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# THE CONSTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF A DIALOGICAL SELF

**HUBERT J. M. HERMANS**

University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands

*Many contemporary conceptions of the self are, often unwittingly, based on Cartesian notions of the mind as individualized, ahistorical, noncultural, disembodied, and centralized. In opposition to these assumptions, the dialogical self is conceived of as socialized, historical, cultural, embodied, and decentralized. Based on these theoretical considerations, a method is sketched for the assessment and change of the organization of the Personal Position Repertoire (PPR). Finally, therapeutic material is discussed around three topics: the innovation of the self, the creation of a dialogical space, and the development of a metaposition.*

We don't know what we mean until we see what we say.
(Blachowicz, 1999, p. 199)

When people are asked where they experience their selves, they typically answer, "inside," and point to their own body. When one asks where they locate the notion of space, they typically point to the outside world. When asked who the self is, they may see it as self-evident that it is "Me" or "I," and if one talks about the other, they see the other as part of the outside world. In my experience not only laypeople, but also psychologists and other social scientists give answers to these questions in terms of "The self is inside, space is outside" and, moreover, "The self is me, the other is not-me." Unwittingly, people have the tendency to conceive of the self in ways that are similar to a Cartesian conception, which deals with the self as thinking matter (*res*

*cogitans*), whereas the outside world is conceived as spatially extended matter (*res extensa*). In the Cartesian world view, the other person is not only outside the self but is, moreover, of an essentially different nature. In Descartes' view, the mind has access to itself, without the necessity of taking the other person into account. Self-reflection is possible in a direct way and doesn't need the interaction or communication with another person.

## CARTESIAN SELF VERSUS DIALOGICAL SELF

In its most succinct form, the dialogical self can be described in terms of a dynamic multiplicity of voiced positions in the landscape of the mind, intertwined as this mind is with the minds of other people. In order to understand this conception, it makes sense to contrast it with the Cartesian self, on the assumption that many psychological views on the self are based, explicitly or implicitly, on Cartesian assumptions. It will be argued that the dialogical self is (a) spatially structured and embodied, (b) populated by the voices of other people, (c) decentralized with highly open boundaries, and (d) historically and culturally contextualized.

### Self as Spatially Structured and Embodied

In his book *The Body in the Mind* (1987), Johnson started with the provocative statement: "Without imagination, nothing in the world could be meaningful. Without imagination, we could never make sense of our experience. Without imagination, we could never reason toward knowledge of reality. This book is an elaboration and defense of these three controversial claims" (p. ix). The fact that the author calls his thesis "controversial" suggests that the basic significance of "corporeal imagination," already discussed by Descartes' contemporary critic Vico (1744/1968) is still not fully accepted by contemporary science, psychology in particular. It suggests also that Descartes' basic notion of rationality is still a prevailing paradigm in much of contemporary research. Because the faculty of imagination plays a central role in dialogical self theory, two phenomena, "image schema" and "metaphor," as described by Johnson (1987), are discussed as exemplification.

An image schema serves as a frame for orienting ourselves in a variety of situations on the basis of the form of our body. A "verticality schema" emerges from our tendency to employ an up-down orientation in picking out meaningful structures of our experience. We stand

"upright" or "lie down," climb a staircase, ask how tall our child is, and wonder about the level of the water. Our body, being part of the spatial world, has a verticality structure, that we use as a means of orientation in that world (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

However, the image schema is not a purely corporeal structure. We use it also as a metaphor to organize our more abstract understanding. For example, in estimating quantities, we understand quantity in terms of verticality. We are used to saying, prices are going up, the number of books published each year keeps rising, someone's gross earnings fell, and turn down the heat. Without being aware of it, we assume that "more is up." We use a verticality structure as a physical base for our mental understanding, although there is no intrinsic reason why more should be up. Apparently, a given image schema emerges first as a structure of bodily interactions, and is then figuratively developed as a meaning structure at more abstract levels of cognition (for the body in the self, see also Kempen, 1998).

As Johnson (1987) and other philosophers and psychologists have argued, metaphor is not to be viewed as an ornament or a mere figure of speech, frequently used by poets or children. On the contrary, metaphor is an indispensable structure of human understanding by which we can figuratively comprehend our world (Mair, 1977). The central significance of image schemata and metaphor is in sharp contrast to basic notions of an objectivist view. The objectivists hold that the concepts that are used to analyze meaning, must map definitive, discrete, and fixed objects, properties, and relations. Such concepts are literal. Metaphorical projections, however, involve category crossings that do not exist objectively in the world. In its simplest definition, metaphor is an implicit comparison between two distinct entities; the quality of one entity is transferred to the other entity (the Greek "metapherein" means "to transfer"). The two qualities form a combination that does not correspond to something that already exists in the world. Rather, metaphorical combinations imply a construction of the world. It is this notion of construction that Vico (1744/1968) had in mind when he concluded that "to know is to make," and "to make is to know." (For a discussion of the controversy between Descartes and Vico, see Hermans & Kempen, 1993.)

Image schemas and their metaphorical use are central to imagination. In Johnson's (1985) terms, imagination is not a wild, nonrule governed faculty for fantasy and creativity, but a basic image-schematic capacity for ordering our experience. The concept of imagination, which played a central role in the development of the concept of the dialogical self (Hermans & Kempen, 1993), can only properly be understood if one realizes that the body is *in* the self. Moreover, spatial structures

are not simply external to the self, but *in* the self. The functioning of the self can properly be understood only if images as spatial structures and the activity of imagination are taken seriously as intrinsic ways of organization. Involved in a dialogue with friends, a person may tell a story in which he or she describes a situation in which he felt "high" and communicates this feeling with corresponding facial expressions and gestures. In this example, "high" is not a word referring to a psychophysiological state of mind which is purely external to the word itself. Rather, the feeling itself is high.

It should be added that Descartes was not totally unaware of the intrinsic relatedness of body and mind. He insisted that the body is "intimately unioned" with the mind. He believed that the soul is not in the body in the way a boatman is in his boat, that is, removably, accidentally, revocably. Forced by the necessity that there must be at least some relation between body and mind, Descartes assumed that a specific organ, the pinal gland, served as a bridge between the two entities. However, as Zaner (1981) argues, in a philosophy that is based on the conception that everything is either matter or mind, nothing can be both mind and matter and, by consequence, nothing can be mind and space at the same time. Therefore, any conception of the body as intimately unioned with the mind has a high risk of being in line with the thesis of the essential opposition between mind and extension. Zaner concludes that Descartes' ontology collapses under the weight of its own insights (p. 10). In a related way, Johnson (1985) considers the Cartesian self as a "fixed entity, essentially isolated and disembodied, an ego-logical thing, encapsulated in a machine of corruptible matter" (p. 15).

## Self as Other-Inclusive

Whereas the Cartesian dualism is widely discussed and criticized by contemporary brain scientists, philosophers, and social scientists who believe in the unity of self and body (see Gallagher & Shear, 1999, for review), the separation between self and other has received relatively little attention. One of the most convincing treatments of this topic is provided by Straus (1958), who argued that Descartes' *Cogito* implies not only a dualism between mind and body but also a dissociation between self and other. When we are speaking about an "outside world" or about "the other," Straus reasons, we are in fact using a Cartesian terminology, implying that the world is outside of consciousness, and that, reciprocally, consciousness, including sensory experience, is outside of the world. This philosophy implies that we can be aware of

ourselves without necessarily being aware of the world. The Cartesian ego is not able to have direct communication with any alter ego, and, in the realm of consciousness, each one is alone with him/herself. Of course, Descartes does not deny, or even seriously doubt, the existence of an outside world. However, he holds that in the act of self-reflection it is never directly accessible to us. The existence of the other person is not more than probable; it must be proved. The alter ego, and external reality generally, are the product of reasoning and proof, instead of an immediate experience and starting point.

A stream of thought that explicitly brings together the spatial structure of the mind, and the intrinsic relatedness of self and other, is Bakhtin's dialogical approach (Holquist, 1990). This combination is most clearly expressed in the metaphor of the polyphonic novel that was proposed by Bakhtin after reading Dostoyevsky's oeuvre. The principle feature of the polyphonic novel (Bakhtin, 1929/1973) is that it is composed of a number of independent and mutually-opposing viewpoints embodied by characters involved in dialogical relationships. The introduction of the polyphonic novel marked the beginning of what in literary circles is described as the "retreat of the omniscient narrator" (Spencer, 1971). Each character in this novel is considered as "ideologically authoritative and independent," which means that each character is perceived as the author of his or her own view of the world, not as an object of Dostoyevsky's all-encompassing, artistic vision. Instead of being "obedient slaves" in the service of Dostoyevsky's artistic intentions, the characters are capable of standing next to their creator, disagreeing with the author, even rebelling against him. It is as if Dostoyevsky enters his novels wearing different masks, giving him the opportunity to present different and even opposing views of the world, representing a multiplicity of differently located voices of the same Dostoyevsky. The characters representing these voices may, at times, enter into dialogical relations. They pose questions and give answers to each other, agree and disagree with each other, try to convince and ridicule each other. As a result of these dialogues new meanings emerge both between and within people. As in a polyphonic composition, the several voices or instruments have different spatial positions, and accompany and oppose each other in dialogical relationships.

Space and dialogue are intrinsic features of the polyphonic novel. 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 . . ." (p. 23, emphasis added). In this narrative spatialization, Dostoyevsky constructs 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 construction, Dostoyevsky portrays 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). The spatialization of dialogical relationships allows for the treatment of a particular idea in the context of both interior and exterior dialogues, creating ever changing perspectives.

In Bakhtin's world view, the other is pervasive, even when the person is alone. The simultaneous presence of the words of two interlocutors is also reflected in his analysis of "microdialogues," the interior dialogues in which the other is present even when the thinker is "alone." In Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, for example, Raskolnikov recreates not only the words of another character, Dunya, but even the intonations through which she seeks to convince, and adds to them his own ironic, indignant intonations: "Well, after all, this is her Rodya, isn't it, her precious Rodya, her firstborn!" (p. 61). Such observations reflect for Bakhtin the idea that dialogue penetrates every word, giving rise to conflicts and interruptions of one voice by another, even if the other person is not actually talking.

As the preceding considerations suggest, the Bakhtinian speaker is not the origin of abstract thinking or analytical thought, so typical of the Cartesian *Cogito*, but is involved in exterior and interior dialogues in which emotions are expressed in intonations and virtual gestures. The words of other people, invested with indignation, anger, doubt, anxiety, or pleasure, enter interior dialogues and create an "inner society of voices" that, in its oppositions, agreements, disagreements, negotiations, and integrations, does not, in essence, differ from the communications in the outside world (see also Verhofstadt-Denève, 2000).

## Self as Historically and Culturally Contextualized

As discussed more extensively elsewhere (Hermans & Kempen, 1993), Vico and Descartes figured as protagonist and antagonist in a philosophical controversy in the seventeenth century. Descartes, strongly committed as he was to mathematical certainty, accepted only those insights that were beyond any doubt. Vico, on the other hand, was an historian and interested in the vicissitudes of human history. Whereas Descartes was convinced of the validity of lucid and clear (disembodied) thinking, Vico believed in the power of (embodied) imagination. For Descartes, space (*res extensa*) was external to the self and could only be understood in terms of universal laws. Vico, however, argued

that the historical world could only be understood as constructed and reconstructed by people themselves. As a consequence, they had to study their own mind in direct relation to its material products in order to comprehend the particular cultural situation in which they lived. Whereas Descartes based his philosophy on thinking, Vico was concerned with language in order to comprehend the communicative processes among embodied people of different cultural periods.

Recently, Roland (2001), a psychoanalyst with considerable international experience in psychotherapy with clients from a variety of national and ethnic backgrounds, emphasized the importance of the historical dimension in the dialogical self. He pointed to the special situation of immigrants and those who were born in the host country to immigrant parents. The earlier experiences of familial relationships, represented by the voices of family members from their indigenous culture, become an integral part of a self that is later exposed through schooling, social relationships, and work to the very different cultural voices of their host country. Confusion, conflict, and anguish can easily arise when these immigrants come into contact with a host culture which is radically different from their own. Many second-generation Indian Americans refer to themselves as ABCD, American Born Confused *Desei* (Indians), giving expression to their particular historical and psychological situation. As a psychoanalyst, Roland conceives positions or voices as "layered." Some are older and more deeply entrenched in the self than others. Voices from the culture of origin do not simply disappear when people are involved in an acculturation process. Instead, the older or deeper voices are often established parts of the self, and they are challenged, evoked, repressed, or simply ignored when the person enters into a host culture populated by different and often dominating voices. (For the relation between self, narrative and culture from a constructivist point of view, see Freeman, 1999, and Terrell & Lyddon, 1996.)

In a similar vein, Bhatia and Ram (2001) argued that the concept of self should not be treated as atomic, bounded, and self-contained, nor can culture be analyzed as an abstract reified entity. They refer to the situation of South Asian women in diaspora, particularly second-generation immigrants who are struggling to know their place in the society. On the one hand, they have to deal, as "brown" minority women, with racial discrimination and prejudice from the larger American society. On the other hand, these women are faced with the oppression within their own communities. The acculturation of many non-White, non-European/Western immigrants, especially women, to U.S. society is a painful, difficult, and complex process. These women have to give an answer, in their exterior or their interior dialogues, to the

contradictions and confusions characteristic of an acculturation process occurring at the intersection of race, gender, and nationality.

Bhatia and Ram (2001) have criticized some underlying assumptions of mainstream acculturation models. One of the main assumptions is that the psychological processes that operate during acculturation are essentially the same for all groups. This assumption, however, neglects the fact that there are considerable variations in the life circumstances of cultural groups. Such an assumption, as far as it starts from an universalist perspective, can be seriously questioned on the basis of the consideration that different cultural groups originate from different historical backgrounds. Bhatia and Ram (2001) argue that any universalist perspective, which typically treats self and culture as variables, implies a self-exclusive conception of culture and a culture-exclusive conception of the self. This view represents a conception that earlier in this article was described as the Cartesian split between self and environment. As the above considerations suggest, the notion of power or social dominance is indispensable to understanding the phenomenon of multiple, hyphenated, and hybridized identities (e.g., Arab-Jew, Asian-American, Algerian-French, Black-British). Cross-cultural notions such as "integration strategy" (Berry, 1980) and "bicultural competence" (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993) overlook the contested, negotiated experiences and sometimes painful struggles associated with living between cultures. This field of tension requires a shift from a focus on developmental end states (like integration or competence) towards a more process oriented notion of acculturation which can account for negotiated and often contested developmental trajectories (Bhatia & Ram, 2001). Cultures can be seen as collective voices which function as social positions in the self. Such positions or voices are expressions of historically situated selves that are, particularly on the interfaces of different cultures, constantly involved in dialogical relationships with other voices. At the same time these voices are constantly subjected to differences in power (Hermans, 2001a; Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Josephs, 2002).

Apart from the fact that dialogical relationships are extrinsically power-laden as processes taking place between positions that are institutionalized and culture-bound, there are arguments that they are also intrinsically power-laden. In a study of participants' initiatives and responses in a conversation, Linell (1990) argued that asymmetry exists in each individual act-response sequence. As part of a process of turn-taking, speakers are able to take initiatives and display their view. However, as part of this reciprocal process, the actors continually alternate the roles of "power holder" and "power subject" in the course of their conversation. There are many ways in which one of the

parties can be said to dominate, that is, to control the "territory" to be shared by the interactants in communication. For example, one party may take the most initiatory moves (interactional dominance), may introduce and maintain topics and the perspective on topics (topic dominance), talk more than the other party (amount of talk), or take the most strategic moves. Power as an intrinsic feature of turn-taking, and as present in institutional and societal structures, may create significant differences between situations. In a criminal interrogation, for example, dialogue is strongly asymmetrical, as one of the parties, the suspect, is forced into a yes-or-no answer frame and is hardly allowed to take initiatives. Power differences may be reduced, for example, in an intimate conversation between friends, but they never disappear entirely. Taken together, inter- and intra-subjective interchange and relative dominance are intrinsic features of dialogue (Hermans & Kempen, 1993).

## Self as Open and Decentralized

Any explication of the self, including the dialogical self, is incomplete when it does not deal with the work of the main originator of the concept in psychology, William James. The difference between mind and self is that the latter concept explicitly assumes that the mind entertains a relationship with itself in terms of self-knowledge and self-consciousness. James (1890) eloborated on this duality of the self by introducing a distinction between the I and the Me—according to Rosenberg (1979), a classic distinction in the psychology of the self. In James' view, the I is equated with the "self-as-knower" and the Me with the "self-as-known." The I has three features: continuity, distinctness, and volition (Damon & Hart, 1982). The continuity of the self-as-knower is characterized by a sense of personal identity, that is, a sense of sameness through time. Feeling distinct from others, or having a sense of individuality, also follows from the subjective nature of the self-as-knower. Finally, a sense of personal volition refers to the agency of the self, as represented by the continuous appropriation and rejection of thoughts by which the self-as-knower proves itself as an active processor of experience.

James depicted the Me as being composed of a variety of empirical elements which are felt as belonging to oneself. Crucial for the present article is James' observation that there is a gradual transition between Me and mine. He considered the empirical self as being composed of 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" (p. 291). As this quotation suggests, people and things in the environment belong to the self, as far as they are felt as "mine." When we take this definition seriously, not only "my mother" belongs to the self but even "my enemy." Although my enemy may be felt as very different or even opposed to myself. As Rosenberg (1979) has argued, James' view of the self was "extended" to the environment. As we have argued earlier in this article, the extended self can be contrasted with the Cartesian self, which is based on a dualistic conception not only between self and body, but also between self and other. James' conception suggests that an extended self does not exclude the other person (self versus other), as if the other is simply "outside the skin." With his conception of the extended self, James has paved the way for later theoretical developments in which the self is considered to be a highly open construct that leaves room for contrasts, oppositions, and negotiations between voices that are part of the broader community (Barresi, 2002).

From a purely subjective point of view, people are used to making a distinction between "self" and "nonself," often in close correspondence with a distinction between "in-group," the group one identifies with, and "out-group," the group one does not identify with (see Gregg, 1991). A sharp distinction may result in a splitting between phenomena that are defined by the person as belonging to the self and other phenomena that are classified as nonself. This splitting is not only part of the relationships between individuals or groups, but also part of the relationships of the person with him/herself (Cooper, 1999). In psychoanalytic circles it is commonplace to observe clients splitting off impulses from the self that conflict with superego moral demands.

In order to study the shifting boundaries of the self, we have analyzed a variety of case studies (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995). One of our clients, Paul, had a dream in which he saw himself as a priest who was confronted with a murderer who threatened his community. In an attempt to protect the people of his parish, he persecuted the murderer by following him to the top of the tower of the church, however, without any success. When he discussed this dream with his psychotherapist, he discovered that the murderer was not simply outside his self, but rather a dissociated part of himself, representing his aggression toward some other people and, at the same time, symbolizing his destructive attitude toward himself.

The investigation of Paul's self involved the formulation of valuations. The term "valuation" is based on the idea that people, telling stories about themselves, give positive or negative value to the events and circumstances of their lives. A valuation may refer to a variety of

aspects of one's self-narrative: a dear memory, a difficult problem, an impressive encounter with another person, or an unattainable goal (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995). As part of an extensive self-investigation, Paul was invited to formulate valuations from three separate positions: the persecutor in the dream, the murderer in the dream, and Paul himself, who was invited to give his personal response to the valuations of the murderer. It was found that the murderer formulated undetailed, generalizing, and extremely aggressive valuations (e.g., "I hate them; I kill them all"), whereas Paul himself responded with more specific, self-reflective, and slightly self-critical valuations (e.g., "There are a lot of situations in which I have harmed myself by not defending myself"). The quality and emotional tone of the valuations from the persecutor were somewhere in the middle between the two other positions. When Paul, during his discussion with the psychotherapist, used the word "I," this I was primarily located at the center of his ordinary self-narrative, for which he felt fully responsible. The I positioned in the persecutor (the good guy) was already at some psychological distance from Paul's ordinary position. The position of the murderer (the bad guy) was even further removed, although Paul admitted that the murderer was "somewhere in myself." Apparently, Paul was reluctant to accept the valuations from the murderer as belonging to the center of his self-definition for which he felt fully responsible, although he didn't go so far as to entirely split off the position and the valuations of the murderer from his ordinary self.

In Paul's case we find an example of what Gregg (1991) has described as "identity-in-difference." The intentions of the murderer are perceived by Paul both as identical to his self (they belong to it), and as different from his self (they do not belong to it). Paradoxically, the valuations from the murderer are inside and outside of the self at the same time. This peculiar form of self-organization can be theoretically understood by taking the multivoiced nature of the dialogical self into account. As part of a multiplicity of positions, the one position is more familiar, accessible, and safe than the other position. The familiar position is most directly expressed by the word "I" and by the person's first name ("I am Paul"), and these words indicate the center of one's self-definition. However, when less familiar, and perhaps more threatening positions enter the realm of the self (as the murderer in Paul's case), these positions may be suppressed or even split off from one's self-definition. In that case, sharp boundaries are drawn around one or a few highly centralized positions, and any dialogical interactions with boundary positions are precluded. When the person is able to extend the self by including less familiar positions as part of a broader multivoiced self, the self-nonself boundaries are opened and widened

to allow for a multivoiced self of a more decentralized nature. In the dialogical self it is assumed that each position of this polyphonic self has its own specific narrative to tell, allowing for a decentralized multiplicity of voices, as Sampson (1985) has described it. As located in such a wide multivoiced self, the individual identifies at some point more with one position than with another, even if fluctuations in situation and time permit the I to fluctuate among diverse or even opposite positions. The identity-in-difference organization of the self reveals that the self has open boundaries that may be widened and restricted depending on changes in time and situation.

## THE DIALOGICAL SELF AS A MULTIPLICITY OF I-POSITIONS

The dialogical self is on the interface between James and Bakhtin. In James' work the I (self-as-knower) is portrayed as a unifying principle that organizes the different aspects of the Me as parts of a continuous stream of consciousness. James seems to emphasize the continuity of the self more than its discontinuity. It should be noted, however, that James is well aware of the multiplicity of the self, particularly in a passage where he talks of the "rivalry and conflict of the different selves" (p. 309). This passage comes close to Bakhtin's treatment of agreements and disagreements between characters. These "characters," like James "selves," represent the multiplicity of the self.

There are, however, two important differences between James' and Bakhtin's views on the notion of multiplicity. First, James keeps the several parts of the self together by introducing an I, which guarantees the self's continuity and identity through time. Bakhtin, on the other hand, deals with polyphony in terms of a multiplicity of divergent or opposite voices, and, as such, he emphasizes the principle of discontinuity more than the principle of continuity. Secondly, the two authors present different views on social aspects of the self. James (1890) elaborated extensively on the social aspects of the individual self, as exemplified by his frequently cited phrase: "A man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him" (p. 294). Bakhtin, however, was primarily interested in the notions of "voice" and "dialogue" which enable him to deal with the dynamics of internal and external dialogical relationships and their mutual influence (Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Holquist, 1990; Leiman, 2002; Morris, 1994; Valsiner, 2000; Wertsch, 1991).

The dialogical self emerges from a reformulation of the Jamesian I-Me relationships in terms of Bakhtin's polyphonic novel. The noun

"position" and the verb "positioning" are used to express the theoretical idea that the *I* is always positioned in time and space and not, in any way, hovering above itself or the world. As parts of a polyphonic novel the different I-positions are embodied in voices and able to entertain dialogical relationships, both internal and external, with other voices. On the basis of these considerations, Hermans, Kempen, and Van Loon (1992) conceptualized the self in terms of a dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous I-positions. In this conception, the I has the capability of moving from one spatial position to another 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. All of them have a story to tell about their own experiences from their own stance. As different voices, these characters exchange information about their respective Me's, resulting in a complex, narratively structured self.

## The Coexistence of Continuity and Discontinuity

Along these lines, the dialogical self incorporates both continuity and discontinuity. According to James, there is a continuity between my experience of, for example, my wife, children, friend, and opponent because they belong to the same I-Me or I-Mine combination. Bakhtin, however, conceives a discontinuity between the same characters as far as they represent different or even opposed voices in a dialogical space. The spatial term "position" always assumes the existence of one or more other "positions" and, therefore, a multiplicity of positions and their mutual relationships are included in an organized repertoire. The differences, conflicts, and oppositions between the elements of this repertoire are expressions of the discontinuity of the self, whereas, at the same time, they remain part of the same continuous self. Even if positions are radically different and may at times be experienced as fragmented or pastiche-like, they are diachronically and synchronically united by a continuous I.

The question is: What is the repertoire? Given the extended nature of the self, the repertoire consists of two domains, an internal and an external domain (see Figure 1 later in this article). In the internal domain are located those positions which are appropriated by the person as belonging to his or her I. For example, I as a father, I as a mother, I as a child of my parents, I as a lover of music, I as vulnerable, I as a

victim of oppression. The external domain comprises all positions that refer to those people and objects in the environment that usually are considered as "mine." For example, my father, my children, my teacher, my friends,'my guest, my enemy, my god, my country. Between the internal and external domains of the self are open boundaries, as we have seen in the example of Paul, who first located the murderer exclusively in his external domain and later allowed this character to enter, at least to some degree, his internal domain. The openness of the boundaries can vary between persons and within the same person at different moments. For example, a son may be so dependent on his mother that he has great difficulty knowing if he is ventriloquating his mother's voice or speaking in his own voice. This relationship indicates a blurring of the boundaries. On the contrary, the boundaries are tightly closed when a person, as a result of an intense disappointment, wants to retreat within himself and avoid any contact with other people. A more differentiated picture emerges when a person is very open to his family members but very closed to people of a rival political group. In other words, parts of the boundaries are open whereas other parts are closed. Moreover, we may see significant fluctuations and changes on the open-closed dimension in the course of time.

Many positions, however, are simply outside the subjective horizon of the self and the person is simply not aware of their existence. As far as the person is aware of outside positions, they do not belong to the person's own repertoire. For example, I can be aware of the passengers in the train but they do not belong to my self. However, when I get involved in an interesting conversation with one of them, "my" co-passenger becomes for some time a meaningful part of the external domain of my self. Positions which are outside the self, as part of society, may enter the self-space at some moment depending on changes in the situation. For example, a child who goes to school for the first time, encounters a teacher (external position) and finds him/herself in the new position of pupil (internal position). Later, after having learned to read, the same pupil gets immersed in a favorite book with new characters that are added to the external domain. As this example suggests, one position may mediate the access to a variety of other positions.

The movement of positions and their mutual relation is dependent on cultural changes. Postmodern writers often point to the unprecedented intensification of the flow and flux of positions moving in and out of the self-space within relatively short time periods. Some authors suggest that this flow and flux leads to an empty self (Cushman, 1990) or a saturated self (Gergen, 1991). Such observations strongly suggest that we are living in an era in which the boundaries between different domains of the self and the outside world are highly perme-

able so that a great number of fluctuating positions come and go as temporary parts of the self. This flux implies also that the boundaries between the internal and external domains of the self are highly open so that a great variety of shifting internal positions is evoked by a zapping life style of a rather discontinuous self. It is, however, not at all certain that all positions show this rapid shifting. The acceleration of the process of positioning may well be counterbalanced by other parts of the self-system in which more stable positions are located, maintaining the continuity of the system (Roland, 2001).

## The Decentralization of Self-Knowledge

It should be emphasized that the theoretical term "I-position" is not exclusively used for the internal domain of the self. Also the external positions, as parts of an extended self, are conceived as I-positions, that is, the other is conceived as another I. This point of view is consistent with Bakhtin (1929/1973) who said, "For the author the hero is not 'he' and not 'I' but a full-valued 'thou' that is another full-fledged 'I'" (p. 51). This point of view goes a step further than James' extended self. James' formulations seem to emphasize the extension of the self primarily on the level of the Me (the self-as-known). He distinguished physical, social, and spiritual aspects of the self as parts of the Me. In line with Bakhtin's point of view, the social other is not only part of the Me but also of the I. So, the other as part of the external domain of the self is not only seen as "mine" but also as another I which, rather than being an extension of the self on the object level, is a person like myself or is an object with person-like qualities (e.g., a piece of art, a toy, a picture, nature, or a beautiful place which "speaks" to you). This theoretical upgrading of the other as another person in the self implies that the other is more than an extension of the Me on the object level, but first of all an extension of I on the subject level. The implication is that the other is conceived as a person who, as another I, is able to tell a story about him/herself, and can do this as a relatively autonomous being with its own existence (even a house has its own story). Rather than an extension of the Me, the other is an I-Me reality located both on the subject and the object level. This point of view has a far reaching consequence. The other is not simply known as a fact but can only be known as far as I approach the other in a dialogical way. That is, the other has to reveal him/herself from his or her own perspective. The other as alter ego has two implications: the other is like me (ego) and, at the same time, is another one (alter). Self-knowledge is then not only knowledge of myself (internal domain of the position repertoire), but also knowledge of the other as alter ego

(external domain of the position repertoire). In this way, self-knowledge and knowledge of the other are intimately intertwined.

The intimate theoretical relationship between self and other has implications for the identity question which is traditionally phrased in terms of "Who am I?". From the perspective of the dialogical self, this question should be rephrased as "Who am I in relation to the other?" and "Who is the other in relation to me?". This question opens two routes of investigation. First, self-knowledge may vary depending on the relationship with other people. For example, in the contact with some of my colleagues, I'm becoming aware that I am quite competitive, but in the contact with my teammates, I am quite cooperative. Second, self-knowledge poses the problem of the partial knowledge of the other as alter ego. Self-knowledge is then the discovery of the alterity of the other, and by consequence, my self-knowledge increases when the alterity of the other is admitted and explored as part of the external domain of my self. In this sense, self-knowledge concerns not the self as object but the self as project: the self-in-relation-to-the-other is a form of social exploration and discovery as part of an unfinished dialogue, both external with the actual other and internal with the imagined other. When the other is included in the self as an alter ego who should be addressed in its otherness, self-knowledge is at the same time a moral enterprise. (For moral development as a dialogical self view, see Day & Tappan, 1996; Tappan, 1999; for the notion of the alterity of the other person, see Levinas, 1969.)

The theoretical argument for including the other in the self as alter ego, doesn't deny or exclude the possibility of studying empirically the other as objectified or as a projection of the internal positions of the repertoire. For example, in war situations we often witness that an enemy-position emerges in the external domain of the self as a result of anxiety and threat in the internal domain. The enemy may be totally dehumanized and devaluated as "vermin" or seen as a dangerous opponent with demonic attributes. In that case the enemy is experienced as "entirely different from us" and subjected to an extreme splitting between in-group and out-group, the latter receiving archetypical shadings (Beebe, 2002). In that case the alter-ego as a possibility of the dialogical self is seriously reduced and the dialogue becomes extremely asymmetrical and power-laden or even totally disappears.

## Individual Versus Collective Voices

The open boundaries of the self have another implication which bears directly on discussions on individualism (e.g., Richardson, Rogers, &

McCarroll, 1998; Sampson, 1988). Recently, Roland (2001) pointed out that people from Eastern cultures like India and Japan show a self that is more a we-self, or an I-self that is far more contextually experienced in dialogical relationships than is typical of Northern Europeans and North Americans. Roland warns against cultural/philosophical assumptions that may, unreflectedly, be introduced in psychological theories of Western origin. In line with this argument, it should be noted that the distinction between internal and external positions, with highly open boundaries between the two domains, acknowledges any fusion between internal and external positions representing the experience of a we. In the form of a group, a culture, or a society, the we corresponds with what Bakhtin would call a collective voice. As collective voices, groups, cultures, and societies may be involved in dialogical relationships including their differences in power.

For theoretical and economical reasons, the term "I-position" is incorporated as a central term into dialogical self theory. This term covers not only internal positions but also external positions, and covers not only positions with an experiential I-quality but also positions with an experiential we-quality. In fact, positions can range on a continuum between the experience of I at the one extreme and the experience of we at the other extreme. People from different cultures and from different groups within the same culture may locate themselves at different ends of the continuum. Moreover, the model allows for the typical observation that within a particular culture, the same person talks in some cases as I but in other cases as we, depending on the positions of the repertoire involved (Pillsbury, 1998).

A dialogical point of view has the promise of broadening individualistic assumptions which may be inherent in some of James' formulations on the self. A dialogical view may broaden the I-Me distinction, representing individual voices talking about themselves, in the direction of a We-Us distinction, representing collective voices talking about themselves. The latter distinction allows groups, communities, and cultures to be incorporated as collective voices in the self. Collective voices are not simply outside the self as an external community, but they are part of the individual self and, at the same time, transcend it as part of the broader historical and social community.

## The Dialogical Brain: The Other as Part of Our Physiology

As opposed to the Cartesian self, the dialogical self deviates not only from an antinomy between individual and society, but also from any

dualism between body and mind. Recent developments in brain sciences are in support of the view that the other is not simply "outside the brain," but represented as part of a developing brain. Researchers are increasingly appreciating a multilevel integrative approach labeled as "social neuroscience" (e.g., Cacioppo & Berntson, 1992) and "affective neuroscience" (e.g., Panksepp, 1991). One of the developments in brain research that bears directly on the dialogical capacities of the mind concerns the orbitofrontal cortex, an area located above the eyes and having many connections with the right cerebral hemisphere. This part of the brain is thought to be involved in the development of reciprocal interactions between mother and child and, closely related to such interactions, in affective self-regulation. Due to its wide network of anatomical linkages, the orbitofrontal cortex occupies a unique position between cortex and subcortex. It has many connections both with hypothalamic and autonomous areas, and with the brain stem neuromodulator systems. As such, the orbitofrontal cortex plays a central adaptive role in emotional processes, and it is thought to be involved in homeostatic affective regulation and attachment functions (Tucker, 1992).

One of the most prolific researchers of the orbitofrontal cortex, Schore (1994, 2001), argues that complex functional brain systems are not ready-made at birth and do not arise spontaneously in development, but are formed in the process of social contact between child and caregivers and as a result of the activity of the child. Schore is particularly interested in the early postnatal growth of the orbitofrontal area. It is his central tenet that the early social environment, mediated by the primary caregiver, directly influences the evolution of structures in the brain that are responsible for the socioemotional development of the child. In response to such influences, hormonal and neurohormonal responses are triggered leading to physiological alterations which are registered within specific areas in the infant's brain. As a result, the brain undergoes a structural maturation during a sensitive period (particularly, from the end of the first year to the middle of the second year). The caregiver attunes herself to the child's internal state by "state sharing" and "affect-synchrony" (see Stern, 1985). Through "reflected appraisals" in nonverbal, prelinguistic dialogues with the child, the caregiver selects and influences, by her intonations, facial expressions, sounds, and touching, specific emotional states which the emerging self can experience. In reflecting the child's emotional states and responding to them, the caregiver also facilitates transitions from one state to another, for example, from a high level of anxiety to relaxation. As a result of repetitions in the course of time, such states and the transitions from one to the other get established in the developing brain.

In the light of pervasive influence of physiological alterations on

the maturation of the brain, Schore (1994) refers to the ability of the dialogical self to occupy a "multiplicity of positions" as reflecting the emergent capacity to switch adaptively between psychobiological states that are colored by different affects (p. 495). When the maturing child develops a dialogical self, she is increasingly able to transcend her immediate state (e.g., distress) and to enhance "self-solace" capacities. That is, the child is able to make the transition between the two states also when the mother is not present (see also Wilson & Weinstein, 1992). The mature orbitofrontal cortex, involved as it is in homeostatic regulation, is increasingly able to adjust and correct emotional responses, given its capacity to shift between different limbic circuits and to make a transition between high and low arousal states in response to stressful alterations of external environmental conditions. The capacity of the orbitofrontal system to facilitate such transitions enables the dialogical self to maintain continuity across various situational contexts. Access to developmentally mature orbitofrontal circuits allows the individual to engage in an internal dialogue for the purpose of adapting her internal states to a particular external situation. As Schore (1994) extensively argues, this capacity to make transitions from negative to positive states of mind, and to realize a certain level of adaptive continuity of the self, is seriously reduced in forms of insecure attachment (pp. 373–385).

The maturation of the orbitofrontal cortex of the child, Schore emphasizes, is dependent on the empathy of the mother and other caregivers. As developmental psychologists have argued (e.g., Stern, 1985), the capacity to understand the distress of another self begins with an accurate appraisal of the other's face, which can be seen as the "display board" of emotions and the site of the body where the self is most typically located (see also Broucek, 1991). Understanding another distressed person requires the ability to shift from a positive or neutral state into the negative state of the other and to be tolerant to an experience of distress within the internal domain of the self. In order to have access to a distressed state of the other, the self must be able to read one's own emotional state and assess the state of the other with sufficient accuracy. This can be realized only if a self-comforting mechanism is available that can regulate a negative affective state and shift it back to a positive one. In this sense, the dialogical self of the caregivers and that of the child are closely related and play a significant role in the development of a flexible movement from one position to the other. As far as such repetitive movements get established across a broader range of situations, the child develops the general trait of 'ego-resiliency' (Block & Block, 1980; Van Lieshout, Scholte, Van Aken, Haselager, & Riksen-Walraven, 2000).

As the workings of the orbitofrontal cortex suggest, the child, and later the adult, when faced with stress, want to return to the ordinary self-position which offers sufficient safety, security, and relaxation to keep a feeling of continuity of the self. To what extent is dialogue possible, if the person continuously wants to return, and automatically moves, to one position or a few positions which fulfill this desire? In a recent discussion of the "dialogical brain" (Lewis, 2002) makes an attempt to tackle this problem. For the sake of illustration, he analyzes phrases like "That was stupid" or "You are dumb" that the person (or an imagined other) is saying to him/herself while performing a task. In such situations of internal dialogue, Lewis observes, there is neither a clearcut other voice, nor much turn-taking or explicit sequence of question and answer. Rather, internal dialogues are usually sublingual and inchoate and there doesn't seem to be much elaboration and development of a dialogue with another voice. As a consequence, the person operates more from a familiar I-position than from any other position and, moreover, continuously returns to situations in which this position can be reached. It seems that on this sublingual and inchoate level, we are more conservative and monological than progressive and dialogical. Along these lines Lewis presents a model that is based on neuroscientific evidence and, at the same time, compatible with dialogical self theory. He concludes that in our daily lives we are involved in a dialogical relation with an anticipated, almost heard other from the perspective of a familiar and rather continuous I-position. Such another, as part of the external domain of the self, produces statements like "good!", "too bad!", "stupid!" or more complex utterances like "You see, this leads to nothing, as always" or "When there is will, there is a way," coming from voices of significant others in the remote past, whose positions are incorporated as stabilized parts into the external domain of the self. This model is consistent with Schore's (1994) work on the orbitofrontal cortex which produces, in its linkage to the subcortical limbic system, an affectively charged, gist-like sense of an interpersonal respondent, which is based on stabilized expectations from many past interactions. Lewis' model has the advantage that it shows how relatively stable, sublingual voices put limits on the linguistic, dialogical processes. These limits are not to be evaluated necessarily as a disadvantage, because they may contribute, in specific situations, to our action readiness and behavioral efficiency.

The sublingual voices, however, do not always produce efficiency and action readiness. They can also be part of a conflictual organization of the self when established positions are discontinuous with sociohistorical changes. Roland (2001) gives the example of the Women's Movement in the United States, started in the 1960s, which made it

possible for many women to pursue careers in combination with having a family, which was quite rare before that time. Intense guilt feelings over leaving their children arose from profound identifications with traditional mother roles incorporated into an earlier layering of the self. At the same time, there was heightened anxiety over not handling their careers well enough, a feeling which was due to young adulthood opportunities and ideals, supported by voices from peers and colleagues. In this way positions rooted in the past (e.g., I as good mother) clashed with later positions (e.g., I as a colleague) as the result of significant sociohistorical changes, leading to conscious or unconscious guilt feelings and a hampering of the flexibility of the self.

## Main Features of the Dialogical Self: Summary

In summary, the central theoretical concept of the I-position combines the notion of "position" by which the self is extended towards a discontinuous heterogeneity of individuals and groups of the society, and the notion of the I that preserves the continuity and agency of the same self. As a response to the Cartesian self, the dialogical self assumes the existence of an embodied, spatialized, extended, socialized, and open system with dialogical relations between positions. It is further supposed that dialogical relations are always more or less asymmetrical and characterized by power differences.

## REORGANIZATION OF THE POSITION REPERTOIRE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A DIALOGICAL SPACE

The remainder of this article illustrates how the preceding theoretical considerations can lead to the assessment and change of the position repertoire of clients in counseling or psychotherapy. Three notions which are relevant to the reorganization of the position repertoire will be discussed: the innovation of the self, the construction of a "dialogical space," and the development of a metaposition.

## The Innovation of the Self

There are three ways in which the self can be innovated. First, a new position can be introduced into the system and included in the organization of the self. Potentially, each new situation can lead to a new

position in the self, but the openness to new positions strongly depends on the existing organization of the repertoire. In their study of embodied dialogue in the first year of life, Fogel, De Koeyer, Bellagamba, and Bell (2002) introduce a distinction which is directly relevant to the innovation of the self, one between rigid and creative frames in the mother-child interaction. Whereas rigid frames are relatively unchanging over repeated instances, creative frames emerge as a result of improvisational coactivity with a broad array of possibilities for innovation of the self. In their case study of Susan, an infant of 15 months, Fogel and colleagues give an example of a rigid frame. Whereas the child wants to climb up the slope of a slide, her mother wants her to climb from the steps. As part of a battle of wills, this circular episode is repeated without many variations and both parties seem stuck in this situation. In a creative frame, on the other hand, the mother invites her daughter to play the "lion" game with a hand puppet. In the past, mother has always played the role of the lion (roaring and scaring), whereas Susan has always played the role of the recipient (being scared). In the session described, the child, for the first time, puts the lion on her own hand with the help of the mother and acts as if to scare the mother. In this situation, Susan is playing with a new I-position and experiences the corresponding emotions. In this way she learns to shift flexibly from the position of the scared child to the position of the dominant lion-adult and vice versa, experimenting with the new position and its associated sounds, behaviors, and emotions. In the example of the battle of wills, however, the child is stuck to an existing position and there is not much of a coconstruction. The interactions in creative play are similar to the adaptive switch between psychobiological states as part of the maturing orbitofrontal cortex, discussed earlier in this contribution. The rigid play, on the other hand, is similar to forms of insecure attachment in that both cases reflect a stabilized, inflexible way of positioning with closed boundaries between the internal and external domain.

A second form of innovation exists when positions move from the background of the system to the foreground, or to use another metaphor, when deeper layered positions are brought to the surface. In that case, the positions are already part of the system but they become accessible as the result of a reorganization of the self. Lysaker and Lysaker (2001), for example, studied schizophrenia as a "collapse of the dialogical self" and followed a client through three phases: before, during, and after a schizophrenic period. They found that particular positions which were active in the first phase (e.g., I as a lover of music) seemed to disappear in the second phase, but could be activated again in the third phase. Such a finding suggests that particular

positions may be backgrounded for a shorter or longer period in a person's autobiographical history as if they disappeared entirely, but the fact is that they are no longer accessible. In a subsequent reorganization of the self, during psychotherapy, their accessibility is restored.

A third form of innovation can be observed when two or more positions are supporting each other or develop some form of cooperation so that they form a new subsystem in the self. As part of a coalition, positions that have similar purposes or orientations can go together (e.g., I as enjoyer of life and I as playful), but it is also possible that a coalition emerges between positions that were previously opposites of each other. As part of a psychotherapy, I assisted a client who suffered from extreme doubts about his own capacities and followed the development of his position repertoire over a period of 18 months. In the beginning of psychotherapy it became clear that there were three positions which played a main role in his present life: the doubter, the perfectionist, and, somewhat in the background, but very important to him, the enjoyer of life. Although this character seemed to be an enduring feature in his personal history, it was strongly suppressed by the cooperation between the doubter and the perfectionist, the second one compensating for the anxiety aroused by the first one. In the course of the therapy, we discovered that the perfectionist position could be tackled by learning to delegate tasks to other people at the right moment, and he learned to practice a new style of working for more than one year. When we examined his repertoire for a second time, the most significant finding was the fact that the perfectionist and the enjoyer had formed a coalition, which was strong enough to push the doubter to the background of the self-system. He was increasingly able to enjoy a good job without completing it in every small detail. The new coalition represented a reorganization of a significant part of his repertoire. From this example I learned that it is possible to form coalitions between positions that were initially opposed and seem to exclude each other (for more detail see Hermans, 2001b).

This phenomenon of a "coalition between opposites" can also be found in the area of cultural psychology. Bhatia analyzes an account from a Pakistani-American woman who is shifting between oppositional voices from different cultural milieus: "Such a catch-22! Your classmates do not think you are American enough, and your parents think you are too Westernized. . . " (Mani, 1994, quoted by Bhatia and Ram, 2001, p. 305). In their comment on this quotation, Bhatia and Ram emphasize that the battles of this woman with her family, the Muslim community, and the American society represent a dialogical negotiation that is more than a push-pull phenomenon. However discordant, the different voices may create a "symbiotic relationship of

ambivalence." The different positions may live off each other in a dynamic loop, and the ambivalence becomes a basis for the negotiation of the different parts of the self, although it may be associated with the feeling of pain and loss.

Although the self has the inherent capacity to innovate itself in a variety of ways, there are powerful forces at work which make the self function in rather conservative ways. Inspired by earlier theories on dissonance and psychological balance, Josephs and Valsiner (1998) describe how "circumvention strategies" are used as buffers against the sharp edges of conflicts and contradictions. For example, a woman may see herself as the "the future wife of X," but she may be warned by her family members that X is not the right man for her. Somewhere, she agrees with her family members that a future marriage will be a great risk. However, she may circumvent the contradictory position by saying to herself: "My love is so strong that I will change him." In this way the original position is not only protected from attack or correction, but the power base of this position may even be strengthened. Josephs and Valsiner (1998) describe how circumvention strategies are often formulated in the form of "but-sentences" (e.g., "Okay, maybe you are right, but I will change him"). The use of circumvention strategies suggest that positions, like people in a society, are organized in hierarchical power structures leading to the relative dominance of some positions over others. Such an organizational structure, however, reduces the multivoiced character of the self and moves it in a monological direction.

## The Creation of a Dialogical Space

If the self moves somewhere between innovation and conservatism, and between dialogue and monologue, how then can innovation be facilitated? An important reason for changing an existing repertoire is when power differences between positions are so strong that the dialogical potential of the system is seriously reduced or relevant voices do not get an opportunity to be heard. This statement applies both to the relationship between parts of a society, and to the workings of the self as a "society of mind" (Hermans, 2002). What follows demonstrates how the innovation of the self can be facilitated by the creation of a "dialogical space."

Working with refugee families in Norway, Reichelt and Sveaass (1994) wanted to consider themselves not as powerful interventionists, but as good conversationalists. In their search for solutions for the problems of those families, they acknowledged their clients as "mean-

ing experts" of their own lives and problems. This expertise of the family members functions as a starting point for the creation of a "conversational space," in which new meanings emerge:

> Therapeutic conversation is the process through which the therapist and the client participate in the co-development of new meanings, new realities and new narratives. The therapist's role, expertise, and emphasis in this conversational process is to develop a free and open conversational space and to facilitate an emerging dialogical process in which "newness" can occur. (Goolishian & Anderson, 1992, pp. 13–14; cited by Reichelt & Sveaass, 1994)

Elaborating on the notion of conversational space, Reichelt and Sveaass make a distinction between "good conversation" and "poor conversation" and explain that good conversation creates a space that allows for mutual reflection that is not dominated by the therapist's ideas of problems and solutions. In poor conversations, the two parties do not seem to meet (parallel talk), they do not find a common direction so that everything seems to be elusive (tangential talk), or the conversation gets stuck by the client's repeated demands for help. The authors describe their work as "sailing between the Scylla of the miseries of the families and the Charybdis of our commitment to movement and solution-oriented preferences" (p. 260). This work suggests that dialogues, particularly with people from other cultures, require a form of conversation that has a sufficient degree of symmetry so that the voices of their culture of origin get an opportunity to speak from their own specific point of view. A certain degree of symmetry is required for the coconstruction of a dialogical space.

## Richard's Personal Position Repertoire

In the following, a method is presented for the assessment and change of a "personal position repertoire" (PPR method; Hermans, 2001b) which is a combination of a qualitative and quantitative procedure (see Raggatt, 2000, for an alternative method). The quantitative part employs a grid format (Kelly, 1955). The main purpose of this presentation is to show that, for the construction of a dialogical space, it is necessary that positions have a high degree of fit with each other and complement each other. The method is illustrated with the case of Richard.

Richard, 38 years old, contacted a psychotherapist after many years of general dissatisfaction with his life as a whole. More specifically, he complained that he was not able to make any choices on important matters in his life. He had intense feelings of guilt that he had not

really chosen his girlfriend with whom he lived together for years. His work as a part-time administrator was unsatisfying for him because he felt it was below the level of his capacities, and he considered this as the result of not finishing his university studies. He considered himself as a failure and was often overwhelmed by shame, guilt, and doubt about his own qualities and about his life as a whole.

We have worked together almost one year: Richard as the client, Els Hermans-Jansen as his psychotherapist, and myself as personality psychologist. Our common purpose was to explore Richard's general dissatisfaction, the nature of his perceived obstacles, and to promote his well-being. After discussion of Richard's situation, the psychotherapist and I decided to propose that Richard examine his position repertoire and work further from there. Richard was provided with a list of approximately 50 internal positions and 40 external positions and invited to select those positions which played some role in his life. He was allowed to change the terms if he thought he could make them more fitting to his own experiences and language. Moreover, he was given the opportunity to add some positions formulated in his own language. For an overview of Richard's positions see the Appendix.

The procedure represents an interplay between the language of the psychologist (who provides an initial list of terms) and the language of the client (who is allowed to adapt the provided terms and to introduce additional ones). Those positions that Richard himself has added are marked by C in the Appendix. (For the internal positions see the row indications in the matrix; for the external positions, see the column indications; for a discussion of the rationale behind the list of internal and external positions, see Hermans, 2001b.)

## Matrix of Internal and External Positions

Next, Richard was invited to estimate the extent to which an internal position is prominent in relation to a particular external position. Concentrating on the first internal position, he was requested to indicate on a 0–5 scale the extent to which this position is prominent (in a positive or negative way) in relation to every external position (0 = *not at all*, 1 = *very little*, 2 = *to some extent*, 3 = *quite a lot*, 4 = *much*, and 5 = *very much*). In this way, all internal positions are rated in relation to all external positions. The result is a matrix of internal positions (rows) and external positions (columns) with the prominence ratings (extent of coming forward) in the entries (see Appendix).

Typically, internal positions differ to the extent in which they are prominent in relation to various external positions. For example, one

of Richard's main positions, I as avoidant, received high prominence ratings in relation to his partner, his father, and his grandfather, but low ratings in relation to his father-in-law, mother-in-law, and nature. These differences exemplify the contextualized nature of the process of positioning: A particular internal position is more or less prominent in relation to a particular external position.

The relationships between positions can be investigated in three ways: (a) between internal and external positions; (b) between different internal positions; and (c) between different external positions. For each of the three kinds of relationship a separate matrix can be developed. In most investigations a matrix of the first type is preferred because the internal-external dialogue is seen as the most central one.

## Procedure for Selecting a Dominant Position

In principle, it is possible to study each of the positions in the context of the repertoire as a whole. The usual procedure is to take one position as a starting point and to work from this in the direction of the reorganization of the repertoire. The steps of the procedure are illustrated by Richard's case.

1. The psychotherapist invited Richard to select one position which he considered as playing a particularly important role in his present life and which he would like to examine as part of this investigation. After a brief discussion with the psychotherapist, Richard was quite sure that he wanted to select his "avoidant" position for scrutiny, a position which was added by himself (see Appendix).
2. The psychotherapist made use of a theater metaphor in order to explain the results of a correlation between two positions: The internal characters enter the scene from the left side whereas the external ones enter the scene from the right side. Some of the internal characters tend to go together when meeting the external characters. In depicting the relations between the positions in this way, the client can understand that two positions which go together, show high correlations between their respective rows in the matrix. Clients have little difficulty understanding this after they themselves have filled in the matrix.
3. The psychotherapist asked Richard to mention some characters which he expected to go together with "I as avoidant." Richard checked the list of internal positions and selected a few positions as going together with the "avoidant." Next, the therapist

added to each selected position the corresponding correlation
with the avoiding one so that Richard could see if his selections
were confirmed or disconfirmed by the correlations (see Table
1). Richard selected six positions in the following order (the
corresponding correlations are added):

- ashamed (.46)
- will-less (.84)
- regretting (.75)
- guilty (.69)
- fearful (.51)
- child of my parents (.63)

The fact that the correlations of the selected positions are positive
and relatively high, suggests that Richard's estimation of the associa-
tion of the avoiding position with the selected positions corresponds
quite closely with the actual findings of the investigation. This means
that, in this part of the investigation, the perspective of the client is
supported by the findings of the investigation. However, when the
total list of correlations with the "avoidant" is inspected (Table 1),
there are some positions which were not selected by Richard, but nev-
ertheless show correlations that are higher than most of the selected
positions:

- perfectionist (.80)
- dreamer (.78)

Looking at these two positions with his psychotherapist (client
and therapist sit side by side), Richard was asked the following ques-
tion: "Here you have some positions which you didn't mention as
going together with the avoidant, but which, according to these find-
ings, are still closely related to your avoidant position. What do you
think of it?" Richard answered:

> I tend to see them as a pair [the perfectionist and dreamer]. The
> dreamer is the one who proposes things. The perfectionist then has
> a critical look at what has been made of it. The dreamer is the phan-
> tast, without any limitation by reality. The dreamer is very free and
> active. He is strongly developed. The perfectionist is more like a
> gatekeeper. He looks ahead: "This will be nothing." He also looks
> back and sees what has come out of all those dreams. He knows
> how it should be done. The perfectionist looks compassionate, shakes
> his head. . . .

As these remarks suggest, Richard recognizes the two positions
(perfectionist and dreamer) as playing a significant role in his life and

**TABLE 1** Correlations of the avoidant position with the other internal positions of Richard's repertoire

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Will-less | .84 | 24. Idealist | .35 |
| 2. Perfectionist | .80 | 25. Deep inside | .33 |
| 3. Dreamer | .78 | 26. Recognition seeker | .32 |
| 4. Regretting | .75 | 27. I as '70-period student | .32 |
| 5. Worring | .73 | 28. Warmth seeker | .29 |
| 6. Guilty | .69 | 29. Jealous | .23 |
| 7. Child of my parents | .63 | 30. Deceiver | .22 |
| 8. Dependent | .60 | 31. I as Partner | .19 |
| 9. Doer not acting | .59 | 32. Like to be in company | .09 |
| 10. Disappointed | .58 | 33. Stiffness | .07 |
| 11. Vulnerable | .54 | 34. Rationalist | .06 |
| 12. Fearful | .51 | 35. Conscience | .02 |
| 13. Child in myself | .48 | 36. Understanding | .00 |
| 14. Father yes | .47 | 37. Dominating | −.07 |
| 15. Sexual absent | .47 | 38. Presenting outside | −.16 |
| 16. Ashamed | .46 | 39. Strong upper body | −.20 |
| 17. Restless seeker | .45 | 40. I as man | −.21 |
| 18. Adventurer in fantasy | .41 | 41. I as colleague | −.26 |
| 19. Independent | .39 | 42. Reserved | −.30 |
| 20. Like to be alone | .38 | 43. Clown | −.33 |
| 21. Doubter | .37 | 44. Cordial | −.41 |
| 22. Father no | .36 | 45. Relaxed | −.50 |
| 23. Spiritual | .36 | 46. Stable-firm | −.81 |

indicates that they tend to alternate. The dreamer is continuously building air castles, but these dreams are only partly fulfilled or never realized. This leads the perfectionist to give a merciless and harsh judgment indicating that Richard is a failure. This leads the dreamer, in turn, to build new castles as a compensation for delayed or unsatisfying accomplishments.

## The Inaccessibility of the Perfectionist

In the following sessions it became increasingly clear that Richard had not incidentally omitted the perfectionist in the list of selected positions as going together with the avoidant one. Rather, he seemed to have emotional reasons which led him to exclude the perfectionist.

> . . . My perfectionism comes forward here. In fact, *I don't like this term very much. I don't want to talk much about it. There is something in myself which is opposed against this. I'm becoming aware that my analysis is strongly directed by my emotions. Perhaps the perfectionist is at least as important as the avoidant* (emphasis added).

In one of the later sessions he pointed again to the importance of the perfectionist and his resistance to admit the influential role of this position:

> The perfectionist: I approach this with much caution. I tend to make movements around this topic. I shrank from giving this a place. It is an arrogant figure: this passionate shaking his head. "This is not noteworthy." This perfectionism has taken the form of expectations which have formed my personality for a long time. Memories are transformed into expectations. As a truck driver I once caused an accident. Ultimately, there was no more than material damage. But at that moment I thought, "This is what you have made of your life." It was something that went beyond that situation, it was an expectation. It was the feeling that I was not a person in myself. It was rather a movement by other people, some kind of melting of my parents and myself. My grandfather had very negative expectations of me, that nothing would become of me, that I had no persistence. I was afraid of his depreciation. At the same time I'm very wary of putting the problem in my grandfather or my parents.

The last remark about the relationship between expectations and the influence of significant others in the past exemplifies the role of inchoate and sublingual voices as discussed earlier.

Gradually, we, Richard, the psychotherapist, and I, became aware that not the avoiding position but the perfectionist was the most influential position in the system. For the three of us, this was something of a discovery. In the beginning of the investigation we were convinced that the avoidant character represented the most influential position. Later, we discovered that the perfectionist, not a foreground but a background position, was the most influential position in the present organization of the repertoire.

## The Introduction of a New Position

Given the dominant role of the perfectionist and his unattainable standards, the three of us decided that Richard would start with some "innocent" activities, which were, in the eyes of the perfectionist, scarcely noteworthy. This was done in order to explore a space in the self that was somewhere beyond the reach of the dictatorial perfectionist. On the basis of Richard's experiences in the past, it was expected that these activities would give him at least some pleasure. He was encouraged to engage in some relaxing activities like running, cycling, and watching birds together with some friends and tell us next time about

his experiences. The strategy behind this plan was to stimulate Richard to do things at a very low-expectation level, without the pressure of any standards of excellence.

Two weeks later, Richard told us that his mood was somewhat improved in the last two weeks. He explained that doing these "innocent" activities, he could feel that there were moments that he could accept the possibilities he had. "In these activities, not much progress is needed, there is less self-blaming and there are far fewer obstacles, and less energy is spoiled." He continued: "By this acceptance, I experience somewhat more lightness in my existence. I often continue to ruminate, yet I have created some islands of well-being." In telling about his activities and his experiences, he spoke about our role, the psychotherapist and me, in his slightly changing view of himself.

> You accept me, and that's okay; I pick up ordinary activities and you agree with that; there is not the pressure to take it very seriously. And these activities work. They provide an antidote to my self-image. *I make space* for doing these things and also my friends give me that space. This also liberates me from isolation (emphasis added).

In this short quotation, Richard brings together three things which are relevant from a psychotherapeutic standpoint: (a) the small steps are somewhat beyond the reach of the dominant perfectionist position; (b) these small activities create a space ("islands of well-being") which liberates him from permanent feelings of oppression; and, last but not least, (c) these activities, linked with our position as external helpers, create a route to a new internal position which seems to be of great importance for his future self-development: "I as accepting." He seemed to adopt this position in part of his internal domain (from external to internal acceptance). It is this position which is not only important on a long-term basis but also seems to have the potential to form a realistic counterweight to the dominant coalition of positions in which the perfectionist plays the most influential role.

## The Accepting Position as Complementary to the Perfectionist

In order to examine the workings of the new position (accepting) in a specific situational context, we invited Richard to describe a relevant situation in his daily life and to consider it from two opposite positions: the accepting and the perfectionist. The idea was to examine the confrontation between the two positions with attention to their dia-

logical relationship. Two weeks later, Richard described a situation in which the two positions played indeed a major role:

> *Acceptance.*
> This event, attending a lecture, the inspiring environment and the presentation, evoke a lot of memories about earlier times, how I hoped and wrestled; the dream to develop myself, to achieve much. Always I felt the disappointment and the failure and all these things came together in a source of aversion and accusation. Now I'm sitting here and cautiously I explore the possibility of acceptance. . . . I feel relaxation, lightness very directly, a cheerful feeling almost, like in a play . . . why not? Look forward, you get this free, consider the possibilities that are available and be content with what you have. The richness of sitting here and getting inspired, after the beautiful walk along the old buildings, by a presentation from which you may learn something . . . this is free.

> *Perfectionism*
> The feeling of sitting here so freely doesn't stay long enough. The space which was formed by the play of optimism, is pulled away by a much deeper desire, a desire as deep as the source that always distributes contempt to and about myself. Besides that, acceptance is not possible and not sufficient. The past should be banished and forgotten by a great future. Reproach must be transformed into pride . . . contempt into admiration.

> On my way home, I succeed in keeping myself somewhat outside these poles or roles. Acceptance, optimism, perfectionism. . . walking along the enormous autumn trees, I can consider them with a smile: A puppetry with the shy and modest accepting, the ruddy, excited optimist and the perfectionist as the angry caricatured pessimist.

> Not a bad day.

## Meaning Bridges Between Positions

In the preceding excerpt, Richard has selected a particular scene and tells about his experiences from two positions that are personally relevant to him. It is remarkable that, talking from his accepting position, Richard doesn't reflect about this position *only*. He starts with referring to his bad feelings associated with the perfectionist (". . . the dream to develop myself, to achieve much. . . ") and then moves to the accepting position ("I explore the possibility of acceptance. . . "). Apparently, he doesn't separate the two positions but shifts, in a rather flexible way, from the one to the other position so that the acceptant

position functions as a meaningful dialogical response to the perfectionist. He shifts from the one to the other in such a way that the transitions between the positions are articulated in comprehensible ways. Moreover, this shifting is not to be seen as a simple zapping between arbitrarily spread locations in the spaces of his mind. Rather, elements from one position are introduced as elements in the other so that, moving from the one to the other, their relational contrasts, oppositions, conflicts, and integrations are made visible. These linking formulations indicate the emergence of "bridges of meaning" (Honos-Web, Surko, Stiles, & Greenberg, 1999).

Whereas the relationship between the dreamer and the perfectionist, is *compensatory* and ultimately ineffectual, the relationship between the accepting and the perfectionist is a truly *complementary* one (Benjamin, 1997). That is, the accepting position has the potential to function as a counterforce that is sufficiently different, opposed and at the same time, *fitting* to the nature of the perfectionist. This position has the potential to make an effective contribution to the adaptive functioning of the position repertoire with an increase of well-being as a result ("I feel relaxation, lightness very directly, a cheerful feeling almost, like in a play. . . why not?").

Richard's dialogical space, as it was created in his contact with the psychotherapist, is depicted as the rectangle in Figure 1. Originally, the avoidant position seemed to reign in his repertoire. In the course of therapy, it was discovered that the perfectionist was even more important than the avoidant position and this crucial position became gradually accessible. Both the perfectionist and the avoidant were dynamically related to the voices of the partner, father, and grandfather in the external domain. In the course of therapy the accepting position was introduced as a complementary position in the internal domain (as opposed the perfectionist and avoidant positions) and the therapist as a complementary position in the external domain (as opposed to the voices of some of his significant others). These complementary positions (accepting and therapist), together forming a new coalition, created a dialogical space and represented a "healthy answer to the positions that were originally overly dominant.

## The Development of a Metaposition

According to Richard's story, the psychotherapist and I played an influential role in the emergence of his self-accepting position which finally led to a reorganization of significant parts of his repertoire. Our task as therapists was not only to accept him as a valuable person but
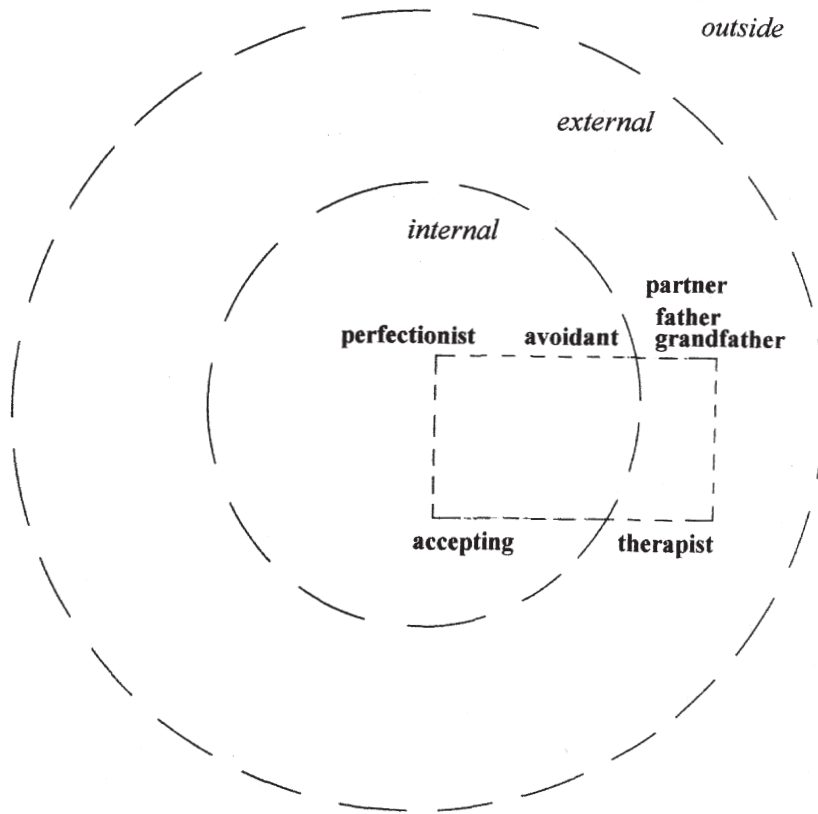
**FIGURE 1**   Main positions in Richard's repertoire.

also to assist him in investigating the psychological background of his problem. This background could be examined by the development of a metaposition from which the other positions, including their mutual relationships and specific organization, could be explored. Because we were involved in a cooperative enterprise with Richard, we as therapists were part of his metaposition, which emerged at the open boundaries between the external and internal domain of his self. In the course of therapy, we felt that his metaposition became primarily associated with his increasing self-acceptance and this was more than a rational insight; it was an emotional experience. His self-knowledge was seeded with affect-laden self-acceptance.

   A well-developed metaposition, which can also be described as an observer position (Leiman & Stiles, 2001), enables clients to separate themselves from the ongoing stream of experiences and to place them-

selves as authors, considering themselves as actors in specific situations. As narrating authors, they are located on the subject level of telling a story; as actors, they are functioning on the object level of the story told. As a result of training, counseling, psychotherapy, and forms of self-reflection in daily life, clients are able to develop their metaposition in such a way that their capacity for seeing relevant linkages among a variety of positions is strengthened. The more developed the metaposition, the more aware the person becomes of linkages between relevant positions (see Dimaggio, Salvatore, Azzara, & Catania's contribution in this issue).

A metaposition has several specific qualities: (a) it creates a certain distance toward the other positions (although it may be attracted, both cognitively and emotionally, toward some positions more than others); (b) it provides an overarching view so that several positions can be seen simultaneously; (c) it leads to an evaluation of the various positions and their organization; (d) it enables the participants to link the positions as part of their personal history (or the collective history of their group or culture), organizing positions into "chains" which show how one position leads to another; (e) the person becomes aware of the differences in his or her accessibility; (f) the direction of change and the importance of one or more positions for future development of the self becomes apparent; and (g) it can play a facilitating role in creating a dialogical space (e.g., the therapist functions as a metaposition in the client's external domain, together with corresponding positions in internal domain). In summary, the development of a metaposition with a broad scope contributes, more than most other positions, to the integration and continuity of the repertoire as a whole (see also Georgaca, 2001).


## CONCLUSION

At the start of this article, the Cartesian self was contrasted with the dialogical self, on the assumption that Cartesian notions are still deeply entrenched in many contemporary conceptions of the self. James' (1890) classic treatise on the topic can be considered as a first decisive attack on any dualistic conception of the self. At the same time, however, elements of individualism were still present in James' formulations, as Mead's (1934) more interactive approach has demonstrated. Now, more than 100 years after James, we have learned much from encounters with other cultures which have reminded us of our theoretical limitations. The kernel of the present contribution was to show how a further step beyond individualism can be made by taking the fundamental

notions of "voice" and "dialogue" into account. It is expected that such a step can contribute significantly to a more global validity of the concept of the self and to an understanding of the theoretical language of colleagues from other cultures (e.g., Chaudhary & Sriram, 2001; Ho, Chan, Peng, & Ng, 2001).

In his book *The Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin (1981) remarks that: ". . . language. . . lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's. . . " (p. 280). In a similar vein, it can be concluded that the self lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The self is half somebody else's.

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## Appendix
## Matrix of Internal and External Positions Filled in by Richard

| | 1. My partner Lisa | 2. My father | 3. My mother | 4. My father-in-law | 5. My mother-in law | 6. My sister Nancy | 7. My grandfather | 8. My colleague Dora | 9. My colleague Irve | 10. My friend Paul | 11. My friend Kevin | 12. My friend Jerry | 13. My friend Dan | 14. My friend Steven | 15. Figure in music: Ellington | 16. Figure in music: Beethoven | 17. I admire: Don Delilo | 18. Problematic person: Adrian | 19. Group: nature people | 20. Therapist: Els | 21. Supernatural being: needed | 22. My house: conflict as home | 23. My home: attic | 24. Nature |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I as man | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| 2. I as father yes | 5 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. I as father no | 5 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| 4. I as child of my parents | 4 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| 5. I as partner | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| 6. I as colleague | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| 7. I as '70-period student | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| 8. I as idealist | 5 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 5 |
| 9. I as independent | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 2 |
| 10. I as clown | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| 11. I as spiritual | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| 12. I as warmth seeker | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| 13. I as dependent | 4 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| 14. I as doer but not acting | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| 15. I as sexual who is absent | 5 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 |

| Item | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16. I as doubter | 5 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 1 |
| 17. I as understanding | 5 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 18. I as adventurer in fantasy | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| 19. I as dominating | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| 20. I as restless seeker | 5 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| 21. I as deceiver | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| 22. I as recognition seeker | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| 23. I as jealous | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| 24. I as perfectionist | 2 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| 25. I as disappointed | 5 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| 26. I as conscience | 2 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| 27. I as dreamer | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| 28. The child in myself | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| 29. I as rationalist | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 30. Strong part body: upper part | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| 31. Weak part of body: stiffness | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| 32. I as fearful | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| 33. Like to be in company | 3 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| 34. I as reserved | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 35. I as relaxed | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 36. I as stable-firm | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 37. I as cordial | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 38. Like to be alone | 3 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| 39. I as vulnerable | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| 40. I as deep-down inside | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 2 |
| 41. I presenting me to outside | 5 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| 42. I avoiding (C) | 5 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| 43. I as ashamed (C) | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 44. I as worrying (C) | 5 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 3 |

*(Appendix continues on next page.)*

# Appendix
## Matrix of Internal and External Positions Filled in by Richard (*Continued*)

| | My partner Lisa | My father | My mother | My father-in-law | My mother-in-law | My sister Nancy | My grandfather | My colleague Dora | My colleague Irve | My friend Paul | My friend Kevin | My friend Jerry | My friend Dan | My friend Steven | Figure in music: Ellington | Figurein music: Beethoven | I admire: Don Delilo | Problematic person: Adrian | Group: nature people | Therapist: Els | Supernatural being: needed | My house: conflict as home | My home: attic | Nature |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 45. I as guilty (C) | 5 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| 46. I as regretting (C) | 3 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| 47. I as will-less(C) | 5 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 2 |

*Note.* The rows of the matrix represent the internal positions and the columns the external ones. In Richard's case, the internal positions, Nos. 1-31 and the external positions, Nos. 1–24 are provided in the standard list. The clients or participants may add a specification (e.g., the name of a particular person or group), and they may even adapt the formulations so that they fit to their own experiences. Internal positions, Nos. 32–39 were provided as part of a specific research project in which positions related to the traits extraversion (Nos. 33, 34, 37, 38, and neuroticism (Nos. 32, 35, 36, 39) are studied in the context of the repertoire as a whole. The internal positions "I as deep-down inside" (No. 40) and "I as presenting myself to the outside" (No. 41) are provided in every investigation, because they reflect some basic aspects of the relationship between the internal and external world. At the end of the investigation, the clients or participants may add those positions which they want to include in the repertoire so that their own words may be studied in the context of the words provided by the standard list (Nos. 42–47 introduced by Richard). The clients or participant may also add positions which are imagined or longed for, although not part of their actual world. On the basis of knowledge of the specific personal history of the participant, the psychologist or psychotherapist may propose to the participants to add extra positions which are not in any standard list and not proposed by the clients or participants themselves.