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Voicing the Self: From Information Processing to Dialogical Interchange

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Dialogue implies an interchange between mutually influencing voices. Two metaphors playing a major role in contemporary research are analyzed from such a perspective: the computer metaphor, in which the self is studied as an information-processing device, and the narrative metaphor, in which story and storytelling are guiding principles for the self. It is argued that, on the metaphorical level, the computer and the narrative analogy allow voice and intersubjective exchange to play important roles in self-organization. In actual research, however, these elements are neglected. Theoretical and empirical arguments emphasize the relevance of the dialogical view for the study of the self. Finally, the role of dominance in inter- and intrapersonal processes and the relevance of collective voices for contemporary psychology are sketched.

Self theorists have shown a particular "fondness for metaphor" as Smith (1984) and Pratkanis and Greenwald (1985) have observed. The self has been likened to a stream (James, 1890/1902); a mirror or looking glass (Cooley, 1902/1964; Mead, 1934); an acorn becoming an oak (Maslow, 1968); an onion, representing different layers and a center or core (Altman & Taylor, 1959); an actor on a stage (Goffman, 1959); a central region of a larger structure (Allport, 1961; Claparède, 1911/1951; Combs & Snygg, 1948/1959; Koffka, 1935; Lewin, 1936); a theory (Epstein, 1973, 1990); a totalitarian state (Greenwald, 1980); and a galaxy, representing a diversity of elements joined in systemic structures (Knowles & Sibicky, 1990). Apart from the fondness self theorists may have for metaphoric expressions, the number and diversity of these expressions certainly reveal the great complexity of the almost elusive phenomenon that the self is.

The focus of this article is on two metaphors of particular relevance in contemporary self psychology: the *computer* metaphor and the *narrative* metaphor. The computer metaphor, rooted in physical sciences and focused on the organization of knowledge (Pratkanis & Greenwald, 1985), has stimulated a great deal of research activity and has been particularly fertile from an empirical point of view. The narrative metaphor, having a clear affinity with the humanities, has shown a recent upsurge in a great diversity of psychological subdisciplines and is well on its way to occupy a central place in academic psychology. Instead of adding the notion of *voice* as just another metaphor, it is my purpose to argue that the computer and narrative metaphors, however different they may look at first sight, have the notion of voice in common. This commonality can be demonstrated when a distinction is made between the metaphorical level and the level of actual theories and research activities. At the core of my argument is the thesis that, for both the computer and the narrative approach, there is a discrepancy between the level of metaphor and the level of theory and research. Whereas the metaphorical level allows for the inclusion of voice and dialogue, actual research seems to neglect this significant human capacity.

Next, I argue that despite the discrepancy between metaphor and research, there are some developments in the cognitive and narrative domains that run parallel in a dialogical direction and contribute to the extension and commonality of the two approaches. As a whole, this treatise partakes of a broader movement in psychology, as manifested in multiple efforts to merge the cognitive and social, treating them as essential aspects of one another rather than as background or context for a dominant cognitive or dominant social science (Resnick, 1991).

In prior work (Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Hermans, Kempen, & Van Loon, 1992), my colleagues and I have drawn on a variety of theoretical developments in psychology, anthropology, philosophy, and literary sciences to elucidate the nature of the multivoiced or dialogical self. This article elaborates on the prior work by focusing on the implications the dialogical view has for the extension and integration of two contemporary approaches of the self, represented by the computer and the narrative metaphors.

Self as Multivoiced

James's (1890/1902) distinction between the terms *I* and *Me* is, according to M. Rosenberg (1979), classic in the psychology of the self. First, I consider what James meant by these terms, and then I proceed by translating them into a dialogical framework.

I and *Me* were for James (1890/1902) the two main components of the self. The *I*—or the self-as-knower—continuously organizes and interprets experience in a purely subjective manner. Three features characterize the *I*: continuity, distinctness, and volition. The continuity of the self-as-knower manifests itself in a "sense of personal identity" and a "sense of a sameness" through time (James, 1890/1902, p. 332). A feeling of distinctness, of having an existence separate from others, is also intrin-

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sic to the *I*. A sense of personal volition is expressed by the continuous appropriation and rejection of thoughts by which the self-as-knower manifests itself as an active processor of experience. The experience of each of these features (continuity, distinction, and volition) implies the awareness of self-reflectivity that is essential for the self-as-knower (Damon & Hart, 1982).

In defining the *Me*—or self-as-known—James (1890/1902) was aware that there is a gradual transition between *Me* and *Mine*. Therefore, he identified the *Me* as the empirical self that in its broadest sense is all that the person can call his or her own, "not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands and horses, and yacht and bank-account" (James, 1890/1902, p. 291). These primary elements or constituents indicate for James a basic feature of the self, its extension. The incorporation of the constituents indicates that the self is not an entity, closed off from the world and having an existence in itself, but rather is extended toward specific aspects of the environment (M. Rosenberg, 1979). (For a different view on the *I-Me* distinction, see Smith, 1992.)

Mancuso and Sarbin (1983) and Sarbin (1986) have proposed a translation of the *I-Me* distinction into a narrative framework. It is their thesis that James (1890/1902), Mead (1934), Freud (1923/1961), and others emphasized the distinction between the *I* and the *Me* and their equivalents in other European languages precisely because of the narrative nature of the self. The uttered pronoun *I* stands for the author; the *Me*, for the actor or narrative figure. The *I* as an author can imaginatively construct a story in which the *Me* is the protagonist. Such narrative construction is possible because the *I* as author can imagine the future, reconstruct the past, and describe him- or herself as an actor (Crites, 1986). Moreover, narrative construction is a means for organizing episodes, actions, and accounts of actions (Sarbin, 1986, p. 9).

Bakhtin's (1929/1973) Polyphonic Novel

As proposed by Hermans et al. (1992), the translation of the *I-Me* distinction into a narrative framework can be further expanded by referring to the original work of the Russian literary scholar Mikhail Bakhtin. The importance of Bakhtin's work for modern psychology, and for the dialogical functioning of the human mind in particular, was recently discussed by Florenskaya (1989), Vasil'eva (1988), Wertsch (1987, 1990, 1991), Morson and Emerson (1990), and Hermans and Kempen (1993). On the interface of literary sciences and philosophy, Bakhtin's contribution is elucidated by Holquist (1990).

Bakhtin (1929/1973), in his book *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, originally published in Russian, developed the thesis that Dostoyevsky—one of the most brilliant innovators in the history of literature—created a new form of artistic thought, the polyphonic novel. The principle feature of this novelistic form is that it is composed of a number of independent and mutually opposing viewpoints, embodied by characters involved in dialogical relationships. On the stage of interacting characters, the author, Dostoyevsky, is only one of many. In Bakhtin's terms, each character is "ideologically authoritative and independent" (p. 3), that is, each character is perceived as the author of his or her own ideological perspective, not as an object of Dostoyevsky's all-encompassing artistic vision. The characters are not "obedient slaves" (p. 4), acting under the guidance of Dostoyevsky's centralized authorship, but are capable of standing beside their creator, disagreeing with him, and sometimes even rebelling against him.

The polyphonic view implies that there is not one single author, Dostoyevsky, but several authors or thinkers—Raskolnikov, Myshkin, Stavogin, Ivan Karamazov, and the Grand Inquisitor—each having their own voice and telling their own story. The multitude of characters are not within a unified objective world, subordinated to Dostoyevsky's individual vision, but "a plurality of consciousnesses," represented by voices who ventilate their own ideas. As in a polyphonic composition, moreover, the several voices or instruments have different spatial positions and accompany and oppose each other in a dialogical fashion.

The theoretical significance of the term *voice* for Bakhtin (1929/1973) becomes especially manifest when one focuses on the difference between logical and dialogical relationships. This difference is necessary for understanding the nature of the metaphor of the polyphonic novel. Bakhtin gives the following examples (see also Vasil'eva, 1988). Consider two phrases that are completely identical, *life is good* and again *life is good*. In terms of Aristotelian logic, these two phrases are related in terms of identity; they are, in fact, one and the same statement. From a dialogical point of view, however, they may be seen as two remarks expressed by the voices of two spatially separated people in communication, who in this case entertain a relationship of agreement. The two phrases are identical from a logical point of view but different as utterances: The first is a statement, the second a confirmation. In a similar way, one can compare the phrases *life is good* and *life is not good*. Within the framework of logic, one is a negation of the other. However, as utterances from two different speakers, a dialogical relation of disagreement evolves. For Bakhtin, the relationship of agreement and disagreement are, like question and answer, basic dialogical forms. To avoid misunderstandings, it must be added that Bakhtin certainly does not reject the rules of logic: "Dialogical relationships are totally impossible without logical and concrete semantic relationships, but they are not reducible to them; they have their own specificity" (Bakhtin, 1929/1973, p. 152).

Dialogue opens for Bakhtin (1929/1973) the possibility of studying the inner world of one and the same individual in the form of an interpersonal relationship. By transforming an inner thought of a particular character into an utterance, dialogical relations spontaneously occur between this utterance and the utterance of real or imaginal others. In Dostoyevsky's (1846/1985) novel, *The Double*, for example, the second hero (the double) was introduced as a personification of the interior voice of the first hero (Golyadkin). By externalizing the interior voice of the first hero in a spatially separated opponent, a full-fledged dialogue is developed between two independent parties. In Bakhtin's terms,

> this persistent urge to see all things as being *coexistent* and to perceive and depict all things *side by side* and simultaneously, as if in space rather than time, leads him [Dostoyevsky] to dramatize in space even the inner contradictions and stages of development of a single person. (Bakhtin, 1929/1973, p. 23, italics added)

In this narrative spatialization, Dostoyevsky constructed a plurality of voices representing a plurality of worlds that are neither identical nor unified but rather heterogeneous and even opposed. As part of this narrative juxtaposition, Dostoyevsky portrayed characters conversing with the devil (Ivan and the Devil), with their alter egos (Ivan and Smerdyakov), and even with caricatures of themselves (Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov).

In summary, the metaphor of the polyphonic novel expands on the narrative conception of the *I* as an author and the *Me* as an observed actor and has, therefore, the potential of advancing beyond existing conceptions of the self. Whereas in Sarbin's (1986) version of the self-narrative, a single author is assumed to tell a story about him- or herself as an actor, the polyphonic novel as a metaphor for the self goes one step further. It permits one and the same individual to live in a multiplicity of worlds, with each world having its own author telling a story relatively independent of other authors of other worlds. Moreover, several authors may enter into dialogue with each other.

Juxtaposition in the Dialogical Self

In line with the polyphonic metaphor and its implication of spatialized dialogue, Hermans et al. (1992) conceptualized the self in terms of a dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous *I* positions in an imaginal landscape. In this conception, the *I* has the possibility to move, as in a space, from one position to the other in accordance with changes in situation and time. The *I* fluctuates among different and even opposed positions and has the capacity to imaginatively endow each position with a voice so that dialogical relations between positions can be established. The voices function like interacting characters in a story, involved in a process of question and answer, agreement and disagreement. Each of them has a story to tell about his or her own experiences from his or her own stance. As different voices, these characters exchange information about their respective *Me*s, resulting in a complex, narratively structured self. (For a discussion of the relationships between *I* positions, including Mead's [1934] theory, see Hermans & Kempen, 1993; for an application of these ideas in counseling and psychotherapy, see Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995.)

A central feature of the dialogical self is its combination of temporal and spatial characteristics. Sarbin (1986), Bruner (1986), and Gergen and Gergen (1988), main advocates of a narrative approach, have emphasized the temporal dimension of narratives. Bruner's sentence "The king died, and then the queen died" (p. 12) nicely illustrates this emphasis. The dialogical self certainly acknowledges the temporal dimension as a constitutive feature of stories or narratives. Without time, there is no story. However, in the line of Bakhtin's (1929/1973) emphasis on the spatial dimension, time and space are of equal importance for the narrative structure of the dialogical self. The spatial nature of the self is expressed in the terms *position* and *positioning,* which are, moreover, more dynamic and flexible than the traditional term *role* (cf. Harré & Van Langenhove, 1991). Bakhtin has emphasized the spatial nature of narrative by his term *juxtaposition.* In this narrative spatialization, a plurality of voices is supposed that are neither identical nor unified but rather heterogeneous and even opposed. As part of a narrative juxtaposition, characters are portrayed as conversing with other, often oppositional characters. As Bakhtin has described, it is even possible to translate temporal relations into spatial structures, by juxtaposition of different periods in our life. A person can, in an imaginal space, move from the present to the past or to the future, and back. When the person comes back, he or she has more or less been changed by the dialogical process itself. For example, I can imaginatively move to a future point in time and then speak to myself about the sense of what I am doing now in my present situation. This position, at some point in the future, may be very helpful to evaluate my present activities from a long-term perspective. The result may be that I disagree with my present self as blinding itself from more essential things.

In the following section, I discuss and analyze the computer metaphor—focused on the processing of information or, in Pratkanis and Greenwald's (1985) terms, on the organization of knowledge—from the perspective of voice. First, I demonstrate that actual theories and research, inspired by this metaphor, acknowledge the multifacetedness of the self, but not its multivoicedness. This state of the art, however, is discrepant from the insights of some computer scientists, who have explicitly paid attention to the importance of voice. A literature review suggests that computer scientists are closer to the multivoicedness of the self than are researchers in psychology who, in their work on information processing, are inspired by the computer metaphor.

Organization of a Knowledge Device: The Self as Multifaceted

In a comprehensive review of recent developments, Markus and Wurf (1987) argued that one of the most dramatic changes in research has been in the structure of the self-concept. They criticized earlier conceptualizations of the self as "generalized" or "average," as a formidable stumbling block for progress in the field (e.g., classifying people in high vs. low self-esteem). The question can be posed as to how such a crude, undifferentiated structure can mediate the diversity of behavior to which it is supposedly related. The answer has been to view the self as a multifaceted phenomenon, as a set of schemas, conceptions, images, prototypes, theories, goals, tasks, or facets (e.g., Carver & Scheier, 1982; Epstein, 1980; Kihlstrom & Cantor, 1984; Markus, 1983; Marsh, 1986; Rogers, 1981; Schlenker, 1980). A similar movement has occurred among sociologists, where it is now commonplace to refer to the "multiplicity of identity" (Burke, 1980; Stryker, 1980; Weigert, 1983). *Identity* includes one's social roles and status, as well as one's personal characteristics and feelings. With this development, psychologists and sociologists converge on a shared conceptualization of the self as a highly complex but organized phenomenon (see also S. Rosenberg & Gara, 1985).

In a similar vein, Markus and Nurius (1986) provided arguments that some selves are not actual but possible selves—the self one would like to be or is afraid of becoming. These selves, providing images of desired or undesired end states, motivate individual behavior. These selves also provide an interpretative and evaluative context for the current self. In this approach, the self-concept is considered a system of affective–cognitive structures (also called schemas or theories) about the self that lends coherence to the individual's self-relevant experiences (for these and related ideas, see Epstein, 1973; Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1984; Kihlstrom & Cantor, 1984; Rogers, 1981).

The multifacetedness of the self is also underlying work on the so-called "undesired self," that, according to Ogilvie (1987) can be considered a "neglected variable" in personality research. Personality theorists have given a great deal of attention to the real self and the ideal self but have neglected the undesired self. To redress this unbalanced situation, Ogilvie provided data showing that the distance between the real self and the undesired self correlates more highly with ratings of life satisfaction than does the distance between the real self and the ideal self. (For the role of potential selves, see also Schlenker, 1985).

Niedenthal, Setterlund, and Wherry (1992) combined the concept of possible self with Linville's (1985, 1987) thesis that the complexity of people's self-concept is inversely related to the intensity of their reactions to evaluative feedback about present goals and abilities. The basic idea in Linville's thesis is that in the case of a complex self, a person's temporary (negative or positive) evaluation of one self-aspect does not spread to the total self-concept if there are other aspects that are semantically differentiated (complexity works as a buffer against emotional experiences). Distinguishing between complexity of the actual self and complexity of possible selves, Niedenthal et al. found support for the idea that actual self-complexity mediates affective reactions to evaluative feedback about present goals, whereas possible self-complexity mediates affective reactions to evaluative feedback about future goals. These findings underscore the independent roles of the organization of actual and possible selves in affective processes.

Another theory that deals with the way knowledge of different parts of the self is organized is Higgins's (1987) *discrepancy theory.* This theory exemplifies how the multifacetedness of the self coexists with its dynamic orientation. Higgins distinguished between several domains of the self and several standpoints on the self. The domains are the *actual* self (i.e., attributes one actually possesses), the *ideal* self (i.e., attributes one ideally possesses), and the *ought* self (i.e., attributes one should or ought to possess). These domains can be viewed from the standpoint of the person him- or herself or from the standpoint of some significant other (e.g., mother, father, sibling, spouse, or closest friend). Discrepancies between the several domains are related to different kinds of emotional vulnerabilities. A discrepancy between the actual and ideal self (from the standpoint of the person him- or herself or of a significant other) is associated with dejection (e.g., sadness), whereas a discrepancy between the actual self and the ought self is associated with agitation (e.g., fear). For empirical studies instigated by this theory, see Higgins, Klein, & Strauman, 1985; Newman, Higgins, & Vookles, 1992; Strauman, 1989; Strauman & Higgins, 1988).

The multifacetedness is further emphasized by the finding that the discrepancy between different components of the self may have a different or even opposite impact on an individual's adjustments in different life tasks. Cantor, Norem, Niedenthal, Langston, and Brower (1987) explored the impact of the discrepancy between actual self and ideal self on behavior in the achievement and interpersonal areas in a group of students. They found that this discrepancy negatively affects adjustment in the (stressful) achievement area and positively affects social outcomes in the (more relaxed) interpersonal area. In other words, it is not only relevant to distinguish among different types of discrepancy, as Higgins (1987) does, but one and the same type of discrepancy may even have an opposite impact on adjustment, depending on the nature of the task.

In summary, within the realm of the organization of knowledge approach, there has been growing emphasis on the multifacetedness and complexity of the self. At the same time, researchers have devoted attention to the relationship between the different subparts of the self. This attention has resulted in an increased interest in the self's dynamic potentials. Although the multifacetedness and dynamic orientation are important requisites of a multivoiced self, the studies in the organization of knowledge domain, reviewed thus far, have dealt neither with voice nor with the dialogical relationship between the subparts.

Next I move to the level of the computer metaphor itself by referring to some recent developments in artificial intelligence. A comparison of these developments with the previously reported self research then explains why computer scientists are indeed interested in the voiced characteristics of the self.

Recent Developments in the Computer Metaphor

Computer scientist Minsky (1985) noted that some of the earliest computer programs excelled at what people consider to be "expert skills." A 1956 program was able to solve hard problems in mathematical logic, and a 1961 program solved college-level problems in calculus. Yet not until the 1970s could computer scientists construct robot programs that could see and move well enough to arrange children's building blocks into simple towers and playhouses. The reason for this delay is that to be an expert, one needs a large amount of knowledge of only relatively few types of knowledge. In contrast, building a tower or many other tasks that people perform on the basis of common sense involve a large variety of types of knowledge, and this requires rather complicated management systems (Minsky, 1985).

To address the complicated management problem, Minsky (1985) developed a model in which the mind is considered a hierarchically organized network of interconnected parts that together function as a society. The mind of the child playing with blocks is imagined to contain a host of smaller minds, called *agents.* At a high level of organization, an agent called *Builder* is in control of the situation. Builder's speciality is making towers from blocks. Building a tower, however, is too complicated a job for any single, simple agent. Therefore, Builder has to ask help from several other agents, which function at the next lower level of organization: *Begin* (who chooses a place to start the tower), *Add* (who adds a new block to the tower), and *End* (who decides whether it is high enough). Each of these agents, in turn, ask lower level agents for help. For example, Add may be connected to *Find* (to find a new block), *Get* (to move the hand who gets it), and *Put* (to put it on the top). As agents in a bureaucracy, the different parts of the mind work together to make it function as an organized whole.

Minsky (1985) emphasized that agencies, although they are parts of a functioning whole, are often not able to comprehend one another. Most pairs of agents cannot communicate at all. Just like in a human society, these agents, each with their own programs, simply do their job without knowing all the other agents that are part of the community.

However, at the higher levels of organization, agents may be involved in direct communication. Elaborating on his block building example, Minsky (1985) described that a conflict may arise between Builder and another agent such as *Wrecker,* at the same level who is only interested in breaking down what Builder has achieved. Agents at this level may agree or disagree as a result of their communication:

> Only larger agencies could be resourceful enough to do such things. Inside an actual child, the agencies responsible for *Building* and *Wrecking* might indeed become versatile enough to negotiate by offering support for one another's goals. "Please, **Wrecker,** wait a moment more til **Builder** adds just one more block: it's worth it for a louder crash!" (Minsky, 1985, p. 33).

At the lower levels of organization, such a negotiation is not only unnecessary, it is also impossible. Find, Get, and Put are smaller, highly specialized agents, who cannot become involved in mutual negotiations. They simply are serially organized and subsumed by a higher level agent to contribute to building the tower. Higher level agents, like Builder and Wrecker, however, assume an anthropomorphic status that enables them to speak and enter into a dialogical relationship.

Another computer scientist, Hofstadter (1986), argued that a brain, with its billions of neurons, resembles a community made up of smaller communities, each in turn made up of smaller ones, and so on. The highest level communities just below the level of the whole are what he calls *subselves* or *inner voices.* Such voices may act like competing selves and a hypothetical dialogue may take place, "a dialogue between two persons both of whom are inside me, both of whom are genuinely myself but who are at odds, in some sense with each other" (p. 782). Hofstadter added that everyone has competing voices—some of them perhaps dormant, but still present—that say opposite things about a particular self-relevant subject. A voice may be dominant for a long time, but suddenly a *phase transition* may take place, that is, a competing voice that was hitherto dormant may awake and cause a transformation of one's view. A particular voice, often disagreeing with other voices, emerges from obscurity and proclaims itself an active member of the community of selves (Hofstadter, 1986).

An important development in computer technology is the change from serial to parallel processing of information. In the original computer models, information was stored and processed in a serial manner, that is, stored in one area and processed in another. The whole worked similarly to an assembly line in a factory, in that only one cluster of information could be processed at a time. More recently, however, parallel computers have been developed that allow many different processors to work side by side. This constellation enables computers to communicate yet remain largely independent of one another. They jointly solve a problem by individually and simultaneously addressing separate aspects of it. In this way, parallel computers "think" in a way that approximates human intelligence much more than the earlier, serial computers (Hillis, 1985; Schwartz, 1987).

Recently, Bruner (1990) described that the cognitive movement, started in psychology in the late 1950s, established "meaning" as the central concept of psychology. The *cognitive revolution* was originally conceived as an enterprise in which psychologists joined forces with anthropologists, linguists, and historians. Gradually, however, this enterprise shifted from the construction of meaning to the processing of information. Bruner then presented arguments for a narrative approach, in which voice is one of the constituents, as it represents a narrator's perspective in the construction of meaning (p. 77).

Comparison of Research and Metaphor

When comparing recent developments in the computer metaphor with actual theories and research of the self, one can observe a divergence. The previously mentioned computer scientists allowed voice and dialogical exchange to play a role, particularly at the higher levels of the mind. Actual theories and research, on the contrary, do not include these notions as significant features of the human self. In accordance with the computer metaphor, some theories pay attention to the interconnection of different parts of the self. In Higgins's (1987) theory, for example, the connection of actual, ideal, and ought selves is of central concern. In research on possible selves, there is interest in the way different selves are balanced or unbalanced with respect to one another (Cross & Markus, 1990). In a discussion of his cognitive–experiential self-theory, Epstein (1993) emphasized that this theory is broadly integrative, as it combines in one theoretical framework elements compatible with psychodynamic, learning, and phenomenological theories and modern cognitive views about information processing. Nonetheless, in all these theories, voice is absent—both in the theoretical formulations and in the research that has been carried out on the basis of these theories. It seems that voice and dialogue fall outside "the range of convenience," to borrow a term from G. A. Kelly (1955), of these theories. Before exploring the implications for self psychology more in depth, I first focus on another metaphor, the narrative approach of the self, which is analyzed in a similar way.

Self as a Narrative

After more than a century, William James's (1890/1902) work is still functioning as a fertile soil for ideas and continues to inspire students of the self from divergent orientations. Before starting with a discussion of the narrative approach, first look at a passage in which James brings together two notions, that of *possible self,* representing a significant development in the information-processing domain, and *character,* representing an indispensable term in the narrative domain:

> With most objects of desire, physical nature restricts our choice to but one of many represented goods, and even so it is here. I am often confronted by the necessity of standing by one of my empirical selves and relinquishing the rest. Not that I would not, if I could, be both handsome and fat and well dressed, and a great athlete, and make a million a year, be a wit, a bon-vivant, and a lady-killer, as well as a philosopher; a philanthropist, statesman, warrior, and African explorer, as well as a "tone-poet" and saint. But the thing is simply impossible. The millionaire's work would run counter to the saint's; the bon-vivant and the philanthropist would trip each other up; the philosopher and the lady-killer could not well keep house in the same tenement of clay. Such different *characters* may conceivably at the outset of life be alike *possible* to a man. But to make any one of them actual, the rest must more or less be suppressed. So the seeker of his truest, strongest, deepest self must re-

> view the list carefully, and pick out the one on which to stake his salvation. All other selves thereupon become unreal, but the fortunes of this self are real. Its failures are real failures, its triumphs real triumphs, carrying shame and gladness with them. This is as strong an example as there is of that selective industry of the mind. . . . Our thought, incessantly deciding, among many things of a kind, which ones for it shall be realities, here chooses one of many *possible selves or characters*, and forthwith reckons it no shame to fail in any of those not adopted expressly as its own. (James, 1890/1902, pp. 309-310, italics added)

When James (1890/1902), as McAdams (1985a) observed, twice termed the possible selves from which one chooses as characters, he hinted at a powerful metaphor for the understanding of the self, the metaphor of the *story*. In the following, I first describe the influence of the notion of story in psychology in general and then focus on two recent developments that specifically refer to the multifaceted nature of the self, the concepts of character and self-narrative.

Upsurge of the Narrative Approach

An early manifestation of storytelling activity in psychology was Murray's (1938) Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), used for the diagnosis of needs or motives. The instrument was based on the supposition that the themes prevalent in the stories participants told in response to viewing a picture revealed more or less unconscious needs or motives of the person. The TAT procedure functions as an example of a relationship between storytelling and psychological motivation. McClelland and his coworkers (McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953; McClelland, Koestner, & Weinberger, 1989) also used a TAT procedure in their influential treatise of the "achievement motive" and extended Murray's ideas by introducing a systematic scoring device.

Although there were many investigators after Murray's (1938) explorations who explicitly used the metaphor of story (e.g., Mitchell, 1980; Wiggins, 1975; see also the review by Polkinghorne, 1988), the most conspicuous upsurge of the narrative approach was in the 1980s. Jerome Bruner (1986) and Theodore Sarbin (1986) are often mentioned as the main advocates. Bruner proposed that there are basically two modes of thought: *argumentation* (propositional thinking) and *storytelling* (narrative thinking). Each mode of thought provides a distinct means for ordering experience and has its own criteria for well formedness. Arguments are formulated to convince someone of their truth; stories are intended to convince someone of their lifelikeness. Whereas propositional thinking has a deductive quality, storytelling has an imaginative quality. The former refers to the ability to see possible formal connections before one is able to empirically prove them; the latter leads to believable drama and historical accounts. Whereas propositional thinking seeks to transcend the particular by reaching for higher and higher levels of abstraction, narrative thinking is concerned with the intentions of individual human beings and the particular consequences that mark their course. The narrative mode describes the (general) human condition in terms of the particulars of experience and attempts to locate experience in time and space (Bruner, 1986, p. 13). Because argumentation and storytelling work on different levels of abstraction, they also imply different kinds of inference. One leads to a search for universal truth conditions, the other to a search for particular connections between events.

Sarbin (1986), referring to Pepper's (1942) fertile work on "world hypothesis," considered the narrative approach as deriving from the root metaphor of contextualism. The central element in contextualism is the historical event that can only be understood when it is located in the context of *time* and *space*. Contextualism presupposes an ongoing texture of elaborated events, each influenced by collateral episodes and by a multiplicity of characters who engage in actions. Both in history and in story—the two main manifestations of contextualism—there is a constant change in the structure of situations and in positions occupied by the actors. There is a basic similarity between the historian and the novelist, in that the historical act and the narrative have approximately the same semantic structure. Sarbin argued that both the historian and the novelist are narrativists, although their emphases are different. The historian relates about presumably actual events, influenced by reconstructed people who have their intentions and purposes. The novelist, however, writes about fictional characters in a context of real-world settings. Fiction always makes use of concrete elements derived from observed reality and is, therefore, to be viewed as a new or unusual combination of realistic elements. Both historical and novelistic narratives make use of so-called "facts" *and* "fictions." Not surprisingly, *story* and *history* are etymologically related.

Both Sarbin (1986) and Bruner (1986) referred in their accounts of the narrative functioning of the human mind to the classic experiments of the Belgian psychologist Michotte (1946/1963). In these experiments, an apparatus was used that allowed an observer to see two or more small colored rectangles in motion. The speed, direction, and distance travelled by the figures were controlled by the experimenter. When confronted with particular configurations, the participants attributed causality to the movements of the rectangles. For example, if Rectangle A stopped after moving toward Rectangle B, and Rectangle B then began to move, the participants would say that B "got out of the way" of A. In these cases, participants typically reported their perceptions in "as if" terms. For example, "It is as if A's approach frightened B, and B ran away" or "It is as if A, in touching B, induced an electric current which set B going." From these and other observations, Sarbin (1986) concluded that the meaningless movements of the rectangles are assigned meaning and described in the idiom of the narrative. In a similar way, Bruner (1986) concluded from Michotte's (1946/1963) and other studies that participants organize events in space–time relationships in such a way that intention or *animacy* is implied. Participants see "searching," "goal seeking," and "persistence in overcoming obstacles" as intention-driven behaviors (Bruner, 1986, p. 18).

Recently, Vitz (1990) drew on divergent sources in the psychological literature to present arguments for the relevance of stories for moral development and moral education. He observed that contemporary approaches to moral development emphasize propositional thinking and verbal discussion of abstract moral dilemmas. In marked contrast to this position, Vitz proposed that narratives are a central factor in a person's moral development. In support of this position, he referred not only to

Bruner's (1986) and Sarbin's (1986) contributions but also to some other sources, one of them Tulving's (1983) work on human memory.

According to Tulving (1983), a great deal of the literature on memory can be conceptualized by distinguishing two types that are qualitatively distinct: semantic memory and episodic memory. Vitz (1990) argued that this distinction is very close to the distinction between propositional and narrative thought. *Semantic* memory is involved "with the knowledge of the world and is independent of a person's identity and past" (Tulving, 1983, p. 9); *episodic* memory, in contrast, consists of "the recording and subsequent retrieval of memories of personal happenings and doings" (p. 9). Some of the differences between the two types of memory are as follows: Semantic (propositional) memory is organized conceptually, episodic (narrative) memory in time; semantic memory refers to the universe, episodic memory to the self; semantic memory is verified by social agreement, episodic memory by personal belief; and semantic memory units consist of facts and concepts, episodic memory units of events and episodes. (For discussion and criticism of Vitz's view, see Day, 1991; for another account of the relationship between narrative and morality, see Tappan, 1989.)

Two developments are discussed in particular because they deal explicitly with the multifacetedness of the self from a narrative point of view. McAdams (1985a) considered the self as a set of contrasting imagoes (characters), and Gergen and Gergen (1988) dealt with self-narrative in terms of the coherence among different events.

Imagoes: Characters as Hot Cognitions

Several authors have emphasized the narrative structure of the self (e.g., Crites, 1986; Gergen & Gergen, 1988; Hermans, 1987, 1992a, 1992b; Hermans & Van Gilst, 1991; McAdams, 1985a, 1985b; Sarbin, 1986, 1989, 1990). McAdams (1985a) proposed to describe the self as composed of a number of affect-laden imagoes. The term *imago* is defined as "an idealized and personified image of self that functions as a main character in an adult's life story" (p. 116). To emphasize the integrative power of the narrative approach, McAdams drew on a number of divergent developments in psychology in support of the concept of imago. One of the arguments comes from the psychoanalytic object–relations approach to personality theory, represented in the writings of Klein (1948), Fairbairn (1952), Jacobson (1964), and Guntrip (1971). In this approach, the internalization of significant objects (e.g., the father and the mother) is considered a sine qua non of interpersonal relationships. Fairbairn, for example, described the ego as object seeking from birth: As the ego gains experience in interpersonal relationships, external objects are invariably internalized to become personified parts of the self. Once internalized, moreover, such objects have an organizing influence on these same relationships. The internalized objects often function as opposites. Fairbairn wrote of the conflict between internalized good (need-fulfilling) objects and bad (need-frustrating) objects. Another forerunner of McAdams's concept of the imago, Sullivan (1953), introduced *personification,* that also implies the internalization of oppositional objects. According to Sullivan, personified images of the self—such as the "good me" and the "bad me"—and personified images of others—such as the "good mother" and the "bad mother"—are organized together in the child's self-system. Such personified self-images then enable the child to construct and orchestrate interactions with the environment in such a way as to minimize anxiety.

McAdams (1985a) argued, moreover, for the integration of cognitive and narrative conceptions by proposing that imagoes also function as "hot" cognitions and as self-schemas. As the main characters in one's story, they are intricately associated with highly emotional issues and experiences. On the basis of a variety of forerunners, and in line with recent developments in cognitive psychology, McAdams argued that the self is composed of a multiplicity of more or less stabilized characters (imagoes) that are often arranged as dialectical opposites and structure the relationship the person has with other people and him- or herself.

Self-Narrative: Scripts as Social Constructions

In their conception of self-narrative, Gergen and Gergen (1988) saw time and "coherence among events" as the defining characteristics of narrative: "We shall employ the term self-narrative . . . to refer to the individual's account of the relationship among self-relevant events across time. In developing a self-narrative the individual attempts to establish coherent connections among life events" (p. 19). In accordance with their emphasis on the temporal dimension, Gergen and Gergen classified narratives according to their movement over time toward a desirable end state. In a *progressive* narrative, the individual organizes experiences in such a way that increments toward an end state are prevalent. An individual engaged in a progressive narrative might say, "I am really learning to overcome my shyness and be more open and friendly with people." A *regressive* narrative, by contrast, relates about decrements in the orientation toward a desirable end state. A typical expression could be "I can't control the events of my life anymore." Finally, events can be linked in such a way that there is no essential change with respect to the valued end point. In this case, a *stability* narrative could be expressed in a statement such as "I am still as attractive as I used to be."

Like McAdams (1985a), Gergen and Gergen (1988) explained the commonality with a number of preceding developments in cognitive psychology. Among them are the concepts of *script* (Schank & Abelson, 1977), *story schema* (Mandler, 1984), and *predictability tree* (M. H. Kelly & Keil, 1985), which have been used to account for the psychological basis for understanding sequences of actions across time. Gergen and Gergen emphasized that there are also differences with these developments: "In contrast to these accounts, we view self-narratives as *properties of social accounts or discourse.* Narratives are, in effect, *social constructions,* undergoing continuous alteration as interaction progresses . . . self-narratives function much as histories within society do more generally" (pp. 19–20, italics added).

Story Metaphor and Its Comparison With Actual Theories

A significant element of story is that it is always *told* (Hermans, 1992a; Hermans et al., 1992; P. J. Miller, Mintz, Hoogstra, Fung, & Potts, 1992). Story cannot be separated from the act of telling. When there is a teller of a story, there is always an actual or imaginal listener present who influences both what is told and the way it is told. Telling a story is telling-it-to-someone. In other words, the telling of a story is a dialogical process and in fact a coconstruction between teller and listener. To what extent do McAdams's (1985a) and the Gergens' (Gergen & Gergen, 1988) narrative conceptions meet this criterion?

Certainly, McAdams's (1985a) concept of imago, described as a character in an adult's life story, explicitly places the self in a narrative context. At the same time, McAdams clearly aligned his concept with recent cognitive approaches on the self, in particular with self-schemas: "As superordinate schemata guiding the processing of information about the self, imagoes specify characteristic action strategies or recurrent plans for behavior" (p. 124). In other words, although imago is explicitly placed in narrative psychology and uses the term *character,* it is described as a way of processing information about the self. The characters do not entertain dialogical relations with one another and do not tell a story about themselves. The same applies to the internalized objects (e.g., the good mother vs. the bad mother) in object relations theory, which McAdams considered a forerunner of his concept of imago. As Schwartz (1987) has observed, these internalized objects typically do not have relationships with one another of a dialogical kind. In other words, McAdams makes an important step by considering the self as a multiplicity of characters, but his characters are still unvoiced.

Similar remarks can be made concerning Gergen and Gergen's (1988) view. In the several descriptions they give, time and coherence are the main elements in their definition and, as far as discourse is mentioned, self-narratives are "properties" of discourse. Voice and dialogue, however, are not part of their treatment of self-narrative. This argument is strengthened when one looks at the five additionally mentioned properties that Gergen and Gergen considered to be especially important to the construction of narrative in contemporary Western culture: (a) the establishment of a valued end point (e.g., the protagonist's well-being), (b) selection of events relevant to the goal state (once a goal is established, it serves to select the kinds of events that are relevant in the account), (c) ordering of events (events are typically placed in an ordered arrangement), (d) establishing causal linkages (events are perceived as products of that which has preceded), and (e) demarcation signs (signals to indicate a beginning and ending of a story).

Apart from the fact that voice and dialogue are not part of this list, an additional, conceptual problem touches the question of what the self is. Is it a story or is it the teller of a story? If it is a story or a narrative, then it would be impossible to make a distinction between the *I* as a storyteller and the story told by the *I*. For example, how could I make a distinction between my dream and the fact that I am the person who is telling this dream? In Jamesian terminology, one should distinguish between the *I*, or self-as-subject, and *Me,* or self-as-object (M. Rosenberg, 1979). On the basis of this distinction, the storyteller can be considered the *I,* whereas the story or narrative figures as *Me.* Considering the self as a story (the object of telling) would reduce the self to the *Me* only. This, however, would be in contradiction to James's (1890/1902) view in which these two components are not only distinguished but also intrinsically related.

In conclusion, there is a notable conceptual convergence among developments in the fields of cognitive and narrative psychology (e.g., imagoes correspond with schemas, and self-narratives have some affinity with scripts). In both fields, the multifacetedness of the self is recognized (e.g., the self as a set of schemas in the cognitive domain and as a set of imagoes or a series of events in the narrative domain). In both cases, however, voice and dialogue are rather neglected. There is multifacetedness but no multivoicedness. This observation is in marked contrast to the computer and narrative metaphors, which both have the potential for a voiced conception of the self, as argued in the preceding analyses.

Although there has not been much attention paid to voice and dialogue in conceptual developments in self research until now, there are some recent research activities, both in the cognitive and in the narrative domain, that are clearly moving in a voiced direction. These activities, to be reviewed in the following sections, may be seen as significant steps toward a more explicit acknowledgment of the indispensable contribution of voice to the self. At the same time, these developments further solidify the common ground of the cognitive and the social domains.

Relational Conceptions in the Cognitive Domain: Steps in a Dialogical Direction

Recent developments into the direction of a voiced conception of the self can be found in the cognitive domain by referring to work on a private audience, relational schemas, and causal explanation.

Private Audience

Drawing on the work of early symbolic interactionists and recent impression management theorists, Baldwin and Holmes (1987) started from the assumption that a sense of self is experienced in relation to an audience: people who are present or imagined, specific or generalized, actual or fantasized. Baldwin and Holmes referred to the common observation that most people respond at different times to a range of different significant others, who often represent distinct ways of evaluating the self. Such an evaluating other was termed a *private audience* and could include such divergent figures as a spouse, best friend, religious leader, or business colleague. In one of Baldwin and Holmes's studies, a group of undergraduate women visualized the faces of either two acquaintances from campus or two older members of their own family. Later they read a sexually permissive piece of fiction. When they were afterward asked to rate the enjoyableness of the story, they tended to respond in ways that would be acceptable to their salient private audiences. That is, women who had thought of friends from campus reported liking the story more than those who thought of their (supposedly more moralistic) older family members. In a similar study (Baldwin, Carrell, & Lopez, 1990), psychology graduate students evaluated their own research ideas after exposures, below the level of consciousness, to slides of either the scowling, disapproving face of their professor or the approving face of a postdoctoral fellow. The students' evaluative ratings of their own research ideas tended to be lower following exposure to their professor's disapproving face than following exposure to the postdoctoral fellow's approving face. Presumably the self-evaluative process was guided by cognitive structures that were primed by the preceding perception of the expressive faces.

The influence of significant others in social perception was further emphasized in a study by Andersen and Cole (1990). They examined the proposition that significant others are mentally represented as well-organized person categories that can influence social perception even more than representations of nonsignificant others, stereotypes, or traits. Andersen and Cole found that significant other representations are richer (trigger more associations), more distinctive (have more unique features), and more cognitively accessible (time required for retrieval of features) than the other categories (nonsignificant others, stereotypes, and traits). Taken together, Baldwin and Holmes's (1987), Baldwin et al. (1990), and Andersen and Cole's (1990) studies suggest that significant others form rich, unique, and accessible internal representations that may function as a private audience that watches or listens to the person and responds to him or her with affect-laden evaluations. (For the influence of "imaginary audience" in adolescence, see Elkind & Bowen, 1979; Gray & Hudson, 1984.)

Relational Schemas

After extensive review of the literature on social cognition, Baldwin (1992) proposed the term *relational schema* as a summary term of recent developments in this research domain. A relational schema is a cognitive structure representing regularities in patterns of interpersonal relatedness. Relational schemas are seen as generalized representations of self–other relationships rather than as representations of self or others in isolation. A relational schema includes three elements: (a) an interpersonal script containing expectations about how an interaction will proceed; (b) a self-schema for how self is experienced in that interpersonal situation; and (c) a schema for the other person, including expectations about how the other reacts in that situation.

Baldwin (1992) explained that relational schemas can become rather complex if the interaction is carried out to multiple iterations of if–then sequences. He gave the example of a teenage boy borrowing the keys to his mother's car. The boy's goal is to borrow the car. He expects, moreover, that his mother's goal is to make sure that he and the car are returned safely. If she seems reluctant, he knows that the required behavior is to reassure his mother that he will act in a responsible way. So he verbalizes phrases that have been successful in the past, for example, "I'll drive carefully" and "I'll be home before 1:00!" If he proceeds this way, he expects that his mother will give him the keys. If not, he may engage in different routines, such as expressing his urgent need for transport, complaining about the unfairness of her behavior, and so on. Along these lines, multiple if–then sequences can be organized into a complete production system for guiding behavior (see also Anderson, 1983).

Multiple if–then sequences are particularly significant from a dialogical point of view. The boy's goal (borrowing the car) is not a purely individual concern because it can only be pursued by starting a process of negotiation with the mother. If the first if–then sequence does not work (the mother refuses), the next sequence is started. In this succession of if–then sequences, the response from the mother at the end of the first sequence functions as a question for the boy ("What shall I say now?"), which leads to the answer of his starting the next sequence. Considered in this way, the if–then sequences are not simply a temporally ordered succession of events; they are part of a process of question and answer between spatially and oppositionally organized positions.

The concept of relational schema is a flexible one because it can cover a large variety of possible interactions. It ranges from conventional social role interactions, such as doctor–patient or teacher–student interaction patterns studied by script researchers, to highly idiosyncratic nuclear scenes (see Tomkins, 1978). The advantage of idiosyncratic scripts is that they have probably the most profound effect on a person's sense of self and relationships with significant others (Baldwin, 1992).

From Causal Attribution to Causal Explanation

As Greenwald (1980) has demonstrated, attribution theory is a significant area of research for self psychology. However, Greenwald based his work largely on research in which attributions were approached as intrapsychic processes. More recent developments, however, move in a direction of taking attributions as interpersonal processes. Hilton (1990), for example, has observed that most theories of causal attribution are based on the "man-the-scientist" analogy. This model, because of its intrapsychic nature, does not concern itself with the interpersonal factors that might constrain attributions. Generally, who is doing the explaining, to whom the explanation is being given, or why an explanation is needed are not considered. In proposing causal explanations rather than causal attributions, Hilton argued that the verb *to explain* implies that someone explains something to someone and is in essence of a conversational nature. To be understandable and meaningful, a conversation, as a cooperative activity between two individuals, has to follow certain organizing principles. For example, the principle of *quantity* requires the speaker not to be more informative than required, the principle of *quality* prescribes the speaker to not say things that he or she knows to be false, and the principle of *relevance* requires the speaker not to say irrelevant things. With these principles, originally formulated by Grice (1975), Hilton demonstrated that the same question when posed by different persons can lead to different explanations. This is particularly true when persons are differently informed about a certain matter.

Hilton (1990) not only argued that explainers may give different answers to the same why question but also that people in different positions pose different questions. Questions posed in scientific research, for example, are often not relevant to the pragmatic, localized concerns of the layperson (see also Hart & Honoré, 1985). Scientists are interested in the question "Why do people die?" whereas the layperson is more concerned with that of "Why did this person die at this point and how?" In the case of a murder, the speaker is expected to explain the individuating features of the case (e.g., "his ex-lover shot him") and not the necessary conditions (e.g., "he stopped breathing, thus preventing oxygen flow to his brain").

Relational Conceptions in the Narrative Domain: Steps in a Dialogical Direction

Not only in the cognitive domain but also in the fields of narrative psychology and discourse analysis, some recent developments are clearly moving into a voiced conception of the self. The following issues are discussed: conarrated storytelling, interpersonal memory, and imaginal figures.

Conarrated Storytelling

In a research project with 2-year-old and 5-year-old children, P. J. Miller et al. (1992) studied how these children portrayed themselves in stories of personal experiences told jointly with family members. The children were observed at home and their naturally occurring talk, often in direct contact with family members, was recorded. A conarration of personal experience is an episode of talk involving utterances, addressed to an interlocutor (parent, grandparent, or sibling), describing a particular past event or a class of past events in which the child portrayed him- or herself as a protagonist. P. J. Miller et al. found that the 5-year-olds portrayed more of their personal experiences as interpersonal, made more references to peers and others outside the family, and expressed a slightly greater number of modes of self–other relations than the 2-year-olds.

For present purposes, it is important to note that P. J. Miller et al., (1992) drawing on work of Bauman (1986), made a distinction between two levels of storytelling. The first level coincides with the narrated event and addresses the following question: To what extent is the self portrayed in relation to others in the re-creation of a past event? The second level coincides with the event of narration: How do the conarrators contribute to the construction of an account of the self in relation to others? In other words, the children may talk about themselves as though they are with other persons in the past; at the same time, they are with other persons in the present (i.e., the very act of conarration). P. J. Miller et al. emphasized that this dual focus leads to an examination of not only how the children portray themselves but also how interlocutors portray the children.

In a related investigation, Haight and Miller (1992) studied the nature of early pretend play (e.g., animating a doll or renaming an object) by naturalistic, longitudinal observations of children who were tracked from ages 12 to 48 months. Mutual engagement was revealed: Mothers and children initiated and responded to pretending, and mothers often elaborated and prompted children's pretending. Moreover, children did not simply forget mothers' interventions but incorporated mothers' pretend talk into their subsequent pretend play.

Interpersonal Memory

Thorne and Klohnen (1993) referred to an Adlerian example to illustrate how the interpersonal character of memories can be analyzed: A man's first memory is that of being held in his mother's arms only to be summarily deposited on the ground so that she could pick up his younger brother. In his adult life, this man has persistent fears that others will be preferred to him, including extreme mistrust of significant others. Thorne and Klohnen then analyzed this example with Luborsky's (1990) core conflictual relationship theme method. This method uses narratives of relationship episodes as its basic unit. Such episodes are often part of anecdotes and other recollections occurring during psychotherapy as well as during everyday conversations. Each episode is characterized in terms of what the person wishes from the other person, the primary response of the other person with regard to the wish, and the following response of self. In the Adlerian example, the wish is to feel securely loved by the mother; the mother's response is rejection, and the boy's response in turn is mistrust. One of the advantages of this procedure is that memories are not studied as isolated events or groups of events to which some causal influence is attributed but as phases in a process in which the mutual influence of the interaction partners is incorporated.

Whereas Thorne and Klohnen (1993) analyzed interpersonal memory on the first level of storytelling—the level of the narrated event—Wertsch (1991) emphasized the importance of interpersonal storytelling on the second level—the level of narration. He gave the example of a 6-year-old girl whose toy is lost. Because she cannot find it, she asks her father for help. The father then helps her by asking her where she last saw it. When she cannot remember, he next asks if perhaps she has left it in her room, outside, or even in the car. At this last suggestion, the child brightens up. Together they go to the car, where they find the toy.

The question, posed by Wertsch (1991), is "Who did the remembering?" Was it the child, the father, neither, or both? The issue of ownership of memory is involved here. It can be assumed that each person is the owner of his or her memory. However, the example suggests that ownership is also jointly shared. It is not located in either the father or the child but developed in conversations taking place between the two. One can easily imagine that the child, after finding the toy, tells about this event to the mother. The joint memory is then transferred from the level of narration (with the father) to the level of a narrated event, where it becomes a past event. In this past event, however, the preceding interaction with the father is incorporated (see Sampson, 1993a, for a more extensive discussion of this example).

Recently, Sarbin (1995) made use of insights from narrative psychology to explicate the phenomenon of repressed memory. His reason was the claim by a number of writers that the psychiatric diagnosis of multiple personality disorder is associated with "repressed memories" that center on childhood abuse. This issue was of central significance in Loftus's (1993) review of literature on remembering. From this review, it could be concluded that the claim of authenticity of the uncovering of a long forgotten event cannot—without adequate corroboration—be sustained with sufficient confidence. A long forgotten event may have occurred, but because of the constructive nature of remembering, the remembered event could also have been a pseudomemory, that is, an imagining reported as a remembering. It was Sarbin's purpose to demonstrate that recovered memories reported by adults who initially rejected the idea that they were traumatized as children might better be labeled as *believed-in imaginings*. The essence of Sarbin's argument is that *rememberings* are formed in telling, and telling involves imagining. Sarbin assumed that all rememberings begin as imaginings. When credibility is assigned to imaginings, they are then called rememberings. Usually, credibility is conferred in a social context through interchange of communication (e.g., with a therapist). Sarbin's analysis again underlines the significance of the two levels of storytelling. The telling, retelling, uncovering, and remembering of past events are activities on the level of narration and express the (co)constructive nature of the self.

Role of Imaginal Figures

On the interface of fact and fiction, imaginal dialogues play an important part in adults' lives. Watkins (1986) observed that in most psychological theories imaginal phenomena are most often approached and judged from the perspective of the real. In these theories, it is self-evident that "reality" and "fact" have a clear ontological priority, and imaginal others are seen as a derivative of and subordinate to real others. Nevertheless, imaginal dialogues are always at work and influence one's daily life to a significant degree. They exist beside actual dialogues with real others, and interwoven with actual interactions, they constitute an essential part of one's narrative construction of the world. One rehearses discussions after meetings with colleagues and has imaginations about questions and answers in coming meetings. One is continuously in imaginal communication with one's critics, parents, conscience, gods, reflection in the mirror, the photograph of someone missed, a figure from a movie or dream, one's baby, or one's pet. As Fridlund (1991) observed, when being alone, the world is populated by interactants. One acts as if others are present by having imagined conversations with them. Even when others are not really present, one rehearses potential interactions and makes social emotional expressions.

Caughey (1984), an anthropologist, has studied the role of "imaginary social worlds" both in Western and non-Western cultures. He conducted fieldwork in Micronesia and Pakistan and compared these cultures with North American culture. He found that imaginal interactions are in no way restricted to non-Western cultures. He estimated that the real social world of most North Americans includes between 200 and 300 people (e.g., family, acquaintances, friends, and colleagues). In addition, a variety of imaginal figures inhabit their everyday world and can be divided into three groups: (a) media figures with whom the individual never had face-to-face contact, but with whom the individual nevertheless engages in imaginal interactions; (b) imaginal replicas of parents, friends, family members, or lovers who are treated as if they were really present; and (c) purely imaginary figures produced in dreams and fantasies.

Caughey (1984), similar to Watkins (1986), objected to the identification of "social relationships" as only actual social relationships. Caughey considered this conception, incomplete as it is, "an ethnocentric projection of certain narrow assumptions in Western science" (p. 17). He preferred to speak of an (imaginary) social world rather than a purely "inner" world to emphasize the interaction with somebody who is imaginatively present. From this perspective, the distinction between a private world and a public world is an artificial one because each world is populated with imaginal or real people.

As Watkins (1986) has explained, there is a clear difference between the multiplicity of characters in an individual's experience and the pathological state of multiple personality. In the latter case, there is no imaginal dialogue, only sequential monologue. At some moment in time, the person identifies with or is taken over by only one character, who dominates the self as a whole (see, e.g., Thigpen & Cleckley's [1954] famous case study of Eve White and Eve Black). As long as there are several characters in a multiple personality in the course of time, there is sequential monologue rather than simultaneous dialogue. Paradoxically, the illness of multiple personality is problematic because of its singleness of voice at any one moment, not because of its multiplicity. Improvement starts when self-reflection and dialogue among the selves begins to happen, when there is multiplicity in a single moment of time rather than multiplicity over time (see also Schreiber, 1973; Harré, 1991).

Voiced Self: Specificity and Implications

In the beginning of this article, it was my purpose to demonstrate that voicing—a central human capacity—is neglected in actual research and theory, both in information-processing and narrative approaches. This neglect is particularly noteworthy in view of the fact that metaphors used in the cognitive and narrative approaches certainly allow voice and dialogue to play a role in the study of self. Despite this discrepancy, it should be noted that both approaches have given a great deal of attention to the multiplicity or multifacetedness of the self. Conceived of as a compound of possible selves (schemas); desired and undesired selves; an organized set of actual, ideal, and ought selves; or a set of imagoes or series of events, a multiplicity was supposed that can be seen as an important prerequisite of multivoicedness. Without multiplicity, there can be no multivoicedness. Moreover, researchers within the two metaphorical traditions have dealt with the relationship between the different components of the self. For example, Higgins (1987) focused on the discrepancies between actual, ideal, and ought selves; McAdams (1985a) conceptualized imagoes as oppositionally arranged; and Gergen and Gergen (1988) emphasized the coherence among events. As a first characterization of the dialogical self, it can be stated that the main agreement between a voiced conception of the self and the developments previously described is in the multifacetedness; the difference, however, is that in the dialogical self the components are supposed to entertain voiced relationships with one another.

Despite the apparent gap between actual theories and metaphor, I next described a number of recent developments in both traditions that are moving in the direction of a voiced conception. These converging developments can be seen as important steps in filling this gap and thus may contribute to the extension of research in the two metaphors. However, what precisely does the dialogical self mean on the conceptual level? What are its distinctive features? In what ways does it differ from concepts already known? What questions can be asked that cannot be asked on the basis of existing concepts and theories? To address these questions, I compare the dialogical self with a concept that covers much recent work on social cognition, the concept of *relational schema.*

Relative Autonomy of Positions

Let me rephrase Baldwin's (1992) example of the boy borrowing the keys to his mother's car as a starting point. As a result of multiple if–then sequences, the mother finally gives the boy the keys. What happens, however, in the mind of the mother before she decides to do so? As a mother concerned with her son's welfare, she is hesitant and perhaps fearful to give the keys. At the same time, she takes the position of her son, who wants her to give him the keys so that he can have a fine day. The mother can imagine that her son needs the car so that he can do what he wants to do. So she vacillates between two positions: the fearful mother and the helpful mother. From the first position, she would say, "I am afraid that. . ."; from the second, "I can imagine that . . . ." After moving to and fro between the two positions, and after a process of negotiation between them, she finally decides to give her son the keys. A specific feature of the dialogical self is that both the positions are part of the mother's self. According to this view, the son's point of view is not only an external position—that is, outside the mother's self—but at the same time represented as an intrinsic part of the mother's self. The mother's self is, to borrow a term from Bruner (1990), "distributed" between two positions, and her decision is preceded by dialogical movements between them. The mother's second position ("I can imagine that . . .") is, during the course of multiple if–then sequences, continuously influenced and fed by the remarks from her son, on the one hand, and interrogated and even criticized by her first position ("I am afraid that. . ."), on the other hand. Her final decision is the result of an eventual agreement between two voices corresponding with the two positions in the mother's self. A similar analysis could be given for the son because he can only be effective in getting the keys when he effectively negotiates among two positions: "I want the keys" and "I can imagine that she. . . ."

The central element of a relational schema is an *interpersonal script,* "a cognitive structure representing a sequence of actions and events that defines a stereotyped relational pattern" (Baldwin, 1992, p. 468). The if–then sequences in the example of borrowing the keys nicely illustrates the stereotyped sequence. Both mother and son have similar experiences in the past when placed in the same or similar situations. The dialogical self covers stereotyped interactions, as demonstrated in the rephrasing of the example of borrowing the keys. At the same time, however, it moves beyond stereotyped interactions and, therefore, beyond the definitional boundaries of relational scripts. This can be illustrated with the following example, which brings one to the heart of the dialogical self.

An author submits a manuscript to a scientific journal and, as part of the review procedure, receives three helpful but critical comments, with the possibility to resubmit the manuscript. The author, who is eager to see the manuscript in print, is then confronted with a challenging situation that entails entirely new information and some new problems to resolve. The author can only solve the problems if he or she takes the positions of the reviewers into account in relation to his own position. That is, the author, on the one hand, has to move between the several reviewers to check them on consistencies and inconsistencies and, on the other hand, between the reviewers and his or her original position as represented by the old manuscript. In these movements, the author is imagining what the reviewers want to say, even between the lines, what their backgrounds are, and who they are. At first, all these positions may sound like a cacophony of voices, but after several rounds of intensive dialogical interchange, a new structure emerges. In the course of this process, the author may arrive at a point of juxtaposition, where the several views are simultaneously present, thus permitting overview and new, sometimes suddenly emerging relationships between the diversity of insights. A new structure emerges that may considerably differ from the original one. The final result may be a thoroughly revised manuscript, in which the information of all reviewers is incorporated. As a result of this interchange, the original position of the author, as materialized in the first manuscript, may be significantly altered. The new manuscript can be seen as the sediment of a process in which the original position of the author, the opposing positions of the reviewers, and the repositioning of the author are part of a highly open, dynamic, multivoiced self.

Note that in the above example, the reviewers are not simply the author's views of others with which his or her views of self interact. Rather, the reviewers are, in the form of positions, part of the author's self. This definitional extension of the self does not mean that the self is everything or everybody. When the same person receives, instead of reviews, advertisements recommending new cars, this person may be totally uninterested if he or she is not motivated to buy a car. In this case, the offerings fall outside the self and do not evoke the kind of negotiating work described in the case of the reviews.

The reviewer example brings one to an essential difference between a relational schema and the dialogical self. The different positions in the dialogical self may each have their own views, wishes, motives, feelings, and memories. A relational schema functions as a stabilized pattern of fixed elements (self-with-other). As a stabilized and fixed pattern, it is a residual of previous encounters. In a dialogical self, on the contrary, the elements (positions) function in a relatively autonomous way: They may agree and disagree, interrogate, criticize, and even ridicule one another. A position is like another person in the self, with his or her own voiced or voiceable perspective. This implies that each position is endowed with the agentlike qualities of the *I* and functions as an original center of organization in the self. (For an empirical study of people reporting different memories and contrasting valuations from the perspective of different positions from the same person, see Hermans, Rijks, & Kempen, 1993.)

Necessity of Innovation

The preceding discussion of the relatively autonomous character of the different positions leads to the inclusion of a closely related feature of the dialogical self, its openness to innovation. Because relational schemas are based on "repeated experiences with similar interactions" (Baldwin, 1992, p. 468) and because the two elements (self and other) are fixed as parts of a stable pattern, such a schema—as with all similarly defined schemas—has a conservative nature. There are two factors that make the dialogical self open to innovation. First, a new position, because of its relative autonomy, can bring in new information and knowledge different from the information and knowledge associated with already existing positions in the self. Under the influence of dialogical transactions, existing and established positions can, under conditions of low resistance, learn from recently introduced positions so that a process of repositioning starts. Second, positions are not to be understood as stabilized centers of knowledge but as perspectives that may, for a shorter or longer time, play a role in direct interchange with the social environment. That is, real others interacting with the person in the present situation, and reflected as positions in the self, may greatly influence the internal dynamics of the self from the outside. Nevertheless, the internal positions are not simply replicas of the real others because the process of positioning implies an active process of imagination, as demonstrated in the reviewer example. (For the role of imagination and innovative self-organization, see Schwalbe, 1991.)

Relational schemas function as relational repetitions and, as internalized structures, find their center in the past. As far as schemas are changed they are changed by external factors, given their lack of internal potential for self-change and self-renewal. The dialogical self is continually challenged or plagued by questions, disagreements, conflicts, and confrontations because other people are represented in the self in the form of voiced positions functioning as centers of initiative, each with their constructive potentials. More dynamically formulated, the self has the capacity of multiple positioning with the possibility of an emergence of new knowledge as a result of dialogical interchange.

Given the capacity of renewal and innovation, it makes sense, in correspondence with Harré and Van Langenhove (1991), to make use of the more dynamic terms *position* and *positioning* rather than the more static term *role.* The capacity of self-renewal and self-innovation allows the self to engage in an active process of positioning. The use of the verbs *positioning* and *repositioning* allows the dialogical self to take initiatives to position itself in new ways, as can be seen in the lives of artists, scientists, and people who renew themselves by breaking at times through the limits of custom and convention. (For extensive discussion on the issue of innovation in relation to Meadian theory, see Hermans & Kempen, 1993.)

The possibility of innovation can be exemplified by so-called *three-step procedures,* which demonstrate that by moving back and forth the active process of positioning may create new information.

Creation of New Information by Three-Step Procedures

As part of their discussion of dialogical relationships, Marková (1987) and Linell and Marková (1993) have argued that a truly dialogical model is not based on two steps (from A to B and from B to A) but on three steps:

Step 1: A to B
Step 2: B to A
Step 3: A to B.

This model implies that A in Step 3 is no longer the same as A in Step 1 but changes to some extent by the dialogical process itself. One can see this in conversations in which people permit themselves to be influenced by another's point of view. In the first step, A might say, "This is my view." In the second step, B responds, "I have another way of seeing it." In the third step, A modifies more or less his or her initial view, "Now I look at it in another way."

Drawing on Marková's (1987) model, Hermans and Kempen (1993) invited participants to enter in an imaginal dialogue with a person depicted on a painting. The picture was a copy of *Mercedes de Barcelona* (1930), a painting by the Dutch artist Pyke Koch (1901–1992). The painting depicts a middle-aged woman placed in a frontal position so that eye contact with the viewer is possible. The participants were invited to select one of their previously formulated *valuations* (narrative units of meaning referring to important experiences in the participant's past, present, or future). They were then asked to concentrate on the picture and imagine that the woman would respond to their personal valuation. After the woman had given an imaginal reaction to their valuation, participants were invited to respond to the woman from the perspective of the original valuation. This procedure involved three steps:

Step 1: Participant presents a valuation to the woman.
Step 2: Woman gives an imaginal response.
Step 3: Participant responds to the woman.

Significant individual differences were found in the extent to which participants were influenced by the preceding dialogical steps. Bob, a 50-year-old man who participated in this investigation after a 4-year period of depression, gave the following responses:

> Step 1—Bob: I always had to manage things on my own; didn't receive any attention, or affection; was superfluous at home; this has made me very uncertain.
> Step 2—Woman: This sounds very familiar to me: I've had the same experience.
> Step 3—Bob: I recognize the sadness in your eyes. (Hermans & Kempen, 1993, pp. 160–161)

Note that in Step 3 Bob does not seem to modify his original formulation in Step 1. Rather, he sticks to the feeling that he perceives in the woman (Step 2), which, in turn, resounds his original feeling (Step 1). This is quite different from the example of Frank, a 48-year-old man, who referred to his work as manager in a company:

> Step 1—Frank: I trust most people in advance; however, when this trust is violated, I start to think in a negative way; this can have harmful consequences.
> Step 2—Woman: You should keep your openness; however, your trust should become somewhat more reserved and take into account the topic involved.
> Step 3—Frank: You are right; I must pay attention to this; reservations in this will also help me to control my negative feelings. (Hermans & Kempen, 1993, pp. 160–161)

In contrast to the previous example, the woman, in the role of a wise advisor, presents a new viewpoint (Step 2) that is incorporated in Frank's final reaction (Step 3) in such a way that the original formulation (Step 1) has been further developed. The content of his answer in Step 3 involves not only a main element of the woman's response (reservation) but also a central element of his original valuation (negative thinking).

Frank's response to the woman incorporates elements from Steps 1 and 2 into Step 3 and thus constructs a valuation with a considerable innovative and synthesizing quality.

Self as Moving

The dialogical self is composed of voiced positions. Both *voice* and *position* are spatial terms. When a voice sounds, it is here in the speaker and simultaneously there where the sound arrives. Between the two places, a space is stretched. Echo, as a spatial resonance, can be considered the primordial origin of dialogue in music and is represented and developed as canon or fugue (Gregg, 1991). Voice assumes an embodied actor located in space together with other actors who are involved in coordinated or, in Fogel's (1993) terms, *coregulated* action.

The term *position* is also a spatial term. A position is always located in relation or in opposition to other positions and is thus suited as a relational concept that allows the relative autonomy of personal positioning. The terms *voice* and *position* can be metaphorically used to depict the dialogical self as an imaginal space that is stretched between a variety of positions. The self then is successively, or even simultaneously (see the reviewer example), located at different positions in an imaginal landscape and is able to move between these positions. In short, the self is a process of dialogical movements in an imaginal space.

What is the self as part of a relational schema? As previously explained, a relational schema consists of three elements: a self-schema, a schema for the other person, and an interpersonal script (Baldwin, 1992). In this model, the interpersonal script functions as the bridge between self and other. Without this bridge, the self would be an individualistic self, that is, the other outside the self. This conception of the self poses the question of how an individual self that is not relational by its nature can be made relational by an interpersonal script that is added to the self from the outside. Moreover, if three different schemas are at work, how do they function together in a coordinated way? Baldwin attempted to solve this problem by introducing the concept of *conjoint schematicity.* He supposed, "If a person is schematic on one element of a relational schema, he or she also should be schematic on the other two elements" (p. 473). In his view, research should then assess whether people hold corresponding self-schemas, other-schemas, or interpersonal scripts. This solution poses, however, an additional conceptual problem: How does the coordination between the different elements take place and which agency is doing this task? The dialogical self solves this problem by conceptualizing the self as relational and organizing instead of supposing an external coordinating schema or element.

Conceptualizing the self as a dynamic interplay among positions opens a range of possibilities for individual differences and differences between situations. Positions can be transient or more permanent (e.g., the relationship between author and reviewers is more transient than the relationship with a good friend). Positions may be more or less supported and established by institutional traditions (social roles like father, mother, or colleague are more supported than positions that are deviant in a particular group or community). Positions may differ in the influence that they have on one another (e.g., in a group discussion one participant may represent a more influential position in the self than another participant). Positions can be more or less imaginary (a figure in a dream as more imaginary than a deceased parent). Some positions enter the self with a higher frequency than others, even when there is no face-to-face contact (a child with problems entering more often into the self of a parent than a child that is doing well). Positions may vary on the positive–negative dimension, some of them being enjoyable, others annoying or even threatening. Finally, the degree of otherness among positions may vary (even when one disagrees with oneself in usual self-talk, the two positions may have a low degree of otherness, whereas in the imaginal opposition with an enemy, there is a strong feeling of otherness).

Research Implications

What are the implications of the voiced conception for research in the information-processing and narrative approaches? In what ways can these developments profit from a dialogical view? First, the increased interest in possible selves, potential selves, and desired and undesired selves has the important implication that these concepts have already stimulated research that goes beyond the stimulus pattern of the immediate situation. Researchers have become more aware of the temporal dimension of the self. When people are anxious about becoming the person they would like to be and afraid of becoming the person they do not want to be, there must be an image or conception in the past and the future. This means that the self in the past or future may be as significant as the here-and-now self.

Research may further profit from the inclusion of the spatial dimension, its implied dynamics, and voice. To what extent do actual, ought, ideal, and possible self components function in a dialogical way? How do they function when they are studied as part of ongoing intrapsychic and interpsychic processes? Is the ought self the same when the person is involved in an imaginal contact with a greatly respected older person in comparison with an actual contact with a group of young peers? When there are different ought selves, have they different memories and do they tell different self-narratives? To what extent do these narratives conflict with one another, and how is this conflict represented in the dynamics of positioning and repositioning?

Causality not only plays a role in the organization of knowledge approach (Greenwald, 1980) but also in the narrative approach (Bruner, 1986; Gergen & Gergen, 1988; Sarbin, 1986). From the perspective of a voiced dialogue, the question may be posed as to what extent people tell different life stories (e.g., in terms of progressive and regressive narratives) and give different causal explanations when placed in different social environments. In what ways are different social environments represented as different positions in the self, and how do these positions influence one another? From this perspective, a self-narrative is a form of communication (with oneself and others) that may show variations, varying emphases, and significant developments dependent on the actual communicative context in which the story is told and retold.

Research may profit from three-step procedures and their underlying thought. Take Higgins's (1987) discrepancy theory as an example. It is typical of research based on this theory that discrepancies among self components automatically and mechanically lead to an emotional outcome. It is the psychologist who measures the several domains and predicts the affective outcome on the basis of the observed discrepancies. When viewed from a three-step procedure or elaborations of it, the following question is posed: What does the person learn from actively interrelating different self-domains? After concentration on the actual self (Step 1), a person might ask the ideal self for a response, that is, the ideal self gives its specific view on properties of the actual self (Step 2), which in turn could lead to a modification of the original actual self. In this way, how people deal with such discrepancies and what they learn from it for their personal development can be studied.

Bruner's (1986) distinction between storytelling and argumentation can be theoretically translated in terms of two different self-systems that may influence one another in a dialogical fashion. For example, a person involved in a process of evaluating his or her own achievements may alternatively use story parts (e.g., "I was not very productive this year") and arguments (e.g., "Which criteria do I use in this judgment?" and "Why are these criteria better than others?"). The question may be raised as to what ways a particular story influences the argumentation used, and vice versa.

Along these lines, the important issue of innovation is raised. Under what conditions does an active process of positioning and repositioning lead to self-renewal? What are the characteristics of a facilitating social environment? In what ways does the self deal with environmental change, and in what ways are people able to change their environment on the basis of a reshuffling of existing positions? Such a procedure requires participants to go beyond merely answering questions pertaining to several self domains or components. The fact that participants are invited to move between different voiced components of the self, and to actively compare these components, requires them to play an active role as coworker or coinvestigator to the psychologist (Hermans, 1992a; Hermans & Bonarius, 1991; G. A. Kelly, 1955; Lamiell, 1991).

Research on the basis of such questions may not only extend insight into the nature of dialogical processes but may also contribute to the further extension and integration of the organization of knowledge and narrative approaches.

Perspectives of a Dialogical View

The dialogical view opens at least two perspectives that are rather neglected in contemporary research of the self: the significance of dominance or social power and the notion of collective voices. Recent developments suggest that these perspectives may have important implications for future theory and research in the organization of knowledge and narrative domains.

Dominance or Social Power

As long as the self is studied as a multiplicity of parts that are interrelated in mechanical ways or studied as part of a fixed interpersonal pattern, changes in dominance or social power among those parts fall outside the questions typically asked within these approaches. As argued earlier, a distinctive feature of the dialogical self is that it assumes a relative autonomy of voices. This autonomy opens the possibility that one of the voices may become dominant over the others so that the existing power structure of the system as a whole is challenged. A dynamic view on dominance is needed because dialogue is not only horizontally structured (moving from here to there, and vice versa, among communicating positions) but also vertically structured (moving from up to down, and vice versa, between power positions).

In a study of the interplay of participants' initiatives and responses, Linell (1990) discussed emergent patterns of symmetry versus asymmetry (or dominance) between voices. He holds that asymmetry exists in each individual act–response sequence. In usual conversations, speakers have a certain privilege in taking initiatives to display their views. However, in the ongoing reciprocity of the conversation, the actors continually alternate the roles of power holder and power subject. A well-ordered conversation requires that, in the process of turn-taking, one party is temporarily dominant over the other.

Moreover, asymmetrical relationships can be partly understood as reproductions of institutionally established provisions and constraints on communicative activities. In the communication between teacher and pupil in traditional education, between doctor and patient in a medical interview, and—even stronger—between interrogator and suspect in a cross-interrogation, there is certainly an alternation of question and answer. However, these forms are, in the context of institutional conventions and prescriptions, asymmetrical.

In his discussion of repressed memories, described in the interpersonal memory section, Sarbin (1995) emphasized that credibility of memories is conferred in a social context through interchange and communication. From this point of view, he discussed the problem of authenticity of uncovering a long-forgotten event (e.g., child abuse). In this context, Sarbin pointed to the notion of *Aesculapian authority* as attributed to the therapist by the client. In this notion, three forms of authority are combined—expert, moral, and charismatic authority—creating an asymmetrical power relationship in the therapy encounter. Aesculapian authority privileges the communications of the therapist over communications generated by others external to the therapeutic context. In situations in which some therapists regard the causal equation between childhood abuse and adult unhappiness as a fundamental postulate, the construct of repressed memories becomes an influential device under the condition of asymmetry of the therapeutic encounter.

As argued earlier, agreement and disagreement are, like question and answer, basic dialogical forms. It should immediately be added that both agreement and disagreement may result from asymmetrical relationships. At first sight, disagreement is more strongly associated with social power than is agreement. This view, however, would cloud the fact that participants of asymmetrical encounters may seemingly agree, if the dominant party is able to establish a position in the less dominant party, which derives its power from the authority attributed to the dominant party. Under such conditions, the less dominant person adheres to the memories, intentions, and goals associated with the new established position because the less dominant person wants to maintain the relationship with the power holder. When the same person, however, enters into contact with a different, evenly influential other, this may result in a repositioning with the implication that other memories and concerns may become more prevalent.

In a study in which personality traits were conceived of as "voiced characters," Hermans and Kempen (1993) performed a longitudinal study in which a female participant was invited to formulate valuations (units of meaning) referring to her past, present, and future. She did so from the perspective of two contrasting positions: "I as an open person," which was her usual position ("That's the way I am"), and "I as a closed person," which she considered a hidden side of herself. Some of the valuations from her former position centered around her mother (e.g., "My mother, open and cheerful, has always been like a friend to me") and were associated with much positive affect. The latter position, centering around her father, was less familiar to her and less accessible to people in her environment, and the valuations from this position were associated with much negative affect. The results showed that at the onset of the 3-week period of investigation, the valuations associated with her open position were rated as more dominant and more meaningful than the valuations from her closed position. In the course of the following weeks, however, in which she increased the contact with her father, the valuations from the closed position became not only more dominant but even more meaningful, despite their negative character. This phenomenon, called *dominance reversal,* demonstrates that a hidden or suppressed position can (without therapy) become, quite suddenly, more dominant than the position that corresponds with the trait the person considers as a prevalent and stable part of his or her personality. The phenomenon of dominance reversal corresponds with Hofstadter's (1986) voices, which are dormant, but still present, . . . that say opposite things (p. 790) and which may lead up to a "phase transition" (p. 791).

Significance of Collective Voices

In Bakhtin's (1929/1973) contribution to a sociocultural approach, an individual speaker is not simply talking as an individual, but in his or her utterances the voices of groups and institutions are heard (Wertsch, 1990, 1991). In Bakhtin's view, dialogical relations include, but also extend far beyond, face-to-face contact. He was also concerned with *social languages* (e.g., languages of particular groups) within a single national language (e.g., Russian or English) and among different national languages within the same culture. For Bakhtin, a social language is a type of discourse peculiar to a specific stratum of society (e.g., age group or professional group) at a given time. Within a single national language, there exists a multitude of social languages. Examples of social languages are social dialects, characteristic group behaviors, professional jargons, and languages of generations and age groups, of the authorities of various circles and passing fashions, and that serve the sociopolitical purposes of the day.

Bakhtin (1929/1973) held that speakers always speak in social languages when producing unique utterances, and thus social languages shape, beyond awareness, what the individual voices can say. This simultaneity of individual and collective utterances involves a specific kind of multivoicedness that Bakhtin termed *ventriloquation.* With this term, he characterized the process in which one voice speaks through another voice or voice type as found in social language. The term *multivoicedness* thus refers not only to the simultaneous existence of different individual voices but also to the simultaneous existence of the voice of an individual and the voice of a group.

Recently, Sampson (1993b) argued that there is a variety of collective movements—including women, gay men and lesbians, African Americans, and members of the Third World—who have been denied their own voice in establishing the conditions of their lives and in determining their identity and subjectivity. In talking about members of other groups, people typically use implicit standards that function as normal and reasonable reference systems rooted in the groups to which they themselves belong. To make these standards explicit, Sampson used the traditional figure–ground distinction as particularly useful to articulate the often implicit working of collective voices. He referred to Lutz's (1985, 1988) work in anthropology for an illustrative example. When the child-rearing practices of a particular culture are described as indulgent (figure), the observer implicitly uses some group's standard—usually the anthropologist's home culture—as the basis (ground) for this description. From a relational point of view, the statement about a culture's child-rearing practices is, at the same time, about the nonindulgence of European American children. In this view, indulgence is not a property the other culture possesses but a statement that is built on the comparison with an implicit standard. This example illustrates that the figure is usually seen, noticed, and described, whereas the ground remains hidden, implicit, and absent from view. A so-called objective property is, in fact, a comparative process made against an absent standard. Sampson's purpose was to demonstrate that collective movements (women, etc.) are typically judged and discussed on the basis of the implicit standards of the society's dominant groups. Psychology as a discipline, as far as it reflects the views of dominant groups in society as a whole, is also using implicit standards that may shape and give form to theories, concepts, and research activities in a self-evident way (Sampson, 1993b).

For my purposes, it is worth emphasizing that a dialogical view of the self has the promise that proper attention will be given to the simultaneous existence of individual and collective voices. This view poses the following question: To what extent do individual participants implicitly express (i.e., in their desired, undesired, ought, ideal, possible selves and self-narratives) viewpoints reflecting the voices of the specific groups to which they belong? The conception of the dialogical self assumes the existence of dominance relationships, both among several positions within one individual self and among the selves of different people.

Societal relationships, Sampson (1993b) argued, are governed by polar opposites, in such a way that *social dichotomies* are created (e.g., male vs. female or young vs. old). Within this dichotomy, the master term (e.g., *male* or *young*) is defined as possessing particular properties, whereas the opposite term (e.g., *woman* or *old*) is negatively defined. That is, the opposite becomes defined by the fact that it lacks the positively defined properties rather than being defined in its own right, with the consequence that it becomes devaluated. The concept of the dialogical self assumes in this case that both positions are part of the self as involved in actual societal interactions (see also Gregg, 1991). In this structure, the master term represents a socially and institutionally established position that is devaluating, suppressing, or even splitting off the opposite position. This structure reflects an asymmetrical dialogical relationship not only among positions between different people but also among positions within the individual self. (Note that this conception deviates in a number of respects from Sampson's view, which puts the other outside his theoretical definition of the self.)

In recent years, there has been a growing concern in psychology for the relationship between self and collectivity. In their introduction to a special issue of *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* on this subject, D. T. Miller and Prentice (1994) observed that for many decades the group was viewed as something external to the individual and centered around the following question: "How do individuals behave when in a group?" A countermovement emerged when researchers, typically those working on self-classification theory, started to ask, "How do groups behave within individuals?" (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). These researchers sought to demonstrate that the social categories with which people identify have a profound impact on their psychological functioning. D. T. Miller and Prentice observed, parallel to the relationship between self and group, a similar shift in the relationship between self and culture. Traditionally, culture was defined in terms of actions, rituals, and customs. Culture (like the group) was out there, perceived as something outside the self. More recently, anthropologists and cultural psychologists have been concerned with culture in more cognitive terms, as structures and processes in the self (e.g., Shweder & LeVine, 1984). With this shift, the boundary between self and culture, similar to the boundary between self and group, becomes blurred, and the study of self becomes a cooperative enterprise of psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists.

The distinction between individual and collective aspects of the self raises the question of how these aspects are related to one another. There is empirical evidence that they function as relatively autonomous parts of the self. Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, and Broadnax (1994), for example, demonstrated that people can experience collective self-esteem as distinct from personal self-esteem. In a similar vein, Prentice, Miller, and Lightdale (1994) showed that one's attachment to the group can be distinguished from one's attachment to the individual group members (individuals may have a stronger attachment to their groups than to its members). This relative autonomy between the personal and the collective parts of the self allows for the study of dialogical relations between them. People may, from a personal point of view, agree or disagree with the collectivities in which they participate (e.g., "As psychologists, *we* are used to saying . . ., but *I* think this is nonsensical because . . ."). From a dialogical perspective, one may be interested in the ways people question and criticize the collectivities (groups or culture) to which they belong. In a process of negotiation between personal and collective positions, new thoughts, stories, and ideals may emerge that return not only to the personal part of the self but also to the collectivity in which the self participates. In this way, the person and the collectivity to which he or she belongs are involved in a never-ending process of change and innovation.

Conclusion

The history of self psychology, an area of central importance in psychology as a whole, ranks highly in the amount and diversity of metaphors. Two metaphors, however, have led to work that has been particularly promising, both from a theoretical and empirical point of view: the information-processing and narrative approaches. The main thesis of this article is that the common ground of these approaches may be significantly extended when the dialogical possibilities, inherent in the two metaphors, are actualized in theory and research. This can be done by extending the cognitive multifaceted self toward the multivoiced self and by including in the narrative self not only the temporal dimension but also the spatial dimension. The result is a highly active process of positioning and repositioning, expressed in the dynamics of self-negotiations, self-oppositions, and self-integrations. This theoretical extension opens the gate to two research domains, which represent two neglected areas in the psychology of the self: the existence of dominant relationships between positions and the working of collective voices. Research in these areas is particularly needed because the intensifying communication in a multivoiced world society calls for an open, dynamic, dialogical self.

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