

WILLIAM JAMES' PRAGMATISM AND PCP

Spencer A. McWilliams

California State University San Marcos, CA, USA

Scholars locate Kelly's Personal Construct Psychology within the context of American pragmatism. Kelly noted his conviviality with pragmatist John Dewey, but only cited William James briefly and in general terms. James' explication of pragmatism demonstrates several areas of compatibility with PCP; examining James' ideas might deepen understanding of PCP. This article describes relevant elements of James' pragmatism, including the process of nature, the practical effects of ideas, truth as action and practice, passion and emotion, conventional common sense constructions, generalization of constructs, the role of human possibility, and the importance of goals and intentionality.

Keywords: Pragmatism, William James, Personal Construct Theory

Constructivist scholars (Butt, 2005, 2006, 2009; Novak, 1983; Warren, 1998) have located Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) within the philosophical context of pragmatism. The early pragmatist movement included a number of notable contributors, including John Dewey, William James, George Herbert Mead, Charles Peirce, and F. C. S. Schiller. While their particular ideas differed, they shared a skeptical approach to dogma and a view of theories as provisional, changeable, and grounded in practical results. Kelly (1955) directly noted the conviviality between his approach and that of John Dewey, and he acknowledged Dewey's influence on his thinking. However, Kelly only cited William James, an important originator of pragmatism and the 'father' of American psychology (Kretch, 1969), and whose pragmatism directly influenced Dewey, briefly, referring only to James' ideas regarding the stream of consciousness (Kelly, 1955) and the child's confused experience of events (Kelly, 1969c).

An examination of James' explication of pragmatism, however, reveals a number of areas of similarity and compatibility with many key Kellian philosophical assumptions and approaches to psychology, further helping to place Kelly's approach within the context of this important and influential, essentially American, philosophy. James' pragmatism may have influenced Kelly directly, Kelly may have developed

these similar views coincidentally, he may have found them expressed in Dewey's writings, or he may have encountered them in the *Zeitgeist*. Without documentation, this question remains unanswerable. In any case, an exploration of these similarities might further inform the original context for PCP as well as contributing to its continuing evolution. This article explores components of James' approach to pragmatism most relevant to PCP, as explicated in his original writings and elaborated in subsequent scholarship. James discussed a variety of topics that appear in Kelly's theory, including as the nature of the universe, human knowledge, the meaning of 'truth,' emotion and commitment, individuality and commonality, the importance of adopting novel alternative viewpoints, and the role of human audacity.

The first section of the article describes some challenges and struggles that James faced with other philosophical perspectives and approaches to psychology, and his attempt to find a balance among conflicting perspectives, in the context of a view of nature as still in process, rather than fixed. The next section discusses James' phenomenological emphasis and its influence on his approach to pragmatism. James' conception of 'truth' from a pragmatic perspective occupies the next section, including his emphasis on the consequences of a particular idea. The article then considers James' views on choice and will and their relation to passion and emotion, and the

importance of the individual. The next section explores how the desire for final truth leads to treating shared, common beliefs as ultimately true and to reifying beliefs in order to maintain consistency and predictability. Then we will consider his views on the active role of human agency. The final section describes a potential weakness in James' perspective that may have undermined the overall influence of pragmatism and that we may wish to address in furthering a constructivist agenda.

JAMES' CHALLENGES

Butt (2009) described how Darwin's theory influenced Mead's pragmatism. Likewise, James experienced a personal crisis in response to Darwin's theory and its challenge to the "rationally ordered world that bound together Western thinkers from Aristotle to Newton" (Siegfried, 1990, p. 258). James struggled with his attempts to overcome his nihilistic reaction to Darwin, and his approach to Pragmatism eventually offered an option that denies that the world possesses its own independent rationality and shows how we create a rational world through personal and social processes (Siegfried, 1990), an approach consistent with Kelly (1955) and social and radical constructivism (Gergen, 1999; Glaserfeld, 1995). Similarly to Kelly (1979a), James emphasized the significant role of human activity in the possibility of bringing about a world as we imagine we might want, within the constraints of actual experience.

Like other pragmatists, James sought a middle ground between what he viewed as the extremes of rationalism and empiricism, a way to use their strengths and avoid their weaknesses. For James, empiricism has the strength of attending to facts, and rationalism emphasizes abstract values and ideas, both of which seemed important to James and necessary to human functioning. However, James believed that rationalism focused excessively on words, *a priori* reasons, principles, absolutes, dogma, and finality. He believed that Rationalist approaches reify common-sense categories, regarding 'things' as subjects that have inherent qualities, and consist of

substances of specific kinds and in definite, discrete numbers. For the rationalist, "These distinctions are fundamental and eternal" (James, 1963, p. 81). James viewed these terms as useful, but he believed that they have no inherent meaning apart from their practical utility in discourse.

James saw the essential difference between pragmatism and rationalism as that rationalist perspectives view reality as fully finished, completed, and permanent, while he viewed it as still in process and awaiting completion in a distant future. This perspective aligns closely with Kelly's view of the universe continually changing (1955) and his opposition to the view that evolution has "run its course" (Kelly, 1979a; McWilliams, 2008). While rationalism sees the universe as secure, pragmatists, including Kelly, see it as "still pursuing its adventures" (James, 1963, p. 113). James came to see rationalism's agenda of seeking final answers to all inquiries as a residue of a primitive magical belief that words can solve the riddles of the universe (Siegfried, 1990).

Rationalists object to James' pragmatism because they believe that the world must be orderly on its own. James' pragmatism agrees with familiar constructivist notions when it suggests that rationalists fail to acknowledge that they do not report on a world as they found it but that they create an organizing structure to the world that responds to their personal needs and interests. James' pragmatism acknowledged personal motivation as one of several conditions for constructing a meaningful world view. He recognized, as does Glaserfeld (1995), that social demands and factual reality prevent constructing a world solely according to our needs and desires (Siegfried, 1990).

James viewed human choice and valuing as embedded in emotion as well as reason. Consequently, James (1963) suggested that people tended to embrace their philosophical position, whether rationalism or empiricism or otherwise, as a function of personal 'temperament,' a vision or bias toward viewing the universe in a particular way. James' notion of temperament appears similar to Kelly's (1955) description of superordinate, core constructs as overarching and emotionally-valenced values. He labeled the tempe-

rament of the Rationalist as "Tender-Minded" and that of the Empiricist as "Tough-Minded." He proposed Pragmatism as a balanced approach that preserves a cordial relationship with both empirical facts and rationalist constructions by tracing the practical consequences of propositions.

James saw pragmatism as a method only, not focused on any particular result and not yielding final answers that will end the quest, again compatible with Kelly's (1955) view of constructs as continually open to revision or replacement. He viewed theories as instruments for inquiry, rather than final answers (James, 1963). He contrasted his approach with foundationalist perspectives, with which he personally struggled, noting that when humans first discovered scientific laws, people "believed themselves to have deciphered authentically the eternal thoughts of the Almighty" (James, 1963, p.27). He came to view scientific laws as approximations and theory, not as absolute transcripts of objective reality, but as something with potential, a language made by humans as a shorthand way of communicating, and as "mental modes of *adaptation* to reality, rather than revelations or gnostic answers to some divinely instituted world-enigma" (James, 1963, p. 85-86, italics in original).

JAMES AS PHENOMENOLOGIST

Butt (2005) described PCP as a phenomenological, as well as pragmatic, theory, and we can see both of these elements in James' perspective, although James apparently did not like the term phenomenology (Edie, 1987). Although James agreed with the skeptics in avoiding dogmatic or final truths, he noted one certain truth that he believed even the skeptics could not challenge, "the truth that the present phenomenon of consciousness exists" (James, 1917, p. 111). For James (1927), all we know is our personal experience, and our debates and discussions should focus only on things that we can relate to experience. Knowledge and anticipation have to do with how some experiences relate to other experiences, similar to Kelly's (1955) perspective on

validating constructions in terms of confirmatory experiences.

Many scholars describe James as a phenomenologist, and discuss his influence on other phenomenologists, such as Husserl (Edie, 1987, Kendler, 2005, MacLeod, 1969), emphasizing James' view of consciousness as a 'stream' contrasted with Wundt's view of consciousness as composed of a series of discrete elements. MacLeod (1969) emphasized James' view that we should observe experience directly and let experience dictate the categories that we use to describe them instead of imposing prior categories on experience. The observer, he points out, begins with phenomenal experience, remains fascinated with experience, and only later checks with others and future experience. This phenomenological perspective appears again below in James' view of truth and his emphasis on passion in determining choice and will.

JAMES' PERSPECTIVE ON TRUTH

Our belief in truth itself . . . that there is a truth, and that our minds and it are made for each other, -- what is it but a passionate affirmation of desire, in which our social system backs us up? We want to have a truth; we want to believe that our experiments and studies and discussions must put us in a continually better and better position towards it; and on this line we agree to fight out our thinking lives. But if a pyrrhonic sceptic asks us how we know all this, can our logic find a reply? No! certainly it cannot. It is just one volition against another,--we willing to go in for life upon a trust or assumption which he, for his part, does not care to make. (James, 1917, p. 106, emphasis in original)

This passage demonstrates James' view of how strongly we desire a sense of 'the truth,' even if we cannot justify any truth as ultimate. James (1927) viewed 'truth' as an attribute or property of a belief or an idea, rather than a possession of the known object or something existing 'inside'

the idea apart from experience. The term ‘truth,’ as applied to an idea, only means how the idea works. We can gain clarity about a belief or idea related to a phenomenon by considering the practical effects that the idea might have on the consequences that we can experience.

There can be no difference anywhere that doesn't make a difference elsewhere—no difference in abstract truth that doesn't express itself in a difference in concrete fact and in conduct consequent upon that fact, imposed on somebody, somehow, somewhere, and somewhen (James, 1963, p. 25).

Kelly employed this perspective by using the directive “Look for a difference that makes a difference” (Katkovsky, 2009, p. 20) in multiple contexts from understanding a person’s construct formation to characterizing the scientific process.

For James, “truth in our ideas and beliefs means ... *that ideas (which themselves are but parts of our experience) become true just in so far as they help us to get into satisfactory relations with other parts of our experience...*” (James, 1963, p. 28, italics in original). Suppose we take “an idea or belief to be true” (James, 1963, p. 88), what difference will it make? Pragmatism answers, “*True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify. False ideas are those that we can not*” (James, 1963, p. 88-89, italics in original). We can regard an idea as “...‘useful because it is true’ or that ‘it is true because it is useful.’ Both these phrases mean exactly the same thing, namely that here is an idea that gets fulfilled and can be verified” (James, 1963, p. 90) because one phenomenal experience leads to other experiences that appear meaningful and worthwhile. Knowledge and ‘truth’ thus relate to concrete facts in specific cases. When we do not have direct experience, we judge another’s ideas as ‘true’ or ‘false’ depending on whether they accord with our existing beliefs and whether they make sense to us.

James also viewed ‘truth’ as a name for the process used to verify ideas as experienced, and

he drew a parallel with other terms ending in “th” related to life-related human processes: health, wealth, strength, etc. “Truth is *made*, just as health, wealth, and strength are made in the course of experience” (James, 1963, p. 96). We *make* truth in the process of our experience, rather than seeing it as something that precedes that experience, in the same way that we make wealth or health, rather than seeing them as pre-existing.

By seeing ‘truth’ as a property of certain ideas and their agreement with subsequent experience, James emphasized the practical difference in true ideas as the only ‘meaningful’ meaning of truth. Therefore, James does not seek to find what true ideas agree with but instead asks what tangible difference an idea being true will make in real life. A verified idea leads towards other experiences found to be satisfactory, progressive, or harmonious.

Thus, we do not passively reflect reality; instead, we create or construct reality in the process of knowing (Seigfried, 1990). Concepts of truth or falsity do not refer to properties of theories, or a relationship between thoughts and facts, but rather how ideas actually perform in specific situations. For James, this makes truth an instrument of action, similar to Kelly’s (1979a) view of behavior as the independent variable, a way of posing a question. Ideas we come to see as true lead us to practically important actions. We assign the label of ‘truth’ to ideas that have survived this active verification process, using the term to describe beliefs that reliably guide our action toward an anticipated outcome (Capps, 2009). We employ these processes because of the utility of this type of activity, both past and present. We would not engage in such activity, nor assign value to determining what we call ‘true,’ unless we have an interest in doing something with it and it serves to enhance human life (Seigfried, 1990, 2009).

WILLING, BELIEVING, INTENTION, ATTENTION

PCP emphasizes our active role in creating and validating ideas through practical application,

and it regards human effectiveness as the ability to adopt new, novel, and alternative ideas, enact them as experiments, and pay attention to what happens as a consequence. Like Kelly's (1979b; McWilliams, 1996) invitational, hypothetical perspective, James (1917) described the idea of regarding construing and action in a hypothetical manner in an essay written in 1896 titled, "The Will to Believe." In this essay, James stated, "Let us give the name of hypothesis to anything that may be proposed to our belief" (1917, p. 100), and he suggested that we regard a 'live' hypothesis as an actual possibility to the person who proposes it, as determined by the individual's willingness to take action upon it. James suggested that we have the 'right' to believe any hypothesis that tempts us to action and to apply it to living options. (Schiller suggested that James originally planned to title his essay "The Right to Believe"; Porrovecchio, 2008). James viewed belief as only the first step, with the pragmatic working of belief through action, considering alternatives, and attending to the empirical consequences of the belief constituting necessary additional steps.

The existentialist Rollo May (1969) elaborated further on James' view of will and belief through the concept of 'intentionality,' referring to it as a structure or process (Bugental, 1969) for creating meaning out of experience. He emphasized people's capacity to form or mold themselves and their relation to their experience. May reminded us of the connection that James made between attention and will, and he sees intentionality as central in turning attention to a particular phenomenon. We can view Kelly's emphasis on effective action, from this Jamesian perspective, as requiring a willingness to adopt beliefs that have direct meaningful relevance to the person, turning the belief into an intention, which guides perception and attention, and ultimately leads to action and subsequent attention to the empirical consequences of the action as a test of the validity of the belief. Bugental (1969) elaborated the process of intentionality by emphasizing its importance for meaning-making and its role in confronting anxiety and ambivalence and making choices. Kelly influenced Bugental, who received his Ph.D. at Ohio State

(Schneider & Greening, 2009), and he regarded Kelly's remark that the key to human destiny lies in reconstruing what we cannot deny as a cornerstone for a truly humanistic psychology. He described choice and intention as a process of confronting ambivalence, reorganizing the self-world outlook, and resolving crises in a uniquely personal manner that preserves values and enhances life. However, he believed that Kelly's approach did not sufficiently emphasize the concept of intentionality as "the dynamic, the force, to bring about the reconstruing which turns the key of man's destiny" (Bugental, 1969, p. 96).

EMOTION, PASSION, AND SOCIALITY

If intentionality serves as the force for reconstruing, how do we understand the root of intention and what gives meaning and relevance to an individual's beliefs and actions? Critics of Kelly often focused on PCP's seemingly 'cognitive' emphasis, implying a totally rational basis for determining relevance and meaning. PCP adherents, however, have effectively described the role of passion and emotion in a constructivist view of the person (Bannister, 2003; McCoy, 1977), and Kelly proposed re-labeling PCP as a theory of human feeling (Bannister, 2003). Kelly's rejection of the false dichotomy between thinking and feeling led him to a new perspective that views thoughts and feelings as integrally connected, a view also expressed effectively by James (1917).

In a 1915 essay entitled "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings," James argues that the judgments we make about the value of things depends on the emotions that the things arouse in us. We frame something in terms of a concept and judge it as valuable because we associate the idea with a feeling. If we only experienced 'cognitive' ideas, we would not have likes or dislikes, and we would view all experiences as equally valuable or significant. James described the significance of life processes in terms of the 'eagerness' they communicate to the individual. Regardless of whether this 'eagerness' occurs in the context of activity, perception, imagination, or thinking, "there is the zest, the tingle, the ex-

citement of reality; and there is 'importance' in the only real and positive sense in which importance ever anywhere can be" (James, 1917, p. 4). For James, this feeling of excitement and significance serves as the only standard for determining value, and he also notes that we have no recipe for determining how a person attains this feeling of vital significance: "Being a secret and a mystery, it often comes in mysteriously unexpected ways" (James, 1917, p. 16).

This view of emotion as central to personal meaning echoes the PCP perspective as described in the Sociality Corollary (Kelly, 1955). It requires an empathic awareness and understanding of the feelings, as well as thoughts, of other individuals, and recognition of our unrealistic tendency to expect that others will feel the same intensity that we feel. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, this perspective implies that we have no basis for critically evaluating the emotional basis of meaning-making of others, and it requires that we "tolerate, respect, and indulge those whom we see harmlessly interested and happy in their own ways, however unintelligible these may be to us" (James, 1917, p. 21).

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION, COMMONALITY, AND COMMON SENSE

Personal Construct Psychology (Kelly, 1955) emphasized the commonality as well as the individuality of personal constructions, and social constructionism (Raskin, 2002) has elaborated this socially constructed nature of beliefs more fully. James (1963) described the socially constructed context in which the truth-making process occurs as 'Common Sense.' He viewed common sense as fundamental ways that people think about their experience and 'things' in the world as developed long ago by human ancestors and maintained and preserved through time. For James, common sense refers to how we use of particular intellectual forms or thought categories (1963). Common sense constructs might include 'thing,' 'same,' 'different,' 'kinds,' 'minds,' 'bodies,' 'time,' 'space,' 'subjects,' 'attributes,' 'cause,' etc. For James, kinds and

sameness are concepts we use to overcome a world of 'singulars,' where nothing occurs twice and there would be no use for logic or predictability. This common sense notion assists us practically by believing that things continue to exist when we do not see them, and by leading to the anticipation of future events.

James emphasized our practical, human needs as dominating this process when he said, "What shall we call a thing anyhow? It seems quite arbitrary for we carve out everything ... to suit our human purposes James" (1963, p. 111). He further stated, "We tend to think of a 'thing' ... as a permanent unit-subject that 'supports' its attributes interchangeably (James, 1963, p. 80)." We can imagine how we brought about the concept of 'things' in antiquity, verified them by their fit with the facts of experience, and how they spread from person to person until they are built into our language and we cannot think effectively in any other terms. For James, "(t)he common-sense categories . . . cease to represent anything in the way of being; they are . . . our ways of escaping bewilderment in the midst of sensation's irremediable flow" (1963, p. 82). Echoing Glasersfeld's (1995) Radical Constructivist view, we can see James' "radical empiricism, not as a traditional metaphysical system which establishes what reality must be, but as an attempt to identify those structures of experience that characterize our being in the world" (Seigfried, 1990, p. 246).

GENERALIZATION, DEFINITION, EXTENSION

From the PCP perspective, a person's meaning-making system embraces a hierarchical structure, and it evolves over time as the individual makes choices to expand or further define the system. Threat occurs in the context of imminent major change in the system (Kelly, 1955), so we tend to rely, maintain, and conserve the structure we have created. As Glasersfeld (1994) points out, invalidation or incompatibility between our expectations and our experience provides the basis for reconsideration and reconstruing. James foreshadowed these perspectives in discussing our

tendency to see these humanly constructed ideas and beliefs, in spite of our better understanding, as real, universal, and permanent. Old opinions meet new experiences that strain or challenge them, through contradiction or incompatibility. As James explained it, "The result is an inward trouble to which his mind till then had been a stranger, and from which he seeks to escape by modifying his previous mass of opinions. He saves as much of it as he can, for in this matter of belief we are all extreme conservatives" (James, 1963, p. 29). We change beliefs as little as possible until we come up with a new idea that can mediate between the old and the new. Then we tend to treat the new idea as true. We count new opinions as true to the extent that we can assimilate the novelty into our current belief structure. While Kelly and James agreed about the human tendency to maintain the current structure, Kelly also emphasized our ability to reduce threat by revising subordinate components of our system (1955) and our willingness to take audacious risks to extend our understanding in new ways (1977, 1979a).

JAMES' MELIORISM AND HUMAN POSSIBILITY

Although pragmatism as a philosophy tends to see the world as "becoming," without an overarching purpose or direction, Kelly (1977, 1979a), emphasized the active role of human inquiry as a method of improving human life and circumstances. James likewise viewed pragmatism as a method for enhancing the human condition and human effectiveness by using theories as instruments for engaging with an on-going world of change. James embraced meliorism, the view of society as innately tending toward improving the world through human action; he believed that we could use it as a way of 'saving the world' through the promise of bringing possibility into probability (Foust, 2007). Sanford (1969) describes meliorism as the most important aspect of James' psychology, an approach that focused on the relief of human suffering and the improvement of society. James described the world as "malleable, waiting to receive its final

touches at our hands" (1963, p. 112-113), and Sanford stated James' view that "(t)he universe is still developing, and we can help it develop in ways that favor our needs and purposes" (1969, p. 99).

James' pragmatism thus accords well with Kelly's emphasis on the importance of human creativity, audacity (1979a), and aggressiveness (1965) as manifest in our willingness to live out our alternative views of the world and pursue their implications in concrete action. James actively supported the sense that our ideas and beliefs can manifest in our lives through direct testing of experience and creating events that will lead to the outcome we desire, within the environmental, biological, social, and personal contexts within which we operate. We can use our actions creatively in understanding and creating ourselves and the broader world. James described human activity as "the actual turning places and growing-places ... of the world...the workshop of being, where we catch fact in the making" (James, 1963, p. 126). Again, we see James and Kelly agreeing fully on the value and importance of human audacity and creativity in making meaning of an ever-changing world.

PRAGMATISM'S WEAKNESS: UNSPECIFIED GOALS

From a Kellian perspective, we see constructions as revisable and replaceable based on their effectiveness in leading to new experiences and greater elaboration and understanding. PCP supports the notion that anticipation of events involves comparing one experience (the anticipation) with another (the outcome). However, James' approach to pragmatism fails to explicate exactly how that match occurs, and Bugental (1969), while extremely complementary to Kelly's work, believed that Kelly's approach lacked a sufficient explication of intentionality as "a structure which gives meaning to experience; it is imaginative participation in coming activities; it is the 'awareness of our capacity to form, to mold, to change ourselves and the day in relation to each other'" (Sanford, 1969, p. 99). Effective implementation of this awareness of

our ability to change the world, which combines thinking, feeling, and valuing, requires not just determining whether we experience an outcome as satisfactory; we also seek the 'best' outcome among possible available alternatives, in terms of efficiency, expediency, or other valued qualities. Additionally, as Kelly often reminded us, to know whether an anticipated outcome has occurred requires articulating that predicted event clearly.

Several scholars have identified a weakness in James' approach to pragmatism that may not only limit the value of James' pragmatic perspective but unfortunately weakened the influence of pragmatism (and perhaps constructivism) in American psychology in general. Huntington (1989) suggested that although James embraced the pragmatic perspective that a fixed reality does not reveal itself to us, he failed to realize that he maintained a deep implicit commitment to a substance-ontology (Streng, 1992). Similarly, Hayes (1993) raised questions about James' commitment to fairly testing alternative constructions. He recapitulates the definition of a pragmatic criterion of truth as 'successful working,' an act that leads to an outcome or goal. This conception requires a direction to the action as a part of the original intention. In order for a potential consequence to guide action toward achieving it, the nature of the desired outcome must precede the beginning of the process. Otherwise, we have no clear way of assessing the success of the action. Thus, Hayes suggests, "(s)uccessful working is a matter of achieving *specified* consequences—of accomplishing that which was there to be accomplished" (1993, p. 14, italics in original).

This formulation applies quite well to Kelly's root metaphor of the personal scientist, a person anticipating events by developing hypotheses, implementing behavioral experiments, and assessing the extent to which the anticipated outcome occurred. Hayes suggests that this process requires clear verbal articulation of the intended purpose or goal prior to the action, similar to specifying the dependent variable when designing an experiment. This process requires verbal expression because, as other pragmatists (e.g., Rorty, 1982) have stated, truth as a verbal con-

cept only applies to a statement, a sentence, or other verbal event. We can only apply the concept of 'true' or 'false' to a verbal proposition; the concept does not apply to actual events. Thus, successful pragmatic action must make contact with a verbally stated consequence specified ahead of time.

Consonant with James' view of the role of emotion and temperament, or core constructs, in our values, beliefs, and actions, Hayes further argues that we cannot ultimately justify or objectively evaluate a goal. We can only state it clearly, and others can only assess whether they personally share the goal, not whether it is ultimately valid or 'true.' Hayes suggests that James' truth criteria lack a clear articulation of his goal. Thus, when James describes truth in terms of outcomes that he regards as 'good,' 'satisfactory,' 'agreeable,' 'validated,' or 'corroborated' it raises the question of the goal or criteria for making such a determination. Several alternative hypotheses might lead to such vaguely described outcomes. Hayes argues that this problem arose for James because of the conflict between his religious beliefs and the implications of Darwinian thought. Wishing to maintain the belief in God in the face of undeniable challenges, James chose to regard the God hypothesis as working effectively and thus, by his truth criteria, 'true,' because it led to 'satisfactory' results. These unexamined assumptions may have weakened the value of pragmatism by mixing it with dogmatically held religious beliefs and not articulating goals in a manner that would require, for example, that the God hypothesis compete equally with other, alternative, hypotheses for attaining those goals.

Constructivists wish to avoid dogmatism by viewing all beliefs and ideas as constructed by humans and subject to revision or replacement. Effective constructivism, which uses action leading to specified outcomes as its truth criterion, should rest on a clear statement of the anticipated goal in order to avoid the dogmatism that results from unclear, unarticulated, or tacit goals. We may regard any personal goal as legitimate, and not subject to justification, and allow others to determine whether they share an interest in that goal. For example, James could have stated

his goal as 'maintaining the value of religious belief,' Skinner could have stated his goal as 'the prediction and control of behavior,' and Kelly could have stated his goal as 'assisting individuals in the psychological reconstruction of life.' We could then, as Hayes states, 'vote with our feet' in deciding whether to joining with them.

Hayes (1997) suggests that in order to implement effective pragmatism (or personal science) we should avoid implicit, vague, incompatible, overly short- or long-term, or rapidly changing goals. We should also ensure that we actually compare the goals to the tangible outcome. Finally, echoing Kelly's emphasis on alternative viewpoints, we should compare the relative efficiency of different courses of action for attaining the specified goal. Hayes argues that the original pragmatists, including James, Dewey, and others, erred in not specifying their goals clearly and that this lack of guide for their truth criteria led to a lack of support for pragmatic psychology, in favor of a more experimental approach. Unfortunately, an overemphasis on the experimental approach takes attention away from important topics and goals that do not lend themselves to experimental investigation, and tends to lead backwards toward a materialistic, foundationalist stance.

JAMES AND ELABORATING PCP

By viewing the foundationalist belief that we can follow a particular method to arrive at a final truth as a figment of imagination, we can appreciate the constructive nature of James' pragmatism. Once we understand the impossibility of absolute ideas we do not lose anything by proposing that ideas are tentative, rather than absolute. We instead proceed by developing more or less satisfactory interpretations, experiencing their success or failure, and comparing the utility of various alternatives, with the sense that by doing so we approach more successful and useful understanding.

In considering the relevance of James' pragmatism to PCP we have noted a number of convivial elements that appear in both approaches. The universe continues to unfold, and we try to

make sense out of our experience (the only reality we actually know) by looking for recurrent patterns or themes, which we call beliefs or ideas. We can regard ideas as valid or useful if they make a difference in terms of actions that follow from them and if they lead to future experiences that confirm or support the idea. Thus, 'the truth' of an idea has to do with how it works in leading to validated anticipations. We have the opportunity to commit ourselves to beliefs and to test those beliefs through action, attending to the consequences and their relevance to the belief. We desire certainty, so when ideas work well over a period of time we tend to treat them as characteristics of the universe rather than as useful tools, and this tendency can lead us to reduce our openness to paying attention to the actually experienced outcome and to considering alternative ideas which might prove even more useful.

These perspectives accord well with Kelly's PCP approach, with its emphasis on effective 'personal science' as the ability to construct relevant hypotheses based on constructed ideas, testing their practical utility through action, and revising constructions in the light of ever-changing experience. Regardless of whether James' pragmatism directly influenced Kelly's theory, these similarities demonstrate Kelly's use of pragmatism and provide further support for placing the development of PCP within its historical context.

In our efforts to elaborate, and strengthen the effectiveness of, a pragmatist, constructivist approach to psychology we may benefit not only from the strengths of James' views but also from the limitations discussed above. Further elaboration of PCP could benefit from a stronger emphasis on identifying intentions and specifying goals, both for clients in psychotherapy and for researchers. We may ask others to clearly specify their intentions and goals and encourage those with convivial goals to join with us in our quest to attain them. We can actively embrace the right, and even duty, of others to articulate and pursue their desired goals, even if we do not find them compelling or interesting, without the need to challenge these goals or ask for their objective justification. Since we cannot identify an objec-

tive 'there' to which we must compare our beliefs for truth or falsity, we have a myriad of perspectives available for leading to our self-determined goals Seigfried (2006).

Following actions based on our diverse, self-established goals, a constructivist approach might focus more on encouraging people to clarify their goals, articulate their intentions (McWilliams, 2008), implement goal directed action, attend to the extent to which the consequences meet the predicted goal, and consider alternative actions that might prove more effective. Such an emphasis might help to address the limitations of James' effective articulation of a pragmatic, constructivist philosophy. It might also provide an active method to guide constructive psychology further into the unknown future and continue the quest to get "a little closer to the truth that lies somewhere over the horizon" (Kelly, 1977, p. 19), while acknowledging that 'truth' as still tentative and *ad interim*, and recognizing that over that horizon lie infinite additional horizons and potential 'truths.'

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Spencer A. McWilliams, Ph.D. has held faculty and administrative appointments at six American universities and colleges from 1971 to the present. He has sustained an active interest and participation in PCP for more than thirty years. He currently serves as Professor of Psychology at California State University San Marcos, San Marcos, CA 92096, USA.
E-mail: smcwilli@csusm.edu.
Home Page: <http://www.csusm.edu/mcwilliams/>

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