Dialogical Self Theory

Positioning and Counter-Positioning in a Globalizing Society

HUBERT HERMANS AND
AGNIESZKA HERMANS-KONOPKA

CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE www.cambridge.org/9780521765268

This page intentionally left blank

Dialogical Self Theory

Dialogical Self Theory provides a comprehensive social-scientific theory that incorporates the deep implications of the process of globalization, and its impact on individual development. Hubert Hermans and Agnieszka Hermans-Konopka present a new and compelling view of the historical changes in perceptions of social realities, and how these changes affected motivation, emotion, leadership, and conflict resolution. They detail the improvement of dialogical relationships both within the self and between individuals, groups, and cultures, providing evidence from everyday life. The book addresses a variety of problem areas that are analysed in new and unexpected ways: the pros and cons of traditional, modern, and post-modern models of self, the role of emotions, power and dominance, motivation, leadership, and conflict resolution. This book will be of interest to scholars in a wide range of fields including psychology and sociology.

HUBERT HERMANS is Emeritus Professor at the Radboud University of Nijmegen. His previous publications include *The Dialogical Self: Meaning in Movement* (1993), *Self-Narratives: The Construction of Meaning in Psychotherapy* (1995) and he was the co-editor of *The Dialogical Self in Psychotherapy* (2004).

AGNIESZKA HERMANS-KONOPKA is a scientist and practitioner in an independent practice near Nijmegen. Along with Hubert Hermans, she coaches individual clients and provides workshops and training on emotional coaching.

Dialogical Self Theory

Positioning and Counter-Positioning in a Globalizing Society

Hubert J. M. Hermans and
Agnieszka Hermans-Konopka

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521765268

First published in print format 2010

ISBN-13 978-0-511-71798-7 eBook (Adobe Reader)

ISBN-13 978-0-521-76526-8 Hardback

To our parents and grandparents
who meet each other in us

Education is a kind of continuing dialogue, and a dialogue assumes different points of view

Robert M. Hutchins

Contents

Illustrations

Acknowledgments

We want to thank several people who supported us in preparing this book.

Sunil Bhatia inspected Chapter 1 and made various suggestions that clarified the cultural implications of the presented view. Frank Richardson read Chapter 2 and his comments helped us to gain more insight in the historical dimensions of self and identity. Marie-Cécile Bertau contributed to Chapter 4 and her detailed remarks led to a more thorough investigation of the linguistic elements in dialogical self theory. Jaan Valsiner has given us valuable advice during the whole project. We thank Elisabeth Thijssen for her editorial remarks and improvement of the language.

Introduction

In a world society that is increasingly interconnected and intensely involved in historical changes, dialogical relationships are required not only *between* individuals, groups and cultures, but also *within* the self of one and the same individual. This central message of the present book is based on the observation that many of the social processes, like dialogue and fights for dominance, that can be observed in society at large also take place within the self as a "society of mind." The self is not considered as an entity in itself, as pre-given, with society as a facilitating or impeding environment, but rather as emerging from social, historical, and societal processes that transcend any individual–society dichotomy or separation.

The central notion of this book, the dialogical self, weaves two concepts, self and dialogue, together in such a way that a more profound understanding of the interconnection of self and society becomes possible. Usually, the concept of self refers to something "internal," something that happens within the mind of the individual person, while "dialogue" is typically associated with something "external," processes that take place between people who are involved in communication. The composite concept "dialogical self" goes beyond this dichotomy by bringing the external to the internal and, in reverse, to infuse the internal into the external. We will describe the self along these lines, in terms of a diversity of relationship between different "self-positions" and consider society as populated, stimulated, and renewed by individuals in development. We believe that the self–society interconnection allows one to abandon a conception in which the self is regarded as essentialized and encapsulated in itself. Moreover, it avoids the limitations of a "self-less society" that lacks the opportunity to profit from the richness and creativity that the individual human mind has to offer to the innovation of existing social practices.

Dialogical self theory is not an isolated development in the social sciences. It emerged at the interface of two traditions: American Pragmatism and Russian Dialogism. As a self theory it finds a source of inspiration

in James's (1890) and Mead's (1934) classic formulations on the workings of the self. As a dialogical theory, it elaborates on the fertile insights in dialogical processes proposed by Bakhtin (1929/1973). Although some of the basic views of these authors have significantly contributed to the development of dialogical self theory, we want to go beyond these authors by developing a theory that receives challenging impulses from the explicit awareness that we are part of significant historical changes on a global scale.

Self as extended in space: globalization and localization

A central assumption of the presented theory is that the self is extended in space and time (see also James, 1890; Rosenberg, 1979; and Aron *et al.*, 2005). From a *spatial* perspective, the self is increasingly part of a process of (cultural) globalization that has the potential to extend the self to a larger degree than ever in the history of humankind. Individuals are no longer living within the stabilized traditions of a demarcated local culture. Rather, different cultures, including their different traditions, values, and practices, are meeting each other in the life of one and the same individual. On the interface of different cultures, a self emerges with a complexity that reflects the contradictions, oppositions, encounters, and integrations that are part of the society at large and, at the same time, *answers* to these influences from its own agentic point of view.

Globalization is not to be considered as a "sea" that floods all areas of our planet with the same water. There is a powerful counter-force, localization, which can be seen as the other side of the same coin. Confronted with the process of globalization that transcends the borders of cities, regions, countries, and continents, people no longer experience their own culture as purely self-evident and "natural." Instead, they become explicitly aware of its specific values, the particularity of its history, and experience it as the "soil" in which they feel rooted and at home. They are willing to defend this home and even use violence in order to protect it. In this sense, globalization and localization are not mutually exclusive but complement each other. Moreover, when involved in the process of globalization, people get in touch, via international contacts and cooperation, travel and trans-locality, tourism, and mass media, with localities at the other end of the world. They are able to open and enrich their selves as part of these encounters or are involved in attempts to close themselves off from any intruding environment. In any case, globalization evokes and even includes localization as its counter-force. In order to articulate the deep interconnectedness of the global and the

local, Robertson (1995) proposed the composite term "glocalization" to emphasize that the global manifests itself in local forms. As we will argue, the processes of globalization and localization are reflected in the mini-society of the self in terms of global and local positions that can lead to identity confusion or lift the self up to a higher level of integration (for discussion, see Arnett, 2002 and Chapters 1 and 4 below).

In the context of the processes of globalization and localization, special attention is devoted to the experience of uncertainty. We will argue that this experience can be a gift as it opens a broad range of unexpected possibilities, but, particularly at high levels of intensity, it also leads to anxiety and insecurity. Given the central role of the experience of "uncertainty" in the present book and the different connotations with which the concept is often associated, a more detailed description is required. We see the experience of uncertainty as composed of four aspects: (i) *complexity*, referring to a great number of parts (of self and society) that have a variety of interconnections; (ii) *ambiguity*, referring to a suspension of clarity, as the meaning of one part is determined by the flux and variation of the other parts; (iii) *deficit knowledge*, referring to the absence of a super-ordinate knowledge structure that is able to resolve the contradictions between the parts; and (iv) *unpredictability*, implying a lack of control of future developments. We assume that the experience of uncertainty reflects a global situation of multi-voicedness (complexity) that does not allow a fixation of meaning (ambiguity), that has no super-ordinate voice for resolving contradictions and conflicting information (deficit knowledge), and that is to a large extent unpredictable.

The question is how the self copes with increasing levels of uncertainty in a globalizing situation. We describe five reactions: (i) uncertainty can be reduced by diminishing the number and heterogeneity of positions or voices in the self (e.g., retreating from the cacophony of contemporary life); (ii) it can be reduced by giving the lead to one powerful or important position or voice that is allowed to dominate the self as a whole (e.g., adhering to a political or spiritual leader); (iii) it can be minimized by sharpening the boundaries between oneself and the other, considering the other as different, strange, or even as "abject" (e.g., xenophobia or supporting extreme right-wing political parties); (iv) in a paradoxical way, uncertainty can be reduced by increasing instead of diminishing the number of positions or voices in the self, particularly when new positions are expected to offer rewards that earlier positions were not able to provide (e.g., searching for new and additional jobs, tasks, and challenges resulting in a cacophonous self); and (v) a dialogical reaction that copes with uncertainty by going into and through this uncertainty rather than avoiding it, in such a way that initial positions are influenced or

changed, marginally or essentially, by the encounter itself (e.g., meeting with another person, with a group, or with oneself in order to learn, develop, and create). Whereas the latter reaction aims at post-dialogical certainty, the former ones take refuge in pre-dialogical forms of certainty. Along these lines, we argue that uncertainty is not just a positive or negative feeling state, but rather an experiential feature of a self in action.

Self as extended in time: three models of the self in collective history

The self is not only extended in space but also in time. The self is seen as emerging not only from processes of globalization and localization but also from personal (Chapter 4) and collective history (Chapter 2). Spatial and temporal changes in society are reflected in the self as collective voices that are not simply outside the individual self but rather are constituting it. Three models of self and identity, associated with different historical phases, will be distinguished: traditional, modern, and post-modern. The *traditional self* is characterized by the following: a distinction between a lower and imperfect existence on earth and a higher and perfect existence in the after-world; the body and senses as a hindrance to spiritual life; the existence of a moral telos; social hierarchy; authority; dogmatic truths; and connection with the natural environment. The *modern self* is portrayed in terms of autonomy; individualism; the development of reason; the pretension to universal truth; and strict and sharp boundaries between an internally united self and an external other. Moreover, it is expressed in an attitude of control of the external environment, a separation of fact and value, science and faith, politics and religion, and theory from practice. The *post-modern self* is portrayed in terms of a profound scepticism of the universalistic pretensions of master-narratives with their emphasis on totality and unity. In opposition to the modern self, it highlights the importance of difference, otherness, local knowledge, and fragmentation. It tends towards dissolution of symbolic hierarchies with their fixed judgments of taste and value and prefers a blurring of the distinction between high and popular culture. It reflects a far-reaching decentralization of the subject and tendencies towards a consumer culture, and argues for the dependence of "truth" on language communities with an important role of social power behind definitions of what is true and not true, right and not right.

We will show in Chapter 2 that an analysis and comparison of the three models of the self will provide the building blocks for the conception of a dialogical self. In order to arrive at a dialogical view on the self, we start from the assumption that the different historical phases associated

with the different models are not purely successive but rather simultaneous, in the sense that the previous phase *continues* when the next phase is starting. The simultaneity of traditional and modern elements is exemplified by the coexistence of reason and the belief in destiny and fate, as typical of the contemporary self. The simultaneity of the modern and post-modern models of the self will be illustrated by the upsurge of ego-documents and the "democratization of history." The simultaneity of the different models results in a *spatialization* of the temporally ordered models creating interfaces in which more complex selves and identities with dialogical potentials emerge. Such a conception of the self recognizes not only the workings of decentralizing movements that lead to an increasing multiplicity of the self (see the post-modern model) but also of centralizing movements that permit an integration of the different parts of the self (see the modern model). The dialogical self is described as being involved in both decentralizing and centralizing movements. Along these lines a dialogical self is portrayed that functions as multivoiced, yet being coherent and open to contradictions, as well as substantial (see Abbey and Falmagne, 2008; Falmagne, 2004).

In the awareness that any evaluation of historical developments is risky as it may be colored by a contemporary perspective, we give an overview (Chapter 2) of what we see as assets and shadow sides of the different models of the self. For example, as assets of the pre-modern self we consider the connection with nature, the existence of community-based meaning and moral awareness, whereas the strong hierarchical order, the overly moralistic attitude, and restrictive religious dogmas are marked as shadow sides. As assets of the modern self, we refer to the emergence of personal autonomy and self-development that has liberated many people from the oppressive forces of the hierarchical structures and dogmatic truth pretensions of the traditional period. On the other hand, we see several shadow sides in the modern model: it has led to a self that is encapsulated within itself and is at risk of loneliness; it has resulted in a loss of the basic contact with the external environment and with nature; its typical dualism between self and other and its exaggerated attitude of control and exploitation has eroded the intimate ties of traditional community life and has threatened the ecological balance of the entire planet. As assets of the post-modern model we refer to several developments: the liberation of the self from its imprisonment within the walls of an intrinsically centralized and stable structure; the recognition of historical and social circumstances and the impact of history, language, social networks, globalization, and technology; the broadening of the role-repertoire of women beyond traditional constraints and the improvement of their participation in society; freedom and variation

beyond the masculine ideals and patriarchal social structures of modernism; more sensitivity and openness to the multiplicity and flexibility of the human mind, the perception of daily life from an aesthetic perspective, and more room for humor and play. The post-modern model, however, also has its shadow sides: the relativistic stance leading to an "anything goes" attitude; the lack of an epistemological basis for a meaningful dialogue between groups or cultures; pessimism and lack of hope; persistent doubts about progress; a one-sided focus on change, flux, and discontinuity resulting in a lack of rootedness or feeling at home; and the flattening of experience resulting from an increasing consumerism, as the "easiest road to happiness." On the basis of a comparison of the three models of the self – traditional, modern, and post-modern – we sketch a fourth model, a dialogical one, that is the result of a *learning process* that takes into account both the assets and shadow sides of the other models.

The extension of the self in space and time forms the basis of dialogical self theory. It would be a misunderstanding to conceive the self as an essence in itself and its extensions as secondary or "added" characteristics. In contrast, the dialogical self is formed and constituted by its extensions.

Dialogue refers not only to productive exchanges between the voices of individuals but also between collective voices of the groups, communities, and cultures to which the individual person belongs. Collective voices speak through the mouth of the individual person (e.g., "I as a psychologist," "I as a member of a political party," or "I as a representative of an ecological movement"). Dialogues not only take place between different people but, closely intertwined with them, they also take place between different positions or voices in the self (e.g., "I'm a smoker but I'm also concerned about my health, therefore I make the agreement with myself to …"). Dialogue, moreover, assumes the emergence or creation of a "dialogical space" in which existing positions are further developed and new and commonly constructed positions have a chance to emerge. Dialogue implies addressivity and responsiveness in human interchanges, but it is more than that. It implies a learning process that confirms, innovates, or further develops existing positions on the basis of the preceding exchange. As a learning process it has the capacity to move the self to higher levels of awareness and integration. As such, it is more specific than the broader concept of "communication." Dialogue is one of the most precious instruments of the human mind and is valuable enough to be stimulated and developed, particularly in situations where learning is hampered by monological communication. At the same time, we believe that a profound insight into dialogue and knowledge about its

potentials can only be achieved when we recognize its constraints. There are situations where there is no dialogue or where it is not possible (e.g. in situations with large power differences between the participants) or even not required (e.g., a general who has to take a quick decision in wartime). The crucial question is not: Is the person dialogical or not? But rather: When and under which conditions is dialogue possible and can it be fostered.[1]

The dialogical self has to be distinguished from "inner speech," usually described as the activity of "silently talking to oneself" and emerging in the literature in the form of equivalent concepts such as "self-talk" or "self-verbalizations" and related concepts such as "private speech" or "egocentric speech" (for review, see Morin, 2005). The dialogical self is different from inner speech in at least four respects: (i) it is explicitly multi-voiced rather than mono-voiced and is engaged in interchanges between voices from different social or cultural origins; (ii) voices are not only "private" but also "collective," and as such they talk through the mouth of the individual speaker; (iii) the dialogical self is not based on any dualism between self and other: the other (individual or group) is not outside the self but conceptually included in the self; the other is an intrinsic part of a self that is extended to its social environment; (iv) the self is not only verbal but also non-verbal: there are embodied precursors of dialogue before the child is able to verbalize or use any language.[2]

The process of positioning as basic to dialogical self theory

One of the basic tenets of dialogical self theory is that people are continuously involved in a process of positioning and repositioning, not only in relation to other people but also in relation to themselves. This tenet is elaborated in Chapter 3, which leads us to the heart of dialogical self theory. Inspired by the three models of the self, traditional, modern, and post-modern, we focus on some of the main concepts of the theory. Referring to the notion of "difference," central in the post-modern model, we deal with multiplicity and differences in the self, showing that actions that take place between people (e.g., conflicts, criticisms, making agreements, and consultations) occur also within the self (e.g., self-conflicts, self-criticism, self-agreements, and self-consultations), illustrating how the self works as a society of mind.

Given the basic assumption of the extended self, we argue that the other is not outside the self but rather an intrinsic part of it. There is not only the actual other outside the self, but also the imagined other who is entrenched as the other-in-the-self. This implies that basic

processes, such as self-conflicts, self-criticism, self-agreements, and self-consultancy, are taking place in different domains in the self: within the *internal* domain (e.g., "As an enjoyer of life I disagree with myself as an ambitious worker"); between the *internal and external* (extended) domain (e.g., "I want to do this but the voice of my mother in myself criticizes me"); and within the *external* domain (e.g., "The way my parents were interacting with each other has shaped the way I deal with problems in my contact with my husband"). As these examples show, there is not a sharp separation between the internal life of the self and the "outside" world, but rather a gradual transition. This, however, contrasts clearly with the phenomenon known in the literature as "othering" that is characterized by a sharp demarcation between self and other. Surprisingly, the transition between self and other is gradual in some situations, but sharp in other ones. This leads to the conclusion that the dimension open–closed is crucial for permitting dialogical relationships.

On the basis of the philosophical literature, we argue that the mind does not simply coincide with itself, but rather *needs itself* in order to arrive at some clarity about itself and the world. In order to find meaningful answers in uncertain situations the person has to interrogate himself in order to find the proper direction. The mind is involved in a series of proposals and disposals to itself that reflects the basic "imperfection of the mind," that is, the mind is a question to itself that cannot immediately be answered or a problem to itself that cannot immediately be resolved. This imperfection, which leaves room for the darker realms of the self (populated by "shadow" or "disowned" positions), strongly contrasts with the clarity and transparent unity of the modern Cartesian conception of the self. The metaphorical movements from one position to another in the landscape of the self are ways of gaining understanding about the self in relation to the world.

The verb "positioning" is a spatial term. It refers to the process in which the self is necessarily involved when part of a world in which people *place* each other and themselves in terms of "here" and "there." When a person positions herself "somewhere," there are always, explicitly or implicitly, other positions involved that are located in the outer space around us or in the inner metaphorical space of the self. In this sense, I position myself as agreeing or disagreeing, as loving or hating, or as being close or opposed to another or to myself. An important theoretical advantage of the term positioning is that it can be used not only as an active but also as a passive verb. From birth onward we are *positioned* by our social environment (e.g., as boy or girl, as black or white, as belonging to a majority or minority) and much of our active positioning can be seen as a monological or dialogical answer to these influences. We get engaged in

dialogues or monologues when such positions become voiced positions that are heard or not heard, answered or not answered, and receiving space for expression or not.

In the dialogical self both multiplicity, (in the line of the post-modern model of the self) and unity (in the line of the modern model) are central concepts. Therefore, it is our concern to make the notion of unity and continuity fit with a conception of a self that acknowledges the existence of difference, multiplicity, contradiction, and discontinuity. With this purpose in mind, we introduce several concepts that are discussed with reference to the considerations of unity and multiplicity: *I-position*, *meta-position*, *coalition of positions*, *third position*, *composition*, and the process of *depositioning*. Together, these concepts elaborate on the tenet that the process of positioning is basic to understanding the workings of the dialogical self as a spatio-temporal process. Moreover, they give access to the study of a rich diversity of phenomena that can be explored in their interconnection.

In the notion of *I-position*, multiplicity and unity are combined in one and the same composite term. Unity and continuity are expressed by attributing an "I," "me," or "mine" imprint to different and even contradictory positions in the self, indicating that these positions are felt as belonging to the self in the extended sense of the term (e.g., "I as ambitious," "I as anxious," "my father as an optimist," "my beloved children," and even "my irritating colleagues"). As differentially positioned in time and space, the self functions as a multiplicity. However, as "appropriated" to one and the same *I*, *me* or *mine,* unity and continuity are created in the midst of multiplicity.

Another concept that leaves room both for multiplicity and unity is the *meta-position*: the *I* is able to leave a specific position and even a variety of positions and observe them from the outside, as an act of self-reflection. The advantage of taking a meta-position, alone or together with others, is that the self attains an overview from which different, more specialized positions can be considered in their interconnections so that "bridges of meaning" can emerge and well-thought-out plans can be executed. We will discuss the main features of meta-positioning as an observing or meta-cognitive activity.

Unity and multiplicity are also combined in a *coalition of positions*: positions do not work in isolation, but, as in a society, they can cooperate and support each other, leading to "conglomerations" in the self that may dominate other positions. For example, a conflict between "I as ambitious" and "I as enjoyer" can influence the self for some time in negative ways. However, when "I as ambitious" learns to cooperate with "I as exploring something new," a reorganization of the self can be achieved

with more coherence between the original positions of "ambitious" and "enjoyer" as a result.

Finally, when there is a conflict between two positions in the self, this can be reconciled by the creation of a *third position* that has the potential of unifying the two original ones without denying or removing their differences (unity-in-multiplicity). In order to examine the societal importance of the development of third positions, we will discuss several examples: the case of a lesbian woman in Catholic Brazil, Roman Polanski's film *The Pianist*, and the case of Griffin, a white man who lived for some time with a black identity.

In the context of artistic considerations, we will discuss the concept of *composition*, where the emphasis is on positions in the self as part of a pattern. This concept will be illustrated by an analysis of the mescaline experience depicted in Aldous Huxley's book *The doors of perception*, and the prominence of patterns in Cézanne's paintings. In this context, we also explore the similarity between Rollo May's treatise of creativity and Martin Buber's exploration of *I–You* relationships.

Inspired by the experience of a "meaningfully ordered cosmos," central in the traditional model of the self, we will deal with the possibility of the *I* as becoming involved in a process of *depositioning*. This notion emerges from the insight that the farther-reaching experiences of the human mind are not so much *in* the self-positions but rather *between* them, giving the self access to a wider field of awareness. We will discuss three forms of experience in which the *I* becomes depositioned: (i) a unifying form of awareness where the *I* is able to identify itself with a great variety of positions, at the same time being detached from them; (ii) a "dualistic" form of awareness where the *I* is strongly detached from specific positions, while remaining conscious of their existence (however, not identifying with them as in the unifying awareness); and (iii) a form of awareness that is characterized by an absence of any sensory experience, yet offering an experience of "union." In all these forms of awareness, silence, not in the sense of absence of words but rather as a "speaking silence" and "being fully present," is a constitutive part of the experience. They illustrate that there are experiences in which dialogue evolves not as successive turn-taking but as simultaneous presence.

Inspired by the moral nature of the traditional self, we will examine the main features of "good dialogue," as a desirable societal and developmental enterprise. Nine features were outlined: good dialogue, as a learning experience, *innovates* the self; it has a certain *bandwidth* referring to the range of positions allowed to enter the dialogue; it acknowledges the unavoidable role of *misunderstandings*; it develops in a *dialogical space*; it recognizes and incorporates the *alterity* not only of

the other person but also of other positions in the self; it recognizes the importance of societal *power* differences as reflected in the relative dominance of positions in the self; it recognizes the existence of different "*speech genres*" and their role in misunderstanding and deception; it can be deepened by the participation in a broader *field of awareness*; and it profits from "*speaking silence*." We consider these features of good dialogue as relevant to learning processes in a society in which individuals and groups are confronted with differences, not only between each other but also increasingly within themselves.

Altogether, the concept of positioning, and its variations such as "repositioning," "*I*-position," "meta-position," "third position," "coalition of positions," "composition," and "depositioning" allow us to stretch the theory into different directions so that phenomena that are usually treated in their separate qualities can be brought together in a more comprehensive theoretical framework. The advantage of such a bridging framework is that it brings insights, meanings, and experiences, back and forth, so that the description or analysis of one phenomenon can profit from the other ones.

What is known in the literature as "positioning theory" has some significant similarities with the present dialogical theory. Positioning theory is often contrasted with the older framework of role theory. Whereas roles are relatively fixed, long-lasting and formally defined, positioning theory is interested in conventions of speech and action that are unstable, contestable, and ephemeral (Harré, 2004; Harré and van Langenhove, 1991). Dialogical self theory is also sensitive to the dynamic qualities of the process of positioning and repositioning.[3] There is, however, an important difference. More than conventional positioning theory, dialogical self theory is focused on the self as an agentic and original source of meaning production (see also Raggatt, 2007). Like positioning theory, dialogical self theory is interested in the role of language, social conventions, collective history, and linguistic communities. However, while positioning theory is focused on the processes that take place between people, dialogical self theory aims at a profound exploration of the experiential richness and emotional qualities of the self in close connection with inter-subjective processes. Therefore, we present a special analysis of emotions as expressions of an embodied self (Chapter 5) and elaborate on a developmental view (Chapter 4) that explains how dialogues *between* parents and children develop into dialogues *within* the self and how these within-dialogues then contribute to the between-dialogues from an original point of view. Moreover, the developmental approach enables us to investigate the embodied nature of the process of positioning as preceding the use of language by the child.

The developmental origins of the dialogical self

In order to understand the workings of the dialogical self, it is necessary to gain insight into its developmental origin. We will describe in Chapter 4 some phenomena that can be considered as precursors or early manifestations of the dialogical self, such as tongue protrusion, imitation and provocation, imagination, memory, pseudo-dialogues in early mother–infant relationships and the acts of giving and taking in the first year of life as non-verbal or pre-verbal manifestations of dialogue. A decisive moment in development is when joint attention, at the end of the first year of life, allows the child to perceive objects from the perspective of another person. The development of joint attention makes it possible for parents or caretakers to point to the child herself as a common focus of attention, so that the child learns to regard herself from a common reference point. We will show that self-reflection and self-knowledge take place, from the beginning, in indirect ways (via the other) rather than in direct ways. Role-playing further expands the capacity of the child to introduce new positions in the self.

Building on Mead's well-known distinction between play and game, we will discuss the notion of the generalized other. We argue that this notion is based on a homogeneous society metaphor but that it is less relevant to understand the uncertainties typical of a globalizing world where different social rules meet on the interface of different (sub)cultures. The differences and contrasts between social rules can rather be understood as associated with collective voices that meet and confront each other as parts of a complex and interconnected world society.

Relevant to the spatial aspects of the dialogical self is the emergence of a personal space as an invisible, dynamic, and transportable space in the first year of life. Typical of a personal space are semi-permeable self–other boundaries indicating the relevance of the dimension open–closed to the notion of dialogue from a developmental point of view. In the line of the discussion of a larger "field of awareness" as discussed in Chapter 3, we describe some transcendental experiences in childhood, which are characterized not so much by a disappearance of self–other boundaries but rather by their increased openness and permeability.

Given the assumption that the dialogical self is basically embodied, we describe the development of the body and its corresponding movements (e.g. rolling over, crawling, standing, and walking) as leading to important turning points in the way the world is perceived. This leads to a discussion of the metaphorical implications of the body and its movements for the emergence of self-positions. Special emphasis is given to two main dimensions of the body, each with their polar opposites: the

vertical dimension (up versus down, or top-dog versus underdog) and the horizontal dimension (here versus there, or close versus distant). In this line, we explore the connection between the body and the social and, moreover, between the social and the personal.

For the development of the dialogical self, both in childhood and adulthood, the concept of "promoter position" is crucial. Such a position is distinctive by its relevance to the future development of the self, by its potential to produce a diverse range of more specialized positions and by its power to integrate and synthesize positions. In order to illustrate the influence of promoter positions in the development of the self, we discuss two very different examples: the emergence of the position "I as acceptant" in the course of a psychotherapeutic process and, from a cultural-anthropological point of view, the phenomenon of "shape-shifting," which refers to the process of identification with a totem animal. We will analyze the similarities between these two seemingly divergent examples from the perspective of dialogical self theory.

Given the field of tension between multiplicity and unity of the self, a model will be presented in which different developmental movements are detailed: "progressive movements" that stimulate the self to a higher level of integration, and "regressive movements" that bring the self to a lower level of integration. In this context, the concept of "positive disintegration" will be introduced, referring to the existence of crisis as a possibility of progressive or regressive movements of the self. For making progressive movements, the integrative power of promoter positions will be emphasized because they have the potential to compensate for the disorganizing influence resulting from the change or even loss of core positions in the self.

The presented developmental view gives room for the distinction between two kinds of *conflict*, labeled as "uni-level" and "multi-level" conflict. The former kind of conflict is most familiar both in everyday life and in the social sciences. It is a conflict between two positions at the *same* level of integration. For example, an employer has to take a decision that affects the life of a friend in a negative way, leading to a conflict between the positions "I as employer" and "I as friend." In a multi-level conflict, a position located on one level is in conflict with a position on *another* level. This occurs when a particular position is more developed than another one, while the less-developed "lower" position is interfering with the more developed "higher" one. For example, a position such as "ambitious" or "competitive" that was helpful when a person was young and building up a career, loses its relevance when the person becomes older and is developing his more cooperative side. However, his ambitious position is still active, although it has lost its function in his new developmental period.

We see "multi-level conflicts" as particularly relevant to the process of globalization. When the developmental trajectories of self-positions emerging from different cultural backgrounds are different in their speed, direction, or flexibility, one cultural position can be experienced as progressive while another one is felt as regressive, resulting in a multi-level conflict. Promoter positions are then needed to transform a multi-level conflict into a form of integration so that the self is able to cope with serious conflicts.

A dialogical view of emotions

Emotions are of direct relevance to the functioning of the dialogical self because some emotions (e.g. persistent anger) work as obstacles to dialogical relationships, whereas other emotions (e.g. love) are able to facilitate such relationships. In reverse, dialogue has the potential to change emotions (e.g. a good dialogue can create a dialogical space in which anxiety or anger is reduced). Given the rather complex interconnection between self and emotions, we start in Chapter 5 from the assumption that the relationship between self and emotion is bi-directional: emotions have an impact on the self and the self, for its part, is able to influence and change emotions. This bi-directional influence is confirmed by neurological evidence that deals with the relationship between self and emotion. As LeDoux (2002) has argued, there are two paths for producing an emotion in the brain, a lower and a higher one. The low circuit is involved when the amygdala, a part of the limbic system involved in the processing of emotions, senses danger and produces an emergency signal to the brain and the body. The high circuit, which is considerably slower than the low road, becomes involved when the danger signal is carried from the lower parts of the brain to the neocortex. Because the lower path transmits signals more than twice as fast as the higher circuit, the self-conscious brain is not well able to intervene and stop the emotional response in time. One is jumping back from a figure suddenly appearing in the dark before one has a chance to correct oneself. In some situations it is most adaptive to respond rapidly (e.g., in situations of danger), while in other situations it is more adaptive to reflect on one's emotions and dialogue with oneself before acting (e.g., taking the intentions of the other into account). As representatives of psychotherapeutic approaches have argued, it is important to make use of the higher but slower road in the brain as an attempt to transform particular maladaptive responses into adaptive ones (Greenberg, 2002).

As phenomena that have immediate implications for the functioning of the self, we conceptualize emotions as temporary self-positions. This has the apparent advantage that emotions can be studied as interactional

and dialogical phenomena that are influenced by counter-emotions. Two developments in the literature of emotions are particularly important from a dialogical point of view. One is a distinction proposed by Lambie and Marcel (2002), between "first-order phenomenology" in which emotional experiences have a "truth pretension" (e.g. "He *is* a bastard"), and "second-order awareness" that involves a reflexive awareness of the emotion ("I'm aware that I'm angry"). We will argue that second-order awareness is a necessity for the dialogical processing of emotions. Another distinction relevant to the accessibility of emotions is between "primary" and "secondary" emotions (Greenberg, 2002). Primary emotions are first responses to a stimulus situation (e.g. anger at violation or fear at threat). Secondary emotions are responses to or defenses against primary emotions (e.g. anger as a reaction to sadness or anxiety) and they obscure what people experience on a deeper affective level. For developing dialogical relationships it is required that primary emotions are accessible to the self so that they are liberated from covering or obscuring secondary emotions.

The existence of a multiplicity of transient emotions in the self evokes the question of what is emotional authenticity from a dialogical point of view. We acknowledge the general consideration that authenticity implies access to one's self and emotions and the ability to act on that, but propose a wider conception of this phenomenon. From a dialogical point of view, authenticity is achieved when the person takes into account not only their own emotions but also the emotions of the other-in-the-self and the actual other, with attention to the learning processes that are connected with them.

In Chapter 5 we address, moreover, three emotions that we consider as particularly significant to different models of the self: (i) self-esteem emotions as typical of the modern model; (ii) enjoyment as relevant to the post-modern model; and (iii) gratitude as one of the emotions characteristic of the traditional model. In our discussion of self-esteem emotions, we consider the costs of a persistent pursuit of self-esteem, as typical of the modern model with its bias of self-sovereignty and independence. By way of contrast to the strong emphasis of esteem in the Western literature, we discuss the less familiar Korean phenomenon of *Shimcheong* that celebrates we-ness in human relationships. The difference between *Shimcheong* and the Western concept of emotional intelligence will be highlighted.

In line with the post-modern model of the self, we will discuss the experience of enjoyment against the background of increasing consumerism and its implications in contemporary society. This discussion leads to the distinction between short-term enjoyment as typical of consumerism,

and enjoyment with long-term implications as typical of experiences that reach the deeper regions of the self.

With the traditional model of the self in mind, we consider the emotion of gratitude and summarize the results of an investigation that shows that words relevant to individualism and consumerism (e.g., "purchase" or "want more") have increased in recent decades, while words referring to solidarity or gratitude decreased in the same period.

A dialogical view of emotions requires a treatment of love. We discuss this emotion in the sense of "deep love" or "dialogical love" and argue that it can properly be understood only when one realizes that love is not only oriented to the other as a separate person but also to the extensions of the self of the other. In other words, deep love is an "extension of an extension." In spatial terms, love is described as a movement in two directions at the same time: to the inner parts of the self and to the actual, imagined, or remembered other. As a dialogical emotion in the life of a person, love can be qualified as a *relationship* of the self with the self of the other in its extensions. In this context we consider the difference between self-love and love of the other.

In order to explore the methodological implications of the presented view of emotions, we propose a stage model devised for the articulation, clarification and change of emotions. The model consists of seven phases: (i) identifying and entering an emotion; (ii) leaving the emotion; (iii) identifying and entering a counter-emotion; (iv) leaving the counter-emotion; (v) developing dialogical relations between emotions; (vi) creating a composition of emotions; and (vii) developing a promoter position in the context of the emotions. The stage model will be illustrated by an actual case. In order to place the model in the broader context of the present book, the interpersonal and cultural implications of the model will be highlighted in the context of the process of globalization.

On the interface of theory and practice

Inspired by American pragmatism we are interested in the practical implications of the presented theory. As clarifying examples, we explore in Chapter 6 three topics: the culture of organizations with proper attention to leadership, the issue of motivation, and the problem of social conflict resolution.

Contemporary organizations are becoming increasingly international, intercultural, and inter-local and, as a result, they become increasingly populated by people with multi-voiced selves and identities. Like container views of self and identity, container views of the culture of organizations are becoming increasingly obsolete in an interconnected world

society. Organizations are becoming more complex and *extended*, as exemplified by the widely used notion of "stakeholder." This term refers to individuals and groups that have direct interest in what is going on in the organization, such as its employees, vendors, customers, and shareholders. Even members of the broader community affected by the local economy or environment of the organization, such as the labor unions, professional associations, ecological movements, universities, and even the global community, are implied. We will analyze contemporary organizations as located in a field of tension between centralizing movements necessary for the coordination and integration of activities, and decentralizing movements in the form of rapidly changing circumstances and the presence of contradictory voices in the environment. These changes require the participants to develop a multi-voiced self that is able to move flexibly from one position to another with attention to the coherence of these positions.

For the culture of an organization we see dialogical leadership as indispensable. A dialogical leader has developed the capacity to make flexible movements between a variety of *I*-positions, such as entrepreneur, manager, coach, and professional. Such positions are part of the repertoire of a leader who knows when and where these positions should be actualized. Involved in mutual dialogical relationships, the different *I*-positions learn from each other in the service of their further development. A dialogical leader is, moreover, authentic in the sense that she acts on the basis of emotions and positions that take the positions and emotions of the other into account, that is, these emotions and positions profit from the communicative feedback from colleagues and stakeholders. A dialogical leader has the capacity to create coalitions between people in the service of the realization of the mission of the organization. We will argue that dialogical leadership develops in an optimal way when the leader is included as a promoter position in the selves of her colleagues.

Because organizations have become increasingly complex in their tasks, missions, and environments, a broadening of the range of positions in the self of the participants and, in addition, flexible and dialogical movements from the one to the other position are required. We will illustrate this thesis by analyzing changes in two types of organizations: the expansion of the repertoire of teachers in school organizations and the expansion of the repertoire of members of police organizations. On the basis of discussions with key people from the two types of organization, we found that they both made a plea for a more open organizational culture in which different contradictory positions should be developed. Moreover, they found it undesirable that conventional roles would be abandoned in favour of new ones, but rather preferred to combine them.

Apparently, there was a need to include the old positions as parts of a coalition with the new ones in order to give an adequate answer to the needs of contemporary society challenged by the growing multiplicity and diversity of components in the cultures of organizations.

On the border-zone between theory and practice, we will enter a discussion of the process of motivation as relevant both to individual selves and to the development of organizations. First, we will stress the importance of "creating space" in one's own self and the selves of other people as indispensable for stimulating motivation to reach particular goals. The basic idea is that motivation flourishes if it is based on a larger variety of positions in the self and if the repertoires of different people fit with one another. Starting with an insight from James (1890) a *basic self-conflict* is described that emerges from the tension between the development of a specific position and the development of the self as a whole, that is, of a large variety of possible positions. We will argue that, although it is difficult or even impossible to fully resolve the basic self-conflict, it leaves room for the reconciliation of conflicts and for bringing together opposites that seem to be mutually exclusive. Our main tenet is that coalitions of conflicting or opposing positions have the potential of creating strong motivation that takes the interests of specific positions into account and combines them as parts of a more encompassing structure (e.g., bringing social, artistic, and cultural interests together in one and the same activity). Such coalitions lead to forms of "integrative motivation" emerging in a field of tension between centralizing and decentralizing movements in the self. Such motivation is relevant to the development not only of individuals but also of teams and organizations.

Finally, we consider the process of social conflict resolution on the assumption that conflict and dialogue are not mutually exclusive categories, but that conflict is a challenge to dialogue and can function as its starting point. Involved in strong negative emotions, the conflicting parties typically restrict their repertoire to one or a few positions and find it difficult to take a meta-position from which a larger variety of possibilities can be taken into account. An apparent obstacle to conflict resolution is the phenomenon of a "claim to exclusive truth" that tends to reduce the multi-positionality of the self so that only one view of the conflict and its solution is allowed. In order to solve social conflicts, or at least deal with them, it is necessary that both parties arrive at the awareness that their view is not "truth" but "perspective" and that more perspectives are possible. Furthermore, we emphasize the relevance of narratives and space to conflict resolution. For example, visiting places that are significant to the lives of the adversary and becoming engaged in common activities to which the participants contribute each, from their

own point of view, may contribute to mutual understanding and conflict resolution. A special discussion will be devoted to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict with attention to some of the main psychological obstacles that hamper dialogue between these groups (Chaitin, 2008).

For the understanding of social conflicts and the way contestants deal with them, awareness of the so-called "dialogical paradox" is required: *there where dialogue is most needed, it does not take place*. This paradox becomes visible in all those cases where people avoid, ignore, or withdraw from conflicts or fight with each other in ways dominated by monological power. Elaborating on the preceding analysis, we will present some specific guidelines for social conflict resolution.

Some specific features of this book

As the preceding introduction has suggested, it is not the main purpose of the theory we put forward to formulate testable hypotheses, but to generate new ideas. It is certainly possible to perform theory-guided research on the basis of the present theory, as exemplified by the research mentioned at the end of Chapter 1, and also by the special issue on dialogical self research in *Journal of Constructivist Psychology* (2008) and in other publications that will be discussed in this book. Yet the primary purpose is the generation of new ideas that lead to continued theory, research, and practice on the basis of links between the central concepts of the theory.

The writing of this book was stimulated by discussions that take place in the *International Journal for Dialogical Science* and at the biennial *International Conferences on the Dialogical Self* as they are held in cities in different countries: Nijmegen (2000), Ghent (2002), Warsaw (2004), Braga (2006), Cambridge, UK (2008) and Athens (2010). The discussion in the *Journal* and at the conferences have not only generated many ideas, but have also aroused questions about the present state of the art and about the directions of the theory in the future. This book is an attempt to point to some of the main directions and to stimulate further activity around the theory. Our aim is to transcend the boundaries of (sub)disciplines, countries, and continents and create fertile interfaces where theorists, researchers, and practitioners meet in order to become involved in innovative dialogue.

After the first psychological publication on the dialogical self (Hermans, Kempen, and Van Loon, 1992), the theory has been applied in a diversity of fields: cultural psychology (e.g. Bhatia, 2007; Chaudhary, 2008; Choi and Han, 2008; Aveling and Gillespie, 2008; Hermans, 2001a); educational psychology (e.g., Akkerman *et al.*, 2006, Ligorio and Pugliese, 2004); psychotherapy (e.g. Dimaggio *et al.*, 2003; Goncalves, Matos, and

Santos, 2009; Hermans and Dimaggio, 2004, Rowan, 2010); personality psychology (e.g. Puchalska-Wasyl, Chmielnicka-Kuter, and Oles, 2008); psychopathology (e.g. Lysaker and J. Lysaker, 2002, 2008; Semerari *et al.*, 2004); developmental psychology (e.g. Bertau, 2004; 2008; Fogel *et al.*, 2002; Lyra, 1999; Valsiner, 2002); experimental social psychology (e.g. Stemplewska-Żakowicz, Walecka, and Gabińska, 2006); career counseling (McIlveen and Patton, 2007), social work (Van Nijnatten, 2007); brain sciences (e.g. Lewis, 2002; Schore, 1994); psychoanalysis (e.g. Beebe, 2002; Bromberg, 2004); psychodrama (Verhofstadt-Deneve *et al.*, 2006); cultural anthropology (e.g. Gieser, 2006; Van Meijl, 2006, 2009); religion (Belzen, 2006); literary analysis (Rojek, 2009); constructivism (e.g. Neimeijer and Buchanan, 2004); the philosophy of Martin Buber (e.g. Cooper and Hermans, 2007); the psychology of the internet (e.g., Hevern, 2004; Rowiński, 2008; Van Halen and Janssen, 2004) and media (e.g. Annese, 2004; Cortini, Mininni, and Manuti, 2004); the psychology of globalization (Hermans and Dimaggio, 2007) and methodology (e.g. Hermans, 2001b; Kluger, Nir, and Kluger, 2008; Leiman, 2004; Osatuke *et al.*, 2004; Raggatt, 2000). In incorporating developments in many of these fields, the present book aims to take a step further and to place these developments in a broader theoretical framework. In working on this framework we became more than before, aware of being part of an increasingly interconnected world society and we are convinced that these changes have far-reaching implications for conceptions of self and identity.

NOTES

1 This statement was made by Giancarlo Dimaggio at the Fifth International Conference on the Dialogical Self in Cambridge, UK, August 26–29, 2008.

2 See also J. Lysaker (2006) who critically discusses Wiley's (2006) view in which the dialogical self and inner speech are seen as equivalent concepts.

3 The present theory acknowledges not only unstable, changing, and ephemeral positions, but also stable and trait-like ones (see Chapter 5).

1 The impact of globalization and localization on self and identity[1]

> *We are all framed of flappes and patches, and of so shapelesse and diverse a contexture, that everie piece, and everie moment playeth his part. And there is as much difference found betweene us and our selves, as there is betweene our selves and others.*
>
> Montaigne (1580/1603)

Understanding globalization and its impact on self and identity is a crucial task for social scientists and practitioners today. As a result of increasing demographic, economic, ecological, political, and military interconnections on a global scale, cosmopolitanism is becoming an aspect of the everyday life of people in many parts of the world. Educational contacts crossing the borders of nationalities; tourism as the biggest industry in the world; the daily use of the internet by adults, adolescents, and children; business contacts with people on the other side of the world; and intensive communication between diasporas and homelands illustrate that never in the history of humankind have global connections had such a broad reach and deep impact on the selves and identities of an increasing number of people.

Although globalization broadens the scope and opens new horizons for an increasing number of people from diverse origins, it has its evident shadow sides. Tragic events such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, DC, and the bombings in Bali, Madrid, and London are fixed forever in our memories. They happened in a globalizing world filled with tensions, oppositions, clashes, prejudices, and misunderstandings between people from different cultural backgrounds, who never in history have been so interconnected with each other as in the present era.

Without doubt, the process of globalization opens new vistas and broadens our horizons. It offers increasing possibilities of international contacts and fosters economical, ecological, educational, informational, and military forms of cooperation across the borders of regions, countries, and cultures. However, it also restricts and closes the selves of many people as a counter-reaction to what they experience as a threat, as evidenced by

the resistance to the world-wide immigration flows, to the religious practices and rituals of other cultural groups that are experienced as "strange" or "alien," to the economic gap between "haves" and "have-nots," and to the power of multi-nationals. In this chapter, we argue that to understand both the positive and the negative implications of the process of globalization on the individual level, a dialogical conception of self and identity is required, one that can account for the different and even opposing demands resulting from the processes of globalization and localization.

Globalization, localization, and uncertainty: a socio-cultural analysis

Before we present a dialogical analysis of self and identity, we discuss the intimate interconnection between the global and the local. As we will show, the experience of uncertainty is a significant psychological factor in this interconnection. Such uncertainty is typical of a globalizing word in which selves and identities are shifting between global and local positions. We will argue that this shifting between positions requires a dialogical approach that takes into account not only the relationships *between* individuals, groups, and cultures, but also the relationships between positions *within* a multi-voiced self.

Globalization and localization as its counter-force

Conceptions that treat globalization and homogenization (e.g., Americanization) as equivalent processes have become increasingly obsolete (e.g., Castells, 1997, Featherstone, 1995). Whether homogenization is seen positively in terms of the utopia of the global village or negatively in terms of cultural imperialism, such notions are based on the questionable assumption that we are moving toward an increasing global uniformity. However, as Meyer and Geschiere (1999) and others have observed, one of the ambiguities of the notion of globalization is that the homogenizing tendencies inherent in globalization imply a continued or even intensified heterogeneity that stresses cultural differences and even oppositions. Rather, the process of globalization, with its implied technological advances, leads to a sharpening of cultural contrasts or even engenders new oppositions.

Indications of such paradoxical articulations are numerous. A few examples (see Meyer and Geschiere, 1999) may suffice. Modern technical devices, such as tape recorders, facilitated the spread of Muslim fundamentalism in North Africa and the Middle East, creating a giant market for cassettes of the latest star imam. The desire of many Westerners for an encounter with the "exotic" world of particular cultural groups requires

these groups to produce local "authenticity" as a commodity for global tourism. The recent economic boom of industrializing countries in East Asia was accompanied by an equally vibrant boom of popular religions and spirit cults in local situations (see Weller, 1994). In some parts of Africa, witchcraft is used as a levelling force, undermining inequalities in wealth and power. Paradoxically, the same force is regarded as indispensable for the accumulation of such wealth and power. Witchcraft is used both to express envy and to accumulate Western goods as an indication of success. Obeysekere (1977) has already observed that, from a historical point of view, spirit cults and sorcery assumed a heightened status in the more modern sectors of Sri Lanka and concluded that this finding contradicts the well-known Weberian equation of "modernization" and "disenchantment" (see also Adams, 2004, who presented similar data from contemporary England). Such observations suggest that globalization and localization imply each other and can be regarded as two sides of the same coin. On the level of the self, this interconnection is expressed as a movement between positioning (as participant in a global discourse) and counter-positioning (as representative of a local community).[2]

"Glocalization," civilization, and the problem of global optimism

One of the problems in understanding the nature of globalization is the widespread tendency to regard the global–local opposition as a polarity consisting of mutually excluding components. This polarity is manifested in the claim that we live in a world of local assertions *against* globalizing trends. As a consequence, localization is cast as a form of opposition or resistance to the global, which is seen as hegemonic. An example of such exclusive opposition can be found in the idea that people retreat into their smaller communities as a defense against the overruling process of globalization. Although there are clear examples of defensive localization (e.g., aversion to immigrant populations), globalization is not necessarily a process which overrides locality. In an attempt to articulate the deep interconnectedness of the global and the local, Robertson (1995) proposed the composite term "glocalization" in order to emphasize that the global manifests itself in local forms.

Globalization in its broadest sense increasingly involves the creation and incorporation of locality, as reflected, for example, in the emergence of TV enterprises such as MTV, CNN, and, more recently Al Jazeera, seeking global markets and focusing on a great diversity of local developments. Therefore, it makes sense to conjure up a process of glocalization as it combines two seemingly opposing trends: homogenization and

heterogenization. These trends can be described as not only simultaneous but also complementary and interpenetrative. The past century, in particular, has seen a remarkable proliferation with respect to the international organization and promotion of locality. One can refer to the current attempts to organize globally the promotion of the rights and identities of native, or indigenous, peoples (e.g., the Global Forum in Brazil in 1992 or the Global Forum on Migration and Development in Belgium in 2007). This trend is also reflected in the attempts by the World Health Organization to promote "world health" by the reactivation or even the invention of "indigenous" local medicine. The global–local interpenetration is not only visible at the level of international organizations, but it can be experienced as part of daily life. As a result of international transport and travel facilities, local traditions at the other end of the world become accessible and, as surfers on the internet, we are introduced to the lives and values of people that were largely unknown to previous generations. (For the interpenetration of the global and the local, see Chen, 2006; Featherstone, 1995; Kahn, 1995; and Robertson, 1995.)

The coexistence of the global and the local is also visible in discussions of the process of civilization. Wilkinson (1995) proposed the thesis that on earth only one civilization exists: a single, global civilization. This civilization is the direct descendant of a civilization that emerged about 1500 BC in the Near East when Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations collided and fused. Since then this fused entity has expanded over the entire planet and absorbed all other previously independent civilizations (e.g., Japanese, Chinese, and the West).

For the coexistence of globalization and localization Wilkinson's criterion for defining a civilization is relevant. He proposes a transactional definition and a criterion of connectedness rather than uniformity for locating the spatio-temporal boundaries of society. When people interact intensely, significantly, and continuously, they belong to the same civilization, "even if their cultures are very dissimilar and their interactions mostly hostile" (1995: 47). Why does he propose this criterion? Because conflict, hostility, and even warfare, when durable (i.e., habitual or inescapable) create a social system comprising contestants and antagonists who do not or cannot live in isolation.

Varieties of antagonistic bonding can be observed in religious and social life, as well as in language itself. Words like "contradiction," "argument," "disagreement," "dissonance," "drama," "collision," "war," etc., refer to the existence of entities which consist of oppositions between ideas, sounds, persons, characters, bodies, and groups: "Israel and Judah, the Homeric pantheon, Congress, counterraiding tribes, the two-party system, the Seven Against Thebes, a Punch and Judy show, and the

Hitler–Stalin pact are all antagonistic couples and collections of separate entities commonly recognized as internally antagonistic unities" (Wilkinson, 1995: 48–9). Disagreements, conflicts, and wars are part of a continuous process of positioning and counter-positioning.

However, the existence of opposites may conceal deeper processes that are inherent in the perception and evaluation of differences between the poles of any pair of opposites. Such evaluative differences may precede or coexist with relations of disagreement, collision, and war. As Sampson (1993) has argued, pairs of opposites have a master-term which is dominant and an opposite term that is not-dominant (male–female; young–old, West–East, white–black). The minor pole of a dichotomy is typically defined in a negative way, that is, lacking the (positive) features of the master-term. Female is not-male, old is not-young, blacks are not-white, out-groups lack the favourable features of the in-group from which the members of this group derive their cherished identities. The result is that the perceiver is focused on the absence of the features of the master-term more than on the specific and original features of the opposite term. This psychological organization creates a basis for devaluation of the opposite pole and for the treatment of the "other" as inferior or alien. The inclusion of the other at the minor side of a polarity of opposites establishes a basis for treating the other as inferior or can be used as a justification of the exploitation of the other in the service of one's own (economic) profit.

Conceiving globalization in terms of one growing civilization or in terms of "glocalization" significantly contributes to the understanding of the apparent interpenetration of the global and the local which is so typical of our era. At the same time, these conceptions carry the risk of seeing the implied differences or opposites as representing equally strong forces that disagree or are involved in a conflict. The effect of seeing differences or opposites as stemming from equal or as equivalent parties may conceal the pervasive influence of power differences and, moreover, blind us from seeing and valuing the opposite pole (the other individual, group, culture) in its own merit, history and aims.

The perception of civilization in terms of antagonistic unities, with explicit attention to the implied power differences, has two advantages. First, it strengthens the awareness that interconnectedness of groups, societies, and cultures, although different and even opposed, belong to each other as part of an interconnected world civilization. As part of one civilization, *different* groups and cultures – intensely interconnected by international contacts, modern technology, media, and transportation as never before – can no longer avoid the necessity of dialogue. The fact that different individuals, groups, and cultures belong, more than ever, to an intensely interconnected world system, requires the recognition and

exploration of dialogical relationships. Such relationships offer the possibility of adequate answers to unavoidable differences that emerge at the interfaces of communities and cultures, differences that work otherwise as unworkable misunderstandings. Second, the conception of civilization in terms of antagonistic unities recognizes the important role of power in intercultural and inter-group relationships. Capitalistic and cultural imperialism, economic exploitation of the natural resources of local communities, and discrimination of immigrant groups create situations of strong inequality (see also Stiglitz, 2002, who referred to globalization as creating dual economies and technological or digital divides in societies). In such situations the less powerful groups are seen as less significant, inferior, or serviceable and, as a result, their voices are neglected or even silenced. Inequality and injustice of this kind underscores the significance of the exploration of the concept of monologue.

The awareness of large-scale poverty, imperialism, exploitation, and discrimination may caution against uncritical global optimism. Both globalization and localization have their shadow sides. The dark faces of globalization are economic exploitation, excessive consumption, lack of roots, and loneliness. Localization can easily lead to a nostalgic longing for a remote past where everything was "better," to an experience of illusory safety, and to a defensive closure for the values, practices, and traditions of other people that are experienced as alien.

In summary, two socio-cultural trends can be observed that are closely intertwined: (a) globalization as boundary crossing and leading to international and intercultural connectedness, spread and exchange of goods, capital, practices, values, and information and (b) localization as sets of goods, customs, values, practices, and information emerging from particular places, regions, or countries. Globalization and localization are not to be seen as mutually exclusive opposites but rather as involved in a dialectical process. Differences, disagreements, and conflicts among groups that are strongly affiliated to their local communities, homelands, histories, and traditions form "antagonistic unities" within a condensed and diversified world civilization. Although globalization offers new possibilities for innovation, development, and growth of individuals, groups, and civilization as a whole, there are reasons to avoid forms of "global optimism" as it can be observed that both globalization and localization have their shadow sides.

Globalization and uncertainty

Globalization is not a new phenomenon, because it is preceded by urbanization, development of transport, growth of capitalism, and the spread of industrialization over the centuries. Typical of our era is that

its scale, speed, and import have changed (Kinnvall, 2004). In terms of scale, the number of economic, ecological, demographical, political, and social linkages is greater than in any previous time in history. In terms of speed, we are witnessing a compression of space and time as never before experienced. In terms of import, the globe is perceived as an ever smaller place: events elsewhere have important implications for our everyday lives in our local situation.

Global and local identities Focusing on the psychology of adolescence, Arnett (2002) discussed the uncertainty resulting from globalization. He noted that in a globalizing world, people have to face the challenge of adapting not only to their local culture but also to the global society. He argued that, as a consequence of globalization, most people in the world, and adolescents in particular, now develop a bicultural identity: part of their identity is rooted in their local culture, and another part is attuned to the global situation. Or they may develop a hybrid identity, successfully combining elements of global and local situations in a mix (see also Hermans and Kempen, 1998). However, Arnett referred also to the increase of "identity confusion" among young people in non-Western cultures. As local cultures are challenged and changed as a result of globalization, some young people feel themselves at home in neither the local situation nor the global situation.

Indeed, increasing uncertainty about social and economic developments is a central feature of globalization in the more advanced economies. Empirical support was provided by a study by Blossfeld (2007; see also Mills and Blossfeld, 2003), who summarized the results from the first phase of the international research project GLOBALIFE. As these results suggest, youth in all thirteen countries under investigation are clearly exposed to uncertainty in the course of globalization. Yet uncertainty is clearly unequal, with risk accumulating in certain groups, particularly those at the bottom of society. It was found that uncertainty impacts family formation, with those in more precarious situations more likely to postpone or even forgo partnership and parenthood.

Aspects of uncertainty Given the central role we attach to the experience of "uncertainty" – a term to which different authors ascribe alternative meanings – a more detailed description is required. We see the experience of uncertainty as composed of four aspects: (i) *complexity*, referring to a great number of parts that have a large variety of relations; (ii) *ambiguity*, referring to a suspension of clarity, as the meaning of one part is determined by the flux and variation of the other parts; (iii) *deficit knowledge*, referring to the absence of a superordinate knowledge

structure that can resolve the contradictions between the parts; and (iv) *unpredictability*, implying a lack of control of future developments. We assume that the experience of uncertainty characterizes a global situation of multi-voicedness (complexity) that does not allow a fixation of meaning (ambiguity), that has no superordinate voice for resolving contradictions and conflicting information (deficit knowledge), and that is to a large extent unpredictable.

As this description of globalization suggests, it is not necessarily a negative experience; for many people, the experience of uncertainty may open and broaden the space for possible actions, adventures, and explorations of the unknown (e.g., traveling, international contacts, forms of international and intercultural cooperation). Moreover, uncertainty can be seen as a definitive farewell to the dogmas and ideologies of institutions that restricted and confined the self in earlier times. However, when uncertainty reigns in many life areas or when one's survival is at stake, as international terrorism demonstrates, the experience of uncertainty may be intensified to a degree that it changes into an experience of insecurity or anxiety. As we have suggested, the latter experience motivates people to find local niches in which they try to find security, safety, and certainty (Adams, 2004; Giddens, 1991). So, the experience of uncertainty can be a gift as it opens a broad range of unexpected possibilities, but a burden in so far as it leads to confusion and anxiety.[3]

The experience of uncertainty should not be equated with the experience of risk taking, although they are similar in some respects. Like uncertainty, risks can be experienced as rewarding, as expressed in the commonplace observation that successful entrepreneurs, salesmen, and managers feel comfortable in taking risks. However, like in uncertainty, most people eschew its possible outcomes when risks become very high. There are, however, some apparent differences. You may take a risk by consciously engaging in a particular situation, whereas you may be subjected to an experience of uncertainty that you never chose, yet that requires you to give an answer. Moreover, uncertainty implies some degree of complexity and ambiguity and is characterized by the absence of a superordinate knowledge structure, whereas in risk these aspects may be lacking. One can engage in a dangerous sport activity or risky sex, or become a heavy smoker, but there is not much complexity or ambiguity as the nature of the danger is well known.

From a dialogical perspective, we see the experience of uncertainty (in the neutral sense of the term) as an intrinsic feature of a dialogical self that opens a process of interchange with an outcome that is, to a larger or lesser degree, unknown. As a result of this process, certainty does not result from avoiding uncertainty but from *entering* it. It emerges from the

dialogical interchange itself that leads to the relative dominance of one position over the others or to a new combination of existing positions. Inspired by the views of figures such as Bakhtin (1973, 1981), James (1890), and Mead (1934), we envision the existence of a multi-voiced dialogical self that is involved in internal and external interchanges and that, although socially and biologically constrained, never reaches a final destination. This self is conceived of as potentially open to an ambiguous other and is in flux toward a future that is largely unknown. As we show in the next section, this uncertainty challenges our potential for innovation and creativity to the utmost, and at the same time, it entails the risks of a defensive and monological closure of the self and the unjustified dominance of some voices over others.

A multi-voiced and dialogical self

Three reasons for a dialogical approach

Our central thesis is that global–local connections require a dialogical conception of self and identity for several reasons. Three reasons, in particular, warrant such a conception: the increasing multiplicity of self and identity, the need for developing a dialogical capacity, and the necessity of acknowledging the alterity of the other person with whom one enters in dialogical contact.

Multiplicity of voices in the self In a globalizing world society, individuals and groups are no longer located in one particular culture, homogeneous in itself and contrastingly set against other cultures, but are increasingly living on the interfaces of cultures (e.g., Appadurai, 1990; Hermans and Kempen, 1998; Raggatt, 2000; Spiro, 1993; Wolf, 1982). The increasing interconnectedness of nations and cultures leads not only to an increasing contact between different cultural groups but also to an increasing contact between cultures within the individual person.[4] Different cultures come together and meet each other within the self of one and the same individual. This process may result in such novel and multiple identities as a business representative educated in a French school system but working for a Chinese company; Algerian women participating in an international football competition but afterward praying in a mosque; English-speaking employees living in India but giving technical training courses via the internet to adolescents in the United States; and a scientist with university training in Zimbabwe desperately looking, as an immigrant, for a job in Britain. The focus here is on intercultural processes that lead to the formation of a multiplicity of cultural positions