



Michael Polanyi: Scientist and Philosopher

By William Taussig Scott, Martin X. Moleski

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Michael Polanyi was one of the great figures of European intellectual life in the 20th century. A highly acclaimed physical chemist in the first period of his career who became a celebrated philosopher after World War II, Polanyi taught in Germany, England, and the United States and associated with many of the leading intellects of his time. His biography has remained unwritten partly because his many and scattered interests in a wide variety of fields, including six subfields of physical chemistry, epistemology, economics, patent law, social and political theory, aesthetics, and theology. This long-awaited volume will be the definitive resource on Polanyi and his work.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Scott's and Moleski's writing is excellent. The text is well documented, quoting from Polanyi's private papers and from his published works, with special reference to his major publications... This is a fine introduction to a profound student of human knowing."--*Theological Studies*

"A fine achievement. The authors have skillfully woven together Polanyi's personal life, his scientific interests and work, and his interests and work in philosophy, politics and economics." --*Appraisal*

"*Michael Polanyi: Scientist and Philosopher* is a splendid tapestry that shows how Polanyi's ideas emerge and grow in the context of Polanyi's life as a European scientist and intellectual engaged with the major issues of his time. This is a book that should appeal both to those who are interested in Polanyi's career as a scientist and to those who know Polanyi for writing in economics and philosophy." --Phil Mullins, Editor, *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical*

"At last a comprehensive and detailed biography of Michael Polanyi, one of the greatest scientists and philosophers of the 20th century, is available. Based on scientist and philosopher William Scott's seventeen years of research and interviews, theologian Martin Moleski has produced a volume that will guide beginners, scholars, and acquaintances of Polanyi in understanding the remarkable journey of a polymath who gave up his distinction in science and social thought to help us relate the objectivity of science to the life of faith. This book is truly a gold mine for grasping the range and depth of Polanyi's still rising philosophy. No further research on Polanyi will be valid without this foundational work on Polanyi's life." --Richard Gelwick, author of *The Way of Discovery, An Introduction to the Thought of Michael Polanyi*

"This is an extraordinary biography of an extraordinary man. Michael Polanyi was both physical scientist and philosopher of science, who sought in his later career to define the relationships among science, faith and freedom, as captured in this vivid narrative by the late William T. Scott and Martin X. Moleski. Drawing on collections of private correspondence and on interviews with more than 150 people who knew him, this first major biography of Michael Polanyi is an essential source for understanding Polanyi, his extremely talented family, and his scientific and intellectual milieu in twentieth-century Central Europe, Great Britain, and the United States."--Mary Jo Nye, Horning Professor of the Humanities and Professor of History, Oregon State University

"This biography presents an outstanding portrait of the life and career of Michael Polanyi and the times he lived through. It will be an invaluable reference work for those interested in this fascinating man."--*Bulletin*

About the Author

William Taussig Scott was a distinguished theoretical physicist with a lifelong interest in philosophy, and the author of *The Physics of Electricity and Magnetism* (1959) and *Erwin Schrödinger: An Introduction to His Writings* (1967). Two National Science Foundation Fellowships were critical in his development: at Yale he studied theology and met Michael Polanyi; at Oxford he immersed himself in philosophy and deepened his relationship with Polanyi, whom he found to be a bridge between authentic science and authentic faith.

Martin X. Moleski, S.J. is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Canisius College. He is the author of *Personal Catholicism: The Theological Epistemologies of John Henry Newman and Michael Polanyi* (2000).

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