

NEWS AND NOTES

Tradition and Discovery 44:1

February 2018

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.

2018 Nashotah House Polanyi Society Conference Registration Now Open

On the Polanyi Society web page (polanysisociety.org) you can now find registration information and a registration form for the 6-9 June 2018 (Wed-Sat) Polanyi Society sponsored conference at Nashotah House in Nashotah, WI (west of Milwaukee, just off of I-94). There is also information about nearby airports and local transportation as well as on-campus and nearby off-campus housing. The conference “early bird” registration rate is \$240 good until 2 March 2018. If you register between 3 March 2018 and 9 May 2018, the fee is \$275, and from 10 May 2018 and 6 June 2018 the fee is \$300. The registration fee includes all conference sessions and all meals (four breakfasts, four lunches, three dinners) and receptions. It does not include lodgings, transportation, or other incidental costs. The registration fee for those who plan to attend the conference for fewer days than the conference is scheduled to meet cannot be pro-rated. Some support for younger scholars in the form of partial registration waivers may be available. Contact Andrew Grosso (atrosso@icloud.com) with questions about the conference.

Satinder Gill from the Center for Music and Science at the University of Cambridge and the author of the interesting 2015 book *Tacit Engagement: Beyond Interaction* (Springer International Publishing) will be a plenary speaker at the conference. A forthcoming TAD review of Gill’s book is available [here](#).

2018 Polanyi Society Annual Meeting Call for Papers

Denver, Colorado is the site of the 2018 annual meeting of the Polanyi Society, to be held at the beginning of the American Academy of Religion’s annual meeting. We expect to have at least two sessions which likely will be held on **Friday, November 16, 2018**, and **Saturday, November 17, 2018** if the number of accepted papers warrants it.

As in the past, we invite paper proposals on any topic related to Polanyian thought that you are interested in. Among the specific ideas suggested at the 2017 annual meeting and subsequent

discussions are the following:

- Post-critical approaches to history (or sacred texts)
- Polanyian understandings of interpretation and the role of frameworks
- Post-critical response to assessment in education.
- Assessment of Polanyi's *The Study of Man*
- Polanyi's social-political thought and contemporary politics

A proposal (or general inquiries) of 250-300 words should be sent as an attachment to Walter Gulick (wgulick@msubillings.edu) by **May 1** (submissions before that date are appreciated). Those on the program committee are open to the possibility that proposals may be inspired by ideas presented at the Polanyi conference in Wisconsin in June; please contact Walter Gulick at or immediately after that conference to see if additional papers might fit into the Denver sessions. The deadline for setting up the program and getting it listed in the several places in which the program is normally listed is in late June.

This Call for Papers and updated information on the 2018 Annual Meeting in Denver will be posted on polanyisociety.org.

Recent Conferences

The Michael Polanyi Symposium: Connecting Science and the Humanities was held October 5, 2016 at Technische Universität Berlin.

The program is online at <https://www.fhi-berlin.mpg.de/PolanyiSymposium.pdf>. The three main speakers were (1) Dudley Herschbach, Professor Emeritus of chemistry at Harvard University and 1986 Chemistry Nobel laureate who is best known for elucidating molecular collision dynamics of elementary chemical reactions, starting from early work by Michael Polanyi; (2) Mary Jo Nye, Professor Emerita at Oregon State University and author of *Michael Polanyi and His Generation: Origins of the Social Construction of Science*; and (3) Istvan Hargittai, Professor Emeritus at the University of Budapest and author of the *Martians of Science* and co-author of the *Wisdom of the Martians of Science*. This symposium was organized by Bretislav Friedrich (Fritz-Haber-Institut der Max-Planck Gesellschaft) and Ludger Wöste (Freie Universität Berlin). Attached to the symposium program is a Bretislav Friedrich's article "Michael Polanyi (1891-1976): The Life of the Mind," which includes many interesting photographs.

Epistemology, Ontology and the Philosophy of Technology Workshop was held in Budapest on December 1 and 2, 2017.

This Philosophy and Technology workshop, sponsored by the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BUTE) Department of Philosophy and History of Science had a

Polanyi-related orientation. The two-day event, organized and chaired by Mihály Héder, included 18 presentations (as well as approximately 20 registrants who were not presenters); some presentations and monitoring of the conference was by remote participants from all over the world. Represented nations were the USA, Japan, Canada, Portugal, Italy, France, Belgium, Russia, Norway and the United Kingdom. Most of the presentations will be re-worked and published soon in a workshop proceedings collection or in a future English issue of *Polanyiana*, the journal of the Michael Polanyi Liberal Philosophical Association. The abstracts for presentations are still posted at <http://budpt.eu/>. The three presentations that directly discussed Michael Polanyi or tacit knowledge were: Kiyotaka Naoe, “Artifacts and Tacit Knowledge;” Phil Mullins, “Michael Polanyi on Machines as Comprehensive Entities;” Mihály Héder, “Michael Polanyi and the Epistemology of Engineering.”

Recent Publications

Istvan Hargittai, 2016. “Michael Polanyi—Pupils and Crossroads—On the 125th Anniversary of His Birth.” *Structural Chemistry* v. 27, Issue 5: 1327-1344. DOI 10.1007/s11224-016-0816-8. This is an editorial loosely based on Hargittai’s contribution to the Michael Polanyi Symposium: Connecting Science and the Humanities; it treats not only Michael Polanyi work in chemistry but also his influence on other scientists such as Eugene P. Wigner, Melvin Calvin and John C. Polanyi.

Mary Jo Nye. 2017. “Michael Polanyi: Science as Personal Knowledge and Social Practice.” *Angewandte Chemie* v. 56, issue 13: 3426-3433. DOI: 10.1002/anie.201610716. This is a revised version of Nye’s talk at the Michael Polanyi Symposium: Connecting Science and the Humanities, which was largely based on her book *Michael Polanyi and His Generation* and her Foreword to the new edition of *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*.

Dudley R. Herschbach. 2017. “Michael Polanyi: Patriarch of Chemical Dynamics and Tacit Knowing” *Angewandte Chemie* v. 56, issue 13: 3434-3444. DOI: 10.1002/anie.201610968. This is a revised version of Herschbach’s talk at the Michael Polanyi Symposium: Connecting Science and the Humanities, which treats Polanyi’s work in chemistry but also his philosophic metaphors.

Gábor István Bíró. 2017 “Changing Knowledge in the Early Economic Thought of Michael Polanyi” *Journal of Evolutionary Economics*: 1-17. Online at <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00191-017-0541-5>.

Keywords: Boundary work, economic evolution, economics education, F. A. Hayek, J. M. Keynes, Michael Polanyi’s social agenda.

Abstract: How did Polanyi, a middleman between Keynes and Hayek, see economics education as a way to save the challenged liberal economic system of the 1930s? The first part of the article explores how experts and non-experts were engaged in making and disseminating economic knowledge, what role perception had in these engagements, and how such practices contributed to a kind of mental division of labor in the early economic thought of Michael Polanyi. The second part reconstructs Polanyi's endeavors to show how the visual presentation of social matters could foster these engagement practices and the construction of economic knowledge. The third part points out that top-down and bottom-up approaches were both present in Polanyi's economic thought and explains why the latter is evolutionary in a sense that it is based on changing knowledge in cognitive, behavioral, social and technical domains. The fourth part discusses how public understanding of economic ideas connected interactional expertise and boundary work in Polanyi's account, and how he was engaged in developing both as part of his social agenda. The article concludes by showing how Polanyi positioned his growth theory and social agenda to save liberal economic thought and our civilization.

William N. Butos and Thomas J. McQuade. 2017. "Polanyi, Hayek and Adaptive Systems Theory," *Cosmos + Taxis*, 4:1 1-20. Online at <https://cosmosandtaxis.org/ct-41/>.

Keywords: Polanyi, Hayek, complex adaptive systems, emergent orders, science.

Abstract: The characterization of science as a "spontaneous order" was forcefully put forward by Michael Polanyi in his principled opposition to schemes for government management of science pressed in the 1930s and 40s. Polanyi insisted that scientific communities were self-governing arrangements based on tacitly held liberal traditions which would be destroyed by the application of central control. At the same time, in response to the trends toward government economic planning, F.A. Hayek was also exploring the idea of spontaneous order, but applied to the economy rather than to science. Hayek argued that the prices emergent from the interactions within the market order could not be duplicated by central planning. While Both Polanyi and Hayek employed the concept of spontaneous order to expose the unintended consequences of government control, neither put forward a fully consistent theory of spontaneous order. Polanyi not only favored prescriptive rules for science but also, in arguing that government funding would be helpful in enabling scientific research to proceed unhampered, seemed oblivious to the unintended effects that could arise from such funding. Hayek, influenced by both Polanyi and the "general systems" ideas of Bertalanffy, later tried to generalize the spontaneous order concept from markets to other social orders, but his use of the idea in the defense of classical liberalism introduced normative elements that betrayed the basic scientific thrust of his approach. Notwithstanding their brilliant and enduring insights, we argue that Polanyi's and Hayek's treatments of spontaneous order are certainly incomplete and are marred by normative and interventionist elements. We claim, however, that, building on their work, the theory of adaptive systems can go a long way toward providing an approach that avoids unnecessary normative excursions, is grounded in generalizations of the observed characteristics of actual systems, and advances the understanding of spontaneous order in general.

Additions to the Polanyi Society Web Site (polanysisociety.org)

Two Polanyi essays have recently been added to the collection of primary materials on the Polanyi Society web site ([Essays, Lectures \(audio files\) and a Film by Michael Polanyi](#)). They are [“The Authority of the Free Society”](#) which was originally published in *The Nineteenth Century and After* (146: 347-360) in July 1949. It is an essay closely related to Chapter 7 of *The Logic of Liberty* (1951) as well as somewhat akin to other essays in the mid-forties. All of these essays reflect that Polanyi was, in the forties, working out an historical account of the way ideas developed in modern Western society. [“On the Modern Mind”](#) was originally an October, 1964 lecture at Bowdoin College and was published in *Encounter* (24: 12-20) in May 1965. “On the Modern Mind” provides a summary of both Polanyi’s broad criticism of the dispositions of the modern mind and his prescription to realign these dispositions by adopting a new understanding of understanding (i.e., the theory of tacit knowing). Polanyi’s account of the perverse dispositions of the modern mind, which he argues have led to nihilism, violence and totalitarianism in the twentieth century, is rooted in his historical account of the way ideas developed in modern Western society.

Polanyi Bibliography Update Project

Maben Poirer compiled a massive 430 plus page bibliography of writings by and about Michael Polanyi which became available in 2002. It is titled *A Classified and Partially Annotated Bibliography of all Forms of Publications, Sound Recordings, Internet Documents, etc., by and about the Anglo-Hungarian Philosopher of Science Michael Polanyi* and was published by Canadian Scholars’ Press, Inc. There is an interview of Poirer in TAD 29:2 (pp. 44-49) which provides interesting details about the organization of this bibliography, the problems of making it, and other Polanyi bibliographies. Although the Poirer bibliography is now out of print, it likely can be found in some university libraries and may even be available via the interlibrary loan system. Colin Corder, a former student of Poirer, is in the process of updating this Polanyi bibliography. He is adding pieces originally overlooked as well as Polanyi materials that has been published since 2002. If you have published something Polanyi-related after 2002 which you think should be mentioned in this bibliography (i.e., something that has not appeared in the primary Polanyi journals, TAD, *Polanyiana* or *Appraisal*, or been noted in TAD’s “News and Notes” section), please notify Colin Corder (ccorder@connect.carleton.ca). If you are aware of an error in the citations in the Poirer bibliography or in any of the several other Polanyi bibliographies, please send the correction along to Corder.

Donations to the Travel Fund, the Richard Gelwick Fund, and the Polanyi Society Endowment

The Polanyi Society's Travel Fund and the Richard Gelwick Fund enable younger scholars to participate in Society meetings. One of the Society's goals is to involve persons who are presently, or have recently, been engaged in their graduate studies. But making this happen in the midst of the increasing burden of student loans, the escalation of travel costs, and diminishing university resources available to facilitate such involvement is a daunting challenge. Society meetings are held in different places in North America and in some years there are two meetings so demands on these Society funds are different in different years. We need continually to replenish these special funds.

The Polanyi Society Endowment was established a few years ago with a gift from Ann Herbert Scott, the widow of William T. Scott, the original Polanyi biographer. Slowly, the Endowment is growing. The eventual aim is to have an Endowment that generates each year some resources which can be used to support an expand Polanyi Society programming.

Please support these funds by sending a tax deductible contribution to The Polanyi Society, C/O Charles Lowney, 10 Jordan Street, Lexington, VA 24450. Checks should be made out to the Polanyi Society and marked Travel Fund, Gelwick Fund or Endowment (or general operating). You can also directly access the Polanyi Society PayPal button to make a donation (<http://polanysisociety.org/paypal/donate.html>). The actual PayPal transaction is handled on the secure PayPal site.

Back Printed 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.

Do Keep Up with Your Membership

If you receive the print issue of *Tradition and Discovery*, your membership expiration date is on your mailing label. Dues notices are sent out with the October issue and must be paid by December 31. The membership secretary will contact folks after the first of the year, but it may

result in missing the February issue. Do remember that we are a small organization and are trying to be good stewards of our resources.