Abstract/paragraph synopses:

- Introductory
- Comparing Polanyi and Clinchy:
  - Clinchy’s connected knowing and Polanyi’s indwelling have much in common.
  - Polanyian destructive analysis compares favorably with separate knowing, and they concur in the detrimental restriction of knowledge to that procedure.
  - Neither indwelling nor connected knowing should be gender-specific, though their de facto gender-specificity may be challenged along with all the other false dichotomies which are the fall-out of an overweening objectivist ideal.
- Comments and qualifications to aid the discussion of Clinchy’s work:
  - (Clinchy’s paper does not represent a further evolution of her thought beyond her 1996 essay.)
  - The fact that subjectivism is powerfully enforced as a practice by the reigning zeitgeist means that we can expect that our students will be subjectivists and need our tutelage to revise their epistemic procedure.
  - Subjectivism itself is a sign of unhealthy epistemological betrayal and disillusionment and the need for epistemological therapy in the classroom.
  - In her earlier piece, Clinchy helpfully addressed a corollary of the reigning zeitgeist, that understanding requires agreement, by distinguishing connected knowing from agreement.
  - Another reason we can expect to find subjectivist thinking occurring in our classrooms at first is that students sense moral and social obligations preventing other engagement. As part of pedagogy, teachers should expect to work to help acquaint students with each other.
  - Some separate knowing is illegitimate at any time; other separate knowing is legitimate in the appropriate context.
  - What is appropriate as a knowing procedure can be expected to vary from first-years to seniors, and from discipline to discipline.
  - Connected knowing requires a healthy sense of self.

In addition to my interacting with this paper of Dr. Clinchy’s, I have recently read and used in my Women Philosophers class, as an opening reflection piece, her chapter on separate and connected knowing in *Knowledge, Difference and Power.* In that piece Clinchy gives a more systematic description of connected knowing than she does here, making the case that it is a legitimate knowing procedure, as separate knowing is a knowing procedure, and that they should both be employed. I especially appreciated that she distinguishes connected knowing from subjectivism (this comes as a relief!). I also very much appreciated that that piece addressed the fear of an aspiring connected knower, that connecting might lead to loss of self. I delighted in her

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2 I am here attaching my discussion prep for that class, in which I made a chart of the various things she noted.
response to this that characterized connected knowing as something like being pregnant with another person! Intimacy and indwelling in knowing, done right, should not efface, but rather should enhance the personhood of knower and known. In both articles I take Blythe Clinchy’s central injunction to be that we need to cultivate connected knowing in the classroom, and that this will involve us in revising epistemic and pedagogical practices which have discredited and discouraged it.  

I think it is highly appropriate and delightfully confirming to acknowledge the resonance between Clinchy’s identified connected knowing procedure, and Polanyi’s notion of indwelling. Indwelling involves getting inside what we are trying to understand. The term is appropriately applied to what the knower does with respect to the yet-to-be-known, as well as to what she/he does with respect to her/his own lived body as knowing mechanism, to the surrounding situation, and to any guiding maxims. Indwelling is what one does with the potentially or actually subsidiary clues that anchor (as in a swamp—Drusilla Scott) a focal integrative pattern. Polanyi never entertains that knowing could happen without indwelling. He does object to the objectivist model of knowledge, and to the perception that this alone is what knowledge involves. While knowing for humans never has occurred in the absence of such indwelling, even when the knower misconstrued her/his own epistemic procedure as objectivist, such misconstrual dangerously hampers and distorts any epistemic effort.

I believe that Polanyi would identify the legitimate practice of separate knowing with what he calls destructive analysis. Destructive analysis involves the knower in a temporary, artificial, focal attending to what he/she normally indwells (focuses from or through) as subsidiary clues. The problem of objectivism is that it mistakenly identifies “knowledge” exclusively with destructive analysis. At least part of what Clinchy rightly objects to about separate knowing is the wrongheaded epistemology it presumes. Polanyi, I believe, would also concur with analyses such as those by John MacMurray, Parker Palmer, and James Loder in saying, to use Clinchy’s terminology: connected knowing is the necessary epistemic preface and context for separate knowing, and never vice versa.  

In my mind, connected knowing just is attentive, careful, empathetic understanding. One never earns the right to anything more separate or critical before this; and when the separate and critical is engaged, it is for the purpose of furthering connected knowing. Separate critical knowing is often a systematic search for things that need fixing to make the product better—much as a house is inspected critically prior to its purchase. Connected, not separate knowing, is more representative, normative and paradigmatic.

Polanyi never entertained that indwelling, or its denial, was in any way gender specific or stereotypic. Nor have most Polanyians, I don’t believe: we learned indwelling, healthy epistemological practice, from a male; and most Polanyians are males. We see indwelling as human, and as healthy. I view the gender stereotyping in epistemology as a false polarization that accompanies all the other false polarizations Polanyians reject, between “reason” and “knowledge” a la the false objectivist ideal, and the personal, the responsible, the tacit, the religious, the artistic, the valuational, the bodily, and the emotional, to name the major ones. We

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3 I find Clinchy’s examples on pages 5 and 6 especially exemplary of the connected knowing procedure.
should expect healthy knowing to reintegrate what our defective epistemological heritage has typically divorced. However, as with all the other polarizations, so with the male-female polarization: we are still needing to challenge its de facto stranglehold on many people and ways of relating and thinking. Hence, we may not merely dismiss the association between “reason,” and “male,” and think we can be done with it. All of us gathered here would insist that the most important way to challenge any of the polarizations is to practice epistemological therapy.

Here are my comments about “Beyond Subjectivism,” offered with a view to helpful discussion of it. The essay primarily showcases a host of quotations regarding learning in the classroom. I do not discern any evolution of Clinchy’s position beyond that published in 1996. I note also that a lot of her sources in this work predate 1996. One question I have is whether more current research indicates a shift in classroom experience. In my classes currently, women, not men, are comfortable both with connected and separate knowing, and men as well as women, left to themselves, can practice a default subjectivist thinking. I don’t know how much if any this has to do with the gender of the professor.

I feel that Clinchy’s theses would be helped by adding to her many quoted student comments the identification and analysis of an array of factors. For example, a couple things may be said helpfully about subjectivism. I believe that the practice of subjectivism is enforced from a moral maxim powerfully present in our prevailing zeitgeist: an individual is only entitled to his/her own opinion, and that opinion is valid only for that individual; to move beyond this is to invalidate others’ rights and inappropriately impose your opinions on another. Thus, in a college classroom—the setting Clinchy never stipulates but from which all her examples are drawn—teachers must expect that uninitiated students feel morally obligated to practice subjectivism, toward the professor, toward the subject matter, and toward classmates. We should expect them to begin as subjectivists. If we want students to develop another approach, we have to address this specifically and reshape attitudes to something that stands up to the zeitgeist. In light of this, it may be a bit too grand to elevate subjectivism to a chosen knowing procedure; it’s a zeitgeist-driven default setting.

I believe that subjectivist thinking itself displays an unhealthy epistemological betrayal and disillusionment, the sad fallout of our Western epistemological heritage. It does not characterize a young child, who is, by contrast, full of wonder and confidence that the world will reciprocate to respectfully exuberant explorations. Subjectivism should never have come to be the default setting of these college students. We may thus view our efforts to reshape their knowing procedures as restoration to themselves and to the world.

A corollary implicit in the zeitgeist is that understanding someone else’s position mandates agreeing with that position. It is often voiced that if you have not shared my experience, you can’t possibly understand. If you don’t agree, you haven’t understood. Clinchy addressed this nicely in her other piece, distinguishing as she did between connected knowing and agreement. I may add to it briefly here by saying that I believe that the confusion arises out of defective, sub-personal interpersonal relationship of emotional fusion. However, my point here is that it is important that the teacher not to expect otherwise of academic initiates and specifically to

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5 I will touch on this again a little later in this essay.
reshape this mistaken assumption of good pedagogy. Given the prevailing zeitgeist default settings, connected knowing must be cultivated.

Another thing I think it would be helpful for us to identify and think about are relational responsibilities in the context of which any knowing event occurs and which inevitably shape it; thus these also ought to shape our classroom pedagogy. Having recently worked through Lorraine Code’s proposals concerning epistemic responsibility, I have in mind her formulations when I say that into the knowing event should be factored matters of responsibility—to the world, to oneself, and to the epistemic community. One application pertains to cultivating connected knowing in the classroom. College students find discussion threatening I think because they rightly feel they are being asked to violate obligations to their classmates. This is because they often haven’t been introduced to each other or hitherto had the privilege of building natural social connection. From my teacher’s perspective I view them as a unit, but they are far from a unit at that point. Teachers can forget that, just as guests in our home may be new to each other and need to be helped to get acquainted before good conversation can occur, students in a classroom require this. It is the teacher’s obligation and privilege and good pedagogical practice to perform this service of human decency. Clinchy’s variegated quotations implicitly indicate this: out-of-class friendship and interaction both enabled (p. 19) and generated (p. 23) confident and respectful disagreement and exploration toward a common understanding—what might look more like separate knowing. The practices of both separate knowing and of connected knowing are only appropriate once a context of epistemic community has been established and its participants feel comfortably oriented within it. In that context, what might be termed “shooting down” a person’s position can be taken as part of the fun of jointly exploring and establishing understanding. Apart from the context, “shooting down” is rude and disrespectful. Disagreement must always be respectful and with a view to understanding developing in a community. Scholars practicing their profession understand this; it should not be expected of novices in the college classroom. Teachers in that context need to understand that part of their job is to secure the learning environment and set and model the expectation of joint pursuit of deep understanding. Polanyians ought to make great pedagogues, understanding as they do that teachers both articulate and “wear” their content; they must both teach the content and model the practice of it; and they must do so with the kind of intentionality and guidance that an expert in the skill extends to the apprentice.

I think the discussion would be helped by distinguishing legitimate and illegitimate separate knowing. Illegitimate separate knowing should never be countenanced. Illegitimate separate knowing consists of criticism for that shows disrespect for the proponent as a person, or that too quickly and disrespectfully dismisses the position rather than taking it seriously. I think people who fear separate knowing may have only known it in its abusive forms, or they fear it because they perceive it so out of their own insecurity. Here the ethical behavior implicit in connected knowing is truer to the mark of responsible human epistemic behavior. Just in general, because

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7 Scholars do not require an acquaintance context. Professionalism in scholarship has its own rules of propriety, and they include respectful criticism in the relatively safe impersonalism of a juried, public forum.

8 There are of course other factors by which the level of engagement of an opponent’s position must be gauged, such as amount of time available, relevance to the topic under discussion, professional expertise and personal calling within the epistemic community, public and personal urgency of the subject matter.

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of our Western philosophical tradition, not to mention our propensity to selfishness, we all need the constant reminder that all ideas we consider and connect with and criticize are always somebody's: there is always a person or persons behind them, persons whose dignity is both priceless and fragile. This is a way that our zeitgeist has actually offered a healthy corrective to Western philosophy: all truth is somebody’s truth.

Clinchy’s quotes indicate that another key factor that could be considered: the diversity of appropriate pedagogical situations. What is appropriate knowing in one situation would be inappropriate in another. In some situations, first-hand experience is always valuable and thus should be welcomed; in others, it would be entirely inappropriate. The radiology teacher would not be too interested in how I felt about x-rays, for example, until I have become proficient in reading them. Even then, he/she might reasonably be less interested in how x-rays impact my sense of my human worth. It would be a whole different story in my humanities discussion class. Artistic work invites the passionate participative response and transformation of its viewers/hearers/readers. Even at that, both radiologist and literature professor would agree that their respective disciplines require their participants to be trained. Another variation in pedagogical setting properly and critically characterizes the college experience: what is expected of first-years and what is expected of seniors should be dramatically different. There is a real sense in which I am not interested in the opinions and personal experience of the first-years; they need to practice active listening (connected knowing) as they learn the subject and its practices. The way I treat upper-class philosophy majors is going to be much more egalitarian and interactive, for they have been learned the practice. They are also very comfortable both socially and professionally in a way that first-years cannot possibly be. I feel that the American zeitgeist overly democratizes personal contribution to discussion. Personal contribution should not be considered a good without qualification. Every student’s learning experience is helped, I believe, by prompting student engagement; I wish to dispute that discussion unqualifiedly is the sole means of achieving that engagement.

Finally, reading between the lines of Clinchy’s quotations, connected knowing requires something healthy of the self, an openness and self-disclosure that is qualitatively distinct from and superior to subjectivism. Following James Loder’s Kierkegaardian account of humanness, it is not the two-dimensional self-reflection but the three-dimensional self-in-relation or the four-dimensional love in response to the Holy that equips the knower to invite and sustain connected knowing. Teachers, and especially parents, have the nurture of this as their obligation and their privilege.

In sum: teachers teach both content and skill. Teachers shape and secure the setting and invite students into it. Where these have not been dealt into pedagogy, learning, which is primarily connected knowing to the end of proficiency in understanding and practice, is sadly thwarted. Students are warranted in fearing both connected and legitimate separate knowing where these are not occurring. And connected knowing, truthful as it is to knower and known, is something we must cultivate in the classroom even as we seek it continually in our own work.
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a bold swinging into the life of the other”; not to be confused with approval or agreement

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Not to be confused with using it as a weapon, or with saying I know how you feel too quickly

218 Requires self-extrication

Requires self-insertion; self as instrument of understanding; diverse aspects of self are templates; an active procedure; qualitative research; risks imposing self on other; will find self reflected in gaze of other

219

Attends to the unsaid; noticing ambiguity

220

Open to subtle surprises; invites surprise

220

Useful for dealing not just with live and present people, but with any object; transforms an it into a thou: be the tumor!

222 Silences the reader

Intersubjective; reading as a conversation; reader increases the power of his/her own voice; leaves space for text to speak

Silences the text; authority is thus limited and tenuous

224 Treats thinking and feeling as mutually exclusive

Einfühlung; feeling into; thinking cannot be divorced from feeling

225 Object is instance of a category and measured against objective stds

Focus is on the object itself

226

The difference is rooted not in gender but in epistemology

227 [doesn’t know what to do with the body in knowing, even though it relies on it]

The connection must be felt viscerally

233 Achieves fullest power when practiced in knowing communities

Achieves fullest power when practiced in knowing communities; though it may be more essential to CK; and women may be more adept at it.