

# Tradition & Discovery

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## Preface

This is a special issue of *TAD* built around the program of the 2002 annual Polanyi Society meeting, which featured a paper by cell biologist Ursula Goodenough, a thinker who today is making interesting contributions to science and religion discussions. See Walter Gulick's introduction to this special issue (p. 5) for comments on the articles included. Walter worked hard to put together both the 2002 annual meeting program featuring Goodenough and this issue that grows out of it.

Please especially take note of my open letter to Polanyi Society members that follows (p. 3). The Society embarks on an experiment with electronic publication with the next issue of *TAD*. Paper issues of the journal will continue to be distributed but the Society's Board of Directors has decided the time has come to explore alternatives since the cost of printing and mailing are increasingly burdensome.

The program for the 2004 annual meeting in San Antonio appears in this issue (p. 4). There are two sessions that promise to be very interesting. One session considers Esther Meek's Polanyi-grounded book *Longing to Know* and the other session puts together Polanyi and Whitehead, a topic that for years some members have proposed for discussion.

Phil Mullins

## Electronic Discussion List

The Polanyi Society supports an electronic discussion group exploring implications of the thought of Michael Polanyi. Anyone interested can send e-mail to Struan Jacobs (swjacobs@deakin.edu.au) who is the moderator. The address for the list is polanyi-list@deakin.edu.au

*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*.

# An Open Letter to *TAD* Subscribers

At the November 2003 meeting of the Board of Directors of the Polanyi Society, the Board approved an important experiment for *Tradition and Discovery* that will begin with the next issue (October 2004). In addition to the paper copy of *TAD*, the Society will begin publishing an Adobe PDF version of the journal, which will be available in a password-protected section of the Polanyi Society web site. Today many journals are, of course, opting to provide an electronic issue. This experiment by the Society is thus part of a larger change in academic publishing. **Although an electronic copy will be online, I want to emphasize that at least for the immediate future any Society member anywhere in the world who wants a paper copy can have one delivered to your mailing address.**

There are some particular circumstances that have led to a decision to begin experimenting now with an on-line issue. *TAD* has always been published internally. In the past, we have considered contracting with one of the large presses that now handle the production and mailing of most academic journals, but such a contract would have required a sharp increase in annual dues. Further, since about 75% of those receiving *TAD* live in the US and Canada, we have been able for years to take advantage of the so-called “bulk” postage rate for most of our mailing. This is the same subsidized mailing program that brings the weekly grocery ads and tons of junk mail to your doorstep in North America. Although the bulk rates have risen slightly in recent years, the Society as a non-profit organization will likely continue to be able to mail issues in North America very inexpensively. Unfortunately, the process and the rate for mailing issues outside North America has changed rather drastically in recent years and it will likely change more soon. If you live outside North America, you may have noticed that the remainder of a green tear-off sticker is attached to your copy of *TAD*. In the new era of terrorism, every piece of mail packaged as *TAD* must have an individual tracer. The price for mailings going outside of North America continues to rise precipitously and the size of *TAD* must be carefully monitored to keep within weight limits.

In sum, I brought a proposal to the Board to begin experimenting with an on-line publication of *TAD* because I think rising costs and the unpredictability of our present production system warrant exploring alternatives. We are an international society and we need to develop ways to continue producing *TAD* within the constraints imposed upon us. As noted above, we will continue to produce paper copies of *TAD* and any member anywhere in the world can continue to receive a paper copy. I hope, however, that some members, especially those living outside of North America, will volunteer to print off an Adobe PDF copy from the Society web site rather than receive a mailed copy. If you are interested, please send me an e-mail and I will set you up with a password. I may also ask some subscribers to try the electronic version. I am sure that there will be some details to work out as this electronic publishing experiment develops. At the moment, for example, we cannot immediately shift too many subscribers in North America to an electronic version since we will lose our “bulk” mailing privilege for paper issues if the number of units mailed drops below 200. Eventually, there will be a password protected electronic archive that houses many past issues of *TAD*; this will be available to any Society member. Also the Society may eventually offer an electronic subscription rate that will be less than a regular subscription, but at present we need to explore the ways such an adjustment can be made and at the same time keep the Society solvent. Please send questions or suggestions to me at the e-mail address below.

**Phil Mullins, Editor**  
**mullins@mwsc.edu**

# 2004 Polanyi Society Annual Meeting in San Antonio

The year's Polanyi Society annual meeting will be held in San Antonio, Texas on November 19 and 20, 2004. As in past years, meetings are to be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion. To secure hotel reservations in the immediate convention area, it is necessary to register for the AAR annual meeting. However, anyone who is interested is welcome to attend the Polanyi Society meetings, whether or not they are attending the AAR meetings. Other hotels in San Antonio are not reserved for the AAR. If you want information about registration for the AAR meetings, go to <http://www.aarweb.org/> or phone (1-404-727-3049) or fax (1-404-727-7959) or email ([aar@aarweb.org](mailto:aar@aarweb.org)). Room locations for the annual meeting sessions are not yet available but will, in the late summer, be posted on the Polanyi Society web site (<http://www.mwsc.edu/orgs/polanyi/>) and will be listed in the AAR Annual Meeting Program as Additional Meetings. Additional information will be included in the issue of *TAD* to be published in the fall of 2004. When the complete papers are available in the fall, they can be downloaded from the Polanyi Society web site by clicking on the title.

## Program

*Friday, November 19, 9 - 11 P.M.*

Topic: Polanyi and Whitehead

Joseph Bracken, Xavier University

"Emergent Monism and Final Causality: A Field-Oriented Approach"

Respondents:

Walter Gulick, Montana State University-Billings

Richard Moodey, Gannon University

Polanyi Society Annual Business Meeting: 10:30 PM

*Saturday, November 20, 9:00 am-11:30 A.M.*

Topic: Responses to Esther Meek's *Longing to Know*

Respondents:

Dale Cannon, Western Oregon University

Jere Moorman, Resident Fellow, Center for Studies of the Person, La Jolla, California

David Rutledge, Furman University

Comment: Esther Meek, Geneva College

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# Introduction To This Issue On Biology and Polanyian Ethics

**Walter B. Gulick**  
**Guest Editor**

This issue's lead article by Ursula Goodenough and Terrence Deacon is the result of an invitation to Goodenough to present her current explorations concerning the biological roots of morality (with special reference to the work of Michael Polanyi) at the Annual Meeting of the Polanyi Society. Her essay, ultimately co-authored with Terrence Deacon, was offered in Toronto on November 22, 2002, and responses were given by Phil Mullins, Diane Yeager, and Nancy Howell. Unfortunately, health problems prevented Howell from revising her comments for publication, but I'd like to acknowledge here the significant role her thoughtful questions played in elucidating details of the Goodenough-Deacon essay.

Phil Mullins wrote a review essay, published in *Tradition and Discovery* 28:3 (2002), on Goodenough's book, *The Sacred Depths of Nature*. In that book, Goodenough explored the biological roots of religion in a virtuoso performance combining clarity and conciseness. Her current project is to replicate for ethics what she accomplished for religion. The co-authored essay published here was also published in *Zygon* 38:4 (December, 2003), and it omits specific commentary on how Polanyi's thought relates to their proposals.

The article by Mullins compensates for that omission by juxtaposing Polanyi's thought with ideas set forth in the Goodenough-Deacon essay. He finds a number of parallels. Yeager's article focuses especially on how the ethical claims articulated by Goodenough and Deacon fit into the history of ethics in Western civilization. She is particularly concerned about the authors' inattention to the functions of human societies in creating a viable morality. I offer an essay that gathers together insights from this issue's articles and integrates them with Polanyi's general perspective as well as his specific attention to moral matters.

In welcoming the readers to these fine essays, I would be ungrateful not to acknowledge the insights and support I have received from each author. My indebtedness to Phil Mullins is long lasting and much appreciated; we have been conversation partners for decades now. While Ursula Goodenough and to a lesser extent Terrence Deacon have impacted my thought only in recent years, their contribution has been significant. Lastly, I deeply admire Diane Yeager's ability to illuminate key moral issues. Her discussion in *TAD* 29:1 of how Polanyi's intellectual passions may play out either in support of the "firmament of values" (*M* 216) or in moral inversions is a model of interpretive exposition.

The reader will find, I believe, that these essays give additional support to the sense that Polanyi's moral philosophy has a significant role to play in ethics today. The essays serve to clarify how that philosophy is grounded in evolutionary biology, how ethics takes further shape in social reality, and how it may fund a distinctively Polanyian moral point of view. Time will tell what impact these ideas might have. For now, here are some excellent essays to read and savor. Enjoy!