

Conference Report
Constructivism the way forward!
The VIIIth Biennial Conference of the European Personal Construct Association (EPCA)
Kristianstad, Sweden, April 8th – 11th 2006

Aim

George Kelly (1955) said that Personal Construct Psychology should be fertile in producing new ideas, in generating hypotheses, in provoking experimentation, in encouraging inventions. He encouraged us to strive to make our theoretical position provocative and hence fertile. The call for contributions to the 8th EPCA conference therefore welcomed contributions exploring the theme **Constructivism – The Way Forward**, aiming to highlight the strong potential of Personal Construct Psychology to address issues of contemporary concern and to give examples of how Kelly's work can be applied across a wide range of disciplines.

Organiser

The conference was organised by Marie-Louise Österlind, University of Kristianstad, on behalf of the European Personal Construct Association (EPCA). The aim of EPCA being to actively promote the spirit and values of Personal Construct Psychology as defined in the following mission statement:

“To raise awareness of Personal Construct Psychology and its applications among Europeans and to promote the exchange of ideas, innovation and training.”

Contributors and Contributions

The 50 conference participants represented three continents and 13 nations (Australia, Austria, Canada, Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Norway, Poland, United Kingdom, Serbia and Montenegro and Sweden).

The conference contributions, paper presentations and a number of interactive contributions such as workshops, symposia, round table discussions and demonstrations, all embracing the overarching conference theme, were organised under the heading of Arts and Creativity; Clinical applications; Education; Leadership and Organisation; and Philosophy. Conference proceedings are found on the conference website <http://www.pcp-net.org/epca/confo6/>. The participants will be invited to submit proposals for publication in an anthology edited by M-L Österlind, P Denicolo, M Pope and M Kompf.

Social activities

The social and creative dimension of the conference was considered of vital interest. In that spirit the following social activities were carried out:

Friday April 7th – *Informal evening-get-together* offered opportunities to catch up with old friends and to make new acquaintances.

Saturday April 8th – *Wine reception* hosted by Malin Irhammar, vice chancellor, University of Kristianstad. After dinner event *“The story of Bäckaskog castle and its inhabitants and ghost”* - a journey through time and space, starting in the year 1250.

Sunday April 9th - *“An Evening of Creative Construing”* – arranged by the recently started network *arts & personal construct psychology* - conference delegates contributed with music, singing, poetry recitals and other creative activities.

Monday 10th - *Sightseeing tour along the coast* –Lunch at *Buhres Fisk*, Kivik, thereafter a stop at *Havängsdösen* before going to Åhus and the *Absolut Company* and *Studio Glashyttan*. *Conference dinner – troubadour* performing songs from Sweden's great poet *Carl Michael Bellman* (1740-1795).

Arts exhibition

Works by Carmen Dell'Aversano and Viv Burr, members of the network *arts & personal construct psychology*, were exhibited in the main plenary session room.

Conference venue

The conference venue the beautifully located medieval Castle of Bäckaskog (Bäckaskog Slott) near Kristianstad in the very south of Sweden was chosen for its potential to facilitate the social and creative aspect of the conference. The management and staff members of Bäckaskog all contributed to make our stay most pleasant and enjoyable.

Websites

To support the memories of the events the conference webmaster Joern Scheer has created the two websites *Pictures from the conference* and *An evening of creative construing* (pictures and live recordings). Links to these sites are to be found on the conference website <http://www.pcp-net.org/epca/conf06/>.

Special thanks

Many thanks to Bäckaskog castle, the University of Kristianstad, and especially to all conference participants for making the 8th Conference of the European Personal Construct Association (EPCA) a positive and memorable experience which in all aspects reflected its theme *Constructivism – The Way forward!*

Kristianstad April 27th 2006

Marie-Louise Österlind

Conference organiser

University of Kristianstad and European Personal Construct Association (EPCA)



Bäckaskog Castle, April 2006

Photo Joern Scheer