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INVITED EDITORIAL

Intellectual Budapest, Hungarian Experience and the Republic of Science *Some Different Faces in Mihály Polányi's Thinking*

Endre Kiss

Prof. Emer. OR-ZSE (Jewish Seminary) Budapest, Hungary; Emer. Prof. ELTE University Budapest, Hungary

Email: dr.endre.kiss@gmail.com

Abstract – The intellectual life in Budapest, since the turn of the twentieth century, developed in fact a hardly evident wealth of intellectual movements. The contours of the fundamental model of Budapest's intellectual history of that time have been drawn by the interaction of two components. Despite the unavoidable generalization, the following thesis can be presented: the contents of the three “*non-simultaneous*” great waves of the European Modern Age revealed as “*simultaneous*” phenomena in the politics, science and aesthetics in the Budapest context.

Tacit knowledge was the focus of interest in the second period of Polányi's sociology of knowledge. He explained the concept, the mechanisms, and the functions of tacit knowledge in several studies and with complete persistence. The process described by Polányi is a ‘real process’. But not a real process can *not become the criterion of truth* or the foundation of a conception of truth.

Most social scientists of that age held the opinion that the fact that the representatives of the Hungarian 1956 formulated and represented values in an explicit way made the judgement of the events impossible *as it would violate Max Weber's principles of value-free judgments*. We believe that the evidence of ‘moral truth’ could be based more successfully on so-called fundamental consensus. i.e. consensus in basic values than on the universal truth approach of the sociology of knowledge. One of its constituents has already been mentioned: neither concept of evidence can avoid relativism.

Scientific communities also have their own history. Thomas S. Kuhn's concept of paradigms changed the situation dramatically. It settled scientific communities in the decisive position of scientific production. This theory liberated science very rapidly, also in practice. In this Kuhnian framework was born Polányi's vision of democracy in the sciences. We don't know what Polányi would say about our new trends. Certainly, he would stick to his special liberal position.

Keywords – Mihály Polányi, tacit knowledge, genealogy, criterion of truth, three waves of European modernity, Max Weber, fundamental consensus, Thomas S. Kuhn, scientific democracy, paradigm, the Republic of Science

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INTELLECTUAL BUDAPEST

Since the turn of the 20th century, the intellectual life in Budapest developed a hardly evident wealth of intellectual movements. The contours of the fundamental model of Budapest's intellectual history of that time have been drawn by the interaction of two components.

One of these components was *sociological*. The intensive industrialization and the modernization of social relationships created an increasingly large range of miscellaneous socio-cultural circles that were looking to express themselves intellectually and dynamically. The other component resulted from the fact that in Hungary – like everywhere in Europe¹ –

¹ The diverse “national” cultures in the modern Europe could be exactly described quite from the order and other definitions of this succession of the most new orientations. It

has also not to be forgotten, that the orientation of the propagation of these impulses was not at all only a west-east orientation. Also quite rightly, one could speak of an east-

the most diverse political, ethical, life-reforming impulses and any variations of a renewal thinking occurred simultaneously.

Despite the unavoidable generalization, the following thesis can be presented: the contents of the three “*non-simultaneous*” great waves of the European Modern Age² revealed as “*simultaneous*” phenomena in Budapest politics, science and aesthetics context.

The interaction of these two mentioned components led to the fact that emerging socio-cultural groups articulating in a foolish and as well intense rhythm found a large choice among the currents and contents of modernization arrived simultaneously, however non-simultaneous in their origin, and could therefore identify themselves very easily with one of these currents. Thus, for example, Herbert Spencer’s positivism was represented in Budapest through the circle of the journal *Huszadik Század*, the symbolism of French poetry since Baudelaire through the journal *Nyugat*, the overthrow of Friedrich Nietzsche’s values³ through the programme of transvaluation also of several intellectual groups, the Viennese impressionism and its numerous modes of overcoming through the young Lukács and his circle⁴ as well as precisely – and here without aspiring to any exhaustivity of these movements – Ernst Mach’s positivism through another even more recent group of intellectuals.

This abundance of schools, groups, circles and orientations created an intellectual situation which naturally drew behind itself and also many other sociological consequences. On the one hand, an intellectual rhythm appeared, in which the verbal exchange has often revealed as more important than the written one, so that much of the material of the intellectual debate was not directly presented in the written form. On the other hand, is also linked to this, the fact that in this domain, the translation literature has also become secondary. The participants in these discussions had at least a high level in German, however, spoke very little French and English. This leads to the singular sociologico-cultural fact, that we cannot, for example, establish from the extent and distribution of the translation literature large leading statements about the size

west orientation and (amongst others) also of a north-west one!

² About the three great “waves” of the intellectual, political and aesthetic Modern Age, see E. Kiss, *Szecesszió egykor és most*. Budapest, 1984.

³ A monographical treatment of Nietzsche’s Hungarian reception. See Endre Kiss, *A világnézet kora*. Friedrich Nietzsche abszolútumokat relativizáló hatása a századelőn. Budapest, 1982. Summarized in German: „Die Rezeption Friedrich Nietzsches in Ungarn bis 1918-1919”, *Nietzsche’s Studies*. 1980/9. 268-284.

and character of a process of concrete reception. One of the most discussed thinkers and actually most acting of that time was Friedrich Nietzsche. However, translations of many works of Nietzsche did not even appear in the best years of discussions concerning him, i.e. simply because the debate could also take place essentially without Hungarian versions⁵.

Mihály Polányi’s historical balance is also motivated by the “Hungarian experience”. This hardly adequately worked off experience consisted of the processing of a terrifically fast succession of three revolutions or counterrevolutions. After the downfall of Austria-Hungary, the bourgeois-democratic political institution appeared first, the Hungarian republic, taken in the western sense of Mihály Károlyi and Oszkár Jászi. It was followed by the Hungarian soviet republic of Béla Kun and Tibor Szamuely, a contemporary form of the Commune, i.e., of Bolshevism. The “white” takeover of the admiral’s Horthy succeeded to it after 133 days.

The declining Austria-Hungary was considered by a lot of contemporaries as an “experiment station of the future” (the formulation comes from Karl Kraus). There is no doubt that it was just the emerging *Hungarian experience*, which also anticipated everything and, rightly, as an “experiment station”, what we were forced to consider later as the essence of the twentieth century. And it has also been this Hungarian experience, which stood behind this historical-philosophical balance, that has broken through in Mannheim’s postdoctoral thesis by the constitution of two new paradigms ways.

ON MIHÁLY POLÁNYI'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

Tacit knowledge was the focus of interest in the second period of Polányi’s sociology of knowledge. He explained the concept, the mechanisms, and the functions of tacit knowledge in several studies and with complete persistence. Therefore, I will assume that the most significant qualities of tacit knowledge should be already well-known.

I consider ‘tacit knowledge’ as a *coherent concept* by the formation of the meaning of certain perceptions and objects. Polányi enumerates six examples of this⁶, but none of which

⁴ About it in detail, see Endre Kiss, “Lukács, Vienna, Belle Epoque. On the Significance of Vienna in the Development of the Young Lukács”. In: *East European Quarterly*, XX. no 2. June 1986. 141-155.

⁵ It is however a very instructive fact that, in the Hungary of the pre-war time, with two complete translations, four (!) Hungarian complete free adaptations of Zarathustra of Hungarian authors are edited. See about this Endre Kiss, “Nietzsche’s Zarathustra”: A model of the philosophical poetry in Eastern Europe. In: *Nietzsche-Studien*, Vol. 17. p. 298-314.

⁶ See Michael Polányi, ‘The Logic of Tacit Inference’, in: *Knowing and Being*. Essays by Michael Polanyi. Edited by Marjorie Green. Chicago, 1969. 145.

seems to be fully convincing. A test person conditioned by appropriate electroshocks will identify the electroshock with the 'meaning' of the searched syllables, but if the syllables in question otherwise also have a meaning, the test person will not obtain this through his shocks. The 'meaning' of the correct bodily movements executes the task of cycling, not to fall off the bicycle, but this meaning can also be interpreted in the context of the cyclist's vital interests. The semantic function of tacit knowledge⁷ is unsuitable for substantiating a semantics of universal validity, though it is indisputable that tacit knowledge can shape meanings in the history and genealogy of the subject himself. I will return to this later. Tacit knowledge can be only *genealogically* suitable for constituting the meaning of individual objects.

Polányi, however, does not confine himself to attributing all the work of shaping a 'meaning' to the activity of tacit knowledge; he goes farther, and he does it in two steps.

The *first* step is this: while expanding the concept of tacit knowledge, he treats the meaning arising as a conception of truth and, therefore, tacit knowledge as the ultimate criterion of scientific truth. This conception of truth - and this is the *second* expanding step in interpreting tacit knowledge as constituting a meaning - is placed in the concept of *metaphysical* and *antimetaphysical* analyses of science. Finally, in explaining these steps, Polányi makes a number of very remarkable and appropriate comments, which hardly makes the criticism of these steps an easy task.

Let us look at Polányi's *first* step. He says: 'the truth of a proposition lies in its bearing on reality'⁸. This statement is true in the sense that the search for truth itself, scientific knowing, is indeed realized when tacit knowledge contacts reality. The process described by Polányi is a 'real process', whether we want to ontologize its reality or remain content with merely stating this reality. But a real process can *not become the criterion of truth* or the foundation of a

conception of truth. I have shown Polányi's six examples of what problems may arise from the shaping of the meaning of individual objects from the normal operation of tacit knowledge alone, without any further reflections. Polányi's mistake lies in deducing truth from the *real being* of the whole of tacit knowledge and the *partial* meaning-giving function of the same tacit knowledge. The criterion of a conception of truth is not what we call the non-explicit and non-explicable real processes leading to it, and we emphasize the reality of these non-explicit and non-explicable processes, but rather that we make it explicit. We cannot use the reality of non-explicit and non-explicable processes of tacit knowledge for the criterion of truth because the real fact of the genealogy of knowledge doesn't give enough evidence to decide their truth or falsity. One cannot speak of non-explicit scientific truth since, in this case, the possibility of intersubjective controllability and verifiability is lost. *What we need is not truth but controllable truth*, and non-explicit knowledge is not controllable.

Polányi rightly refers to the fact⁹ that his critics reproach him baselessly that his theory of knowledge, or if you like, his sociology of knowledge, has a 'psychological' character. Polányi's criticism of the conception of truth is based on the genealogy of scientific knowing. The real being of tacit knowledge does not guarantee the 'rightness' of individual integrations and the 'rightness' of the explicit scientific statements based on them. Tacit knowledge is the theory of the real history of the genesis, the genealogy of particular knowledge.

From this perspective we can immediately and clearly show where Polányi makes his determining mistake. *The conception of truth based on tacit knowledge is genealogical*. But a genealogical conception of truth should be interpreted only in a genealogical, that is in a diachronic context. And indeed, Friedrich Nietzsche's genealogical conception of truth builds the genealogy of truth on the meaning of tacit

⁷ Ibid. - A relevant explicit definition: 'I shall show that to form such a structure (the structure of tacit knowledge - E.K.) is to create meaning.' (Michael Polányi, 'Sense-Giving and Sens-Reading', in: *Intellect and Hope*. Durham, 1968. 402.

⁸ Ibid. 172. The two central thoughts of my essay appear in logical interrelation with each other in the direct context of this text, inasmuch as the genealogical conception of truth is interlinked with the criticism of 'anti-metaphysical' philosophies: 'Modern anti-metaphysical philosophies, like pragmatism, operationalism, positivism, and logical positivism, have tried to spell out the implications of asserting a proposition to be true. But... the truth of a proposition lies in its bearing on reality...' (ibid). My essay from the beginning treats Polányi's conception of tacit knowledge as a genealogical conception of truth. I consider his scientific genealogical attitude expressly as a specifically *positivist* philosophical one. Therefore, we cannot agree with those who - although based on real similarities - consider Polányi's conception of science to be an existentialist one (see Marjorie

Green, op. cit., XI), or a phenomenological one (Marjorie Green, 'Tacit Knowing and the Pre-Reflexive Cogito', in: *Intellect and Hope*, 31-32.). Franz *Brentano's* name appears remarkably often and so does the name of Henri *Bergson*, though less often than expected. It comes clear, on the basis of the genealogical interpretation of knowledge, that I consider Friedrich *Nietzsche* as the nearest reference point. This also evidently raises several questions. One of them is the extremely significant philosophical role that Nietzsche played right in Hungary at the beginning of the century (see Endre Kiss, *A világnézet kora. Friedrich Nietzsche abszolútumokat relativizáló hatása a századelőn*. Budapest, 1982 - The era of Weltanschauung. Friedrich Nietzsche's influence relativizing absolutes at the beginning of this century).

⁹ 'My own attempts to acknowledge tacit powers of personal judgment as the decisive organon of discovery...have been opposed by describing these agencies as psychological...in character.' (*Knowing and Being*, 173.)

knowledge in this diachronic context. Let us look at an example from Nietzsche's *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*: "...es wird einmal gezeigt werden, wie allmaehlich (!), in den niederen Organismen dieser Hang (jeden Gegenstand an sich, in seinem eigenen Wesen als einen mit sich selbst identischen Wesen...kurz als eine Substanz zu erkennen - E.K.) entsteht, wie die blöden Maulwurfsaugen dieser Organisationen zuerst Nichts als immer das Gleiche sehen, wie dann, wenn die verschiedenen Erregungen von Lust und Unlust bemerkbarer werden, allmaehlich verschiedene Substanzen unterschieden werden, aber jede mit Einem Attribut, das heisst einer einzigen Beziehung zu einem solchen Organismus...Uns organische Wesen interessiert ursprünglich Nichts an jedem Dinge, als sein Verhaeltnis zu uns in Bezug auf Lust und Schmerz."¹⁰ This last sentence explains without doubts the meaning-giving process of tacit knowledge from a legitimate genealogical point of view.

The integration of tacit knowledge is, at the same time, a sense-giving process *on the basis* that it attributes the *sense of its vital needs* to integrated perceptions. We have seen that from among Polányi's six examples, we can speak of true meaning-giving only in the cases when direct vital significance could apparently be revealed. Consequently, if the genealogical conception of truth is placed into a genealogical context, the real integrating processes of tacit knowledge find their place. But this is not what Polányi does. He wishes to use his genealogical approach not in a *diachronic* way but in a *synchronic* way (the terminology of modern linguistics), not in a historical but in an actual context. Naturally, actual, synchronic knowing also has an actual genealogy that *takes place in the present*. This actual genealogy, however, is irrelevant from the viewpoint of theoretical generalization. The genealogy of actual knowing is real, one without which knowing is in fact, impossible. Here Polányi is right, but the real being of this process does not make it explicable. He not only fails to notice the obvious traps of a synchronic application of this originally diachronic conception but also takes a stand against the synchronic

explicability of scientific statements, inasmuch the conception of truth based on explicability is determined in an illegitimate way by the constantly changing, non-determined, moreover undeterminable character of scientific knowledge. This reminds me of the Frankfurt School's accusation of ideological criticism against the *Verdinglichung* of positivist sciences and philosophy, against the failure of scientific objectivization. Polányi writes: '...if the truth of a proposition lies in its bearing on reality, which makes its implications indeterminate, then such efforts (to try to spell out the implications of asserting a proposition to be true - in other words, a conception 'to try to spell out explications - E.K.) are foredoomed'.¹¹

At this point, the maintenance of the indeterminate being of the genealogical character of knowing seems to be more important for Polányi than formulating a conception of truth based on explicit scientific statements: '...the indeterminate cannot be spelt out without making it determinate. It can be known in its indeterminate condition only tacitly...'¹² With this, isomorphy appears tacitly on the one hand between tacit knowledge and 'the indeterminacy' and on the other hand between the possible analysis of explicit statements and the 'determinacy'. This sort of isomorphy does not stand up when carried through consistently, partly because it does not reflect the circumstances constantly determining tacit knowledge Polányi raises knowing based on the meaning-giving genealogy of tacit knowledge to the rank of the conception of truth. In the immanent criticism of this conception, its main mistake is seen in not taking into consideration the immense differences between the synchronic and diachronic applications of this conception. This genealogical conception has its place in a genealogical context, and while genealogical elements are present in actual knowing, they are irrelevant from the aspect of a possible conception of truth.

Is there a connection between Polányi's conception of truth and his conception of metaphysics? In explaining his conception of tacit knowledge, Polányi does not speak of

¹⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Saemtliche Werke*. Kritische Studienausgabe, Band 2. 39.

¹¹ 'The Logic of Tacit Inference', 172.

¹² Ibid. - Non-explicit knowledge was so central to Polányi's sociology of knowledge and theory of science that Marjorie Green starts the Introduction of one of the most important works of Polányi with these words: 'It is one of the paradoxes of modern epistemology that we take science as the paradigm case of knowledge, yet insist upon a conception of wholly explicit truth.' (*Knowing and Being*, IX.) Polányi does not content himself with emphasizing the comprehensiveness of tacit knowledge either, but also calls into doubt the ontological grounds of explicit knowledge: 'The ideal of a strictly explicit knowledge is indeed self-contradictory; deprived of their tacit coefficients, all spoken words...are strictly meaningless.' (*Sense-Giving and Sense-Reading*, in: *Knowing and Being*, 195.). From this perspective, one can

better see why the 'meaning' creating the role of tacit knowledge was so important for Polányi. - Another new dimension of the fight against the independent status of explicit knowledge is the actualization of the question of *Fremdbewusstsein*: 'No knowledge, not even that embodied in a logistic system, is explicit in the sense of being neutrally transferable from person to person without reference to its tacit base.' (Edward Pols, 'Polanyi and the Problem of Metaphysical Knowledge', in: *Intellect and Hope*, 69.) Raymond Aron's excellent study on Polányi also seems to accept the priority of a genealogical conception of knowledge as opposed to a 'synchronic' conception. Later it is used for nothing less but playing off Polányi against the Weberian classical distinction of facts and values: '...for Weber, facts and values would be rigorously heterogeneous and every hierarchy of values indemonstrable... Polányi answers that the understanding of works or persons involves appraisal.' (Raymond Aron, 'Max Weber and Michael Polanyi', in: *Intellect and Hope*, 361.)

metaphysics. Even more characteristic is that he often refers to his own connection as being opposite to an antimetaphysical analysis of science.¹³ I am not merely playing with words when I say that the criticism of the antimetaphysical attitude hides a pro-metaphysic position: 'The antimetaphysical analysis of science assumes that the logical foundation of empirical knowledge must be capable of definition by explicit rules. While the difficulties of this enterprise have not gone unnoticed, the reluctance to abandon it in principle still seems universal.'¹⁴ I think that Polányi's following statement leaves the way open to explicit metaphysics as well: 'My own attempt (is) to acknowledge tacit powers of personal judgment as the decisive organon of discovery and the ultimate criterion of scientific truth...'¹⁵ In this sentence, the main thesis of our analysis perfectly appears, according to which Polányi is not sensitive to the differentiation of synchronic and diachronic spheres. That tacit powers are the decisive organon of discovery is not at all equivalent to tacit powers being the ultimate criterion of scientific truth. And this is so not only because organon is not the same as criterion but because the decisive organon determines the historical (genealogical) formation of knowledge, while a criterion assumes actual, that is, synchronic, agreements.

Finally, let me illustrate my thesis with a story about why tacit knowledge cannot rise to the rank of a universal conception of meaning and/or truth.

Two desperate Italian emigrants are rowing in the Atlantic Ocean towards America. In the boundless sea, they come across a fishing boat. Having climbed onto this boat, they are happy to see that the boat is empty. They become even happier when they also find several bottles of wine on the boat. They immediately start drinking. While drinking this literally heaven-sent wine, the idea strikes on of them to plug their ears with earplugs (let us notice this element, it will play a certain role in the analysis of tacit knowledge). They are becoming more and more cheerful when we suddenly see warships emplacing their guns. Again, the emigrants appear in the picture, who are even more cheerful, and then once

again, the guns. Suddenly we understand: the fishing boat is dancing on the waves empty because the huge warships are preparing for target training. The two cheerful emigrants with their earplugs (!) go up onto the deck and start throwing empty bottles into the water. This is the moment when the first gun goes off. Thus, the tacit knowledge of the two emigrants and the meaning based on this tacit knowledge led to the following result: the empty bottles that they throw into the water burst so loudly that they can be heard, despite the earplugs. *The bottles are consequently something that explodes...* The two cheerful Italian emigrants come to this conclusion through the legitimate integration of tacit inference taking place through the tacit knowledge of particulars.

POST-SOCIALIST LIBERALISM AND VALUE-FREE JUDGMENTS

Incredible, but at the same time inspiring, is the struggle that Mihály Polányi carries on for the interpretation of the Hungarian 1956.¹⁶ Mihály Polányi takes a stand against the leading paradigms of his age and states that the substance of 1956 is the *return to the ideas of classical liberalism* or, as he concretely names them in an essay even in 1966, to liberty, equality and fraternity. At that time, the leading social sciences were not able to formulate this. On the one hand, they did not regard the representation of the values of 19th-century liberalism as a topical task, while on the other hand, *they had lost their vital relationship with their own liberal roots*. However, Polányi's polemics, with the members of the scientific community, were not based on their different attitudes to liberalism only.

Most social scientists of that age held the opinion that the fact that the representatives of the Hungarian 1956 formulated and represented values in an explicit way made the judgement of the events impossible *as it would violate Max Weber's principles of value-free judgments*. They received his unambiguous speech articulating values and advocating values with suspicion, sometimes with aversion that was due to a primitive or archaic phenomenon. Polányi's thesis,

¹³ Ibid. 172-173. - The criticism of antimetaphysical philosophies is inherent in the conception of tacit knowledge, but clear *ontologisation* of the conception of tacit knowledge plays an important role in rendering metaphysical conceptions possible (see *Knowing and Being*, 126.) - Polányi's fundamental explicit view of this is as follows: 'It appears that traditionalism, which requires us to believe before we know, and in order that we may know, is based on a deeper insight into the nature of knowledge than is a scientific rationalism that would permit us to believe only explicit statements based on tangible data and derived from these by a formal inference...but I am not reasserting traditionalism for the purpose of supporting dogma. To argue, as I do, that confidence in authority is indispensable for the transmission of any human culture is not to demand submission to religious authority. I admit that my reaffirmation of traditionalism

might have a bearing on religious thought, but I want to set this aside here. Modern man's critical incisiveness must be reconciled with his unlimited moral demands...' (Michael Polanyi, 'A Society of Explorers', in: *Tacit Dimension*. New York, 1966. 62.)

¹⁴Ibid. 173.

¹⁵ We note here that we find the conception of tacit knowledge as a genealogical conception *in itself* not only interesting but also coherent. Moreover, the fact did not escape our attention that Polányi made more than one new finding in the sociology of knowledge with the help of this connection (see the relation between the conception of tacit knowledge and the so-called 'plausibility' of scientific judgment ('The Growth of Science in Society', in: *Knowing and Being*, 77).

¹⁶ Michael Polanyi, The message of the Hungarian Revolution. in: *Knowing and Being*. London 1969. 24-39.

according to which the Hungarian 1956 was the re-formulation of the principles of classical liberalism, is being justified in the history of the post-socialist Eastern-Middle Europe as well: in all-likelihood it outlines the main direction of development in all post-socialist development.¹⁷ For us, it is not the thesis on the justification of this statement that is mainly important, but Polányi's reasoning - surprisingly - in terms of the logic of science.

Reflecting on the lessons of 1956, Mihály Polányi works out a system of arguments against the Weberian principle of value-free judgments.¹⁸

In the following, first, we wish to review Polányi's arguments and then try to prove his thesis in another way. From the point of view of the logic of science, a scientist cannot declare the truth of the 'moral judgment', which would shape a 'value judgment'.¹⁹ The afore-mentioned value - 'liberty of judgment' - was put into the centre as a - newly-found 'objective' truth.

Mihály Polányi argues in two ways against this wide interpretation of the value-free nature of scientific statements. In one, he starts from the moral of the scientists, while in the other, he reacts to the new historical situation in which it is impossible to stick to the original meaning of value-free judgments and thus - though Polányi does not formulate it in an explicit way- this argument can be considered as to be a 'historical' one.²⁰

The first reasoning is built on the unavoidableness of the validity (Gültigkeit) of moral measures binding all. The acceptance of moral measures regarded as 'valuable' is aimed at universality. The evidence of their validity rests on the fact that because of their universal character, they are binding for all. With the separation of moral truth and moral illusion, Polányi ensures that the evidence of moral truth can be supported by reasonable argumentation. Thus, there is nothing left but to regard the recognition of the existence of 'valid moral judgments', 'true human values' as a basis, starting from which he can state that it is impossible to interpret all human actions without the reflection of moral judgment. The statement according to which the moral judgments interpreted in this way cannot be separated from the work of the scientist on the basis of the Weberian principle of value-free judgments can be considered the furthest point

of the first reasoning. The concept of moral truth binding for all is by all means a Kantian solution in its type. This seems to be justified by Polányi's footnote on Kant, in which he considers the universality of moral measures to be extended to moral judgment but not to real human behaviour.²¹ This is supported by the frequent uncommon durability of human situations.²²

In several contexts of moral practice, science or moral reflection, the evidence of 'universal validity' (Gültigkeit) of the first reasoning play their parts satisfactorily. For a deeper approach, however, especially in argumentations for their validity, the original considerations originating from the requirement of value-free scientific statements on the one hand and the arguments of 'relativism'²³ that can be lined up against all 'evidence' on the other, will most probably return. Against the evidence thesis, we wish to present the fundamental consensus thesis. Polányi argues against his English colleagues, therefore not in the Weberian context of the necessity of value-free thinking; in this case, it is therefore not the problem whether the orthodox scientific thinking should forcefully exclude that the scientist (in this case Polányi himself) admires the Hungarian event of the year of 1956. In fact, he argues that the admiration for the event of the Hungarian 1956 could have been shaped by a fundamental consensus which penetrates scientific research.

We believe that the evidence of 'moral truth' could be based more successfully on so-called fundamental consensus. i.e. consensus in basic values than on the universal truth approach of the sociology of knowledge. One of its constituents has already been mentioned: neither concept of evidence can avoid the relativism of critical quantity, which threatens the whole construction with upset. None the less important is the argument that the evidence of considering something true postulates the existence of a real or latent fundamental consensus.²⁴ Feeling or pronouncing the fact of evidence postulates that I agree with the other in the fundamental and unavoidable character of the statement constituting the context of the evidence.

Polányi's second important reasoning built on the reflection upon the Hungarian 1956 is the philosophy of history *translated into the dry language of philosophy of science*. In principle, in this train of thought arguments of fundamental

¹⁷ The elaboration of this thought see in the second part of this study.

¹⁸ The analysed study was written not as much against the whole of Max Weber's doctrine but against the scientific community which, referring to Max Weber, did not want or was not able to realize the historical and typological importance of the Hungarian 1956 which can be considered as accepted by now.

¹⁹ The Message of the Hungarian Revolution, 33.

²⁰ Both reasonings of theory of science are interwoven with the liberal doctrine both historically and in their logic.

²¹ The Message of the Hungarian Revolution, 38-39.

²² Naturally, we could find examples in Kantian ethics for reflecting consequences resulting from the incommensurability of human situations.

²³ Polányi mentioned that he did not want the real behaviour to be submitted to 'universal' moral measures precisely because of the - relativistic - incommensurability of real situations.

²⁴ The Message of the Hungarian Revolution, 34.

consensus.²⁵ The element of the philosophy of history is linguistically the expression ‘not merely’, which refers to two eras.²⁶

We wish to extend the Polányi-thesis about 1956 - *the re-formulation of classical liberalism* - to all post-socialist situations. We want to emphasize that each of the five arguments for the extension is suitable for the Hungarian 1956.

The five constituents substantiating post-socialist liberalism are as follows:

1. Owing to the totalitarian structure of existing socialism, it is obvious that the spirit, the classical liberalism of the Charter of Human Rights, becomes the fundamental determinant of the post-socialist social existence. It is so trivial that further discussion seems unreasonable as the results of political, moral, historical, functional and pragmatic considerations are united in total harmony in this conception.

2. The economic recommencement following the collectivized system of existing socialism returns with the same indisputable self-evidence to the liberalism of the similarly classical and similarly 19th-century principles of private property and free enterprise - here, naturally, we think of principles guiding political intentions as even with the greatest Manchester-type voluntarism it would be impossible to make economic conditions classically liberal.

3. Following the area of the ‘closed’ society of existing socialism, the creation of ‘open’ systems at all levels of social structures becomes a trivial requirement. As far as several scientific or publicistic phrases were used to compare existing socialism to feudalism or Asian mode of production, the justification of the open society, of classical liberalism is obvious and though we do not regard Karl R. Popper’s *Open Society...* an entirely successful work concerning its quality standard of history of philosophy, the distinction between the notions of ‘open’ and ‘closed’ society may play a very important role in our context.

4. The unavoidable post-socialist reason for the existence of liberalism is justified by intellectual, moral anthropological and other motives, ones which play a role in the regeneration of the ‘finer’ fabric of society. In the case of the stronger or weaker representation of the ‘anthropological impasse’ - thesis is become clear that in overcoming post-socialist anthropology and in encouraging the creation of a new anthropology only the liberal practice, the values reconstructed by Polányi can help.

5. Finally, post-social liberalism is the only possible technique for advancement and social strategy in the extremely delicate conflict of social transformation. The present democratic system in Hungary was not created by mass movements against the system of existing socialism or by political struggles but by the self-destruction of the system motivated by considerations of survival. As a consequence, the overwhelming majority of the actors of the new Hungary did not render direct political services in the creation of the new Hungarian democracy. Therefore, the inner structures of the new society can be formed in the long run by a liberal public spirit only which can overcome this projection of the real preconditions of democracy.

THE DEMOCRACY IN THE SCIENCES AND ITS ENEMIES

Scientific communities also have their own history. Thomas S. Kuhn’s concept of paradigms changed the situation dramatically.²⁷ It settled scientific communities in the decisive position of scientific production. This theory liberated science very rapidly, also in practice. It liberated science from state interventions, politics, and ideologies, primarily from the omnipresent ideological pressure which was going back to the imperialist division of the world. Kuhn’s suggestion seemed firstly to emphasize the *intellectual* side alone, but scientific communities became almost without transition a *sociological* reality and later also a *power*. Scientific communities organized themselves, and they also became formalized communities. All this already *democratized* sciences.

²⁵ This starting point, however, is an interesting paradox worth further consideration: a scientist either withdraws himself from the validity of general human motivation or considers all value relations empty. We have to remark that - possibly due to English traditions of thinking - Polányi does not regard his second reasoning historical.

²⁶ In an explicit form: *ibid.* -- The unsolved messages are also numerous, ranging from *Bulgakov* to *Broch* which we do not understand because we do not reflect adequately on the consequent effects of the ‘not merely’s’ of the *twentieth century* on the organizing principles of our system of values. See also E.K., Polányi Mihály és a posztkommunista liberalizmus. in: *Népszabadság*, the 14. May 1990. or E.K. Polányi Mihály és 1956 értelmezése. in: *Ismét válaszút, avagy a magyarországi zsidóság és az ’56-os forradalom*. Ed.

Schöner Alfréd és Oláh János. Budapest, 2009 (Országos Rabbiképző – Zsidó Egyetem). 64-70.

²⁷ Kuhn, Thomas S., *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 3rd ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996. To the direct consequences of the *Kuhnian Turn* see: Adorno, Th., Albert, H., Dahrendorf, R., Habermas, J., Pilot, H., Popper, K., *Der Positivismusstreit in der deutschen Soziologie*. Darmstadt (Luchterhand) 1969. and Dahms, Hans-Joachim: *Positivismusstreit. Die Auseinandersetzungen der Frankfurter Schule mit dem logischen Positivismus, dem amerikanischen Pragmatismus und dem Kritischen Rationalismus*. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1994, ISBN 3518286587.

In this Kuhnian framework was born Polányi's vision of democracy in the sciences. The core of his concept is as follows: The Republic of Science shows us an association of independent initiatives combined towards an indeterminate achievement. It is disciplined and motivated by serving a traditional authority, but this authority is dynamic; its continued existence depends on its constant self-renewal through the originality of its followers. The Republic of Science is a Society of Explorers. Such a society strives towards an unknown future, which it believes to be accessible and worth achieving. In the case of scientists, the explorers strive towards a hidden reality for the sake of intellectual satisfaction. And as they satisfy themselves, they enlighten all men and are thus helping society to fulfil its obligation towards intellectual self-improvement. A free society may be seen to be bent in its entirety on exploring self-improvement - every kind of self-improvement. This suggests a generalization of the principles governing the Republic of Science. It appears that a society bent on discovery must advance by supporting independent initiatives and coordinating themselves mutually with each other. Such adjustment may include rivalries and opposing responses which, in society as a whole, will be far more frequent than they are within science. Even so, all these independent initiatives must accept for their guidance a traditional authority, enforcing its own self-renewal by cultivating originality among its followers. Since a dynamic orthodoxy claims to be a guide in search of truth, it implicitly grants the right to opposition in the name of truth - truth being taken to comprise here, for brevity, all manner of excellence that we recognize as the ideal of self-improvement. The freedom of the individual safeguarded by such a society is, therefore, to use the term of Hegel--of a positive kind. It has no bearing on the right of men to do as they please but assures them the right

to speak the truth as they know it. Such a society does not offer particularly wide private freedoms. It is the cultivation of public liberties that distinguishes a free society, as defined here.²⁸

Polányi's concept of the democratization of sciences comes with troubles. Today it's already clear that the Kuhnian concept of scientific communities turned out to be self-fulfilling. The democratization process experienced its mutations. The social and sociological role of the already new scientific communities changed. Along with this change loses this order its high-level legitimacy. Scientific communities were the democracy in the sciences itself. Maybe the victory of the scientific communities was the real reason for the crisis of this institution. Because of the permanent state debt found, the scientific community itself, in the situation that step for step, becomes obliged to manage scientific life. A retreat of the state from the financing of science is exactly so a disaster for the ruling role of scientific communities as the increasing privatization. Under today's conditions, the Kuhnian democratization of Mihály Polányi should become step for step empty.

We don't know what Polányi would say about our new trends. Certainly, he would stick to his special liberal position: "This view transcends the conflict between Edmund Burke and Tom Paine. It rejects Paine's demand for the absolute self-determination of each generation but does so for the sake of its own ideal of unlimited human and social improvement. It accepts Burke's thesis that freedom must be rooted in tradition but transposes it into a system cultivating radical progress."²⁹ It's now up to us whether we discover in this attitude the afterlife of the Intellectual Budapest of the 1910s.



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²⁸ See M. Polanyi, *The Republic of Science: Its Political and Economic Theory*. *Minerva* 1:54-73, 1962

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²⁹ *Ibid.*