

NEWS AND NOTES

Tradition and Discovery 45:3

October 2019

The online-only “News and Notes” section of *Tradition and Discovery* includes bibliographic information, calls for papers, annual meeting programs, and any other items possibly of interest to members of the Polanyi Society and other persons working with the thought of Michael Polanyi. Send material to Paul Lewis, Editor of *Tradition and Discovery*, at lewis_pa@mercer.edu.

Correction

Colin Cordner’s essay on the Society of Explorers that was mentioned in the preface to the July issue actually appears in this issue. The editor apologizes for his error.

Editorial Transition for *TAD*

Paul Lewis has been *Tradition and Discovery* editor for eight years. In the next year, he will begin the process of retiring from the role of general editor. Paul has generously agreed to continue serving as the production editor responsible for *TAD*'s relationship to Mercer University and those businesses involved in producing the printed journal. Inquiries are invited from anyone interested in becoming the next *TAD* general editor, who will be primarily responsible for the non-business aspect of producing *TAD*. At their November meeting, the Polanyi Society Board of Directors will consider a proposal to provide modest financial support to be used for conference and travel expenses of the general editor. If you would like further information about the general editor's tasks and responsibilities, please email Paul Lewis (lewis@mercer.edu). If you would like to indicate some level of interest in the position or obtain information about making a formal application, please contact Gus Breyspraak (gus.breyspraak@ottawa.edu), who is chair of the search committee. The search will remain open until the position is filled.

The Mead Bequest to the Polanyi Society

Walter B. Mead died August 8, 2018. “Wally” was a former President of the Polanyi Society. He was an active scholar interested in Polanyi’s thought as well as that of William Poteat. Wally guest edited special issues of two academic journals which focused on Polanyi’s ideas, and he also had several articles in *TAD* as well as Polanyi-related articles in other academic journals. He was primarily responsible for convincing the University of Chicago Press to reprint Polanyi’s

The Tacit Dimension. He spearheaded the project of collecting materials for a William Poteat Archive at Yale Divinity School Library and played an important role in putting together the 2014 conference at Yale on William Poteat. A memorial notice reviewing Wally's life and work was in the October 2018 online-only "[News and Notes](#)" section of *TAD*.

Wally also was a person who generously provided financial support for the Polanyi Society for many years. He established the fund which has been used for some time to help with the cost of student travel to annual meetings and conferences for presentations. In August 2019, the Polanyi Society received from Norma Rossi Mead (Wally's widow) a bequest of almost \$100,000 from the Mead estate. Approximately 20 of Wally's friends from across the US have also, since Wally's death, made contributions to the Society in honor of Wally. Wally was one of the Society's members who helped, a few years ago, set up the Polanyi Society Endowment; he was one of the first members of the Endowment Committee, which has sought to begin building the endowment, establishing investment policies, and planning ways in which some income from the endowment can be used modestly to expand the future programming of the Polanyi Society. The Mead bequest has provided a generous jump start for the Polanyi Society Endowment.

**2019 Polanyi Society Annual Meeting
Schedule of Sessions
Friday, November 22, 2019
San Diego, California**

This year all sessions of the annual meeting plus the board meeting of the Polanyi Society will be held in San Diego on a single day, Friday, November 22, in space provided through the American Academy of Religion. In early November, links to available papers will be provided on the Society web site, polanyisociety.org. As in past years, papers will not be read but summarized in the sessions. Participants are expected to bring a personal copy of papers.

9:00-10:30, Hilton Bayfront Sapphire 400B (Fourth Level)
Theme: Polanyian Investigations

Walter Gulick, Montana State University Billings, presiding

Martin Turkis, University of Navarro

“Searching for Teleological Origins: Correlating the Material and the Immaterial”

Tim Simpson, Morehead State University and Jon Fennell, Hillsdale College

“A Polanyian Rationale for the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum”

10:30-12:00, Hilton Bayfront Sapphire, 400B (Fourth Level)

Polanyi Society Board of Directors

4:00-6:00. Marriott Marquis-Vista (South Tower, First Level)

Theme: Polanyi's Imaginaries (See chapter 7 and 8 in Charles Lowney II, *Charles Taylor, Michael Polanyi and the Critique of Modernity* [Palgrave, 2017], for background discussion)

Phil Mullins, Missouri Western State University, presiding

Jean Bocharova, Mt. San Jacinto College

“Enchanting or Bewitching: The Role of Rhetoric in the Formation of an Imaginary”

Andrew Grosso, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Columbia, SC

“‘Visionary Art’ and the Rehabilitation of Modern Imaginaries”

Richard W. Moodey, Gannon University

“Polanyi’s Imaginaries and Pictures”

Brief responses: Charles Lowney, Hollins University and Jon Fennell, Hillsdale College (authors of the chapters cited above)

Brian Gowenlock—A Memorial Note¹

Marty Moleski, S.J., and Phil Mullins



Brian Gowenlock, one of Polanyi’s last chemistry graduate students, died peacefully in Sidmouth, Devon, on March 17, 2019, at age 93. Born on 9 February 1926 in Oldham, Lancashire, Gowenlock won a state scholarship to the University of Manchester, where he graduated with 1st class BSc Honours in 1946. He subsequently obtained an MSc and PhD at the University of Manchester in 1947 and 1949, and went on to do chemistry research and teaching for 40 years at the University of Wales, Birmingham University, and Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh. In the mid-seventies, Gowenlock began a nine-year term on the University Grants Committee, whose role is to advise on the distribution of grant funding at British universities. In recognition of his contribution to higher education in the UK, Gowenlock was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 1986. In addition to his role as a chemical researcher and educator, Gowenlock for most of his life was a highly regarded Methodist clergyman known for his preaching, his kindness and concern for social justice, and his strong commitment to inter-faith dialogue. He was deeply interested in the interplay between science and religion, and, as his family testifies, was much influenced all of his life by Michael Polanyi, his PhD supervisor. In fact, Polanyi apparently planned at one point to have Gowenlock join his staff as an assistant lecturer in physical chemistry. But in 1948, in order to work on his upcoming Gifford Lectures, Polanyi gave up his chair in chemistry and moved to a newly created chair in Social Studies. Gowenlock subsequently took a position at University College, Swansea (a constituent College of the University of Wales). As one of Gowenlock’s daughters pointed out, this was most fortuitous because her father met his spouse of almost 60 years at Swansea.

Especially after he retired, Gowenlock was a careful reader of *TAD* who from time to time sent along interesting tidbits of information about Michael Polanyi. He was one of the many people Bill Scott interviewed for the Polanyi biography. After the biography was published, Moleski got to know Gowenlock through email and came to appreciate how much of what we know about Polanyi's character and career in Manchester came from him. In 2010, Gowenlock sent Moleski a complete copy of Polanyi's lecture handouts from an elective course on quantum mechanics for third-year students that Polanyi taught in 1945. Gowenlock also described the background of Polanyi's collaboration with others in Manchester to produce the short-lived liberal journal *Humanitas*, then sent all seven issues of the journal to Moleski. Polanyi articles appeared in this journal, along with articles of some of Polanyi's colleagues such as Dorothy Emmet. Gowenlock introduced Polanyi to the Reverend James Knox, who played a major role in one phase of Polanyi's Christian faith in 1947. In 2017, Gowenlock wrote from the nursing home where he spent his last years, "In my old age I am thankful to have known Polanyi, and I am also thankful for the decision of the trustees of the Gifford Lectureship that led to my own removal from Manchester at the age of 22 and thus gave me incentives to develop my own research interests."

¹ This memorial note draws freely from online obituaries by Phillip John, Professor Emeritus, Heriot-Watt University, and the Gowenlock family (http://www.rse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/gowenlock_B.pdf), and the Royal Society for Chemistry (https://www.rsc.org/Membership/AboutRscMembership/Obituaries/B_G_Gowenlock_Obituary.asp) as well as a letter and materials provided by Cathy Gowenlock.

Academic Papers, Blogs, Dissertations, and Publications

Gábor Bíró's new book, *The Economic Thought of Michael Polanyi*, was published by Routledge in August of 2019. A future issue of *TAD* will include a discussion of the book.

Phil Rolnick gave two talks at Luther Seminary in June, 2019 for a group who had read his *Origins: God, Evolution, and the Question of the Cosmos* as part of an intensive course on science and theology. One talk was based on a chapter of *Origins*, "Evolutionary Suffering, Pain, and Death—and the Goodness of Creation," and the second was based on another chapter, "The Given and the Earned—the Virtues." In February 2019, Rolnick spoke at Notre Dame on "Evolutionary Suffering, Pain, and Death—and the Goodness of Creation." He also presented on Polanyi in a mixed class of graduate and undergraduates and was a participant in a luncheon discussion of *Origins* with faculty and graduate students.

David James Stewart's new book, *The Truly Infinite Universe: Hegel, Hawking, and the Quantum Cosmo-logic of the Absolute* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing: Newcastle upon Tyne), will be published by the end of 2019. A future issue of *TAD* will include a review.

Charles Lowney's essay, "Michael Polanyi: A Scientist Against Scientism," is included in *Critics of Enlightenment Rationality* (Eugene Callahan and Kenneth Macintyre [eds.] from Palgrave Macmillan Press), a collection which will be published late in 2019 or early in 2020. His abstract is below.

Abstract: Michael Polanyi (1891-1976), a scientist and philosopher, shows that Enlightenment standards for knowledge hold distortions that can have destructive effects. He admired the Enlightenment's political ideals, but its critical rationalism brought a "scientism" that justifies only facts based on physics and considers meaning and human values to be illusory. Polanyi's post-critical philosophy revises Enlightenment standards to more accurately reflect the limits of knowledge and how science actually proceeds. He critiques (1) the viability of complete objectivity, (2) the adequacy of Cartesian explicit analysis to simple self-evident truths, (3) the concomitant reductive analysis of reality to smallest physical components, and (4) reductive dichotomies between mind and matter, and fact and value. He opposes and balances these with conceptions of (1) personal knowledge, (2) tacit knowing, (3) emergent being, and (4) discovery and indwelling. Polanyi shows that science moves toward truth and better contact with reality by using the same tools of practical reason that produce understanding in traditions open to dialogue and discovery. Values—not just physical facts—can be real discoveries about the world. Post-critical epistemology thus provides a non-skeptical fallibilism that opens new possibilities for understanding. Polanyi hoped it would both combat nihilism and renew hope in human progress.

Daniel Paksi's new book, *Personal Reality (Volumes I and II): The Emergentist Concept of Science, Evolution and Culture*, was released by [Pickwick Publication, \(a division of Wipf and Stock\)](#) in May 2019. The author describes his objective in *Personal Reality* as "to establish a coherent concept of emergence based on Michael Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge* and Samuel Alexander's *Space, Time, and Deity*." A review is being set up for a future issue of *TAD*.

Jon Fennell's article "Polanyian Educational Dimensions of Mill's Mental Crisis" will be in the next quarterly issue of *Journal of Philosophy of Education* (a British journal). This is a revised version of a talk that he earlier presented at the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain conference in Oxford.

Andrew Grosso, on February 27, 2019, gave an invited lecture, "Religion Transforming Reason," at Simon Fraser University in Abbotsford, BC. This lecture made modest use of Polanyi. Grosso also delivered a paper, "Freedom, Authority, and Pluralism: Figgis on Nietzsche," on April 3, 2019, at a conference titled *Churches in a Pluralist World: a Centenary Conference on the Legacy of John Neville Figgis, CR*, at the Community of the Resurrection, an Anglican Benedictine monastery in Mirfield, UK.

Stephen Turner's article, "The Road From 'Vocation': Weber and Veblen on the Purposelessness of Scholarship," appeared in a recent special issue of *Journal of Classical Sociology*, vol.19, no. 3: 229-253 (DOI: 10.1177/1468795X19851375), devoted to "Max Weber's Science as a Vocation."

Abstract: "Science as a Vocation" describes an ideal of scholarship for a vanished world. Images of the past university still color our idea of the university. Weber dispelled illusions about the

university of his own time, and pointed to its cruelty and irrationality. Veblen did something similar for the American university of his time, defended a similar ideal, and foresaw the effects of disciplinarianization and the quantification of academic life. They both provide insights into the ways in which the autonomy of academic inquiry has been transformed, and the price that has been paid for the present forms of autonomy. But a consideration of these changes also reveals the reasons for the change in academic values over the last century and what has been lost.

Stephen Turner's "The Political Philosophy of Science in Historical Perspective: The Road Through Popper and Polanyi to the Present," was published in *The Impact of Critical Rationalism: Expanding the Popperian Legacy Through the Works of Ian C. Jarvie* (Raphael S. Sassower and Nathaniel Laor [eds.], Palgrave MacMillan, 2019: 257-272).

Esther Lightcap Meek's essay, "The Unformalizable, Irreducible Primacy of the Person in the Digital Age," will appear in a forthcoming festschrift, *Advancing the Vision: Essays in Honor of John H. White* (Jonathan M. Watt and Bruce R. Backensto, [eds.], Beaver Falls, PA: Falls City Press).

POST-CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL THEORY

JUNE 9-11, 2020 Nashotah House Conference

Call for Papers

In June 2020, the Polanyi Society will sponsor a conference dedicated to exploring the abiding relevance of Michael Polanyi's philosophical work, and in particular his social thought. Many of the socio-political and cultural dynamics of the early 21st century invite a reconsideration of the principles and practices that contribute to the maintenance of liberty, solidarity, and constructive pluralism. This conference will explore the enduring relevance of Polanyi's philosophy for all such efforts, and will also include papers dedicated to other dimensions of Polanyi's work. The Society invites proposals for papers that examine Polanyi's social and political thought, its development, and its relationship to other aspects of his work; comparative studies that examine Polanyi's thought alongside that of others are welcome. The Society also encourages proposals on any topic related to Polanyi studies; the conference will accommodate presentations on a range of subjects. Initial proposals should be no more than 250 words, and can be sent to Andrew Grosso at (atgrosso@icloud.com). The deadline for submission is Thursday, December 31, 2019; proposals submitted thereafter will be considered only if the conference schedule allows it. The first sessions of the conference (the afternoon of June 9) will be dedicated to discussion of selections from Polanyi's writings that set forth his thoughts on social dynamics. Senior Polanyi scholars will facilitate collaborative discussions about these texts, and these conversations will provide a framework for the rest of the conference.

There will also be a pre-conference seminar for graduate students and those new to Polanyi studies beginning in the afternoon of June 8 preceding the conference opening session on the afternoon of June 9. This seminar will provide an introductory overview of Polanyi's life and philosophy, and will focus on Polanyi's philosophy of science and its roots in his ideas about skills and articulation, subsidiary and focal awareness, and tacit knowing (see the entry on the

pre-conference seminar immediately below this call for papers).

The conference will convene at Nashotah House Theological Seminary in Nashotah, WI (west of Milwaukee). The nearest airport is General Mitchell International Airport (MKE) in Milwaukee, about 45 minutes away; Chicago's O'Hare International Airport (ORD) is about two hours away. It is possible to take the train from O'Hare to General Mitchell and arrange transportation to Nashotah. As with other recent Polanyi Society sponsored summer conferences, the June 2020 conference will be organized to be a comparatively inexpensive academic conference which cultivates what Polanyi called "conviviality" and serious conversation.

Registration fees include access to all conference sessions and all meals. Early-bird registration is \$250 and opens Tuesday, January 14, 2020. Regular registration is \$275, and opens Tuesday, March 17, 2020. Late registration will be \$300, and opens Tuesday, May 12, 2020.

Registration does not include accommodations; a limited number of rooms will be available at Nashotah House, and there are several affordable hotels within five miles of Nashotah House. Guest rooms on campus (with rates ranging from \$50 to \$75 per night, and some rooms can be shared) can be reserved by contacting Kelly Medina at (kmedina@nashotah.edu). Nearby hotels include the Hilton Garden Inn (3.3 miles away), Holiday Inn Express (4.7 miles away), and AmericInn of Delafield (4.5 miles away).

A limited amount of financial aid is available for those unable to meet the cost of registration, accommodations, and travel. For more information about financial assistance or other questions, please contact Andrew Grosso at (atgrosso@icloud.com). Updated information regarding the conference will be posted on the Society's website (polanyisociety.org) and will also be in the online-only "News and Notes" in the February 2020 issues of *Tradition & Discovery*.

Polanyi Society-Sponsored Pre-Conference Seminar June 8, 2020, Nashotah, WI

In conjunction with the June 9-11, 2020, conference at Nashotah, WI (discussed above), the Polanyi Society will sponsor a June 8 one-day seminar open to graduate students and others new to Polanyi studies. This small pre-conference seminar begins on the afternoon of June 8 and is designed to interface with the June 9 opening conference afternoon workshop focusing on Polanyi texts addressing social dynamics. The June 8 seminar will provide an introductory overview of Polanyi's life and developing philosophical ideas and will focus on key elements of Polanyi's philosophy of science and its roots in his ideas about skills and articulation, subsidiary and focal awareness, and the "tacit dimension." The June 8 seminar will dig deeply into parts of *Personal Knowledge*, which treat topics such as skills and articulation, and perhaps a short late Polanyi essay. Copies of primary texts will be provided to participants for study before the seminar; the seminar discussion of texts will be facilitated by seasoned Polanyi scholars. Those who attend the June 8 seminar and the June 9 opening conference day workshop are also invited

to participate in the subsequent conference events on June 10 and June 11. Financial aid for registration, accommodations, and/or travel is available to scholars new to Polanyi studies who wish to attend both the pre-conference seminar and the conference. For further details, contact Andrew Grosso (atgrosso@icloud.com).

New Link on Polanyi Society Web Site

Liberal Currents recently added to their web site “The Eclipse of Thought” which is Chapter 1 of Polanyi and Prosch’s *Meaning*. There is a [new link to “The Eclipse of Thought”](#) on the Polanyi Society web pages in the component with links to other primary materials. This chapter of *Meaning* is actually a reshaped version of Polanyi’s “Perils of Inconsistency” which was published in 1950 and is also Chapter 7 of *The Logic of Liberty, Reflections and Rejoinders* (1951). A short discussion of the additions and deletions in the reshaped text precedes the link to the Liberal Currents site.

Donations to the Travel, Grants, and Projects Fund and the Polanyi Society Endowment

In 2018 to simplify our accounting, the Polanyi Society consolidated several old funds into the Travel, Grants, and Projects Fund. Particular disbursements from this new fund may, however, be in memory of particular persons. The Travel, Grants, and Projects Fund will continue to support the participation of younger scholars in Society meetings. Some recent Polanyi Society annual meetings have included a session with graduate student papers, and travel awards supported this part of the program. These travel awards will continue under the Travel, Grants, and Projects Fund and possibly some new awards and projects aimed at younger scholars will soon be added. Donations to the Travel, Grants, and Projects Fund are much appreciated.

The Polanyi Society Endowment was established a few years ago with a gift from the late Ann Herbert Scott, the widow of William T. Scott, the original Polanyi biographer. The Walter B. Mead estate recently provided a substantial contribution to the Endowment (see the entry above). Slowly, the Endowment is growing. The eventual aim is to have an Endowment that generates each year some income which can be used to support and expand Polanyi Society programming.

Please support the Travel, Grants, and Projects Fund and the Polanyi Society Endowment by sending a tax-deductible contribution to The Polanyi Society, C/O Charles Lowney, 10 Jordan Street, Lexington, VA, 24450. Bequests and large donations are very important to the Society, but the many smaller donations to the Society, often made in conjunction with dues payment, are also significant and appreciated. Checks should be made out to the Polanyi Society and, if so intended, marked Travel, Grants, and Projects or Endowment. Unmarked donations will go

toward general operating expenses. You can also directly access the Polanyi Society PayPal button (with accompanying tutorial) to make a donation:

<http://polanyisociety.org/paypal/donate.html>

All actual PayPal transactions for the Polanyi Society are is handled on the secure PayPal site.

Back Issues of *TAD* Available for Purchase

A limited number of back issues of *TAD* are available for purchase as long as supplies last. The cost for a copy of issues up to and including Vol. 41:3 is \$5.00. A copy of issues from 42:1 on is \$7.00. All prices include shipping and handling. For issues up to and including Vol. 39:2, contact Phil Mullins (mullins@missouriwestern.edu). For issues from 39:3 to the present, contact Paul Lewis (lewis_pa@mercer.edu). Payment should be sent to The Polanyi Society, C/O Charles Lowney, 10 Jordan Street, Lexington, VA, 24450. Checks should be made out to the Polanyi Society and earmarked for back issues.