

# Tradition & Discovery

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# The Polanyi Society

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# Preface

Those who have studied Polanyi's philosophical writing are aware that, late in his life, Polanyi became very interested in the nature of meaning which is found in art, myth and religion. In part, Polanyi's late analysis of meaning turns on his conclusions about the role of imagination in human affairs. The book *Meaning*, co-authored by Harry Prosch, is the major published document which collects Polanyi's late ideas on these matters; those who have explored the Polanyi archives at the Regenstein Library at the University of Chicago are aware, of course, that there were some North American lectures that underlie *Meaning* as well as some articles reflecting Polanyi's growing interest in imagination, art and religion. This issue of *TAD* includes three articles which nicely fit together as pieces sharing an interest in themes emphasized in later work; although this is not a special thematic issue, it is fair to say that this issue explores what I would dub Polanyi's philosophical aesthetics. The articles by Barbara Baumgarten and Unchol Shin are creative efforts which make use of Polanyi's late ideas about imagination and meaning. The short article by the late Gabriella Ujlaki, reprinted from our sister journal *Polanyiana*, is an appreciative recognition of her good work as a Hungarian scholar whose work focused on Polanyi and aesthetics. Here she links Polanyi's epistemology with the longer tradition of philosophical aesthetics; she argues that tacit integration grounds cognition but is essentially an art.

Don't overlook some of the other things in this issue. There are three substantial reviews of books explicitly making use of Polanyi's work (pp. 29-35). David Rutledge has provided (p. 4) the call for papers for the November 1995 Polanyi Society meeting; note that proposals must be in by March 17, 1995. There is also news (p. 5) about the N.E.H Summer Seminar for secondary school teachers which focus on *Personal Knowledge*. Diane Yeager who will direct this program has specifically asked Polanyi Society members to help make qualified teachers aware of this excellent summer study opportunity.

Phil Mullins

*Tradition and Discovery* is indexed selectively in *The Philosopher's Index* and *Religion One: Periodicals*. Book reviews are indexed in *Index to Book Reviews in Religion*.

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## NEWS AND NOTES

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On November 19, 1994, in Chicago, IL, the Polanyi Society held its annual meeting in conjunction with the meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society for Biblical Literature. Twenty-six people participated in the discussion of papers by **Ira Peak** on "Polanyi and Multiculturalism," and by **Barbara Baumgarten** on "Theology and Embodiment." Formal responses were provided by **Bruce Haddox** and **Phil Rolnick**. We are grateful to presenters and respondents for their work. For those who missed the session, papers are available via FTP from the electronic archive which is a component of the Polanyi discussion list (see page 39 for information). A business session following the paper discussion brought members up to date on **William Scott's** biography of Polanyi, and **Diane Yeager's** plans for an NEH Summer Seminar for high school teachers; ideas were solicited for the Philadelphia program in 1995. The November 19 session followed a very instructive Friday, November 18 afternoon seminar at the Regenstein Library of the University of Chicago. Ms Suzy Taraba, Public Service Librarian in the Department of Special Collections, provided an orientation to the special collection of Michael Polanyi's papers, for twelve members of the Society. We received an overview of the collection, information about using the collection, and were then able to look briefly at some of Polanyi's manuscripts.

**M. W. Poirier** has published (*Modern Age* 35:3 (Sp 1993): 215-223) an extensive review of fellow Canadian Charles Taylor's *The Malaise of Modernity*, a book covering some of the same ground as Taylor's *Sources of the Self*, but based upon his 1991 Massey Lectures delivered over C.B.C. Radio. Taylor, an influential contemporary philosopher who has read and occasionally cites Polanyi's writing, tries to articulate a view of modernity that is neither too positive nor too negative, according to Poirier. Taylor offers a rehabilitated ideal of authenticity as a remedy to the disorder of the modern psyche; Poirier asks whether

Taylor's remedy is capable of treating (or is it merely a manifestation of) the hubris that is the origin of problems. *The Malaise of Modernity* was published in the U.S. under the title *The Ethics of Authenticity* (1991); see **Walter Gulick's TAD** 19:1 review under this title for another Polanyian perspective.

**Joan Crewdson's** *Christian Doctrine in the Light of Michael Polanyi's Theory of Personal Knowledge: A Personalist Theology* (ISBN 0-7734-9150-3) has recently been published by The Edwin Mellen Press. **Drusilla Scott's** *Everyman Revived: The Commonsense of Michael Polanyi* (ISBN 0-86332-077-5) has been out of print but will soon be reprinted by W. B. Erdmans Publishing Company of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Reviews of both books will be included in a future issue of *TAD*.

Doris Prosch, wife of **Harry Prosch**, reports that "they have had an avalanche" of visitors this fall. While Harry's health is about the same (following his stroke), he would enjoy hearing from members of the Polanyi Society. Because he is not able to write, please do not expect a reply.

**Aaron Milavec** has developed a method for lay study of the scripture. His method and work are published by Sheed and Ward under the title *Exploring Scriptural Sources*. A review of this book as well as of his *EasyGreek Software* is forthcoming in a future issue of *TAD*. Milavec is Professor of Church History and Historical Theology within the Lay Pastoral Ministry Program at Mt. St. Mary's Seminary of the West in Cincinnati.

Richard Gelwick

# Call For Papers

The Polanyi Society is issuing a call for papers to be presented at the Society meeting to be held November 18, 1995 in Philadelphia, in conjunction with the annual American Academy of Religion/Society for Biblical Literature meetings. While consideration will be given to papers on any aspect related directly or indirectly to the philosophical writings of Michael Polanyi, the Society is particularly interested in encouraging work in the following areas:

- ~ pedagogy in Polanyian perspective;
- ~ the political implications of Polanyian thought;
- ~ economic theory in the background of *Personal Knowledge*;
- ~ Polanyian thought and Deconstruction.

Society members are encouraged to share this announcement with colleagues in philosophy, literature, and the social sciences.

If there is sufficient interest, a second session on Friday evening may be added to our usual Saturday morning program. Abstracts (one page, single spaced) should be sent by March 17, 1995 to the address below; if you have questions, please phone (803-294-3296), fax (803-294-3001) write or contact me by e-mail (Rutledge\_David/furman@furman.edu).

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# Upcoming N.E. H. Seminar for Secondary Teachers on *Personal Knowledge*

Georgetown University in Washington, D. C. will host a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar for Secondary Teachers from June 26 through July 28, 1995. Diane Yeager, a Georgetown faculty member, will direct this program which will focus on study of Polanyi's magnum opus, *Personal Knowledge*.

Fifteen participants can be accommodated in this program which Yeager emphasizes will be a seminar rather than lectures on Polanyi's complex text. Like other N.E.H. summer programs, this one will include not only intellectually stimulating work but some convivial opportunities. Graduate credit is not directly available for the seminar, although Yeager is willing to provide a letter recommending equivalency credit. Participants will receive a stipend of \$2825 to cover living expenses.

Yeager has requested the help of Polanyi Society members in locating teachers who might be interested in participating in the seminar. She can provide a brochure describing the program and will write or talk by phone to anyone with questions. Yeager can be contacted by phone (202-687-6232), e-mail (yeager@guvax.acc.georgetown.edu), or regular post (Professor Diane Yeager, Theology Department, Georgetown University, Washington, D. C. 20057-0998).

**The N.E. H. mandated application deadline for the seminar in March 1, 1995.**

# Gabriella Ujlaki

## 1959-1994

Last spring, the Polanyi Society office in Biddeford, Maine was informed of the sudden and unfortunate death of Gabriella Ujlaki. The news was a very saddening event. Gabriella was the secretary and a key leader in the founding and development of the Michael Polanyi Liberal Philosophical Association in Budapest. Her efforts were a major part of the Polanyi centennial celebration held in Budapest in August, 1991, in the beginning of their journal *Polanyiana*, and in the carrying out of a research program on "The Liberal Philosophical Tradition in Eastern Europe." Gabriella was one of the promising young Hungarian scholars developing the understanding and implications of Michael Polanyi's thought; her loss to Polanyi scholarship and development is a great one.

I first met Gabriella at the Kent State Centennial Conference. She and Endre Nagy had both come to meet Polanyians in North America and to find ways to bring to Budapest copies of Polanyi's papers. She and Endre used their time well, met many people, and were able to return later to the University of Chicago for study in the Polanyi archives there. Eventually, with the help of John Polanyi, the Michael Polanyi Liberal Philosophical Association obtained a copy of the Polanyi papers which are now in the library in Budapest.

The energy and zeal of Gabriella were remarkable. At the Budapest celebration, she was not only busy with the running of the meeting and the arrangements, but she was very generous in guiding and helping foreign guests to find their way. We were especially surprised to see her early in the first morning at our hotel where she came to accompany us to the opening session.

Her paper, "The 'Tacit' and the 'Personal': An Aesthetical Approach to the Nature of Knowledge", was a brief but incisive discussion of the contribution of Polanyi's epistemology and showed her capability in philosophy. On the list of conference participants, Gabriella is listed by discipline as "aesthete." She taught aesthetics and was working on her doctoral degree. Her death was caused by a heart attack that occurred while she was returning from studies in The Netherlands. Very unfortunately, she left behind two young children. While we only knew her briefly, we glimpsed her spirit as one that would benefit many in the search for truth and wisdom. In a short time, she accomplished much. For her wonderful life with its joyfulness and for her example of dedication in research, she will be long remembered.

Richard Gelwick

The movement in Hungary to study the thought of Michael Polanyi was dealt an unexpected and cruel blow this past spring. Gabriella Ujlaki, the spark behind the Michael Polanyi Liberal Philosophy Association, died of a heart attack on her way home from her doctoral studies at the University of Leuven. She leaves behind two young children and her mother, a survivor of the Auschwitz death camp.

My wife and I have special reason to mourn the loss of Gabi, because from the time she met us at the Budapest airport in January, 1993 until the time my Fulbright was up nearly six months later, Gabi was a vivacious friend who perhaps more than any other person made our Hungarian stay such a wonderful, memorable experience. Our adventures with Gabi started right off when we drove with her into the center of Budapest from the airport. She had just recently begun driving her own car, a none too reliable Skoda. Her joy in the freedom her car gave her was not matched by skill in operating it. She tended to decide where she was going once she was in an intersection, and, to keep her options open, she often straddled the white line. She did all she could to avoid shifting. Consequently, Barbara and I learned some choice Hungarian words from other drivers within an hour of arriving in Budapest.

The name of Michael Polanyi was barely known in Hungary before the fall of communism. Gabi was, I believe, the first person to appreciate Polanyi's importance and then do something about it. Her enthusiasm was the catalyst that led her, together with faculty from several disciplines in Budapest, notably philosophers Marta Feher and Eva Gabor at the Technical University, to seek out funding from the Soros Foundation to found the Michael Polanyi Liberal Philosophical Association. She became involved in the translation of many key Polanyi texts into Hungarian. Published by a leading Hungarian academic publisher, Atlantisz, these translations offer a good reason for hope that that appreciation for Polanyi's work may flourish despite Gabi's death.

In addition to her work on translations, Gabi also wrote a number of articles on Polanyi's philosophy. Her special area of interest was aesthetics, and this interest is evident in much of what she produced. The next issue of *Polanyiana* will feature these writings.

Together with Hungarian political scientist Endre Nagy, Gabi made two extended trips to the Regenstein Library in Chicago to photocopy the Polanyi papers in order to make them available in Hungary. During the first of these trips, funded by the Soros Foundation, Gabi and Endre were able to attend the Polanyi Centennial meetings at Kent State and thereby make contact with Polanyian scholars from America and Western Europe. Gabi was a leading force behind the meeting in Budapest to celebrate the centennial in the summer of 1991.

An outgoing, fun loving person, Gabi made friends easily and seemed to know everyone in Hungarian philosophical circles. Through her arrangements, I was able to meet many of the leading philosophers in Hungary, one of the great joys of my stay. Her stories of smuggling Western literature into Hungary before 1989 were dramatic glimpses into another world (even in 1993 crossing borders made her nervous). I fondly recall becoming Uncle Walt for Judit, her little girl, and showing Daniel, her boy, how to throw a frisbee; enjoying her pleasure in exploring Freud's home in Vienna; and hearing her happy high pitched greetings. I'll not forget driving her Skoda only to discover the clutch barely worked (no wonder she didn't shift) and the dipstick revealed nary a trace of oil. I know there are many others who share my sense of loss, and on behalf of the Polanyi Society I send my condolences to members of the MPLPA.

Walter Gulick