

Ideas for a phenomenological interpretation and elaboration of personal construct theory

Part 1. Kelly between constructivism and phenomenology

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Kelly's personal construct theory, put forward in 1955, is considered the first constructivist theory of personality and the first expression of those contemporary psychotherapeutic perspectives grounded on a constructivist view of knowledge. Notwithstanding the similarities between psychological constructivism and the phenomenological-hermeneutic tradition, Kelly always rejected the parallel of his theory to phenomenology, regarding the latter as unacceptable since idealistic, solipsistic, and particularistic. In this first article of a work subdivided into three parts, the Authors explain such criticism by Kelly with his knowledge of phenomenology deriving from secondary sources, and stress the wide possibilities of a phenomenological interpretation and elaboration of his theory.

Keywords: personal construct theory, constructivism, phenomenology, idealism

Cognitive, behavioural, emotional, existentialist, psychoanalytic, and even dialectical materialist and Zen Buddhist: these are some of the ways in which George A. Kelly's (1955) theory has been labelled, as he himself tells with pleased irony (Kelly, 1969/1965, pp. 216-217). Such obstinacy in trying to insert personal construct theory (PCT) within already formalized psychological perspectives, and the odd variety of proposals so distant each from other on the epistemological and theoretical level, in our opinion testify as better would not be possible the originality of Kelly's thought, and at the same time the threat which derives from it: threat to remove through a far-fetched operation of homogenization to the "already known".

Kelly does not appear so much amused when commenting the comparison of his theory with phenomenology and the phenomenological approaches in psychology. He rejects it, but

feels to have to justify it, and does so in many occasions; and he does not hesitate to underline the differences, but also to acknowledge similarities between his theory, phenomenology, and the neophenomenological systems of that period (Kelly, 1955, p. 86 ff.): Raimy's self-concept theory, Lecky's self-consistency theory, Rogers' client-centred approach, and Snygg and Combs's phenomenal field approach.

It is likely, however, that Kelly had a knowledge of phenomenology acquired through the reading of secondary sources rather than original texts. Maybe, as Butt (2003) maintains, Kelly's understanding of phenomenology (and, we would like to add, of idealism), was limited by "a knowledge of those American personality theories that imported a particular version of phenomenology" (p. 381); on the other hand, many treatises on personality theories still refer mainly to the work of Rogers and Maslow when expounding phenomenological views. Notwithstanding this, our thesis is that Kelly developed a theory that, starting like phenomenology from a rejection of psychology as a natural science, has unwittingly given an important contribution to the Husserlian project of foundation of a science of experience implying a way of conceiving psychological research and therapy which is definitely alternative to that of mainstream psychology.

In order to expound this thesis and give a contribution to a phenomenological elaboration of PCT, we chose to subdivide the subject into three parts. In the present part we shall document Kelly's opinion on phenomenology, pointing out the similarities between phenomenology and psychological constructivism (of which Kelly is considered a forerunner), and we shall go in search of the phenomenological and hermeneutic signs identifiable in PCT such as originally formulated by Kelly. In the second part, after having outlined the Husserlian project of a science of experience based on a new idea of objectivity, we shall show the points of view shared by Husserl and Kelly about the project of a psychology which can recover the role of people in their construction of the world, and we shall present an interpretation of Kellyan theory as a science of experience and world of forms. The third part will be devoted to the psychological research based on methodological assumptions consistent with the agreement to a science of experience, and the attempt at formalizing a hermeneutic-phenomenological approach to personal construct psychotherapy.

Kelly on phenomenology

Kelly's relationship with phenomenology – or, better with the rather misrepresented image he had of it – has been changing over the years with regard to the reported differences.

In his major work, *The Psychology of Personal Constructs* (1955), Kelly seems to differentiate his theory from phenomenology almost exclusively for the "particularistic" approach of the latter, which he regards as "the bane of the phenomenologists"¹ (p. 318). According to Kelly, PCT differs from this particularism – that is, from an interest limited to the understanding of the single individual – for the importance given also to the commonality of construing processes and the utilization of professional constructs, that is, constructs to be applied to personal constructs and allowing the clinician and the psychotherapist to assume professionally useful role relations with the clients:

¹ Throughout the work Kelly quotes once (p. 40) only two phenomenologists: Husserl and Stumpf.

We attempt to use the phenomenologist's approach to arrive at personalized constructs which have a wide range of meaning for the given individual; then we attempt to piece together this high-level type of data with what we know about other persons. (Kelly, 1955, p. 455)

This difference reminds of the distinction between nomothetic (looking for general laws of nature by means of the procedures of exact sciences) and idiographic (looking for what is singular in the historically determined form, by preferring description) methods proposed by Windelband (1998/1894) as an alternative to Dilthey's (1989/1883) distinction between natural sciences and spiritual sciences:

while we could agree with the psychological phenomenologists and assign an important place to generalization within the realm of the individual, we were quite sure that some data must be lifted from the realm of the individual and construed nomothetically that is, in a realm comprising many individuals. (Kelly, 1955, pp. 677-678)

Kelly therefore regards as possible a psychology that, beginning from an understanding of the individual in his or her uniqueness, allows the individuation of aspects of construction of experience shared by many individuals. We shall see, in the second part of our work, how the possibility of reconciling singularity and generality is indeed a key feature also of Husserl's phenomenology, and hence that the charge of particularism reveals itself groundless. Kelly reproposes it when, discussing transference and countertransference processes, describes the "phenomenologically oriented therapist", who

admits no public or subsuming professional constructs into his system, but who insists that "every client is unique in every way," can get involved with his client in an unproductive series of lovely personal relationships. [...] Too often the clinician with this type of orientation is wholly dependent upon "me and thee" constructs. He may end up by providing the client with an adjustment that is no more than a "me and thee" adjustment. (Kelly, 1955, pp. 678-679)

Following the publication of the two volumes in 1955, Kelly repeatedly refers to the differences between phenomenology and his theory, probably due to the frequent attempts at classifying the latter, in turn beginning to be taken into consideration in the treatises of personality theories and psychotherapy, as a phenomenological theory:

along with the emphasis I place on experience, I hope it is equally clear than I am not proposing phenomenology as the key to scientific advancement - nor existentialism - nor cognitive theory. I realise that personal construct theory, with which my name has been identified, has been placed by various writers in each of these categories. (Kelly, 1977/1963, p. 227)

At this point, however, Kelly moves the comparison on a decidedly ontological level; and it is at this point that there are many considerations to do, regarding not only the idea that Kelly has of phenomenology, but also, in the light of the contemporary debate on psychological constructivism, the view of knowledge he appears to adopt.

Though granting that "phenomenology comes in various shapes and sizes" (1959, p. 6), Kelly shows to consider each of them as many forms of idealism and, as a consequence, senses the risk of a solipsistic condition of the person.

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Kelly expresses in several occasions (thus revealing his agreement to an epistemological constructivism, as we shall comment later on) his conviction that the phenomenological view of knowledge implies the impossibility of comparing our understanding of the world with an external reality, so espousing an idealist view:

I sketched an epistemological position that assumed the reality of events, independently of how they are perceived. In taking this stand I broke off with the position known as phenomenology; at least I broke off with phenomenology to the extent that it is a form of pure philosophical idealism. (Kelly, 1959, p. 20)

But let us assume also that there is indeed a real world out there, one that is largely independent of our assumptions. [...] To understand this objective world is to be able to do more than trace its permanent features; we must anticipate the flow of its events. Now it is precisely at this point that our line of reasoning veers away from classical phenomenology. While we do hold that perceptions are anchored in constructs, we hold also that some constructions serve us better than others in our efforts to anticipate comprehensively what is actually going on. (Kelly, 1977/1963, p. 220)

Kelly reasserts his distance from phenomenology in a paper on hypothetical language inspired by the work of the pragmatist philosopher Vaihinger (1924). It is well-known that Kelly acknowledges being in debt with American pragmatism (Butt, 2008), in particular with Dewey, “whose philosophy and psychology can be read between many of the lines of the psychology of personal constructs” (Kelly, 1955, p. 154).

If I say "the floor is hard," I employ a language system in which the subject-predicate relationship inheres in the subject itself. It is the floor which is hard, and that is its nature, regardless of who says so. The statement stands, not because the speaker said it, but because the floor happened to be what it is. The sentence's validity stems from the floor and not from the speaker.

Contrast with this the phenomenological use of language in which it is presumed that such a statement portrays a state of mind of the speaker and does not necessarily represent anything more than that. [...]

[A statement expressed in the invitational mood] suggests that the view of the floor as something hard is one that is not imposed upon us from without, nor is it isolated from external evidence, as a phenomenological proposition would be, but is one that can be pursued, tested, abandoned, or reconsidered at a later time. (Kelly, 1969/1964, p. 138-139)

Elsewhere, Kelly shows to liken phenomenology to logical positivism, a hazardous comparison in his times, which will find some justification only after the “linguistic turn” formalized by the neo-pragmatist Rorty (1967):

Now you can go at it another way and say, from man's point of view, the world is known only through his perception of it. Since he has only his perceptions to go by, the world is [...] what he construes it to be. What it really is, outside of his perceptions, is a purely academic question and, according to the logic of the logical positivists, it is unanswerable and therefore foolish. Well, this is the phenomenological point of view. I am not a phenomenologist, and therefore, of course, am not a logical positivist, although I read somewhere – in the Koch volumes¹, I believe it was – that personal construct theory was a phenomenological theory.

¹ Kelly refers probably to the six volumes edited by S. Koch (1959-1963).

(Kelly, 1969/1965, p. 218) [...]

As in phenomenology, personal construct theory sees man looking out on his environment, but, unlike phenomenology, does not portray that environment as a figment of his imagination. It's a real world that he lives in. (p. 219)

Another aspect of differentiation from phenomenology is identified by Kelly when writing about the importance of historicity in the experiential process:

The phenomenological psychologists, of whom I certainly am not one, usually take the view that it is only the experience of the passing instant that is of essential psychological significance. But I would argue that it is the whole story of mankind that is of greatest psychological significance. (Kelly, 1980/1966, p. 22)

In the same period Kelly expatiates upon the differences between his theory and his skepticist interpretation of phenomenology in a work on the role of anticipation as an extension of the principle of explanation. We believe it interesting to report it extensively because it describes in a particularly picturesque language the distressing image of human life that Kelly ascribes to phenomenologists:

There are those who argue that since we know reality only in the dubious terms of our own construction of it, there is no point in assuming that it exists at all, except as a figment of our imagination. Our own contrived constructions - sometimes called "experience" - are all we shall ever have, they say, and we had better make up our minds to be content with them. [...] This phenomenological view keeps all the turmoil within the man and offers him neither the challenge of external threats nor the comfort of resources beyond himself. In its light no circumstances lying beyond the outermost layer of his skin can be seen to constrain his impulses or to offer any hint of the enticing mysteries of anticipations. There is nothing, absolutely nothing save the image he himself conjures up, to dictate his acts, to disclose their consequences, or to suggest that anything other than chaos awaits him. There is no venture, and hence no ominous risk and no hairbreadth escape. All the story will ever tell is what he will set down for himself to read.

Life provides this man with no scientific footholds on reality, suggests to him no narrative plots, offers no rhythmic metaphor to confirm the moving resonance of a human theme. If he chooses to write tragedy, then tragedy it will be; if comedy, then that is what will come of it; and if burlesque, he, the sole reader, must learn to laugh at its misanthropic caricatures of the only person he knows - himself.

Most of all, phenomenological man cannot share his subjective plight, for even his most beloved companion is a manakin fabricated out of his own moods. A blind poet, imprisoned alone in a cell whose walls he cannot touch, the only sound man hears is a ringing in his ears. With no voices to haunt him, no future to dread, no consequences to stir remorse, he experiences the absolute freedom that only utter emptiness can guarantee the human soul. [...]

We can selectively agree and disagree with phenomenology. We can agree that we cannot find the explanation of human behavior neatly wrapped up in antecedent events. Events do not prophesy. [...] But we can disagree with phenomenology by declining to accept its implicit assumption that perception is passive. Let us say, rather, that we know an event through our own act of approach to it. We ask questions about it, not academically merely, but experimentally. We intervene and there are outcomes. We invent and new accomplishments materialize. We traverse space and strange objects heave into view. Academic impossibilities yield to demonstrated achievements. The scholar has only to look outside his study window to see less educated men doing what he once said could not occur.

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The psychologist has only to participate in the human enterprise to find that man does what "intelligence" tests have said he can't. (Kelly, 1969/1966, pp. 23-26)

Finally, in an essay about pity and guilt, Kelly sums up in this way his relationship with phenomenology:

I do not regard personal construct theory as a phenomenological system. Phenomenology is an ontology and a psychology of private and noninterdependent worlds. I do not see one's personal construct system as wholly private, nor do I see it as free to regenerate itself into some monstrosity completely oblivious to external reality. (Kelly, 1969/1962, p. 177)

Kelly's opinion on phenomenology is now quite clear, together with his misunderstanding in interpreting phenomenology as an idealist, and therefore particularistic and solipsistic view. On the other hand, in the light of an understanding of phenomenology closer to that of its followers, many similarities emerge between it and a certain contemporary constructivism. Let us examine them in detail.

Constructivism and phenomenology

The first psychological theory definable as constructivist, particularly in the interpretation given by von Glasersfeld (1974), is Piaget's (1937) theory of cognitive development. It is not casual that Piaget (1967) himself was the first to utilize the term *constructivisme*. Beyond the odd attributions of his theory we took off from, Kelly was likened to Piaget (Rychlak, 1981) and is considered the forerunner of constructivist approaches in the field of personality theories and psychotherapy; of course, since the term "constructivism" has begun to connote theories, approaches, perspectives which, in the field of psychology and more generally of human sciences, see as their epistemological and/or ontological assumption a particular view of knowledge representing a sort of *tertium datur* compared to the traditional opposition between the realist and the idealist view (Chiari & Nuzzo, 1996).

The fast spreading of psychological constructivism – and of social constructionism, with which it shows several similarities – has however implied an abuse of the term (sometimes utilized in reference to a generic and trivial subjectivism) and a corresponding indefiniteness of its meaning. Von Glasersfeld (1984) was the first to try to show the difference between Piaget's "radical constructivist epistemology" and the "trivial constructivism" peculiar to cognitivism, anchored to a representationalist view of knowledge. In this connection it is interesting to note how constructivist epistemology has been (and still is) object of misunderstanding similarly to phenomenology. Von Glasersfeld (1995) observed that "for believers in representation, the radical change of the concept of knowledge and its relation to reality, is a tremendous shock. They immediately assume that giving up the representational view is tantamount to denying reality, which would indeed be a foolish thing to do" (p. 14). As evidence of this difficulty, Mahoney (1988), a psychologist who, an exception among Americans, has always shown a particular interest for the philosophical assumptions of psychology, claimed that von Glasersfeld's radical constructivism is "basically indistinguishable from 'idealism'" (p. 4), since it would deny the existence of reality. For this reason he contrasts radical constructivism with "critical constructivism", which keeps basing itself on a realist ontological assumption. It is easy for von Glasersfeld (1991) to reply that "constructivism deals with *knowing* not with *being*. [...] As a constructivist, I have never said (nor would I ever say) that there is *no* ontic

world, but I keep saying that we cannot *know* it.” (p. 17). Paradoxically, the very same position of Mahoney has been accused of being antirealist by Held (1995) in her criticism of postmodern theories in psychotherapy.

Since von Glasersfeld, many other distinctions have been proposed in an attempt at discriminating different ways of interpreting the constructivist view of knowledge. The most relevant to the thesis we would like to develop in this work is in our opinion that between an epistemological and a hermeneutic constructivism suggested by Chiari and Nuzzo (1996, 2010).

The term “epistemological constructivism” refers to those views, which recognise the existence of a world independent from the observer, but regarded as unknowable, and susceptible to be construed in many different, all equally legitimate, ways. Therefore, epistemological constructivism (assimilable to von Glasersfeld’s radical constructivism) implies a subject-object dualism in its making reference to two realities, the extra-linguistic and the experiential reality construed by the person: we *and* the world.

“Hermeneutic constructivism” transcends such dualism by assuming that we are enmeshed in a world we cannot observe and describe from the outside: we are *in* the world. Such a consideration of a relation of complementarity between subject and object of knowledge is the ontological assumption of phenomenology and hermeneutics (Chiari & Nuzzo, 2006).

The epistemological and hermeneutic constructivist views share the idea of a historicity of knowledge, deriving from the recursivity and self-referentiality of the personal process of change. However, whereas epistemological constructivism emphasises the relativity of knowledge, hermeneutic constructivism stresses the possibility of questioning any knowledge by underlining the linguistic nature of reality and the shared understanding we can achieve through dialogue.

One can therefore find, in the view of knowledge and of its relation with reality all inside experience which is peculiar to hermeneutic constructivism, the overcoming of the distinction between subjective and objective which characterizes phenomenology. Notwithstanding this, the similarities between the two views have been seldom pointed out and only by a limited number of scholars (Armezzani, 2002, 2010a; Butt, 1999; Rasmussen, 1998; Steiner, 1999; Strong, 2014), even in the more specific reference to personal construct theory. Warren (1985, 1989, 1990, 1998), in particular, is one fervent supporter of a phenomenological rootedness of PCT; Epting (1988) has often maintained his hermeneutic interpretation of personal construct psychotherapy; Butt (2003) in his turn inserts PCT into a phenomenological context, by making use of Dilthey’s (1889/1883) distinction between understanding and explanation in order to clarify the Kellyan project in terms of an approach to the understanding of the complexity of the lived world (Butt, 2004), and giving an important contribution to a reading of the notions of role (Butt, 1998a) and elaborative choice (Butt, 1998b) in the light of Merleau-Ponty’s (1942, 1945) phenomenology of corporeity; Armezzani (2004, 2010b; Armezzani, Grimaldi & Pezzullo, 2003) inserted the Kellyan diagnostic techniques into a constructivist and phenomenological frame; in the end Chiari (in press; Chiari & Nuzzo, 2004, 2010) is proposing a narrative hermeneutic approach to personal construct psychotherapy.

Phenomenological and hermeneutic signs in personal construct theory

Perhaps the rarity of such comparison, particularly with respect to PCT, is due to the fact that the latter, at least in Kelly’s original formulation, lends itself to be more easily interpreted in terms of an epistemological constructivism (when a superficial reading does not even lead to equate personal constructs and cognitions, thus justifying its frequent classification as a cogni-

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tive theory). Kelly's reiterated claims on the existence of an independent reality are aimed at making clear his epistemological position, antirealist of a kind and original among the psychologies of his period, and at averting the risk that his theory is accused by contrast of being idealist.

We have long since committed ourselves to a point of view from which we see the world as being real and man's psychological processes as being based upon personal versions of that reality. (Kelly, 1955, p. 135)

His dualism is even more evident in phrases like this:

The summary answer to our question of whether or not constructs are real is that a construct is indeed real, but its reality is not identical with the factual elements in its context. With respect to the factual elements it is representative, not identical. Its reality is not their reality. The construct has its own reality. The problem should not cause us trouble if we keep in mind that a construct and its elements are both real, but distinguished from each other, (Kelly, 1955, p. 136)

On the other hand, Kelly does not consider himself a realist, in the light of his deterministic view of realism:

Since we insist that man can erect his own alternative approaches to reality, we are out of line with traditional realism, which insists that he is always the victim of his circumstances. (Kelly, 1955, p. 17)

Elsewhere, as we have seen, his assertions about reality are specifically directed to differentiate his position from the assumed phenomenological view of knowledge, accused of idealism and solipsism. In this connection, it is curious to examine this particular passage:

We did not say, for example, that one is surrounded only by his perceptions. [...]Nor do we say that each personal world is an island universe. The words "personal" and "private" are certainly not synonyms. I think the tree that falls in the primeval forest makes a bang just like any other tree. (Kelly, 1959, p. 6)

Here Kelly makes reference to a well-known dilemma attributed to the empiricist philosopher Berkeley (that the Irish bishop probably has never proposed, but that well suits his thought): "If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?" Usually, the horns of the dilemma are meant in these terms: does the tree emit a sound independently from the presence of a person able to perceive it as such, being the sound a property of the world, or is it the person to "produce" the sound, being the sound a creation of his or her mind? In other words, the question is read in terms of the traditional opposition between realism and idealism (and, put in these terms, the first answer is almost foregone). Less foregone is a consideration of the sound as emerging from the relationship between "what the tree does while falling" and what an observer with a certain structure (the hearing organ) perceives of this phenomenon (the "interpretation" he or she can give). Maybe Berkeley, like the contemporary hermeneutic constructivists – among which we number Maturana and Varela (1987) with their theory of autopoiesis – would have opted for this last answer (even though Husserl regards him as an idealist, as we shall see in the second part of our work). In Berkeley's (1710)

“defence”, and as evidence of the complex attempt at conceiving knowledge as inner to experience without denying the existence of a reality, these passages are worth consideration:

If you think that this detracts from the existence or reality of things, you are very far from understanding what I have said in the plainest way I could think of. [...] the sun that I see by day is the real sun, and what I imagine by night is the idea of the former. In the sense I am here giving to ‘reality’, it is evident that every plant, star, rock, and in general each part of the system of the world, is as much a real thing by my principles as by any others. Whether you mean by ‘reality’ anything different from what I do, I beg you to look into your own thoughts and see. (Berkeley, 1710, §36)

It would be a mistake to think that what I am saying here detracts in the least from the reality of things. [...] When I deny that the things perceived by sense exist independently of a substance or support in which they may exist, I take nothing away from the received opinion of their reality, and am not guilty of any new doctrine in that respect. The only difference between myself and other philosophers is that according to me the unthinking beings perceived by sense have no existence distinct from being perceived, and cannot therefore exist in any substance other than those unextended, indivisible substances, spirits, which act and think and perceive them; whereas the common run of philosophers hold that the perceptible qualities exist in an inert, extended, unperceiving substance that they call ‘matter’, to which they attribute a natural existence, outside all thinking beings - that is, distinct from being perceived by any mind whatsoever. (Berkeley, 1710, §91)

Kelly did not go so far as conceiving this alternative to the realism-idealism opposition. He transcended the mind-body dualism by regarding the realms of mental (cognitive, psychological) and bodily (emotive, physiological) as the product of the application of as many personal constructs to the undifferentiated flow of events. As a consequence, he suggested a radical rereading (even this often misunderstood) of emotional experiences (Chiari, 2013). However, he never arrived at transcending in the same way the knowledge-reality dualism in terms of the emergence of the construct “self/other-than-self” during the development of the personal construction of experience.

And yet PCT presents rather evident signs of an affinity with phenomenology and hermeneutics, even in their developments following Kelly’s theorization; and above all we believe that an elaboration of PCT in terms of hermeneutic constructivism is viable if not even “natural”.

To begin with, Kelly is interested in the way the world appears to people, to their “lived world”. As a consequence, he prefers understanding to causal explanation of phenomena (Butt, 2004), in lines with Dilthey’s (1883) distinction.

The philosophical assumption of PCT, which Kelly (1955) defines as *constructive alternativism* – “all of our present interpretations of the universe are subject to revision or replacement” (p. 15) – seems to echo Nietzsche’s (1967/1885-1887) “perspectivism”, according to which “facts are precisely what there is not, only interpretations. We cannot establish any fact ‘in itself’: perhaps it is folly to want to do such a thing” (§481).

The invitation to transcend the obvious that Kelly at various times repeats reminds Husserl (1970/1936) when considers that our understanding of the world can imprison us, making us take for granted our bodies, our culture, language, our knowledge. “Man”, Kelly wrote, “to the extent that he is able to construe his circumstances, can find for himself freedom from their domination. It implies also that man can enslave himself with his own ideas and then win his freedom again by reconstruing his life” (Kelly, 1955, p. 21).

The role attributed to the process of interpretation and reinterpretation is particularly clear in the illustration of PCT’s theoretical bases: “By construing we mean ‘placing an inter-

pretation': a person places an interpretation upon what is construed. He erects a structure, within the framework of which the substance takes shape or assumes meaning" (Kelly, 1955, p. 50).

This strong phenomenological colour is unfortunately diluted by the metaphor Kelly (1955) chooses to employ and for which he is more popularly known, that of "man-the-scientist" (p. 4), with the consequent importance given to experimentation and verification. Also the wide utilization of the repertory grid technique out of their own theoretical framework has favoured a view of personal knowledge in terms of a set of structures which can be mapped and statistically processed. Still, even in the 1955's major work "another Kelly" is hidden: that of self-characterization as narrative device for the exploration of personal roles through the hermeneutic techniques of analysis Kelly himself suggests, and that which proposes acting forms – enactment, role playing, fixed role therapy – to favour relational experiences able to pave the way to new narrative identities. Unfortunately, as Mair (1989) observed, "very little attention has been paid to the much less familiar *narrative* or *story-telling* approach to psychology that Kelly also employs and, I think, reaches toward advocating" (p. 4).

In the writings ensuing 1955 Kelly moves back from the image of the person as scientist, as far as representing the person, in a series of unpublished conferences on the function of interpretation in psychotherapy, as "an incorrigible interpreter, one who must interpret at all levels of awareness in order to live, even in order to be credited with being alive" (Kelly, 1959, p. 18). This is the Kellyan project we propose ourselves to develop in the second and third part of our contribution.

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Kelly between constructivism and phenomenology

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