

# Reflections on the 1966 Dialogue Between Carl Rogers and Michael Polanyi

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## **Abstract**

In dialogue format, the authors revisit the issues of scientific and humanistic approaches to human knowing raised by Carl Rogers and Michael Polanyi in their 1966 dialogue. Moorman posits an unreduced and unexplained view of persons and phenomena. Stillwell offers that the use of language necessarily introduces some reductionism. Both value an acceptance of experience. The dialogue concludes with expressions of trust in the making meaning from the ambiguity of existence using concepts like the “tacit,” the “self,” and “indefinitude.”

## **Introduction to our Purpose**

*Jere:* As a part of a conference conducted in La Jolla, California in 1966, epistemologist Michael Polanyi and psychologist Carl Rogers engaged each other in a live television dialogue. This dialogue was reproduced as the final chapter in the book from the conference edited by Rogers and William R. Coulson called *Man and the Science of Man*. This recounting was also published in *The Carl Rogers Dialogues* (Kirschenbaum & Henderson, 1989).

On the basis of his original training and practice in chemistry, Michael Polanyi built his considerable reputation as a philosopher through writing, lecturing and teaching. His magnum opus is *Personal Knowledge*, published in 1958. He characterized his approach as "post-critical," writing that his main professional concern was "to establish a better foundation than we now possess for holding the beliefs by which we live and must live, though unable to adequately justify them today" (Rogers and Coulson, 1968, p. vii). Carl Rogers' reputation was as an outstanding and profound innovator in the fields of psychology and education. His book *On Becoming a Person*, published in 1961, had been widely accepted by a public well beyond his profession. He was deeply concerned with

Author Note: William Coulson organized the conference at which the Rogers-Polanyi dialogue took place at the Western Behavioral Sciences Institute where Rogers was a Resident Fellow. Some time thereafter, Coulson held a study group with others from the Institute (and later, from The Center for Studies of the Person) aiming to thoroughly understand Polanyi's thinking, its relevance to Rogers' approaches, and its implications for persons. The study group continued for 17 years (long after Coulson withdrew), and included various participants, among them Moorman and Stillwell. The Moorman and Stillwell dialogue began as working notes for a live conversation to have taken place at the 100th year celebration of Carl Rogers' birth. That conversation did not occur, but the working formed the basis for email and personal discussions resulting in the present publication.

how scientific knowledge would be used and by whom. Even further, he was questioning the deterministic thinking inherent in contemporary scientific methods and looking for a way to conceive of a science that would be "self-transcending in freshly adaptive ways of meeting life and its problems" (Kirschenbaum, 1995, p. 45). In 1966 Polanyi and Rogers had each reached the conceptual boundaries of their respective disciplines, and each was striving to revise some of the assumptions behind contemporary practices in science.

Will and I are create a dialogue of our own that is not intended to evaluate the 1966 dialogue so much as to reflect upon it from our perspectives as students of the work of both men. We want to consider the questions: What can we learn from this dialogue today? What issues did this dialogue seek to address? What progress have we made in the past thirty-seven years regarding the issues involved? What work still needs to be done?

### **Application of Science to Human Being**

In the first part of the dialogue, Rogers uses an example from studies of delinquency. He notes that from the standpoint of objectivism, a boy who comes from a broken home, who lives in slum area, who has been rejected by his parents, and so on—that that boy has a high probability of becoming a delinquent. He reflects as to how this way of thinking is akin to treating the boy as an object in much the same fashion as measuring the speed of a steel ball rolling down a slope. Rogers affirms the usefulness of this sort of positivistic/objective research, and yet he is troubled that such research leaves out the person. As distinguished from the inevitability of the rolling ball following a determined pathway, Rogers asserts that whether the boy becomes a delinquent is not an inevitable process. As an alternative to depersonalizing the person, Rogers has a vision of spontaneity, creativity, and the possibility of responsible action.

Two beliefs have dominated the modern era: conceptual reduction and causal explanation. There is a third, legitimate, way to understand: to describe a phenomenon or person as it/he/she ingenuously presents it/himself/herself—unreduced and unexplained. This is the appropriate mode of coming to understand things, events, and persons: They disappear when they are subject to conceptual reduction or causal explanation.

Both Polanyi and Rogers are concerned with a science that has attempted to squeeze a person into a box whose dimensions are defined by reductionistic, explanatory scientific methods. Both men see that science, as practiced at the time of the dialogue, is inadequate to the task of studying the person. Both men lament that the scientific ideal has not accounted adequately for the boy in the example above as he is and as he might become. In fact, Polanyi and Rogers lament that the ideal has even precluded such an accounting of the real person.

I pose the questions: To what extent are we still limited by the ideas of reductionistic and positivistic science? Have we swung too far to the pole of subjectivism and radical relativism of some extreme interpretations of the postmodern worldview? Is there a view that can affirm that there is something to be known, yet that there are many approaches to this something?

*Will:* I am intrigued, Jere, by several of the concerns you raise in a new voice. I would like for us to together handle these topics of reductionism, relativism, multiple

approaches, creativity, and a reality that may be known—topics of our mutual interest. If spontaneity blooms, we might even get to other topics of which Polanyi and Rogers spoke that evening—moral value judgments and transcendence.

I'm not sure I understand one of your statements, and if indeed I do understand it, I'm skeptical of it. Even if we disagree, I sense you've opened a promising door for our thinking. So, under my friendly scrutiny, would you expand on your belief in a "third way to understand," a way of being able to "describe a person or any phenomena...unreduced and unexplained"?

*Jere:* I begin with a short story or metaphor. As your math teacher, I have given you a mid-term test with twenty-five questions on it. You have gotten five answers right according to the standards of arithmetic.

Reductionism: "You got five right *or* you got twenty wrong."

Explaining: "You have not been studying—That's the reason you're not doing well!"

Unreduced and unexplained: "Sounds like the test was a challenge for you."

"Yes, I realize that my dyslexia is worse than I thought, and I fear not being able to graduate this semester, etc."

Here is the beginning of a story of a real person, the student is not an abstraction; she is an individual self, not as we resemble other selves. This is not objectivism nor subjectivism, but "the personal." The personal story seeks to know truly with recognition of hazard. This responsible speaking in the first person is indicative of respecting another who can take up the communication. It creates, as Patricia Poteat wrote, "a space of appearance apart from which the apprehension of truth, or reality itself is impossible" (Poteat, 1985, p. 162).

*Will:* Thanks. I hear your concern with how persons are understood, that a person is best known from her sense of how she takes responsibility for placing herself in the world and all the joys and hazards that commitment implies. I am attracted to this hope of yours founded in the understanding person. But your example has not decreased my skepticism towards what I understand as your project to "describe without reducing or explaining." I'd like to tell you my thoughts on this to see if they can move us along together.

Now, I believe that your or my way of being at any moment *can* be nonreductive and avoid explaining. However, when I try to communicate *what* I know in any manner other than being present (or absent) I must use language. In your example, the happenings—test-studying, test-developing, the challenge, the dyslexia and so forth—end up as descriptions in a mathematical language or a language of feelings as soon as they become communications. To reproduce in language is to reduce the *happenings* to what we can communicate to a *description*. Descriptions inherently reduce any happening to that-which-I-attend in order to know about the happening. Knowing about something seems to me not the same as being present or absent toward that something.

Perhaps Polanyi and Rogers can help us here. In their strivings to re-extend or expand science to a more inclusive practice, they looked at ways to bring in non-reductive, non-explanatory human knowing.

Both Polanyi and Rogers were scientists applying objectivist measures to their experiences and were profoundly affected by what they perceived as wrongheaded, even immoral, determinism. Looking beyond the facts and hypotheses each had generated in his own field—the *what* of knowledge—both men were uncomfortable continuing to apply exclusively deterministic/chance frameworks to the whole enterprise of scientific understanding.

*Jere:* Polanyi and Rogers both agree that the statement “this is scientific” is limiting, that we would be better off to include the personal notions of responsibility and creativity as legitimate aspects of a “rational framework.” I believe that the major blockages to communication are the blockages of a person’s own position, which he often defends with statements akin to “this is scientific,” often rigidified into an “I am right—you are wrong” position.

It seems to me that the proclamation—“This is scientific”—is an attempt to minister to the craving for certainty and the anguish and torment of ambiguity.

### Human Creativity in Understanding

*Will:* The only viable alternative on the scene thirty-seven years ago against this kind of determinism seemed to be a kind of phenomenological approach to knowledge. This approach walked away from an absolute grounding and toward understanding the basis of science as a synthesizing, intentional, and subjective process. Polanyi and Rogers were living amidst what has proved to be a continuing culture-wide dissolution from the quest for pronouncements of certainty. They were attracted toward a quest for what Paul Vitz (1977) has called “authentic”—as contrasted to “authoritative”—declarations (p. 53). Both were extending science, making bridges out from what was for them an outmoded scientific rationale, extending toward the agency, passions, thoughts, and hunches of the scientists’ (and *any* knowers’) processes of understanding and action. Each was deeply interested in how a person participates in what she or he knows.

Each started from what he knew in his own thinking and being. Rogers wanted to understand how a person comes to know and take responsibility for his or her life. From his clients’ explorations and travails, Rogers learned the momentous importance of a person knowing and living in the declaration, “I exist!” This declaration is at the heart of what Rogers called a person’s “self.” To conceptualize how the “inner world of self-perception be more and more aligned himself with phenomenological humanist approaches to knowing existence. As he honored and accepted the descriptions of happenings that people expressed, he came to trust his own tentative and even yet more forceful self-expressions.

I think Polanyi was after something slightly different from Rogers. He wanted to understand how anyone comes to believe or know the truth. What he labeled “personal knowledge” is his spelled-out conviction that the irreducible human source of knowing lies in an individual’s tacit knowledge. This inexplicit knowing is a person’s intuitive, imaginative, comprehensive, embodied grasp of the nature of reality. He said each of us relies upon our tacit experiences to question or accept information or take actions or make descriptive statements. And in doing so we all necessarily risk ourselves, as we respond and submit our claims of truth to a world independent of ourselves.

Polanyi trusted and risked in his “tacit.” Rogers trusted in his fluid, ever-changing, and ultimately inexplicable “self.” Both men inspired you and me, Jere. Yet, although I find their concepts and articulations useful, they do not satisfy me. I’m eager to pursue, but I don’t pin my trust to a kind of certain knowledge (or even the certainty of random chance). I don’t relinquish my trusting to my “self” or to my “tacit knowledge.” Neither is of much help in my telling you why or how I live in the grace of the earth.

The help I can now accept from these men is the fuzziness, the transcendence from language to which they refer. I’m inspired these days, not so much by the truth or the progress toward truth their concepts represent, as by their trust in indefinitude.

*Jere:* Indefinitude. . . such as what you just said, your “living in the grace of the earth.” What do you mean by this phrase “grace of the earth?”

*Will:* Yes, it’s true. My turn of phrase that just emerged, it’s a fuzzy indicator. I do not have a very specific reference. I’m avoiding a specific reference. Had I said something similar, like, I trust the “grace which passeth all understanding,” you might have easily assumed you knew what I meant. But the emptiness of what I did say tastes just right on my tongue.

*Jere:* I like this other term you offer, “indefinitude.” Throughout his writing, Polanyi writes about the unspecifiability of knowledge, i.e., the notion that the grounds of knowledge claims cannot be exhaustively specified.

Both Polanyi and Rogers offer an appreciation of the likelihood and inevitability of ambiguity, of the unreality of the hankering after the certainty of positivistic, reductionistic knowledge, which leaves out the person. Both men offer a theory of the climate where this ambiguity may be best borne, and even cultivated, for valuable gifts.

Rogers moves towards the good-enough “claims of the person,” though I believe he would not make a claim for certainty or perfection. He would recommend boldness about relying on these claims, trusting, paradoxically, that the fully functioning person “not only experiences, but utilizes, the most absolute freedom when he spontaneously, freely, and voluntarily chooses and wills that which is also absolutely determined.” (Rogers, 1989. p. 418).

Polanyi, on the other hand, seems more interested in a reality that makes a claim on me, that comes to me, that does not proceed from me. As I understand Polanyi, I do not determine my own existence, I discover what is there. While I am conditioned at my source by my belonging, I am responsible in a radical way for my life. I am somehow “called” to search for the truth and state my findings.

My project has more to do with acknowledging that to *describe* a phenomenon accurately as it ingenuously presents itself, unreduced and unexplained is truly a way of *understanding* this phenomenon.

For example, I can describe a trip to a foreign land to you in a letter using ordinary, common sense, language. Whatever wonder my letter may evoke would all but disappear if limited to methods of reductionistic and causal explanatory science.

I am assuming that ordinary language is both metaphorical and adequate for our commonsense daily living. I am not assuming that language is presuppositionless. Nor am I assuming that the assertions of reductionistic and causal explanatory science are

presuppositionless, though this is often implied via a pseudo-substitution that seeks to escape the asserter's acknowledgement of personal participation in his or her knowledge.

Consider reductionistic and causal explanatory science as seeking to explain the tangible; consider my letter to you as an attempt to describe something real, which has some intangible elements. Reducing the Mona Lisa to tangible paint scrapings would tell you little of the profundity of the Mona Lisa. Perhaps we are, in some way, saying the same thing. Yet, my restatement does not say, to me, that my project is to describe without reducing or explaining.

*Will:* In whatever way you describe the Mona Lisa, *my* understanding—or standing-under—*you* consists of at least two senses. The first sense connotes “support” and “acceptance.” I am holding you, perhaps I seem to balance you on my shoulders: I support and confirm your expression, your acts of knowing. The second sense connotes our possessing or holding or intending the same or similar “knowledge.” What you express is more-or-less the way I too could experience an order in Leonardo's paint on that canvas. In addition, this second sense of understanding serves to support *me*, in that within our interchange I am oriented, not adrift from the world I know (even if you and I do not completely agree).

One urge that I'm aware of in people is a need to order the world, to make the world ordinary. We put order onto the world through our capacity to use symbols. Symbols can bring-to-presence that which is absent—some thing or thought or feeling we remember, or imagine, or wish for. This sense for what-is-absent is important. When what-is-absent is brought together somehow with what-is (-present), we feel a unity.

My understanding of Polanyi leads me to propose that his term for this unity is “truth.” I think Rogers' unitary term is “self.” And both these men developed methods to bring the un-formed, unexpressed, tacit creature that we are to more explicit presence. Rogers spoke of providing an atmosphere or an environment, Polanyi spoke of “indwelling.” These are methods of discovery meant to plumb our organismic, incarnate, intuitive bodies. These are methods of creativity that use both senses of understanding I mentioned before: a support under the bodily presence of the person, and a joint holding-under that body of knowledge brought symbolically present.

While we humans respond to and initiate order in the world, we also sense a heritage, which is unordered, knows no limits, and is unspecifiable (Polanyi, 1958). To touch or be touched by this heritage of the extra-ordinary is to transcend the world we've made ordinary. Your idea of understanding via ingenuous description, Jere, perhaps signifies your courtship of what I'm calling this unending indefinitude. Polanyian indwelling and Rogerian environments for dialogue are methods for a science that explicitly honors and gives account to our human knowledge creation.

### **Reality – Objective and Subjective, Constructed or Discovered**

*Jere:* I see both Polanyi and Rogers as interested in the personal. For Rogers, the personal is subjective. As noted before, Rogers assumes that the fully functioning person, disencumbered from conditions of worth, will choose, “be determined by,” the most economical and satisfying vector of all the internal and external available stimuli.

Polanyi, on the other hand, sees the “personal” as referring to a responsible activity. He claims for its comprehension, a universal validity, an outward-directed movement toward what is known, and an appraisal of what is known that meets a commitment to universal standards, *not an activity of self-development*. It is this latter point I would like to develop in point/counterpoint with you.

I believe one cannot refer to “commitment targets,” such as truth, reality, justice, and beauty non-committally. My understanding is that the scientific objectivism of the time of the Rogers/Polanyi dialogue proceeded as if there is no problem discussing them non-committally.

It seems that all four of us—Polanyi, Rogers, you and I, agree that there is some problem with this! It seems we agree there is an ineradicable fiduciary component (a component of acritical, methodological faith) to all of our judgments about reality. This faith component may *appear* to be saying that reality is a projection of our subjectivity. But, I do not believe that what we are committed to, even though we know it may be wrong, is necessarily a merely subjective projection. Rogers, though, seems to be saying that “reality” is a projection of our subjectivity! This is where I would like to offer a difference for consideration. I’m not sure how that’s going to go, but I am clearer on my issue. Where are you on this “subjectivity” point?

It seems to me, on the contrary, that Polanyi is contending that reality in this sense of transcendence, in its capacity to manifest itself inexhaustibly in future surprising new ways, is accessed only in the fallible, self-transcending (or subjectivity transcending) venture of faith. Not everyone's capacity for methodological faith is the same. This faith is a capacity for a sensibility that must be built up. Rogers offers the notion of “maturity” as a standard for discerning success in therapy. I’m not sure how he would apply this notion to epistemology. Polanyi offers a conceptual reform, which he calls “personal knowledge,” as an alternative to both objectivity and subjectivity. I want to claim some idea of “reality” that has more of a flavor of commitment than the subjective “for me this is true,” or the objectivism of “seeing is believing.” At the same time I seek a convivial community of fellow knowers: I look for a committed “we.” I am still willing to go my way alone in *dissent* from the consensus (and even alone declaring “what the consensus should be!”) As a lone discoverer, I would consider that I have not yet been successful with the responsibility of my “persuasive passion.”

Back in the 1970’s, I remember how the word “convincing” was one of the big sins of the Rogerian mode of being; so I am attempting to “reclaim” the notion of “persuasion.” Do you and I begin to move apart here in what we believe?

*Will:* Turning to Rogers for inspiration, let me try to fashion a response to your queries about subjectivity, self-development, and persuasion. Rogers did not hesitate to express his professional truth. It is his theory of the person. He claimed he formed it inductively by opening himself to the reality of the phenomena called “client” he met through a method of empathic inquiry. He then submitted his notion to various kinds of testing and theoretical enrichment. When he speaks of *this* truth he attempts to be persuasive to the convivial group of fellow scientists and lay people.

But with a client, Rogers was in pursuit of the client’s self. A person entered therapy out of a sense of separated self, or incongruence. The truth that the person knew or discovered or rediscovered was in service to this seemingly disunited self. In therapy it is

the phenomenon of the client that is seeking to reveal itself to itself as it is. The relationship that the client and Rogers developed as persons together seemed to free the client for seeking self-unity. Out of self-unity came a greater capacity for relationship with others.

This truth is “for me” (the client). The self-unity is enhanced by explicitness and testing of the truth of relations among the parts of the self. Making explicit one’s truth seems helpful to being faithful to that truth. Perhaps you could call it “persuading” one’s self. Rogers believed his own understanding and acceptance of the client’s truth was important for the client’s healing. It is in this context I spoke earlier about two kinds of understanding. To Rogers, I believe, “understanding” the client had more to do with his tacit contact, “holding the client on his shoulders”—an authentic, interactional or embodied presence truth, than with a contact generated between himself and the client “holding the same knowledge”—an authoritative, absolute or logos truth. Rogers chose to put his own congruence into the mix when he wanted to further understand the client, or (occasionally) when he sought bonding with the client. I see Rogers assuming, “You are a person.” Bringing that assumption to therapy may very well be an attempt at persuasion, but I have never thought Rogers understood his one-to-one work was trying to persuade the client of *any* truth. In his paradigm, the convivial group is the therapist-client, the focus is on the unified self of the client, truth “for me” and truth “for you” do not necessarily need to resolve into agreement.

A good example of the truth of personal presence alongside an authoritative, professional truth is found in his therapy demonstration film, *Anger and Hurt* (Whitely, 1977). In the therapy, Rogers stays with the meanderings-for-truthful-relationship-with-the-world that the client proposes. Only after the sessions does Rogers comment about the client’s process in more clinical terms. He chose to make these latter statements not as part of the therapeutic relationship, but as part of the relationship of himself to another group. Presumably the client also talks to another audience about what he knows from his relationship with Rogers differently than he talked to Rogers while in therapy. In most social relationships people readily perform their own persuasive intents.

Persuasion toward “authoritative” truth may be enlightening and may take us out of an “authentic” present and obstruct any new appearance of the phenomena-as-they-are. This is an authoritative lesson many of us have learned from Rogers and applied to our own ways of being with other people.

But Rogers himself, the scientifically curious man, continued to test the validity of this lesson. In the twenty years following this dialogue with Polanyi, Rogers’ work with people in groups influenced him to demur less in expressing his own convictions with group members and even with his individual clients. (Maybe he became more trusting of his own “tacit” self.) While he strayed further from the “non-directive” methodology of his early therapeutic style, at the same time he remained convinced that a humanistic approach—induction through empathy—was a valid way to create hypotheses that could be subject to later thought and testing.

Of course he was acutely aware that his greater self-expression might easily influence others toward his opinions. But further, and possibly more importantly, I see him experimenting inductively as usual, trying out new empathy with his own self in the interest of both his self and science. I hear him asking his old question in a new way

within new contexts looking for new evidence: "How much and in what way within human interactions do subjective truths lead toward more universal possibilities?"

*Jere:* I am looking at your distinction between "authentic" and "authoritative" modes of truth. I see the road to authoritative truth as each of us speaking truth with authority and universal intent from where we are. Thus, the authoritative truth becomes the discernment of a truth "in common," a truth, according to Polanyi, that reveals itself inexhaustively in the future. I don't see that this process necessarily takes us out of authenticity, nor does it necessarily obstruct any new appearances of the phenomena-as-they-are.

I do see that Rogers is not attempting to arrive at an "authoritative" truth within the therapeutic milieu. In his empathy and unconditional positive regard for the client, he does not pose a litmus test of "authoritative" truth on the client's story. During those magic moments in which the client verifies "yes, that is true for me," Rogers does not direct the client to an external standard for confirmation.

I do believe that the phrase, "this is true for me," is often used to make radically relativistic truth statements about the truth in ways that are philosophically solipsistic, a relativism that would be abhorrent to Polanyi in his project of knowing as both an original and convivial enterprise.

Well, I realize that several Ph.D. dissertations could be written around the themes we've mentioned above. I am interested in coming to a termination for now and looking for reflections that emerged out of the dialogue, for each of us individually and together.

*Will:* I now hear more clearly what you were saying in your earlier discussion of ingenuous presentation as a description of how phenomena (including people) present themselves. You are interested in the truth that a knower can apprehend in relation to the truth that the Other reveals in her ingenuous way of being, unencumbered by the knower's reductionism.

One of the holy grails for Western knowledge-seeking has been our desire for phenomena to reveal themselves—as they are—to our observation. Both Polanyi and Rogers in their separate ways accounted for how the knower *necessarily* inserts his predisposed and moral self into the relationship with phenomena he seeks to know. Self-insertion is presupposed when you assume (as we do, for the most part) that knower and known are distinct entities. Huh! Come to think of it, the Holy Grail legend itself hinges on a similar notion of self-insertion into life, doesn't it? When the knight continues to seek the Grail as a desired object of Christian holiness and bypasses the opportunity to love or genuinely care for the ailing king, the knight creates, discovers, only a wasteland.

May I in this context once again visit "authority" and "authenticity?"

The contrast between them, I believe, begins with a person negatively experiencing "authority" as excluding or cutting off his or her personal experience. Perhaps by following a logic of reason, "authoritative" voices can seem to establish a totalizing monoculture of truth. "Authentic," as a concept brought salient by phenomenologists, has to do with a life open to improvising relationships with the world, faithful to possibilities so that truth may come into being.

Both "authoritative" and "authentic" are relationship concepts relating person to world. I really like your rendering, Jere, of the essential compatibility between

“authoritative” and “authentic” being. Yet I do not relinquish their contrast, because to me it also points to a subtle difference between Rogers and Polanyi. I feel Rogers' interest in the person (self) as holder of a truth. His primary emphasis is the relationship of one subjective person dwelling with another, secondarily is he concerned with the matters to which they are attending. Polanyi primarily emphasizes a person's relational approach to the world in which he dwells. Secondarily, and significantly, these personally-known relationships to the world are shared among relevant people. Polanyi seems more interested in a truth as held by persons, he brings “self” into his concept of “truth.”

Notwithstanding these differences of emphasis, Polanyi and Rogers had very similar conceptions of a committed relationship between person and truth and common outlooks on creativity and tacit (or organismic) knowing. In this space of their similarities, they attempted to meet in 1966. The hope might have been that they could give birth to, or discover, a unity, or perhaps, chart a course bringing together science and humanism.

Not easily accomplished. A scientific quest seems to me a search for structures and processes that underlie and define a world made up of real things (including persons). The interests of humanists has centered on how we find our individual and collective paths forward. Humanists do this by drawing inspiration from life-stories through a process of identification, likeness in character or circumstance. People in our culture have not found it easy unifying or even crossing between these two different intentions of knowing. Humanism and science have channeled conscious perception in two alternative, exclusive paths, collapsing one of these ways of perceiving the world into a subset of the other: Either *truth* is overarching. Truth is something in which self plays a part; or, alternatively, *self*, the conceiving one, makes its own truth (“for me”). Since Polanyi and Rogers spoke, Postmodernism's excessive but playful, separating subjectivity has followed as a corrective (and in its turn, as fashionable) response to Structuralism's playful unifying determinations. We weave back and forth in our attraction to ideas and styles of universalism then particularism, accumulating knowledge in each, keeping in our hearts and efforts and conversations possibilities of a more human science of human being.

Somewhere in their conversation, Rogers says to Polanyi something like, “you can't ever get to peoples' essential experiences that bring about their change.” Both Rogers and Polanyi and we too, I believe, face indeterminate reality, relying on what we've got—our bodies' responses tempered and shaped by our explicit knowing and believing. If I am alert to unformed, unexpressed, and tacit aspects, both my humanistic and scientific senses of understanding are valuable as we meet. It's up to me to trust who I am in world. Maybe I can get better at that by knowing self and knowing truth.

*Jer:* I like what you have just said, your summary. In addition to bringing together science and humanism, Polanyi claimed that all knowing—science, humanism, religion, literature, etc.—has an identical tacit structure with both a subjective and objective pole. All knowledge is “personal” knowledge.

As we reach a stopping point in our ongoing dialogue, I want to thank you, Will, for joining me with your energy. With some care, I feel, we have been asking for our own clarity on the issues raised by Polanyi and Rogers back in 1966. From Polanyi, Rogers, and you my old friend, I have learned much: the importance of asking the right questions and being humble about the answers that I find and the importance of keeping an attitude of hope and possibility. May we always nourish the attitude of discovery.

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