Australasian Personal Construct

Newsletter

No. 82

MARCH/MAY 2006

From: Personal Construct Interest Group and
Australasian Personal Construct Group
c/o School of Psychology,
University of Wollongong,
Northfields Ave,
WOLLONGONG,
NSW, 2522

The Australian Psychological Society Ltd

Correspondence to be sent to
Assoc. Prof. Beverly Walker
PHONE NO:- 0242 213653 FAX NO:- 0242 214163
EMAIL:- bwalker@uow.edu.au

1. CHANGE OF PLAN

Dear all,

This is late not just because of me, for once. This is late as I was waiting for information about the Sydney conference, but that didn't eventuate. Everyone on the committee seemingly was too busy. So we have re-construed.

The 13th Australasian Conference on Personal Construct Psychology will be held in Wollongong from 13th-14th July.

It will be a 'no frills' conference, held in our department (which has excellent facilities). Bring your own notepads and pens. This means it will be relatively cheap, though there is added travel for some. We hope that you will all consider coming and hopefully presenting. All sorts of presentation types are invited – normal paper, workshops, symposia, and fun alternatives. But come anyway, even if you don't present. This conference is not just geared for psychologists, or for academics – it is for everyone who uses pcp or might want to use it in the future, whether for work or for living.
The tasks have been divvied up between a number of people.

I don't seem to have much gossip, except that the European conference in Sweden was most enjoyable – good venue, food, papers and entertainment.

Future conferences: -

The 12th Biennial Conference of the Constructivist Psychology Network

(Formerly the North American Personal Construct Network)
Hosted by the Psychology Department at California State University San Marcos
Wednesday, July 19 through Sunday, July 23, 2006

International Congress on Personal Construct Psychology,

Brisbane, Australia, Monday 16 July to Friday 20 July 2007.

PLANNING MEETING WILL BE HELD ON SAT MORNING, 15TH JULY AT BOATHARBOUR MOTEL, WOLLONGONG. ANYONE WHO IS INTERESTED IN CONTRIBUTING PLEASE COME ALONG. LET BOB GREEN KNOW OF YOUR INTEREST.

2. 13TH AUSTRALASIAN CONFERENCE ON PERSONAL CONSTRUCT PSYCHOLOGY

WEBSITE: http://www.pcp-net.org/aus/conf06/

INFORMATION

1. DATES

13-14TH JULY, 2006

2. VENUE

The conference will be held in the School of Psychology, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, NSW. The main room used will be in Building 41, room 104. For those who haven't been to the university the campus is widely regarded as one of (if not the) most beautiful campuses in Australia.

3. STYLE OF CONFERENCE

The conference will be relatively informal, with lots of opportunities to interact with fellow participants. It will be a low budget, 'no frills' conference.

3. .PROGRAM

We hope the program will be varied – normal papers (half hour time slots, with some flexibility for longer presentations at the discretion of the program organisers),, workshops, films, work in progress – you name it, go for it. Don't be shy. This is a great opportunity to try out your ideas in a supportive framework.
Program organisers: Bill Warren and Linda Viney

CLOSING DATE FOR ABSTRACTS – 12TH JUNE

We also intend to publish the abstracts in the supplement to the Australian Journal of Psychology (costs to be covered by Interest group funds). However this means the deadlines for abstracts to be included in the supplement will be quite firm. Desley Hennessy (dh37@uow.edu.au) is responsible for this.

4. ACCOMMODATION

Participants are invited to stay at the Boatharbour Motel, which is, as the name suggests, adjacent to the harbour and two main beaches. It is also quite close to town. Make your own bookings, requesting the University Rate. This is $98 for a single and $108 Twin.
PHONE: 02 42289166
Address: Cnr Campbell and Wilson Streets, Wollongong
The main disadvantage of the Boatharbour is that it is a lengthy walk from campus and no public transport explicitly links the two. Several people staying

there will have cars so we can arrange some form of car pooling. We thus ask that you indicate whether you have transport, so arrangements can be made.
Anyone who requires cheaper accommodation, whether in college or billeting, should let Coral Warren know: Email: coraliz@bigpond.net.au

4. REGISTRATION

Registration will take place on Thursday 13th from 10 am, with the formal program beginning at 11. We would appreciate it if people could register **by JUNE 12TH**.
Please complete the enclosed form and send to:
Peter Caputi, School of Psychology, University of Wollongong, Northfields Ave,
Wollongong, NSW 2522.
The cost will be $60.
Full-time students not in receipt of income (or paid for by their departments) and unemployed $30.
This will cover morning and afternoon teas and sandwich style lunches. Those with dietary restrictions please indicate and other alternatives will be available.
Please send a cheque or money order to Personal Construct Group, University of Wollongong.

5. DINNER

There will be a dinner at the Harbourside Restaurant, adjacent to the Boatharbour Motel, on the evening of 13th. Details and firm bookings will be available when you register in the morning. This is a seafood restaurant, but it has other meals also.

6. GETTING TO AND FROM WOLLONGONG

Wollongong is about 75 minutes from Sydney airport. To get from there to Wollongong contact Airport Connections. Phone no: 02 42 617393.
Costs are $45 per person. If there are three together they send a special vehicle for $135.
Alternatively there is a train from Central in Sydney about every hour. It takes about 90 mins. Closest stop to campus is North Wollongong, but with luggage you may prefer to go to Wollongong and get a taxi ($5-6 to either campus or the Boatharbour).
By road from further north than Sydney, you would do best either to use the tollways through Sydney or skirt around the edge as if going to Canberra, coming down via Campbelltown. From the south, if you like driving and don't mind hairpin bends, the scenic route is from the Hume Hwy via the Illawarra Hwy and down Macquarie Pass. The boring, safer route is via Campbelltown. Once you are on the expressway in Wollongong the university is signposted.
The first gate of the university, where the roundabout is, is the entrance closest to Building 41.

REGISTRATION FORM

12th AUSTRALASIAN PERSONAL CONSTRUCT CONFERENCE

FAMILY NAME:

FIRST NAME:

ADDRESS:

EMAIL:

I will be attending the Personal Construct Conference in Wollongong from 13-14th July, 2006.

For the following please cross out what does not apply.

*I **will/will not** be staying at the Boatharbour Motel and **will/will not** need transport from there to campus.*

Any food restrictions meals?

Are you intending to come to the dinner?

*Enclosed is a cheque/money order for $60/$30 to cover associated costs, made out to PCP group**. Due 12th June.** Late registration $80.*

PLEASE EMAIL TO PETER CAPUTI AT pcaputi@uow.edu.au or snailmail him at the School of Psychology, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, 2522, NSW

PRESENTATION PROPOSAL
DEADLINE: MONDAY 12TH JUNE

TYPE OF PRESENTATION: (EG. PAPER, WORKSHOP ETC.)

DURATION REQUESTED: (ORDINARILY HALF AN HOUR FOR PAPERS, UNLESS JUSTIFICATION IS MADE).

TITLE OF PRESENTATION:

ABSTRACT (350 WORDS MAX): (ATTACH)

AUTHOR(S): (PLEASE GIVE DETAILS INCLUDING TITLE, NAME, SURNAME)

ADDRESS (INCLUDING SUBURB, STATE AND POSTCODE):

AFFILIATION (IF DIFFERENT):

EMAIL:

PHONE:

Please email to Bill Warren, William.Warren@newcastle.edu.au or snailmail him at the School of Education, University of Newcastle, Callaghan, NSW 2308

3. TRIBUTES FOR TOM

The tributes keep coming in for Tom Ravenette. I found the following particularly moving and interesting.

Tom Ravenette: An appreciation

By Harry Procter

I first came across Tom's name when "Dimensions of Reading Difficulties" (1968) had recently been published. It was brilliant piece of work still useful today. He did justice to the complexity of the area by devoting chapters to many different perspectives: cognitive, psycholinguistic, social class, familial and neurological. Tom was exceptionally widely read and always willing to dip into sometimes quite obscure areas to illustrate and elaborate his teaching. Other chapters include, "The head teacher's view of reading failure" and "Find out if the child likes the teacher". These latter betray his utterly *relational* view of human difficulties at both theoretical and practical levels. His approach involved interviewing the child (only with their willingness), teacher, head teacher and parents in various combinations and designing a tailor made intervention helping the group resolve its difficulty. Over the years he developed this into a one-off interview often of extraordinary effectiveness. He used a wide variety of techniques and tools, involving carefully honed questions, pictures to show to the child, stories, forms of the grid and one of my favourite, "the drawing and its opposite". His perceptiveness in working with children's drawings was deeply impressive to me but always in bringing out the *child's* construing, not imposing his own framework. He said to the child: "I don't know what the meaning of the picture is. Think about it and now do another drawing with the *opposite* meaning". In this utterly Kellyian way, it would help the child focus on their own meaning and give an opportunity for psychologist and child to discuss by comparing the two drawings. I used this countless times in my work in child mental health.

I never missed the chance to attend Tom's workshops at the conferences. I know he influenced me profoundly in how to *be* in interviews, not only in the content but in the enthusiasm, the adventure, and the joy with which he worked, which was so effective in engaging children (and adults) and in intensifying sessions. "Make it dramatic"; he said when he gave a workshop in Somerset in 1993. His sessions were so rich, illustrating theory and technique with case examples, which became highly memorable *teaching stories*. These would often contain further stories, which he used as interventions to help the child consolidate or develop construing. In one there is a *third* nested story in the form of a dream. The case was of a ten-year-old boy in a residential school who had been extremely challenging to the staff and to his grandparents, resulting in their care breaking down. As usual, Tom carefully explored the boy's constructs with the "Who Are You" technique and with the drawing and its opposite. He had suffered a lot of bereavement and his constructs contained strong themes of illness, death and danger. He then told the boy a story:

> I knew a boy once, he was about your age, and he'd had a terrible life. He'd lost his parents when he was young, he was moved about all over the place and he felt that nobody really cared or treated him as important. At times he felt that nothing was worthwhile and he might just as well be dead. Because of this he made sure that he really existed by making life difficult for everyone else with his behaviour.

He wouldn't do what he was told, he wouldn't work, and he was thoroughly bored. Things got so bad that it was difficult to find a place that would have him. Then he knew that he really was somebody. One night he had a dream and in the dream he met two old people. They said they too had had a very bad childhood just like him. But they were still around and they learned that just because of their experience they were able to understand and sometimes help boys with unhappy experiences like his. The dream faded. When the boy woke up he remembered the dream and thought it was rubbish. But then he had the feeling that he'd been given something very important in the dream, and no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't recall what it was. Day after day he searched to find this message, without success. But it was the continued search that kept him going.

The boy listened to the story with great attentiveness and left in a very thoughtful mood. The teacher reported that he had come back to the classroom a changed boy, calm, nice to be with and it was a joy. Tom said, "perhaps the interview had made a difference to him, giving him something positive, something to hang on to that was worthwhile".

In an obituary for Tom Ravenette, Currie and Gersch (2005) say: "Educational Psychology has lost one of its most inspirational and respected leaders…he was widely influential. His application of Personal Construct Theory was highly skillful, innovative and exciting…it was clear that we were in the company of an exceptional person, a pioneer and a brave person who was simply inspirational and who made a real difference to people's lives and to our profession". Can you hear Tom whistling, "phew…"?!

Tom's work can of course be found in his collected papers (1999). Good expositions can also be found in Richard Butler and Dave Green's and in Rick Beaver's books. I am grateful to Rick for a conversation we had whilst I was preparing this piece.

Beaver, R. (1996) *Educational Psychology Casework.* London: Jessica Kingsley.

Butler, R. & Green, D. (1998) *The Child Within: The exploration of personal construct theory with young people*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Currie, J. and Gersch, I. (2005) Obituary: Arthur Thomas Ravenette (1924 – 2005) *Association of Educational Psychologists* 'The voice of the profession' 23rd November, 2005.

Ravenette, A. T. (1968) *Dimensions of reading difficulties.* Pergamon

Ravenette, A. T. (1999) *Personal construct theory in educational psychology.* London: Whurr.

From *Constructivist Interventionist*, 28, December 2005, pp. 2-3

News Magazine of the Centre for Personal Construct Psychology

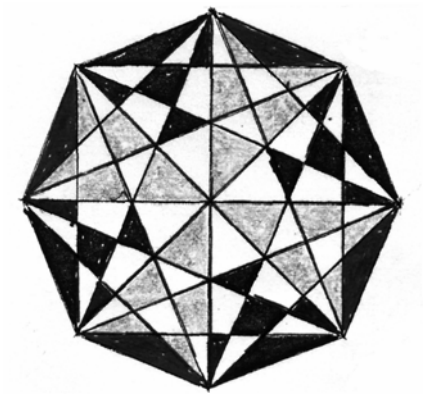
at the University of Hertfordshire

4. TOM'S SELF CHARACTERISATIONS

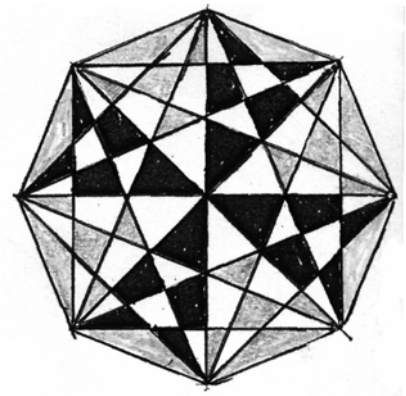
These come with the permission of Peggy Dalton and were published in *Contact: PCP Education and Training Limited Newsletter* March 2006.

Peggy writes about them:

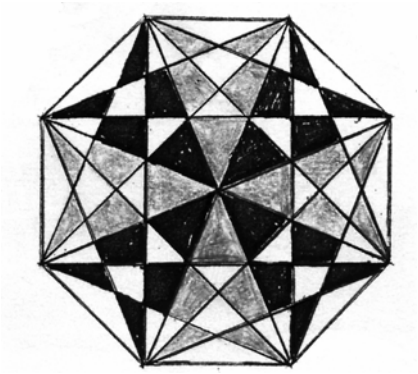
The drawings are similar and yet different and seem to me to represent three aspects of a core self. They were some of the last drawings he did, at a time when I know he was looking at the extent of his contribution to the world.



Tom the psychological interventionist



Tom the teacher



Tom the theorist and author

5. NEWS FROM PCP EDUCATION AND TRAINING, LONDON

FOUNDATION COURSES IN PCP

Five day intensive summer course: 19-23 June

Autumn course in 3 units: 8/9 September + 6/7 October + 3/4 November

For further details please contact Peggy Dalton daltonpcp@aol.com

6. PCP EDUCATION & TRAINING 2006 CPD WORKSHOPS

Crossing Barriers

Friday, April 28th
Communicating across cultures led by Richard Casebow and Anne Hartop

Monday, June 12th
Barriers and bridges between adults and children led by Heather Moran

Friday, September 22nd
Blurred edges: exploring non-mainstream constructions of gender and sexuality
led by Alessandra Iantaffi

Thursday, November 9th
Crossing barriers or breaking boundaries? Risk and dilemma in social relationships led by Mary Frances

Friday, December 8th
Social class and personal identity led by Peggy Dalton

For information and to apply please contact daltonpcp@aol.com

PCPET AUTUMN WEEKEND

Our autumn residential weekend will be held from **6-8 October** this year, in the usual lovely setting of the Ship Inn near Newbury. This informal weekend of workshops and activities is eagerly awaited by those who have been in previous years. Full details will be available soon, but you may like to reserve these dates in your diary now to be sure of attending.

7. NEW BOOK

Jörn W. Scheer, Kenneth W. Sewell (Eds.) (2006)
Creative Construing - Personal Constructions in the Arts

Giessen: Psychosozial-Verlag -- 216 p., € 24,90

Special discount price for PCP group members: € 15 + postage
when ordering from Jörn Scheer: joern.scheer@joern-scheer.de

For details, see: http://www.pcp-net.de/info/cc-arts.html

The Psychology of Personal Constructs, as devised by the American psychologist George Kelly, stresses the importance of the meanings that individuals attach to persons and events in the world surrounding them. Originating in clinical psychology, it has increasingly attracted the interest of scholars and practitioners working in education, in organisations, and in other disciplines working with people. As there are hardly more “personal” processes than creative ones, it seems appropriate to look at the arts from a

personal construct psychology perspective. This book presents for the first time analyses of creative processes, but it features also personal accounts by creative people – who write, sing, dance, act, and make music.

Contents

READING AND WRITING

- A PCT view of novel writing and reading - *Don Bannister*
- People, poetry and politics - the novels of Don Bannister - *Max Farrar*
- George Kelly and literature - *Fay Fransella*
- What-if versions of ourselves: Creative writers speak - *Chris Stevens*
- Two roads converge: Poetry as Personal Construct Theory - *Richard Bell*
- Haiku poetry: Escape from constriction - *Sean Brophy*

EXPERIENCING MUSIC

- Music and the person - *Eric Button*
- Construing sounds, constructing music and non-music - *Devorah Kalekin-Fishman*
- Living with jazz: Construing cultural identity - *Jörn W. Scheer*

SINGING

- Becoming a singer: PCT and voice - *Vivien Burr*
- Stand at the back and pretend - the experience of learning to sing - *Mary Frances*

DANCING

- Construing through body: The dancing experience - *Sabrina Cipolletta*
- Music and mirrors: Dance as a construction of self - *Sara K. Bridges*

ACTING

- Construing characters and cast: Personal constructs on the stage and in the dressing room - *Kenneth W. Sewell*
- Sociality and the sitcom - *Jonathan D. Raskin*

COMING TO TERMS

- Art proustifies Kelly's PCP: Personal searchings and revisitings - *C. T. Patrick Diamond*

APPENDICES

- A short introduction to Personal Construct Psychology - *Jörn W. Scheer*
- Constructive criticism - *Editors*