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DON'T CRY FOR ME GEORGE A. KELLY: HUMAN INVOLVEMENT AND THE CONSTRUING OF PERSONAL CONSTRUCT PSYCHOLOGY

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This paper uses Kelly's typology of weeping to explore how remaining focused on what Kelly "really meant" often restricts creative and novel use of his theory. Arguing against particular interpretations of personal construct psychology because they fail to adhere to Kelly's beliefs proves difficult because it is impossible to know for certain what Kelly "really meant." Concepts from radical constructivism and social constructionism are used to bolster this argument. Then, it is argued that the problem of discovering what Kelly "really meant" can be avoided by emphasizing our human involvement with particular ways of understanding personal construct psychology (as opposed to emphasizing some kind of superior ability to know what Kelly actually intended). Implications of this position are briefly sketched.

Key words: *constructivism, human involvement, personal construct psychology, weeping*

DON'T CRY FOR ME GEORGE A. KELLY

Since its original publication half a century ago, George Kelly's (1955/1991a, 1955/1991b) personal construct psychology (PCP) has enjoyed a great deal of attention. Kelly's work has produced a devoted group of theorists and researchers interested in exploring all aspects of his unique and groundbreaking theory. Professional organizations devoted to Kelly's ideas have sprung up in North America, Europe, and Australasia. In addition to holding regular conferences, these groups have been integral in the founding of the *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, a scholarly forum that—despite its name change from the *International Journal of Personal Construct Psychology*—has remained a medium for the dissemination of research and theory grounded in Kelly's PCP.

Notwithstanding the enthusiasm of a diverse group of personal construct psychologists from a variety of professional backgrounds, the rest of psychology has often remained relatively distant from the PCP community, with many psychologists generally unfamiliar with Kelly or his theory (Neimeyer, 1985). Much of this can be attributed to the very different, perhaps even revolutionary, new approach to psychological knowledge that PCP advances.

PCP's unique orientation, symbolized most clearly in its emphasis on constructive alternativism, may seem foreign enough to more traditional psychologists that they simply have not paid much attention to Kelly. On the other hand, PCP has also remained somewhat aloof from other meaning-based and constructivist approaches. This is perhaps illustrated by noting some disagreement over renaming the PCP journal as the *Journal of Constructivist Psychology* (Fransella, 1995). Such evidence suggests that there is more to PCP's intellectual isolation than simply its non-traditional orientation. Whatever reasons are postulated for the marginalization of PCP within psychology as a whole, one rather unfortunate outgrowth of it is the tendency for personal construct psychologists to be labeled as 'Kelly worshippers.' Of course, the accusation of Kelly worship leveled at the PCP community is something about which personal construct psychologists have long been aware. For example, a past issue of the newsletter of the North American Personal Construct Network (recently renamed the Constructivist Psychology Network) included an article directly addressing whether or not accusations of Kelly worship are justified (Desai, 1995).

The goal of this paper is to more fully explore some thorny issues surrounding Kelly worship and

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PCP's status as a form of constructivism by examining PCP's typology of weeping, a part of Kelly's theory that has not garnered much attention. First, I present and critique Kelly's typology of weeping. Then, I discuss the weeping typology and its critique in relation to the general tendency of personal construct psychologists to rely on Kelly quotations as a means to forcefully delineate what Kelly really meant about various topics. In my view, a major problem with relying so heavily on Kelly quotes is that it produces a kind of accumulative fragmentalism with regards to PCP, one in which ultimate Kellian truths are uncovered through bits of Kelly quotations. Further, I contend that relying on Kelly quotes to build an argument is problematic, especially because Kelly can be interpreted as saying different things in different parts of his work. If Kelly says different things in different places, what does this imply about relying on Kelly quotations as a strategy for forcefully delineating what Kelly really meant about various topics? In any given instance, how do we know which of Kelly's contradictory statements are most in keeping with PCP? Reliance on Kelly quotes as a mirror into the mind of Kelly that reveals what he *really* meant flies in the face of my construal of PCP as a variety of constructivism, one which emphasizes human involvement and elaboration as key to the ongoing process of human meaning creation.

In an effort to outline a solution to these issues, I delve into what I see as the prospects and potential pitfalls of an approach to PCP and constructivism that highlights human involvement in making meaning of others' work. While emphasizing human involvement frees personal construct psychologists from the shackles of what Kelly really meant, it also can be experienced as a slide into relativism because construing Kelly's work in one direction is just as good as doing so in another. In the spirit of Butt's (2000) musings on pragmatism in constructivist ethics, I maintain that the benefits of a reflexive relativism regarding PCP are preferable to the stifling alternative of feeling beholden to what Kelly "really meant." In developing this argument, I incorporate elements of radical constructivism and social constructionism and invite others to continue talking about what Kelly "really meant" while simultaneously viewing doing so as a linguistic strategy. Such a strategy helps to "warrant voice" for constructions that owe more to their authors' personal

investments than to anything that can be credited to or blamed on Kelly.

KELLY'S TYPOLOGY OF WEEPING

The typology

Kelly (1955/1991b) postulated ten types of weeping as techniques people use to control anxiety and guilt. He reportedly used to demonstrate the different styles of weeping for his psychotherapy students, acting out various types during class (Fransella, 1995). It is even rumored that during these demonstrations, Kelly shed real tears (Fransella, 1995). Below I briefly describe each type of weeping, using Kelly's colorful phrasing as much as possible.

Diffuse-inarticulate weeping is exemplified in the person who "cannot express himself coherently or even say what he is crying about" (Kelly, 1955/1991b, p. 388). The diffuse-inarticulate weeper seems unable to verbalize specific fears or guilty feelings and such weeping is potentially indicative of—in Kelly's words—"a 'decompensating neurotic'" insofar as "the weeping may be a sign of rapid deterioration in psychological structure" (p. 388). Therapists working with diffuse-inarticulate weepers may, according to Kelly, need to resort to temporary institutionalization in order to stave off suicide attempts.

Infantile weeping, by contrast, "seems to be an attempt to express oneself emphatically without the words to do so" (p. 388). Kelly described the hallmark of infantile weeping as "the familiar 'organic cry' which is sometimes mixed up with wailing laughter" (p. 388). Infantile weeping is purportedly associated with "thalamic lesions" and "intracranial distortions," but also is common among the feeble-minded and those with cerebral palsy. Kelly contended that, in its "animal-like whimpering quality," infantile weeping is much like "hebephrenic" weeping and that both are indicative of "infantile levels of organization" (p. 388).

Regressive weeping "is accompanied by childlike overtures" (p. 388) such as baby talk, grimacing, and whining. Again, this weeping is common in "hebephrenics" and "represents an attempt to simu-

late childlike distress signals, but without the signs of neurological disturbance one notes in infantile weeping" (p. 388). Clients displaying regressive weeping may be prepared to relate to their therapists, but only in "the role of an infant" (p. 388).

Loose weeping "usually involves ideational content which seems to be inappropriate to the behaviour" (p. 388). Ideas and behavior are "loose," as in acute schizophrenia. In the short term, the clinician is usually unable to bring such weeping under control; thus, the clinician may wish to simply "conserve the client's energy" (p. 389).

Situational weeping occurs when "the specific situation the client faces seems to define the limits of his area of disorganization" (p. 389). As an example, Kelly (1955/1991b) discussed a student faced with an exam who cries for hours on end, only to cease weeping immediately and become "ready to celebrate" as soon as he is excused from taking the exam. In other words, once the student is given permission to miss the exam "he seems to recover necessary structure" (p. 389). Kelly alerted clinicians that they need not stop situational weeping, but instead should employ it as a means to focus treatment.

Histrionic weeping, according to Kelly (1955/1991b), is common in "conversion hysteria" and "psychopathic personality" (p. 389). The histrionic weeper "is acting out his confusion in order to put on an exhibition," but is "betrayed by his use of 'hammy' devices and artistry" (p. 389). The client may play the martyr role. Histrionic weeping has the distinct disadvantage of distracting therapist and client from the therapeutic task.

Hostile weeping is common in "conversion reaction" and "hypochondriasis" cases. With its protest-like aspects, this weeping appears "designed to embarrass the therapist" (p. 389). That is, "the client cries in such a manner as to make it clear that he is being misunderstood and abused by the therapist" (p. 389). As examples, Kelly (1955/1991b) mentioned people who make sure bystanders overhear their complaints and hospitalized clients who make it known that their therapists are "demons" (p. 389). Kelly further noted that many clients combine hostile and histrionic elements in their weeping and that

hostile weeping is a generally poor way of aggressively approaching one's difficulties.

Constrictive weeping is characterized by withdrawal; as the client cries, an effort is made to disengage from the world. The client "perceives everything as dangerous, himself as completely guilty, and no venture as either worthwhile or safe" (p. 389-390). Even as such clients constrict their perceptual fields, they find little relief. This weeping often continues to the point of exhaustion and, like diffuse-inarticulate weeping, is often associated with deterioration in ability to verbalize one's concerns. Kelly was quick to point out that constrictive weeping is found "in 'depressed' cases, either psychotic or neurotic, and in 'involutional melancholia'" (p. 390).

Agitated weeping is an expression of efforts at "adventure and aggressive exploration. The client cries and tries" (p. 390). Constructs are formulated tightly as part of some movement through the C-P-C cycle, though they are often poorly conceptualized and tend to produce impulsive behavior. Such weeping is, as Kelly described it, a good sign because it suggests that "at last the client seems to be 'getting over the hump'" (p. 390). As an example, Kelly cited "the bride's mother who cries at her successful culmination of several years' surreptitious efforts. Instead of clapping her hands, jumping into the air, and clicking her heels, the mother cries" (p. 390).

Façade weeping is a lot like histrionic and hostile weeping, but its purpose is to convince the therapist and client that the client's problems are "real." That is, "the client magnifies his confusion in one area as a façade against exploration in another area" (p. 390). Kelly counseled clinicians to consider the possibility of façade weeping in cases where client complaints seem too specific and appear to continuously return to the same dead-end issues. In such cases, Kelly encouraged clinicians to "take bold steps to tear down the façade" (p. 390).

In talking about weeping more generally, Kelly (1955/1991b) observed "weeping is best viewed as a device for avoiding anxiety" and "is often the expression of a childlike dependency construction" (p. 237). Kelly (1955/1991b) cautioned clinicians that allowing clients to weep during early sessions runs the risk of fostering a dependent relationship. A the-

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rapist who elicits hostile weeping from a client winds up in an even deeper dilemma because "he must validate all of the client's bad bets—he must conform, he must appease" (p. 238). This speaks to the issue of whether weeping is clinically helpful. Kelly contended that if weeping allows the client to return to childhood constructions and approach problems anew, then it could be of therapeutic value. By contrast, unless the clinician is prepared to "follow through with an extended interview programme which is both patient and realistic" (p. 239), hostile weeping is likely to be harmful.

In sum, Kelly's typology of weeping identifies ten distinct types of weeping. Each type of weeping is identified in terms of the psychological meanings it expresses and the specific kinds of comportment that clients engaged in it overtly demonstrate.

A critique

Numerous strong arguments can be made that Kelly's typology of weeping is at odds with more fundamental tenets of personal construct psychology. I critique Kelly's typology of weeping on the grounds that it contradicts (1) PCP's process orientation, (2) PCP's idiographic emphasis, (3) the credulous approach to therapy, and (4) constructive alternativism. I contend that Kelly's weeping typology reveals more about Kelly than it does about weeping. The basics of these arguments are summarized below.

PCP's process orientation

PCP generally views people from a process perspective. In other words, Kelly's theory is often seen as emphasizing the ongoing evolution of peoples' personal constructs as they successively test out and revise their constructions. This contrasts with more trait-based approaches to psychology, which often see people as possessing relatively stable qualities that drive their behavior. This conceptual difference perhaps explains why Kelly was wary of diagnostic labels, which tend to petrify peoples' personalities by overlaying static labels on them (Faidley & Leitner, 1993; Honos-Webb & Leitner, 2001; Raskin & Epting, 1993). In recalling his early days as a therapist in Kansas, Kelly (1958/1969) sarcastically remarked that "we had even made up 'diffe-

rential diagnoses,' a way of choosing up sides in the name-calling games commonly played in clinical staff meetings" (p. 76). Rather than seeing clients as afflicted with categorical disorders, Kelly (1958/1969) generally preferred to view clients as active construers capable of change: "Always the practicing psychotherapeutic solution turned out to be a reconstruing process, not a mere labeling of the client's motives" (p. 78). In other words, "efforts to assess human motives run into practical difficulty because they assume inherently static properties in human nature" (Kelly, 1958/1969, p. 80). The contrast between these kinds of statements and Kelly's statements about weeping is striking. Whereas Kelly generally objected to diagnostic labeling and pigeonholing of clients, when talking about weeping he readily referred to clients as hebephrenics, hypochondriacs, and decompensating neurotics. Additionally, whereas in the two previous quotes Kelly demeaned the practice of labeling clients and assuming an understanding of their motives, in his work on weeping he readily presupposed a variety of not very admirable motivations behind the different forms of weeping that clients display. For example, he claimed that regressive weepers are only prepared to relate to their therapists in the role of an infant, while situational weepers are motivated to get out of something unpleasant such as an exam. In both instances, it sounds like Kelly was offering motivations for why these clients were weeping, something he elsewhere criticized other personality theorists for doing.

PCP's idiographic emphasis

Kelly is usually credited with presenting a theory that prefers idiographic understandings of the client at hand to nomothetic proclamations that apply to all people. In other words, personal meanings are emphasized over general psychological principles that are pertinent to everyone. Kelly's typology of weeping seems to assert that (1) there are universal meanings attributable to types of weeping, and that (2) types of weeping can often be identified based on how they sound. These assertions are surprising when compared to statements Kelly made elsewhere about the centrality of personal meaning in understanding any particular client. Kelly generally was skeptical of universal interpretations that failed to take into account the specific person at hand:

Much of the reform proposed by the psychology of personal constructs is directed towards the tendency for psychologists to impose preemptive constructions upon human behavior. . . . [T]he psychology of personal constructs . . . registers its protest against nosological diagnosis and all the forms of thinking which distract our attention from the fact that life does go on and on. (Kelly, 1955/1991b, p. 154)

Thus, a strong argument can be advanced that Kelly's typology of weeping seems to violate the idiographic spirit of PCP.

The credulous approach to therapy

Kelly claimed that clinicians should credulously accept the utterances of their clients in an effort to understand client construction processes. Even when a clinician's account is at odds with a client's, the clinician should be "careful to lay out both versions side by side and not erase the client's version in order to replace it with the 'true' version" (1955/1991a, p. 241). One can easily argue that Kelly (1955/1991b), in talking so definitively about the meaning—and even the acoustic specifics (e.g., "the familiar 'organic cry'" [p. 388])—of types of weeping, violated the spirit of the credulous approach. Instead of attempting to understand the unique relevance of weeping to each client's personal experience, Kelly provided global categories of weeping and then proceeded to pigeonhole clients with these categories. In its disregard for the credulous approach, Kelly's typology of weeping apparently runs counter to the larger theory of which it is a part.

Constructive alternativism

With the idea of constructive alternativism, Kelly asserted that "all of our present interpretations of the universe are subject to revision or replacement" (Kelly, 1955/1991a, p. 11). There are an endless number of possible ways to construe events. The only thing that limits people is their willingness to consider new constructive possibilities. Constructive alternativism owes a lot to both idealism and pragmatism. Idealism suggests that the world we expe-

rience is known only thorough our constructions of it rather than directly (Landfield & Leitner, 1980), while pragmatism goads us into toying with the notion that our constructed understandings of events are better viewed in terms of their workability than their correspondence with reality (Butt, 2000). Constructive alternativism is idealistic in its assertion that there are an infinite number of constructions of the world, while also being pragmatic in its optimistic emphasis on the primacy of how well people's constructions hold up in the course of everyday life. Kelly's typology of weeping strikes me as neither idealistic nor pragmatic. It fails to be idealistic by presuming there are specific types of weeping with precise meanings. It fails to be pragmatic by discouraging alternative constructions of weeping beyond those Kelly presented.

The preceding arguments suggest that Kelly's weeping typology errs by presuming to carve nature (or at least weeping) at its joints. Diffuse-inarticulate weeping is presented as a readily identifiable clinical entity, just like the "decompensating compulsive neurotic" who demonstrates it. Histrionic weeping, in all its exhibitionistic drama, is equated with having a martyr complex, as if both things were discovered and unquestionable realities. Because elsewhere Kelly tended to reject the kind of mechanistic, pathologizing, and global meanings he bandied about in talking about weeping (Kelly, 1955/1991b, 1958/1969), reading his weeping typology can be jarring. It is difficult to reconcile Kelly's rather definite and directive writing about the etiology of weeping with the more playful and client-centered approach he takes throughout most of his psychology of personal constructs.

Insights into Kelly?

Another persuasive argument about Kelly's weeping typology is that it is more a reflection of Kelly's own core structure than a justifiable typology that sheds light on the underlying rhyme and reason of why people cry. In informal conversations, people who knew Kelly have suggested to me that his weeping typology may have been a colossal spoof or practical joke designed to make fun of the categorical diagnostic tendencies of psychologists. In this line of analysis, Kelly's goal was to shame those who initially took his typology seriously by leading them down a ridiculous path until they realized the

preposterousness of such a nomothetic nosology. Regardless of whether it was meant as a spoof, Kelly's typology of weeping may tell us more about the particular 'hang ups' of Kelly the man than it does about the genuine nature of weeping. For example, Fransella (1995) recounts recollections of Kelly as aloof and distant. Students saw him as very much in control of himself at all times and not especially good at letting down his façade and showing his emotions. Might Kelly have felt disdain for those who wept openly, as evidenced by his referring to them using terms like "infantile" and "disorganized?" Regardless of whether this hypothesis about Kelly is accepted, in offering universal interpretations of what each type of weeping means, Kelly seemed to be contradicting what he wrote elsewhere about the personal nature of meaning. For example, Kelly (1958/1969) wrote about his tenure in Kansas, when he collaborated with teachers who referred their "lazy" students to him as clients. He often had to use a teacher's complaints about a student's "laziness" as a "point of departure for reorienting the teacher" because "it usually happened that there was more to be done with her than with the child" (p. 77). In other words, "complaints about motivation told us much more about the complainants than it did about their pupils" (p. 77). This statement is interesting when compared to Kelly's assertions about diffuse-inarticulate weeping as a sign of rapid deterioration or about hostile weeping as a client strategy for communicating negative things about the therapist. In both these instances, Kelly appeared to be voicing criticism of clients instead of encouraging understanding of each client's personal constructs.

YES, BUT WHAT DID KELLY *REALLY* MEAN?

In discussing both Kelly's weeping typology and my ensuing critique, I hope to elaborate the limitations of PCP approaches mired in a "what did Kelly really mean" orientation. I claim that as long as PCP'ers remain transfixed by a "here's what Kelly really said" approach, they limit themselves and make accusations of Kelly worship more difficult to refute. My argument is that what Kelly really meant is not only impossible to know, but—more importantly, is by and large irrelevant in expounding PCP. The ty-

pology of weeping and my critiques of it will be employed in developing this argument.

Kelly quoting as accumulative fragmentalism

The direct quotation is one of the primary tools that scholars, including personal construct psychologists, employ in constructing their arguments. For example, as I developed the various critiques of Kelly's weeping typology, I wanted to make sure that each argument was not only well developed and convincingly stated, but also 'on the mark.' That is, I wanted each argument to seem accurate and justified. A powerful way to support my argument was to quote Kelly. It was not enough simply to say that PCP is disinclined towards diagnostic labeling. It was much more convincing if I had some hard data to support my contention. Thus, I quoted Kelly: "Always the practicing psychotherapeutic solution turned out to be a reconstruing process, not a mere labeling of the client's motives" (1958/1969, p. 78). I used the same strategy again when arguing that Kelly (1955/1991b) violated his process-oriented, idiographic approach by presenting generalized types of weeping that could be associated with specific sounds such as "the familiar 'organic cry'" (p. 388). Quoting the phrase "familiar 'organic cry'" served the purpose of highlighting the inaccuracy of Kelly's typology of weeping, or at least its incompatibility with Kelly's thinking through the rest of PCP. The point of my argument was that the typology of weeping is not compatible with the rest of Kellian thought and that it violates the basic tenor of what Kelly tried to say elsewhere. So, in keeping with an accumulative fragmentalist orientation in which pieces of truth are gathered bit by bit, I piled one Kelly quote upon the next in order to ostensibly demonstrate my position's legitimacy.

However, this begs a larger question, namely how we know that it is Kelly's ideas about weeping that deviated from his broader message and intentions. Is it not possible that Kelly's non-weeping writings are the ones that actually strayed from what he really tried to convey? One solution to this is scurrying about locating as many Kelly quotes as possible that seem to speak in favor of idiographic, anti-labeling, anti-essentialist approaches to psychology. However, this presumes that if Kelly wrote more often in favor of idiographic and anti-labeling

perspectives, then this is what he really meant. Of course, writing something more often does not necessarily indicate that what was written more was meant more. Certainly, lovers who have broken up may leave behind more love letters than letters expressing their mutual disdain for one another, but this in no way means that their love letters best reflect their predominant viewpoints. Quoting Kelly, or any other scholar for that matter, is not so much a matter of conveying the truth about what was really meant. Rather, it is a discursive strategy with a persuasive purpose. By channeling the spirit of Kelly himself through use of his own words, I hoped to more effectively convince readers that the points I made rest on solid ground. In discussing the typology of weeping, my use of Kelly quotations was meant to suggest that Kelly's views on the subject were inconsistent with PCP at best, regressive at worst. My effectiveness hinged not so much on whether what I said is or ever was true in some kind of real way, but more so on how convincing an argument I made and whether the implications of my argument were deemed generative by readers.

Radical constructivism, social constructionism, and whether what Kelly meant matters

In some respects, what I have been saying owes a great deal to other 'constructivisms' besides PCP. Granted there has been a good deal of controversy within the PCP community as to whether PCP is or is not best considered a form of constructivism (Butt, 2006; Chiari, 2000; Fransella, 1995, 2006; Raskin, 2004; Warren, 1998). The issue reared its head most recently in the responses of Trevor Butt (2006) and Fay Fransella (2006) to *Studies in Meaning 2: Bridging the Personal and Social in Constructivist Psychology* (Raskin & Bridges, 2004), a volume I co-edited that highlights connections between PCP and other constructivist psychological theories. Butt (2006) and Fransella (2006) both found a lot to like in the volume but expressed some typical hesitations about 'constructivism.' They lamented that constructivism is often theoretically ill defined, especially compared to the more fully fleshed out PCP. Butt (2006) reasonably observed that constructivist scholars should more fully include in their constructivism philosophical approaches such as those proffered by pragmatists and social interactionists like Mead and Dewey.

At the same time, Butt's and Fransella's reservations about constructivism-as-ill-defined philosophy strike me as much-ado-about-nothing because they simply reiterate the increasingly forlorn complaint that too many PCP'ers are abandoning PCP and adopting something more vague and general, namely constructivism. This is a common lament, one so understandably compelling to PCP'ers worried about the future of PCP that perhaps a central point is overlooked—specifically, that those of us construed to be abandoning the PCP ship typically use the term 'constructivism' not to refer to an explicit and precise theory unto itself that we believe should supplant PCP, but instead as a broad moniker encapsulating a number of diverse theories sharing an emphasis on how people create and live according to their own constructed meanings (Raskin, 2006). Thus, we retain PCP as a comprehensive theory in its own right. However, we also toss radical constructivism and social constructionism (among other approaches) into the fray for consideration and possible cross-pollination. Another way to think about this is that we use 'constructivism' in a similarly general way as those who use the term 'existentialism.' Surely the existential philosophers had differences among themselves, but many people have found enough in common across these philosophies to continue applying to them the broad (and, like 'constructivism,' equally wide-ranging) term 'existentialism.' Constructivism, in this way of thinking, is not a hodge-podge of eclectic concepts drawn from a number of different freestanding theories (as Butt and Fransella bemoan). Instead, it is an organizing principle for finding commonalities across these theories. As such, constructivist scholars can work from within the confines of different theories themselves (PCP, radical constructivism, social constructionism, etc.) while also attending to possible interrelations between them.

Adopting this mind-set, I am intimating that considering radical constructivism and social constructionism potentially enriches analysis of PCP (in this case, its typology of weeping). Radical constructivism advances the idea of people as closed systems. That is, the only thing a person ever knows is his or her own internal experience, from which mental schemes are developed that guide the person through everyday life (Efran, 1985; Maturana &

Poerksen, 2002/2004; Maturana & Varela, 1992; von Glasersfeld, 1984, 1995). Consequently, one's personal constructions of PCP are more than just personal. They are forever private. Each person reading a passage from Kelly construes it in a unique manner that can never be fully communicated to someone else. Radical constructivism's metaphor of the 'person-as-private-knower' precludes the possibility of shared meaning. Like reader response theory popular in literature departments (Fish, 1980), all one ever has is one's own interpretation of a text. Author intentions and expert interpretations are no more or less correct and valuable than anyone else's. From this perspective, what Kelly really meant becomes a moot question, replaced instead with, "What do you personally make of Kelly's words?" While this question is germane to radical constructivists, there is no final answer because our responses to this query continuously evolve as we discuss them with one another. As we do so, we inevitably refine our own private meanings as a reaction to any internal disequilibrium we encounter as a consequence of said discussions.

Social constructionism (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1985, 1991, 1994) offers a significantly different, but perhaps just as useful, take on what Kelly really meant. From the social constructionist's point of view, what Kelly really meant is shaped not by Kelly's words so much as the way a community of observers decides what such words mean. Over the years, members of the PCP community have engaged one another across a range of relational contexts—via conferences, collaborative research endeavors, informal visits with one another, discussions on the PCP e-mail list, reviewing one another's work for publication, and so forth. Such relational engagement produces a variety of shared social constructions about PCP. Of course, as in any community, there are as many relational contexts as there are combinations of people in relationship. Even identifiable communities contain an assortment of sub-communities and—in the case of the community that has developed around PCP over the past fifty years—these sub-communities have formulated their own ideas about the proper ways to interpret Kelly's texts. A community's leaders, by virtue of their prominent social positions, influence which views are considered most appropriate and correct. In the PCP community this often means that what the most respected and prominent scholars

think about what Kelly "really meant" warrants the most voice. Thus, their views are typically considered most correct and valuable.

Whether one prefers the radical constructivist or social constructionist take on how PCP'ers settle on what Kelly really meant, both perspectives provide some interesting ways of thinking about how intellectual communities reach consensus about truth. Though one emphasizes knowledge as private and personal while the other stresses the socially negotiated aspects of human understandings, when it comes to what Kelly "really meant," both radical constructivism and social constructionism can be appropriated to argue that we can never be certain. And does what Kelly meant matter? When I outlined an argument against Kelly's typology of weeping, I found myself asking whether I did so by "calling it the way it really is" or by adopting one among an infinite number of possible positions and then trying to convince readers to abide by my stance. I prefer the latter explanation. In the final section of this paper, I outline some ideas about what I call *human involvement* and what I see as its utility in thinking about Kelly, weeping, constructivism, and relativism.

HUMAN INVOLVEMENT IN CONSTRUING KELLY AND WEEPING

Human involvement

Spencer McWilliams (1996) wrote a remarkable book chapter titled 'Accepting the Invitational.' In it, he encouraged PCP'ers to take responsibility for the constructions they hold. He stated: "I believe that to acknowledge further our active role in construing we must use a language that requires us to take conscious responsibility for our personal participation in creating meaning" (McWilliams, 1996, p. 70). In other words, McWilliams construed PCP as a theory that requires people to acknowledge their *human involvement* in how they make sense of things. Human involvement "can be used as a way to encourage people to think about the respective parts they play in creating means for understanding all areas of life, which might otherwise simply be seen as objective representations of how things are" (Raskin, 2004, p. 335). Elsewhere, I have begun relying upon Donald Campbell's (1974) evolutio-

nary epistemology to develop the idea that human construction (and, by implication, human involvement) arises out of mutually interacting and influencing evolutionary processes occurring at biological, personal, and social levels (Raskin, in press). While a more thorough discussion of the relationship between human involvement and evolutionary epistemology is beyond the scope of this paper, suffice to say that in further explorations, I hope to more fully articulate how human involvement and investment in personal and social constructions ideally serves the adaptive purpose of enhancing and maximizing lived experience. For now, it is enough to simply make clear that human involvement means that all constructions come from people committed to particular points of view. Rather than merely a neutral picture of objective reality, knowledge is always about the pragmatic viability of humanly created understandings that help people productively live their lives.

It's my paper and I'll cry if I want to: human involvement and weeping

When I examined Kelly's typology of weeping, I did so from a point of view. My involvement with that point of view inevitably means that I understand Kelly's weeping typology through my own set of lenses, which I myself crafted! Truth becomes personal, albeit sometimes fluid and slippery. This suggests that the (personal) truth of the matter regarding what Kelly meant when writing about weeping lies in my constructions of his words rather than his words, themselves. Surely I should feel free to quote his words to build my argument. However, I do so not because I believe his words hold a final and invariant meaning, but as a discursive strategy designed to sway others to my perspective. Perhaps arguments about what Kelly really meant can be usefully reformulated using his notion of the invitational mood (Kelly, 1964/1969). Doing so transforms them. They become invitations to consider PCP 'as if' certain presumptions held steady. For example, elsewhere I invited personal construct psychologists to anticipate what might ensue should they subsume PCP under a constructivist rubric (Raskin, 2004). Likewise, herein I am asking readers to explore the implications of proceeding 'as if'

Kelly's typology of weeping is out of step with his broader theorizing.

The beauty of human involvement and the invitational mood is that they open possibilities for looking at things in new ways. At the same time, a commonly observed drawback is that in addition to inviting possibility, they seem to invite relativism. The straw figure of relativism is often raised to discredit constructivism (Gillett, 1998; Held, 1995; Mackay, 2003a, 2003b; Parker, 1999). The commonly sketched argument generally goes something like this:

> *Constructivism, in contending that all knowledge systems are human creations, loses the ability to discern which constructions are true and which are false. This, in turn, generates a nihilistic "anything goes" attitude that is anathema to intellectual inquiry. Constructivists are seen as contradictory and incoherent because (1) they feel that all truths are constructions and therefore relative, but (2) simultaneously hold that constructivist constructions are true.*

I move beyond constructivism-as-relativism arguments by adopting a human involvement approach to constructivism. Human involvement presumes that all truths are constructed and therefore relative, but maintains that constructivist theories are experientially true to constructivists *from their humanly involved perspective*. That is, constructivists do believe that truth is relative to one's point of view, but also believe that approaching the world from a point of view is inevitable and unavoidable. Using Polanyi's (1958) language, we all dwell within a perspective. Therefore, truth is a function of human involvement—what seems true is experienced as such because one operates from a perspective producing particular beliefs. That is why constructivists believe their own constructions. However, constructivists maintain that believing something is not *simply* or *primarily* a product of external occurrences. It is also a product of one's *personally and socially created assumptions*. When it comes to evaluating the utility of one's constructions, personal and social negotiation are required. When people argue that they are right, they are essentially claiming that their constructions are more viable and generative than alternative constructions. 'Anything goes' argu-

ments against constructivism become little more than empty scare tactics because what 'goes' is a product of the constructions one dwells within and is committed to based on lived experience (Edwards, Asmore, & Potter, 1995; Polanyi, 1958). Such constructions cannot be readily dismissed and are experienced as true, even if constructivists question the universal and eternal prospects of such experienced truths.

Human involvement requires people to take responsibility for their assumptions. In this respect, human involvement is something of an existential concept. For example, Nietzsche's (1883/1978) existential 'overmen' take responsibility for the meaningful beliefs they create. Rather than justifying their actions via reference to truths handed down from on high by religion or science, 'overmen' justify their behavior according to human involvement in the beliefs they invent and choose to live by. Similarly, as a constructivist, I need not justify my theoretical beliefs by claiming special access to the intentions of Kelly, Maturana, Gergen, or others. Rather, I take responsibility for appropriating the writing of Kelly, Gergen, and Maturana for my own purposes. From this perspective, I must take responsibility for opposing Kelly's typology of weeping and using Kelly quotes to build my argument. And just as human involvement requires me to accept responsibility for my repudiation of Kelly's weeping typology, it also demands that all PCP'ers tread carefully and reflexively when relying on Kelly quotes to support their arguments—regardless of what these arguments might be.

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I appropriated Kelly's typology of weeping to develop my own ideas about human involvement and accepting responsibility for one's constructions of constructivism. Quoting Kelly is a discursive strategy scholars readily employ as they try to persuade others to entertain their point of view. However, in using Kelly quotes as a discursive strategy, I urge caution so as to avoid the trap of believing that these quotes offer fragments of Kellian truth that justify the correctness of one's position. While Kelly quotes can be useful in building one's scholarly arguments, in the end I attribute responsibility for particular arguments to those advancing them. I do so

because I conceptualize the use of Kelly quotes as a discursive strategy rather than a revelation of fundamental meanings housed in Kelly's writing. This allows for many generative possibilities in considering Kelly's work because, though it sometimes induces weeping of my own, I doubt that anyone has yet to corner the market on what Kelly "really meant."

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