worth registering that for Polanyi: "A potential discovery may be thought to attract the mind which will reveal it—inflaming the scientist with creative desire and imparting to him intimations that guide him from clue to clue and from surmise to surmise." And Polanyi adds: "The testing hand, the straining eye, the ransacked brain, may all be thought to be laboring under the common spell of a potential discovery striving to emerge into actuality."<sup>31</sup> This all speaks to the notion of a certain kind of singularization of the subjectivity of knowledge work. Consider that choices of research are themselves so many indexes of the unconscious. In this light, half the work may indeed be said to have located one's singular choice of a subject for investigation. On some level, it is the very selection procedure that indexes what matters most in the event of a true breakthrough. Thus it is perhaps

<sup>29</sup> Polanyi and Prosch, *Meaning*, 59.

<sup>30</sup> *Meaning*, 61.

<sup>31</sup> Michael Polanyi, intro. *Science, Faith and Society*, by Michael Polanyi (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1964) 14.

only by rejecting conventional narratives about decisions for research topics that we can tap into the awesome agency of our unconsciousness, and so too of the drive to know and to learn more about ourselves and the universe in an explosive mix of creative and scholarly activities.

Another provocative theoretical statement that rises from Polanyi's edifice of thought is the following one on the notion, for this present author, of a creative community still to come:

The creative life of such a community rests on a belief in the ever continuing possibility of revealing still hidden truths. In *Science, Faith and Society*, I interpreted this as a belief in a spiritual reality, which, being real, will bear surprising fruit indefinitely. To-day I should prefer to call it a belief in the reality of emergent meaning and truth.<sup>32</sup>

This absolutely communicates the invigorating notion that though we are in this world, we are not altogether of this world. For there is more to the actual than what meets the eye. And the problem of becoming on some profound level surmounts all in the construction of a larger and more capacious stance and understanding of matters. An extremely cultured universe would endorse these sorts of ideas for the intellectual life. For there and communal pleasure and happiness might thus follow in truth's train.

There is another remark from Polanyi, which I find particularly notable. This is because it offers the notional possibility that a capacity may be attested to and cultivated namely "a faculty of speculative discovery."<sup>33</sup> Surely speculative knowledge work is what we need more of today in an era that in a rather militantly conservative way, both ideologically and functionally, blocks the speculative imagination from attaining its true life-ennobling and emancipating potentials. This is ironic given that

<sup>32</sup> Polanyi, *Science, Faith and Society*, 17.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Polanyi, *Science, Faith and Society* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1946) 88.

the official economic system today of finance capital preeminently relies on speculative forms of thinking. As for the transfer of knowledge from one era to the next one, consider this remark from Polanyi, "the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the other must be predominantly tacit."<sup>34</sup> Hence knowledge has a profoundly conjectural trait to it; this is what is important not to underestimate.

In addition, for Polanyi, "we are forced to conclude that all knowledge is of the same kind as the knowledge of a problem."<sup>35</sup>

If this is so, and in certain contexts it indubitably is, then the key thing is to locate the true problems: this takes both courage and imagination and a singular intellectual energy to persist in the face of misunderstanding and misrecognition from others. There may even be forms of exploitation that also result from some commendable effortfulness.

The Polanyi notion that we know more than we can tell, resonates with the modus operandi of another major figure of the twentieth century, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), of whom Patrick Mahoney has written: "In his own life as a writer, Freud placed the stakes very high. Cromwell's words, 'A man never mounts so high, as when he does not know where he's going,' were often quoted by Freud and indeed shed light on the conquistadorial intent behind his creative self-abandonment to unconscious impulses. The outcome of Freud's bold venture was remarkable."<sup>36</sup> To be sure, something the same may be said about Polanyi's and Leibniz's unbounded and astonishing intellectual projects. For they did have a certain quality of extreme heroism and redemptive power. Therefore, if we are to do justice to their extraordinary legacy, and to locate their inspiring cultured trajectories, we need to also see our own intellectual and spiritual endeavors in similar terms. The examples of the efforts of other scholars such as Polanyi and Leibniz may help us to avert the

<sup>34</sup> Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, foreword Amartya Sen (Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 2009) 61.

<sup>35</sup> Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 24.

<sup>36</sup> Patrick J. Mahoney, *Freud as a Writer*, Expanded Edition (New Haven: Yale UP, 1987) 162.



ghetization of knowledge, which itself is a kind of ideological fascism or depraved corruption. The duty of self-improvement with regard to knowledge work thus lives on with the uncommon cognitive-spiritual accomplishments of Polanyi and Leibniz.

As Polanyi puts the matter, and ably in my view for new practices of intellectual freedom: "Thus corruption or outright servitude will weaken and narrow down the true practice of science; will distort its rectitude and whittle down its freedom. And it will similarly distort and whittle down all rectitude and freedom in every field of cultural and political activity."<sup>37</sup> In contradistinction, if we are allowed a certain more nimbleness and suppleness of mind that would mobilize the resources of higher teaching and research in the service of more free-ranging powers of thought and of intellectual work, this all would conduct a more authoritarian-free society of polyphonic knowledge production and overall tendency of today's practical and ideological worlds. For our form of universalism today is not knowledge and creative learning culture, but money and power, which is to say also the market and the profit motive defined in a narrow-minded way to push forward a reductive notion of gain. There is a lot of extra baggage on board here that we would do well to discard. For a culture of life, knowledge, and learning would instead estimate not the prison house of mammon and limited power, but that of gestation, growth and learning, for the common and genuinely powerful bonds that we have with one another and with our universe.

<sup>37</sup> Polanyi, *Science, Faith and Society*, 79. - 286 -

for self- and other-transformation via the awesome force of cognitive and imaginative work.

Let us move on to that other magus and shooting star of interdisciplinary culture: Leibniz. In another continental key, the contemporary German scholar and writer Peter Sloterdijk (1947-) asserts in a fascinating brief text on the very gifted magician of learning and knowledge work that: "If one looks back at the phenomenon of Leibniz through the lens of this typology, his figure appears strangely remote and distorted." Indeed,

Seen against the backdrop of the philosophical *imagines* and investigative images of the twentieth century, the genius of Leibniz falls into a typological gap in which he becomes all but invisible—and if contemporary thought has not known how to reestablish a convincingly fruitful relationship with the work of the philosopher and scientists, the main reason is that it no longer understands the kind of type Leibniz was.<sup>38</sup>

This is compelling material. For it teaches us to know that the problem of knowledge in today's ideological environment has become so sectorally interested, if not all too often ghetized, and thus more a part of the problem than of the solution; this is so to such an extent that such a conceptual persona as who Leibniz embodied would precisely be of aid nowadays. That the notions of power, territory, property and control thus subtend so much knowledge work in the twenty-first century constitutes a central problem for the contemporary mind and imagination. It is perhaps a crucial if disavowed deadlock in the extreme challenge that remains that of making a world society of scholars.

Furthermore, Sloterdijk adds brilliantly that with regard to Leibniz and universality, among much else besides, "To understand the *oeuvre* and theoretical temperament of this great scholar and comprehend them on his own terms, it is imperative to

<sup>38</sup> Peter Sloterdijk, *Philosophical Temperaments: From Plato to Foucault*, trans. Thomas Dunlap, foreword Creston Davis (New York: Columbia UP, 2013) 37. - 287 -

reconstruct the typological locus or the field in which Leibniz pushed himself up to such monumental and polymorphous height." Further textual supports from Sloterdijk arrive hereby:

The Leibnizean field of theory sees the merger of two shaping forces that cannot be adequately grasped from either the professorial or the literary form of philosophical thought. The first matrix of the Leibnizean *Wissenskunst* (knowledge-art) is the magical universal science of the Renaissance along with its subsequent developments during the Baroque. Leibnizean universalism, which a romanticizing history of philosophy erroneously turned into a matter of genius, represented in truth the outflow of an epistemological-magical ideal that had asserted itself from the fifteenth century on in numerous potent incarnations.<sup>39</sup>

That is, Leibniz was also an epiphenomenon of his era of time, the early modern historical baroque, which allowed for his kind of cultural work to happen in the first place. The complexity of the creative-intellectual opportunity seized by Leibniz is itself to be sure instructive.

More specifically, Sloterdijk urges in a rather magisterial account that,

Only the convergence of the courtly intellectual and multi-tasker with the Baroque universal scholar could bring about the specific Leibniz effect—the marvel of intellectual polyathleticism in which the happily restless, proficiency-addicted, multi-focused intellect of the thinker radiated in all directions. Like a Sun King of thought, Leibniz exhausted himself in countless departments of reason.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Sloterdijk, *Philosophical Temperaments: From Plato to Foucault*, 37.

<sup>40</sup> *Philosophical Temperaments: From Plato to Foucault*, 39.

Leibniz thus argued matters synthetically and creatively in his cultural work that was time and again informed by the logic of development of good, happy, and powerful spirits of reason and rationalism. And in another Sloterdijk-moment of high estimation of the Leibnizian project that aspires to that status of a kind of universal creator in the heritage of the special power of the sun or if you prefer of the ur-creator, a God-agent, "Competent activity all around: according to Leibniz, that is the surest way—within human limitations—to imitate God, the one who interconnects all in everyday life."<sup>41</sup> This love of the complex whole that is one true lesson of the veritable greatness of Hegel's philosophy then is what Leibniz embodied in the passionateness of the drive to knowledge work that his cultural work and writing career so well instanced with weight and luster.

Sloterdijk then ends his illuminating short piece with the following affirmational note about Leibniz, to wit,

By defining human subjectivity as competent and informed activity that is endlessly perfectible, he made his contribution to the formation of the modern subject as the entrepreneur of Being in its totality. The brightness and dispassionate friendliness of the Leibnizian world is grounded in the circumstance that its subject is allowed to move, still without any scruples, as the agent of a rational deity within a universe rich in perspectives and full of mysteries worthy of investigation.<sup>42</sup>

This passage contains more than a glimmer of radical and educative-scholarly hope in the notional possibility and plausibility of a bright and brilliant future for the universe and for the human-scholar's extremely modest place in it. A learned and conciliatory Leibnizian conviviality here wins out.

And yet things are not quite so simple, as Sloterdijk avers in what comes next in his textual record, "In post-Leibnizian worlds, the relationship of loyalty between Subject and Being seems

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

destroyed, and with the rise of existentialisms, life philosophies, and systems theories, the optimistic fit between subjective and objective reason was lost." Adds Stierdijk:

Ever since, the subjects have found themselves entangled in total wars of various types of reason: as agents, they are at the best of various types of reason. For the future history of humankind it will be important to regenerate a principle of optimism (or at least a principle of non-pessimism) with post-Leibnizian means. If that were to happen, who would rule out the possibility that future generations will find their most important inspiration in Leibniz?<sup>43</sup>

This passage allows us a largeness of spirit to imagine that Leibniz may be the true signpost and waypost for a more open, participative, and intellectual future of a society of non-pessimistic internationally minded citizens of scholars. In this *society of scholars*, forms of knowledge would be central in the construction of a public sensibility that would be more open, free, nimble, adventurous, courageous, and generous-hearted, rather like the forms of knowledge such a societal sensibility would invoke and provoke, for another experience of the economic and of the social. This would thus be a culture not of death, but of the stunning power of life. And it would enable the society of scholars to perform its proper work for the production of common knowledge. This may be taken care of in interesting and productive ways in a cultural world that estimates the life of the mind and of the imagination with a new nobleness and great heartedness.

Thus, what a culture of life-learning would promote would be free-ranging powers of mind and of cognitive work for a world society of scholars that would take its cue from the considerable nobility and intellectual energy of Leibniz. A new dedication to the noble ideals of research work would take center stage in a Leibniz-motivated culture of learning, development, and growth. For if we are to speak up for the cognitively dispossessed, then we need to cultivate a culture of life-affirming knowledge with radical

emancipatory possibility. Beyond all the scholarly disputes about Leibniz's philosophical and mathematical work, above all, what then remains for this author the most important thing about this star scholar: his amazing and transmissible qualities of curiosity and energy for a culture of life-betterment.

Leibniz possessed high, wide, and deep erudition and intellectual powers; these successes and gifts were unmatched by his peers; Leibniz and Polanyi too might be viceroys for another index of knowledge work, one that would be more on the scale of the intellectual, and not only on that of the reliable. The creative fold and practice of learning would merit nothing less. The public sensibility requires this form of intellectual enlightenment. A lifeless age it may not be, but surely it could be one of a rather more creative and open-minded disposition and attitude. If the work of Leibniz and Polanyi could be alchemized into a more beneficent social space, all the better. A practical and ideologically oriented world of big finance is stealthily taking away our proper work and birthright. Hence, the world cries out from all sides to be activated by knowledge. For our knowledge of things may enlighten our experience of them. Knowledge matters: So may a culture of apprenticeship thus begin with respect to its recognition in order to move up the knowledge scoreboard to truly dramatic and efficacious outcomes.

Devotion to communal ideals of research and learning work are what thus we need to emancipate ourselves from forms of individual and social-communal death: namely, property, a false doctrine of power, and modes of freezing discovery due to the reification of forms of knowledge and obtusive hyper-specialization. If we are to emancipate forms of death we must by a logical extension also liberate the human imagination and creativity and defend each at every turn for a newfangled culture of life. It is thus the form of Leibniz's philosophical and writing career that may be of the most interest in thinking about a culture of immortality, rather than any content effects of his revolutionary investigations in philosophical research, in logic, in mathematics, and beyond per se. Accordingly, the trumpets will blare.

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For the popular and also in many contexts academic conception about dilettantish inter-disciplinary work is false, superficial, and phony. Contrariwise, it is what we most need today in a Leibnizian spirit full of the most valuable thing of all: anti-death, which is to say life and one of its most natural activities and byproducts: genuine inter-disciplinary and creative learning. If we have a self and communal obligation to the validity of knowledge work, then we likewise have a duty to life and to the truth of its enhancement.

The elephantine footprints of Polanyi and Leibniz are left to help us navigate our own way in these hard endeavors stamped by intensely focused discipline, curiosity, and creativity. For human being, and its still largely undiscovered abilities in the construction of knowledge work, awaits its day in the amazing and miraculous galaxy of the Milky Way. Two blueprints of knowledge work have already been set toward this end by the exemplary writing carers and research guides of Leibniz and Polanyi. The vacuum left by their demise as still active knowledge creators should goad us on to find the right mixture for our own knowledge activities. For there is a balance to be won for the special qualities of personal curiosity and creativity, and for a concomitant proper pride in their development and attainment.

The individual scholar, citizen, and also the public sphere, would by extension all be winners in a newly revamped and inexorable, because inevitable society of co-operative scholars for a universal community that would be unfettered from forms of cognitive and affective death that erroneously pass off as forms of life. With Polanyi and Leibniz as models of thought for intellectual action, all bells will be tolling, for a catholicity of thought may find its rightful place and true home for our better judgment.



CHAPTER TWELVE

Inspection Of The Cryonics Institute On January 25, 2016

Charles Tandy

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"Inspection Of The Cryonics Institute On January 25, 2016"  
By Charles Tandy  
(Publication Release Date: March 14, 2016)

*Note On Terminology Used Herein*

ACS means American Cryonics Society, Inc.

CI means Cryonics Institute.

Hibernation means cryonic hibernation (also known as cryonic suspension).

Patient means cryonics patient (also known as cryonaut).

LTC care means long term cryonics care (also known as long term cryostorage).

Animal means non-human animal.

*Prefatory Remarks*

The (non-profit) American Cryonics Society, Inc. has the contractual right to inspect the facilities of the (non-profit) Cryonics Institute to determine if patients coming in under ACS (ACS patients) are being properly cared for by CI. ACS and CI are independent of each other in governance and finances.

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*Death And Anti-Death, Volume 14:  
Four Decades After Michael Polanyi,  
Three Centuries After G. W. Leibniz*

Volume 14, as indicated by the anthology's subtitle, is in honor of Michael Polanyi and of G. W. Leibniz. The chapters do not necessarily mention them (but some chapters do). The chapters (by professional philosophers and other professional scholars) are directed to issues related to death, life extension, and anti-death, broadly construed. Most of the contributions consist of scholarship unique to this volume. As was the case with all previous volumes in the Death And Anti-Death Series By Ria University Press, the anthology includes an Index as well as an Abstracts section that serves as an extended table of contents.

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