

# Polanyian in Spirit: A Reply to Gulick

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ABSTRACT: Key Words: Michael Polanyi, practices, traditions, social theory, tacit knowledge, sociological explanation, habits, social causes, presuppositions

*Walter Gulick criticizes The Social Theory of Practices for its non-Polanyian views of the problem of the objective character of tacit knowledge, its insistence that there should be plausible causal mechanisms that correspond to claims about tacit knowledge and its “social” transmission, and its denial of the social, telic character of practices. In this reply it is asserted that the demand for causally plausible mechanisms is not scientific or for that matter non-Polanyian, that the book has a view of objectivity that parallels Polanyi’s own, and that the idea of telic practices is subject to the same problems over mechanism as non-telic ones, with the additional problem that telic concepts need supra-individual feedback mechanisms, of which no plausible examples exist. In each case, the non-social or personal explanations of the phenomenon of “practice” are better than the “social” ones. The discussion concludes by posing the challenge of connectionism to Polanyi, as well as the opportunity it presents.*

I thank Walter Gulick for the civility of his review essay, and for recognizing that *The Social Theory of Practices*<sup>1</sup> is very closely related to Polanyi’s concerns. As will become clear, I think the criticisms he makes are largely off-target. But others have read, or misread, the book in a similar way, so it is important to clarify the issues he raises. The key issues are the role of teleology in practices, the problem of objectivity, the kinds of explanation appropriate to human things, and the problem of the social nature of practices. A secondary issue, but an important one, is the question of the way in which Polanyi’s views bear on these issues.

On some of these issues, such as objectivity, Gulick attributes views to me that I sought to avoid, because I do not share them, and which in any case the argument of the book undermines. On others, I think his interpretation of the argument of the book is wrong. I also think his reading of Polanyi is misleading in some respects, notably through a neglect of what Polanyi quite insistently called the “personal.” But I also think that Polanyi needs to be revised, or will ultimately need to be revised, especially in light of some issues that are important for cognitive science. All these issues are important for the community of those who share Polanyian concerns.

## Practices as an Object of Knowledge and as Causal

Gulick thinks that my complaints about concept of practices are epistemic, that is to say that they somehow amount to saying that because a thing is difficult to know objectively it therefore does not exist. Although the book does on occasion make the uncontroversial point that practices are not directly accessible, the argument which Gulick attributes to me does not appear in the book. The focus of the book was relentlessly on one topic, mechanisms and the explanatory uses of the concept of practice. The argument was very straightforwardly against the usual explanatory uses of the concept of practices understood as something with causal powers but shared and therefore identical between individuals.

Let me briefly recapitulate the argument. To say that people “share” presuppositions or practices means that they have the *same* presuppositions or practices. The usual argument for this is transcendental: people do something, such as communicate; they could not communicate unless they shared the same framework; therefore they share the same framework. This argument mimics a standard strategy used by Polanyi and many others to argue that explicit rules are never sufficient and need to be supplemented by something tacit. But the argument that something extra (and tacit) is needed to explain, for example, communication or scientific discovery, *is not the same* as the argument for a shared framework or for the possession of the same practices. The argument for “sharing” or sameness requires us to believe that there is some mechanism by which the same rules, presuppositions, or practices get into the heads of different people. But if we consider the various possible strategies for solving this problem of transmission, we soon see that it is insurmountable. The claim that the *same* practices, presuppositions, and the like get into the heads of many people requires a means of transmission that is little short of magical.

The details of this argument are too complex to repeat here, but the point may be seen in a simple consideration. Ordinary communication is difficult, even if we use the full range of available explicit language, as anyone who has tried to write an instruction manual knows. One version of the tacit knowledge hypothesis, which I attack, makes the following astounding assumption: that people can (and routinely do) obtain perfect reproductions of the tacit possessions of others. In other words, people “share” extremely complex common frameworks. moreover, somehow they acquire these framework through means that are radically less error-prone than ordinary explicit communication is. The means in question must be much more effective than ordinary “training,” which is, of course, imperfect. My questions related to these hypothesized means, and I concluded, that they are phantasms: that acquiring the tacit possessions that people need is an imperfect training-like process that could not guarantee that people would “share” anything tacit, but could only, like training at its most successful, assure that people had habituated capacities to perform. Training of this sort only affects external similarities of performance: it tells us nothing about sameness of tacit possessions. Learning “from experience” is likely to produce an even greater diversity of habits than formal training.

The “habituation” alternative to “sharing,” once we look carefully, seems to accord better with what we know about the causal processes that actually operate in the world and with the known facts that practice theories purport to explain. This alternative account of what is going on when people learn to communicate, make scientific discoveries, and so forth, will be more plausible as an explanation because it does not appeal to any quasi-magical processes of transmission. Individual habituation (with the term being broadly construed to include all acquired learning that is tacit), I argued, does explain the same things, and we can even make some sense of such mysterious things as our common feelings by reference to the role of rituals and performances in inducing habits. This approach inverts the usual explanation of a tradition, for example, by saying not that its rituals are performed because people share a common framework, but that instead that rituals are behavioral technologies that produce a certain uniformity of habits--but a uniformity that is literally superficial, a matter of external similarity, with internal or personal consequences that vary from individual to individual. Prayer, for example, has effects on those who pray. But the effects vary from person to person.

Gulick thinks that this emphasis on cause and mechanism must represent some sort of crypto-scientism, behaviorism, or positivism. He quotes Polanyi, who makes a comment against what appear to be Hobbesian reductions of autonomous human activity to causal processes. But this line of attack is misdirected, because the argument outlined above says nothing reductive about anything *but* the “social” aspect of the notion of practices. Nothing about human agency, commitment, or autonomy is denied by the argument. Indeed, far

from undermining autonomy, it supports it by undermining the idea that people are trapped in a framework which is mysteriously reproduced within them, a notion that is a commonplace of postmodernism.

## **Objectivity, Reflexivity and Causality**

The postmodernists, and the best of the social constructionists, such as Steve Woolgar (see his comments on the “methodological horrors” of representation in constructionism in *The Very Idea*<sup>2</sup>), have made an important point about the logic of social constructionism, and the reflexivity problem it produces. This is the problem of reflexivity: if the concepts of science are rooted in representational practices, what is the status of representations of representational practices? Are they “real” or are they also rooted in representational practices? It holds equally for the position Gulick takes, and may be seen very simply in the following question about tradition. Is the concept of tradition simply a narrative device that is found within a particular tradition, a fiction, so to speak, employed within a tradition? Woolgar, for one, accepts that the logic of social constructionist accounts of practices applies to social constructionism itself, and that these accounts are, so to speak, fictive.

The problem for every “non-causal” model of practices that I know of is that they cannot escape the “methodological horrors” that arise from the problem of reflexivity. The passage Gulick quotes from my book, which asks rhetorically whether “facts about practices [are] just ‘made’ facts” expresses this reflexive difficulty. As he admits, the basis for his own view of the subject is writers other than Polanyi, such as MacIntyre and Borgmann. The reflexive problem clearly does arise in their cases. Polanyi, in contrast, was concerned to root his account in the results of psychology, and not only accepted, unlike the postmodernists, that his views should be consistent with science, he actively concerned himself with empirical psychology<sup>3</sup> a point I will make again below.

Any attempt to claim that practices are somehow not subject to considerations of causality and substance, including his own, are subject to this problem in one form or another, and in each case that I know of it leads to relativism, self-contradictory evasions, or dubious metaphysics, such as the idea that there is a fundamental metaphysical quality called “normativity.” Is saying this “scientism”? I don’t think so. The issue is not my invention, nor is it taken seriously only by “scientific” types. I can cite in my support the fact that social constructionists and others have wrestled with and drawn large implications from these problems of reflexivity. Is talking about cause by itself enough to convict one of scientism and slavery to the model of physics (or worse, to the wrong model of physics) as Gulick suggests? I do not think so. I made no commitments to a particular model of causality. Unless I am greatly mistaken, the notion of causal law never appears in the book: the philosophically different and more neutral terms “mechanism” and “process” are used throughout. My objections to the mechanisms of transmission postulated by various social theorists were not, as Gulick suggests, objections to postulation as such. After all, the mechanism of individual habituation I find more plausible is postulated or hypothesized as well. My argument is just that it is a strikingly more plausible hypothesis.

## **Frameworks and the Personal**

Gulick says that my non-social account of tacit knowledge is not Polanyian. This is not an objection that admits of a simple answer. It is literally true. But what I say could be taken either as a critique of Polanyi

or as a clarification of some issues which are not entirely clear in Polanyi and which have become more important as a result of other writings on tradition, paradigms, and so on. I would also claim that in a very important sense my line of argument is spiritually closer to Polanyi than to many of these other writings, for reasons that need a certain amount of background to understand, and which relate to the notion of “personal,” which Gulick is right to raise.

Polanyi routinely objected to such things as theories of meaning that “depersonalized” meaning. At the same time, he was concerned that asserting the personal character of meaning would expose it to being reduced to the status of dogmatic subjectivity.”<sup>4</sup> He could have said that meaning is secured from this fate by virtue of the fact that people share tacit frameworks of meaning. But Polanyi emphasized the personal, and said “repeatedly that we must reaccredit our own judgement as the paramount arbiter of all our intellectual performances” and that “I shall yet try to elaborate the structure of this ultimate self-reliance, to which this entire book shall bear witness.” He summarizes his own views by saying that “into every act of knowing there enters a tacit and passionate contribution of the person knowing what is being known, and that this coefficient is no mere imperfection, but a necessary component of all knowledge.”<sup>5</sup>

In retrospect, the important difference between Polanyi and writers like Kuhn is this emphasis on ultimate self-reliance, on the personal. Kuhn believed in shared frameworks, saw individuals as trapped in their frameworks, and was concerned with the problem of the circularity of justifying frameworks through evidence arising within frameworks. Kuhn had, as many interpreters suggest, a *social* theory of knowledge. It was precisely this social use of the notion of tacit knowledge and presuppositions that I attacked in *The Social Theory of Practices*. As the title of his great book makes clear, Polanyi saw *personal* knowledge as primary.

Polanyi, of course, said that he was “a person intellectually fashioned by a particular idiom, acquired through my affiliation to a civilization that prevailed in the places where I had grown up,” and that “all my amendments...will remain embedded in the system of my previous beliefs.”<sup>6</sup> He did not think that this was the end of the matter, and that people are condemned to a socially determined relativism as a result. This was my conclusion as well: one can admit to the importance of what Polanyi called being “fashioned by a particular idiom” without falling into the error of thinking that this means that one is condemned to one’s intellectual framework as an iron cage in which one is totally dependent and unfree.

My way of thinking about what we can know and how we are dependent on frameworks is summed up in the slogan I used at the end of the book, which revised Stanley Cavell’s famous saying “We learn language and the world together,” by which he meant that the processes of learning the one were inseparable from the processes of learning the other. I said that we should add to this that “Not only do we learn language and the world together, at the same time as we learn them we acquire habits that enable us to be more or less proficient in using both language and the world.”<sup>7</sup> By this I meant that the processes of learning “objective” or public things were inseparable from tacit processes of habituation. My point was that the feedback mechanisms of experience that produce habituation are personal, or individual, but at the same time bound up with learning an idiom and experiencing the world. This is closely *parallel* to the position taken by Polanyi between objectivity and subjectivity.<sup>8</sup>

Suppose, as I suggest, that our experiences are partly the result of habituation that is necessarily personal, as well as of idioms that are in some sense impersonal or public. This is an anti-objectivist supposition. For me, objectivity, in science, the law, or elsewhere, cannot be merely a matter of my individually applying

a public framework to the world, because the tacit element, which I take to be a matter of habituation, is personal, not objective. So, for me, objectivity is a public achievement or claim. To say that some fact is objective is to say that others will accept it, under the right conditions. I explain all this in part to explain why the term objective and its cognates do not appear in the book, and why I am not, as Gulick says, an objectivist.

### **“Telic” Practices: Personal vs. Social**

Gulick notes that the book itself begins by admitting a *lacuna* in the argument. The book does not attempt to deal with what it calls telic or purposive notions of practice, such as the one which appeared in Kant’s essay on the saying that may be true in a theory but it is not in practice. There Kant argued that there was something left over when one attempted to reduce certain *purposive* activities to theory or to rules. Medicine is the primary example of this. The examples Gulick gives, of playing a game of chess, hosting a New Year’s party, going fly fishing, and so forth fit Kant’s model nicely: there is something left over in each of these cases that cannot be reduced to rules or to what can be said explicitly, that is to say to “theory.” In these cases, the skilled practitioner knows more than he or she can say.

I did not discuss these cases for a simple reason. I agree with the idea that there is something tacit “left over” in these cases. The question that motivated the book was the question of what the tacit stuff is, and particularly to one special aspect of the question: whether the tacit stuff could be said to be “shared” and in this sense “social.” The problems with the “yes” answer to this question arise whether one’s conception of practices is telic or not. So by declining to pursue the issue of telic practices I did not mean to say that the argument was irrelevant to them. I simply did not wish to burden an already complex presentation with responses to positions that I thought no one now held.

In any case, it doesn’t matter. The argument applies to telic practices as well. So the *lacuna* is less of an issue than it might appear, and indeed is not really a *lacuna* after all in the sense that Gulick thinks it might be, i.e. a loophole through which one might sneak the “social” notion of tacit knowledge I criticize. Understanding why this is so, however, is a little difficult, so I will have to subject you, gentle reader, to a digression on the problem of purpose.

The issue of telic practices is confusing because two quite different claims have often been run together. The first is the claim that the tacit knowledge in question is “social” rather than personal; the second is the claim that the purposes of the activity itself are tacit. Gulick’s examples are of cases where the purposes *themselves* do not appear to be tacit: the point of chess is winning, and there is nothing tacit about that; of fly fishing to catch fish, and so on. But not all of his examples need be interpreted in this way. Perhaps one might say that a great party-throwing host could tell whether a party was good without being able to explain what it was that made it good, or seek to throw a good party without being able to articulate in any depth what “good party” meant, and, better yet, strived to produce good parties.

In this last case, the purpose is tacit, and there is also tacit stuff, such as a sense of propriety, that the host needs to possess in order to achieve the purpose. There seem to be no cases in which the purposes are tacit but the rules themselves are all explicit. It is logically possible to claim, for example, that the law is nothing more than a body of explicit rules, but that its purposes are hidden and understandable only by reference to purposes that are inarticulable. This, however, is a very odd argument, for an important reason that I will discuss shortly.

In any case, it is an argument that runs in the opposite direction from Polanyi, who would say that the law is a body of explicit rules that can be used only on the basis of a vast body of tacit knowledge.

My view, and Polanyi's, would be that every case of tacit purposes is also a case in which something tacit needs to be possessed in order to achieve the purposes. The reason I did not devote a separate discussion to the telic case should now be clear: if the argument applies to the tacit things that need to be possessed to achieve the purposes, it applies to telic practices of which they are supposedly an element. The difficulty the book is concerned with is one that sets in when it is claimed that the goals are not personal but social. In the "personal" case, there is some point to saying that the host is guided in his party-producing activity by goals that in the nature of the case cannot be articulated--after all, none of us imagine that the success of a party can be reduced to elements or explicit rules, such as "properly heat the cocktail hot dogs," which, added together, would always and necessarily produce something that would count as a great party. To say that a collectivity is guided by inarticulable goals is a different matter.

Theories that purport to identify shared but tacit purposes that have actual causal effects on the world that inhere in an activity but in some mysterious way transcend the various purposes of the practitioners have a long history in social theory. They even exist today. Pierre Bourdieu claims to find hidden purposes such as the accumulation of cultural capital lurking behind the practices of various dominant social groups. There is, however, an objection, nicely formulated by Jon Elster, which I consider to be fatal to such theories. Elster says, essentially, that to have a notion of purpose it is a minimal requirement that some sort of feedback mechanism exist by which the activity in question can be modified as a result of changes in circumstances in accordance with the purposes.<sup>9</sup>

Without a feedback mechanism, Elster suggests, there is nothing to the notion of purpose, at least in the sense of a purpose that has effects on, and guides, behavior. If I have a thermostat on my air conditioner, it might be said that the thermostat has the purpose of regulating temperature and acts to switch the power on and off in accordance with this purpose. But thermostats have feedback mechanisms. They are connected to thermometers. The thermometers feed back to the switching mechanism when the temperature reaches a particular point in a range. Arguably, of course, such mechanisms can be characterized entirely in causal terms. But having a feedback mechanism is, so to speak, an essential condition for asserting that something has an inherent purpose or a purpose of the sort that practices are supposed to have, i.e. one that guides what people do.

Now we can see what is so odd about saying the law is fully explicit but has tacit purposes: if we mean that the law has purposes in the sense that it is guided by purposes, there must be a feedback mechanism. But there is no hidden feedback loop through which the tacit purposes of the law operate to produce the explicitly stated law. Legislators write the laws and vote on them, all explicitly. They may have tacit purposes, of course. But the explicit law is a fixed document, and thus like an unguided missile. It cannot be "guided" by tacit mechanisms, because its course is fixed, so to speak, at the point it becomes explicit. This is not say that the judges who apply and interpret the laws do not have tacit purposes, and "guide" the law in the light of these purposes. It is rather to assign them personal causal responsibility for this guiding, rather than to assign it to some unknown and mysterious regulative mechanism by which the course of legal interpretation is automatically righted.

The issue of tacit purposes may be put in Polanyian terms, and in terms of Polanyi's concerns: scientific discovery is goal-oriented or telic, but not in the sense that many skilled activities are. A golf champion

may have inarticulable skills, but the goal of getting the ball in the hole in the smallest number of strokes is not inarticulable. The goals of scientific discovery, in contrast, are not always articulable in advance in this way, and this fact greatly impressed Polanyi, who sought to understand how great scientists proceeded in ways that were apparently intuitive, but who wanted also to do better than to rely on notions like intuition. His alternative idea was that great scientists in some sense knew in advance what they were looking for, but could not articulate it until they found it.

In *Science, Faith and Society*<sup>10</sup> Polanyi notes that astronomical observers making physical records of observations with telescopes correct their observations by a mathematical factor that represents their reaction time in marking the positions. This is called their personal coefficient. Different observers have *different* personal coefficients. This is why they are personal, and irreducibly so. I have no objection to this personal notion of tacit possession And I accept that individuals seek and are guided by goals that they cannot articulate. But I would like to know how this process works, and to find this to be a credible explanation of anything I would have to believe that there is a process or mechanism by which it might work.

Here is a suggestion about how it might. Consider the key question for Polanyi: are great scientists especially good at discerning the significant patterns in what they observe? Do they do so in particular cases of discovery because their awareness has been prefocused or refocused, again in ways that they cannot articulate, in such a way that the patterns that are significant are more obvious and recognizable to them than to other scientists? Polanyi would have given a “yes” to both questions. Recent work on connectionist ideas about the mind lend some additional plausibility to these ideas, in the sense that they point to “tacit” but entirely casual processes through which people learn and change their expectations without being aware of this happening. The case of the great scientist who anticipates but cannot articulate the discovery he or she is about to make seems to me to fit very nicely with the idea that individuals have trajectories of connectionist learning that differ and that enable them to do and learn differently, including making different discoveries. I think it is reasonable to say that there is a kind of feedback mechanism operating when people learn and change their expectations without being able to explicitly articulate these changes. I call this habituation, and give the example of a person who gets better at reading certain kinds of difficult philosophical texts.

One might say that there is some sort of feedback mechanism that operates in more or less the same way with groups. Musicians may develop a sense of one another that enables them to play together collectively and through a feeling for the quality of the performance regulate their behavior in accordance with the collective outcome, for example the recorded sounds that they can listen to after a session. But while the performance is a collective product, the feedback mechanism is individual: each member of the group hears for himself or herself and adjusts accordingly. Mutual adjustment, getting comfortable with one another, and so forth are not themselves collective acts, but rather processes of interaction and mutual taking-account-of by individuals using individual feedback mechanisms. If it is a matter of individuals adjusting to one another in the course of collective activity, I would claim, it is a matter of habituation, and personal.

Gulick wants to go beyond this. He suggests that “a Polanyian would insist that practices exhibit social structure and telic qualities” and that to reduce practices to individual habits is “arbitrary atomism.” My response to this is simple: to say that practices have telic qualities, as distinct from saying that individual practitioners have purposes, means that there are feedback mechanisms by which shared or social practices are guided by shared or social purposes, tacit or otherwise. If the only plausible mechanisms are individual ones, then the skills they produce through the continuous process of feedback will necessarily be personal, not

“social” in the sense of being “shared,” simply because people will get personalized feedback leading to personalized habits. Polanyi is, I think, of two minds on this: he saw the purposes of the legal or scientific tradition as in some sense inherent and discoverable, but also believed that they rested ultimately on personal acts of commitment. I accept the latter, but in the book argue that the tacit part of traditions can only be carried by and subsist in individual habits, by which I mean to include habitual dispositions.

### **Conclusion: What it Takes to be a Polanyian Today**

Where does this discussion leave us with Polanyi? The legacy of Polanyi surely was meant as something to be continually rethought, and to be made consistent with new kinds of considerations, arguments, and scientific findings, even if that meant revising it. One central idea in Polanyi is “the well-known fact that the aim of a skillful performance is achieved by the *observance of a set of rules* which are not known as such to the person following them.”<sup>11</sup> I have altered the emphasis on this quotation to bring out the thesis that is now controversial: that skilled practice is a matter of the observance of a set of rules. I will merely cite two texts by John Searle, which express a widely but not universally accepted idea: that the notion of deep unconscious rule-following is incoherent, because rules are not self-interpreting, and the notion that there are in the mind rules to interpret rules and rules to interpret the rules that interpret rules *ad infinitum* is computationally impossible for physical brains.<sup>12</sup> The challenge for Polanyians is to deal with these arguments, even if it requires them to revise Polanyi. In my view, the arguments can be strengthened by these revisions, and that Polanyians have nothing to fear from science. In a sense, this kind of friendly revision was the aim of *The Social Theory of Practices*, a book rooted, as Gulick rightly observes, in a deep appreciation of Polanyi.

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Stephen P. Turner, *The Social Theory of Practices* (Chicago: The University of Chicago University Press, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> Steve Woolgar, *Science: The Very Idea* (London and New York: Tavistock Publications, 1988), 30-38.

<sup>3</sup> I note that he was very concerned to find support for his suggestions about discovery in the experimental study of psychology. The late Donald Campbell told me that he had many conversations on these and other psychological issues with Polanyi in the early fifties, and the imprint of these concerns with causal psychological processes is evident in *Personal Knowledge* and elsewhere. I think it is wholly to Polanyi’s credit that he sought to make his own insights fit with the available evidence about the causal nature of the processes in question, as I have also attempted to do. Times change, and there are different ways of making sense of the problem today that enable us to point to different interpretations of the processes.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), 253.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 312.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

<sup>7</sup> Turner, *Practices*, 121.

<sup>8</sup> “Parallel,” but not “the same as.” Polanyi solved the problem of our personal stake in frameworks by means of the notion of personal commitment to a framework. This notion I would question. How can one commit oneself to something tacit, and how can commitment be separated from the pre-existing possession of a framework? To use Polanyi’s language quoted here, if one is formed by an idiom, aren’t one’s commitments inseparable from the idiom? Don’t we acquire and make commitments as we acquire mastery of an idiom, in a process that cannot be meaningfully separated? Do we learn the language of love one day and “commit” to it the next? Or are we formed by this language and able to make the commitments we make because we have been formed by it, but at the same time able to learn because we are committed? I think commitment and learning are inseparable, and that “commitment” is a misleading concept, especially when used in connection with “framework.” Thus in my view there is a tension within Polanyi, which Gulick and I resolve differently. When Polanyi says “that we must reaccredit” our judgment I agree--but reaccrediting is a continuous process, coterminous with mastering and acting, and not a matter of a separable “commitment” to a framework.

<sup>9</sup> Jon Elster, *Sour Grapes: Studies in the Subversion of Rationality* (Cambridge, London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 105-7.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Polanyi, *Science, Faith, and Society* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964).

<sup>11</sup> Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 49.

<sup>12</sup> John R. Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1992), especially chapters 7 and 9, and John R. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), chapter 6.

## **Polanyi Society Membership**

*Tradition and Discovery* is distributed to members of the Polanyi Society. This periodical supercedes a newsletter and earlier mini-journal published (with some gaps) by the Polanyi Society since the mid seventies. The Polanyi Society has members in thirteen different countries though most live in North America and the United Kingdom. The Society includes those formerly affiliated with the Polanyi group centered in the United Kingdom which published *Convivium: The United Kingdom Review of Post-critical Thought*. There are normally three issues of *TAD* each year.

Annual membership in the Polanyi Society is \$20 (\$10 for students). The membership cycle follows the academic year; subscriptions are due September 1 to Phil Mullins, Humanities, Missouri Western State College, St. Joseph, MO 64507 (fax: 816-271-5987, e-mail: mullins@griffon.mwsc.edu) Please make checks payable to the Polanyi Society. Dues can be paid by credit card by providing the card holder's name as it appears on the card, the card number and expiration date. Changes of address and inquiries should be sent to Mullins. New members should provide the following subscription information: complete mailing address, telephone (work and home), e-mail address and/or fax number. Institutional members should identify a department to contact for billing. The Polanyi Society attempts to maintain a data base identifying persons interested in or working with Polanyi's philosophical writing. New members can contribute to this effort by writing a short description of their particular interests in Polanyi's work and any publications and /or theses/dissertations related to Polanyi's thought. Please provide complete bibliographic information. Those renewing membership are invited to include information on recent work.