

**ANTHROPOLOGY AND DIALOGICAL THEORY:
CONVERTING THE CONVERSATION ON THE PROCESSUAL SELF
(COMMENTARY ON VAN MEIJL)**

Benjamin Zabinski
Clark University, USA

ABSTRACT. The supplementation of anthropological theory with dialogical self theory and vice versa is elaborated upon through discussion of Toon van Meijl's article, "Culture and Identity in Anthropology." Contemporary conceptions of self in dialogical and anthropological theory are critically viewed in light of globalization's ubiquitous influence. The assertion of disunity and uncertainty as defining characteristics of the self in the face of globalization is critically examined, giving way to a self best analyzed processually.

Keywords: anthropology, dialogical self, globalization, intercultural contact zones, processual self, interdisciplinary research

Toon van Meijl (2008) makes a compelling case for building collaboration between anthropologists and dialogical self theorists. He recognizes the mutual benefit of joining anthropological identity theory and cultural theory with dialogical self theory, offering a focused analysis of where each discipline could supplement the other. He indicates that anthropologists lack a fitting theory to describe identity and culture, and certain contemporary dialogical assessments of the self in the face of modern globalization overlook elements well-documented by anthropologists. Rather than letting these two ships pass blindly in the night, van Meijl strives to light the way for them to meet and join courses. I will emphasize through this commentary the importance of this linkage, emphasizing the imperative of interdisciplinary discourse from this joining of disciplines for dialogical theorists, anthropologists, and all social scientists, in pursuit of an informed, well developed perspective on the self and his or her world.

AUTHOR'S NOTE. Benjamin Zabinski is a semiotically-oriented cultural psychologist interested in developmental identity theory, particularly from the dialogical perspective. His work includes exploration of the microgenetic creation and semiotic mediation of meaning-laden objects, and the process of empathizing, analyzed within the intrapersonal dialogical mindscape. His ongoing theoretical focus explores methodologies that can encompass the centrality of process underlying identity, and he seeks to implement interdisciplinary discourse between diverse social scientists to encourage the sharing and development of perspectives on common areas of concern such as culture, meaning, and the self. Email: zbabinski@gmail.com

I will brighten this theoretical sea even more: extending old avenues of exploration for both anthropology and dialogical self theory and building new paths in directions yet unexplored. Specifically, I wish to extend van Meijl's conversation regarding the modern/post-modern/post-post-modern self, with particular attention to the globalizing world's effect on the individual in terms of intrapersonal unity/disunity and certainty/uncertainty. In the underpinnings of each of these diametrically opposed dyads, and, by extension, in the underpinnings of contemporary notions of self, I will highlight the fundamental role of process.

In turn, I will critically compare the way in which the self is being discussed by van Meijl and by others with the contemporary concept of a fundamentally processual, dialogical self. I will show how current conversations on globalization and the dialogical self involve a self who is still couched in terms that imply a static self. Some current constructs within dialogical theory, while paying lip service to the self's dynamism, fail to describe it as processual; at best showing snippets of the self seen like the frames of a motion picture. No matter how fast we fly static images of the self by our eyes, we will be picturing it digitally, piecemeal, until we change our discourse to leave these snippets behind. To conceptually rework a dynamic construct of the self, we must develop a new lexicon that leaves behind the essentialist, digital self and embraces the self in movement.

Anthropology Meets the Dialogical Self

Van Meijl makes a strong case for dovetailing anthropological theory and dialogical self theory. He indicates key areas in anthropology that would be well supplemented by conceptual frameworks found within dialogical self theory, and likewise indicates where dialogical self theory would gain valuable insight from the field of anthropology. In his view, the disciplines are well placed to provide new perspectives that would complement and invigorate each other in areas where there is great need for reassessment. Before embarking on a detailed discussion of the effects and ramifications of forging strong links these two disciplines, it would be fitting to discuss in greater detail precisely the areas of potential supplementation.

Anthropology requires a revised theoretical viewpoint in order to provide a proper foundation from which to view modern individuals in the globalized, multicultural world. Anthropological theory, in van Meijl's view, relies too heavily today on outdated perspectives on both the individual and her or his culture. These historical precepts are mired in the antiquated presuppositions that the individual is relatively identical over time, and that the individual's culture remains nearly identical over time as well. These ideas within anthropological theory have predicated static, unchanging individuals, and have turned a blind eye to process and development in both the individual and the culture. This historical context is juxtaposed with the presently changing anthropological discourse on culture and identity. Drawing from Friedman

(1994), van Meijl contends that “the anthropological focus on homogeneity and permanence have gradually fallen into disarray. For that reason, too, the concepts of culture and identity have been intensely debated, as has the relationship between the two” (van Meijl, 2008, p 6). The anthropological concepts of culture and identity, which were grounded initially in frameworks of stability, stasis, and homogeneity, have come to a state ripe for metamorphosis, given the mutability, interdependence, and deeply processual life of the individual existing in the contemporary globalized era. In this time, where potential and actual cultural contact zones have multiplied many-fold, the anthropologist must have a firm and salient foundation that recognizes the inherently dynamic and actively mutable surroundings of the modern individual.

Dialogical theory, in turn, would be well supplemented by anthropological work. Through this article, van Meijl draws from anthropological analyses to show that individuals react to globalization in a variety of ways that have yet to be captured by contemporary dialogical analyses. These analyses can provide dialogical theorists with new and telling discussions of the complexities of the modern self from a strongly intercultural perspective.

Anthropology requires theoretical constructs that can encompass a dynamic, changing, heterogeneous culture and self. Simultaneously, the anthropological perspective is well situated to supplement dialogical self theory in analyzing the self's complex reactions to the globalized world. It is the current situation as globalized, having caused fundamental changes in the self's context, that has helped bring to social science's eye the issue of the self's multiple identifications within intercultural situation. Thus, I wish to treat the topic of globalization, with particular attention to how this has affected both the self, and the conceptualization of the self in anthropological identity theory and in dialogical self theory.

The Globalization of Cultural Contact Zones

Van Meijl rightly pinpoints globalization as the major contemporary factor contributing to a need to revamp anthropological notions of culture and identity. Globalization has greatly changed the relation of the individual with his or her social context: “over the past few decades the world has probably changed more swiftly than before. ... Never before have so many people been interconnected, with all due consequences for the lives of individuals.” (Van Meijl, 2008, p. 20). What remains to be suitably analyzed are the consequences of globalization on the lives of individuals, seen from the anthropological framework. While intercultural contact is nothing new, globalization has quantitatively and qualitatively changed how the individual relates to the rest of the world, and changed how the individual negotiates different (and sometimes contradicting) cultures and internal identifications in the intercultural contact zone.

The current era is one of trans-national, trans-cultural communication; migration; cultural integration; and cultural disintegration, on a greater scale than at any other time in human history. Additionally, when compared to past eras, globalization has brought about profound qualitative changes: by the fruits of technological revolution, a person can communicate with many very different cultures, worldwide, nearly simultaneously. This qualitative difference manifests itself through an increase in intercultural contact zones, which has produced concerns among dialogical self theorists about the changing level of certainty and unity in the contemporary dialogical self. Many people live astride different, sometimes conflicting cultures, on a day-to-day basis. This exponential increase in intercultural interaction provides new opportunities for growth and positive change for the individual through increased avenues of learning, employment, communication, etc., but at the same time is said to bring a greater potential for instability, uncertainty, division, and deconstruction of the internal world of the self (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007).

Before focusing on these potential boons and banes of the globalized situation and their impact on the individual, let us assess the relation of the individual to his or her globalizing circumstance. At the individual level, globalization reveals itself in the creation of "intercultural contact zones" (Appadurai, 1991), the encounter between the individual's cultural zone and a foreign cultural zone. To describe this process in its least complex conception, let us take a general case of an individual's cultural zone, and how he or she enters the intercultural contact zone. The individual exists always already as a part of her or his pre-established cultural zone. This pre-established cultural zone can be seen in terms of a personal culture and a collective culture (Valsiner, 2000). The individual expresses his or her own cultural values - the personal culture - and these are expressed within a milieu of others' expressed cultural values - the collective culture. There always exists a boundary between the personal culture and the collective culture that may be ambiguous, mutable, and in flux, as the values of the personal culture and the collective culture change in the individual.

There is also a group of cultural values that is recognized by the individual as being neither personally shared, nor collectively shared. This group consists of those cultural values seen by the individual as being shared among members of the collective culture, which are not shared by the individual; an unheld yet familiar field within the cultural zone. This distinction between the familiar and the foreign comes to the forefront at the individual's encounter with something internally perceived as culturally foreign, a moment typical of the globalized world. It is only in the intercultural contact zone that the individual perceives cultural values that exist outside of his or her established cultural zone. The values encountered within the intercultural contact zone are unheld, and, as yet, unfamiliar. However, their unfamiliarity cannot render them completely alien, since the individual often comes into contact with unfamiliar cultural values even within his or her own cultural zone.

The possible responses of the individual to the intercultural contact zone are multiplex. One possible response is a bolstering of the individual's current cultural zone in opposition to the foreign cultural zone (Otto & Pederson, 2000, 2005). Another is the assimilation into the foreign culture, as is often seen in the case of the children of immigrants (Wikan, 2002). Still another entails the individual taking useful elements of the foreign culture, while retaining other valued aspects of the pre-established culture. These possibilities, of course, represent only a small fraction of possible responses to contact with cultures perceived as alien. This is a point of great interest for social scientists studying intrapersonal microgenetic changes in relation to globalization. The increase in potential zones of intercultural contact, the increased opportunity for the individual to leave her or his cultural boundaries and be witness to fundamentally different ways of mediating with the world, reflects the individual as encompassing an ever-increasing reservoir of potential responses. It is not only the increasing heterogeneity of cultural practices (and hence individual reactions to globalization) that is a provocative focus, but the potentiality of reactions of globalizing individuals. An increase in exposure to foreign cultures entails an increase in possible perspectives, mores, reactions, mediations of the world by the individual. The individual in the face of globalization is complex; made more complex in the face of the globalizing world, in potential as much as in actual.

A Multitude of Responses: The Dialogical Self as an Innovative Conflict Resolver

The value that the anthropological perspective adds to the conversation on dialogical self theory is in providing the indication that while uncertainty and internal inconsistency are present in most lives at some point, different individuals react to these internal crises overtly in very different ways. The contribution of van Meijl, and of the anthropological perspective, resides in the supplementation of dialogical analyses with anthropological analyses, highlighting the innovative capacity of the self in the face of widened horizons of intercultural contact.

There is a common dialogical movement that underlies the overtly different responses to the globalizing world. Hermans emphasizes the person who recognizes inconsistencies within her- or himself at different times which in turn produce a crisis of selfhood, which may potentially be resolved through a mindset working towards a reunification of the self. Van Meijl emphasizes the self who also recognizes internal inconsistencies, but is not thereby provoked to resolve a dilemma of selfhood, or recognizes it as a dilemma and solves it in some way other than reunification. In both cases, when the self comes to a place of self-recognized inconsistency, she or he creates and uses dialogical semiotic mediations to confront the inconsistency. Whether through a self-ascribed reunification, or a recognition and acceptance of the self as inherently in discord, or any one of innumerable resolving strategies, the self confronts internal conflicts, dilemmas, and crises semiotically in multitudinous ways.

Increasingly in the face of globalization, individuals have internal inconsistencies. It is how they deal with these crises that is dialogical-theoretically interesting. Unification is but one tool that some use to resolve internal inconsistencies. Whether consciously striving toward a unity of the dialogical self, or coming to shrug it off and being comfortable with different parts of the self being in conflict, there is a commonality between these reactions in the semiotic confrontation of conflict. One may semiotically confront the conflict 'modernly' as the integration of selves into a unit, 'post-modernly' as accepting the irreconcilability, or altogether otherwise.

Both anthropological theory and dialogical self theory have been faced with the momentous task of analyzing complex individuals in their myriad responses to the complex, globalizing world, keeping in mind both the heterogeneity of these responses, and overriding commonalities in this intercultural circumstance. Two issues which have come to be of concern to dialogical theorists, uncertainty and unity, have been highlighted by van Meijl. I wish to treat his assessments of these aspects of the globalizing dialogical self, with attention to the underlying dynamism and heterogeneity of response that the globalizing self exhibits, in order to further discuss the ramifications of these responses to the way in which both anthropologists and dialogical self theorists discuss the contemporary self.

Dialogical Theory and Uncertainty

In order to supplement Dialogical Self theory with anthropological insights, van Meijl gives a close study of Hermans' and Dimaggio's (2007) implications of globalization on the structuring of the self. It is Hermans' and Dimaggio's contention that globalization creates a great deal of uncertainty in the self, in contrast to van Meijl's (2008) perspective.

The increasing interculturality of the world does not necessarily make the self increasingly uncertain at the same time. Of course, globalisation challenges people to extend their selves and identities beyond the bounded domain of traditional settings, which automatically leads to a multiplication of internal positions and intensifies the multivoicedness of the self, but whether it also leads to permanent uncertainty of the self is not self-evident. (Van Meijl, 2008, p. 16)

He hereby highlights the arena where the effects of globalization are most clearly demonstrated: the extension of the self's domain of traditional settings, and its effect on the dialogical self.

The mark of globalization is the dramatic and sudden increase in potentiality for an individual to come into contact with the unfamiliar. As such, and citing examples of job movement to offshore locations and increases in terrorist attacks on the global stage (along with, of course, the implicit widespread dissemination of these events through global media), it should be no surprise that Hermans and Dimaggio (2007), and

Hermans and Kempen (1998) would come to the conclusion that the contemporary self is increasingly uncertain, in many cases to an extreme of anxiety and worry. At the same time, uncertainty and anxiety in life have been ubiquitous in all times. These reactions constitute an important part of the developmental process that characterizes the self, as Hermans and DiMaggio acknowledge.

As van Meijl and I have both demonstrated, globalization leads to a more heterogeneous group of cultural identities overall. Some individuals change their personal culture when globalization offers them the opportunity. Some take from other cultures what they prefer, incorporating new meanings, values, and relations into their own culture. Some react to the increase in intercultural contact by a “walling off,” strongly identifying with what was identified with before and closing themselves off to the possibility of incorporating the values of any globalized culture. Common to all responses is a meeting between the individual and a foreign element. In all cases, there is a semiotic confrontation in the face of this foreign state. Many face increased uncertainty in their lives in the process, and continue to feel this uncertainty continuously, as they are confronted with more and more intercultural zones. Some, as van Meijl aptly demonstrates, do not experience any uncertainty in reaction to globalization. The lesson to take from these myriad reactions to a common confrontation is that the dialogical self reacts semiotically in a variety of ways to this contemporary situation. If we are to study the dialogical self in a globalized context, we ought to pay particular attention to this heterogeneous response to globalization. Whether uncertainty, anxiety, comfort, self-containment, or any of a great variety of responses is employed, it is important to consider each in its context, for its validity, and to draw conclusions about the dialogical self that recognize this cornucopia of possible reactions to the modern world.

Unity and the Self: What do we strive for?

Another important insight of van Meijl about the contemporary construal of the dialogical self presented by Hermans (2006) concerns the importance of unification to the dialogical self. Hermans suggests that the dialogical self, recognizing internal inconsistencies, seeks resolution in unification of the self. He further suggests both that this unification is unattainable and that this unifying process is unending. Van Meijl, in contrast, draws from his anthropological experience to argue that the dialogical self does not necessarily seek unification of different and disparate I-positions. He suggests that unity be done away with altogether as an inappropriate value, citing anthropological field analyses showing that many people can accept different, conflicting, and even irreconcilable parts of the self (Van Meijl, 2005, 2006). He argues that since these individuals recognize incongruities within themselves, and do not seek to resolve them and achieve unity, or even a meta-unity as also suggested by Hermans, the dialogical self must not necessarily be looking to achieve anything resembling unity.

Van Meijl's skepticism on this topic is, I believe, well-founded. His anthropological perspective informs a revealing contrast to current dialogical theory. He gives multiple anthropological accounts of persons in globalized contexts, living in zones intersecting two or more cultures, conceptualizing themselves as internally inconsistent, yet not striving for unification. This is, indeed, the value of the anthropological perspective for dialogical theorists. Anthropology provides dialogical theorists with valuable new sources of information about the dialogical self precisely in intercultural, globalized contexts.

In addition to providing pertinent examples of individuals living with inconsistent viewpoints, living with neither unification nor any resulting anxiety, van Meijl suggests that the term "unity" may indeed be ideologically misplaced in the study of the dialogical self. This line of reasoning can be drawn to a further conclusion on the dialogical self. As Hermans indicates, even if the dialogical self seeks a unification of its I-positions, such a position is never attainable. If the dialogical self were to strive toward unity, it would suggest, in reflection, that the self recognizes itself as teleologically oriented toward an end-state - an idealized, static, unchanging state of "unity." Further, the analysis of the self in "unity" as opposed to "disparity" further reflects a tacit assumption on the part of both van Meijl and Hermans that the self is to be analyzed atemporally, in a static, unchanging state.

When portraying the self as positioned toward a goal of unification, one analyzes the self as oriented toward stasis. The current, non-unified self in this perspective is changing, in flux, but oriented toward an idealized state of unification. Given the deeply processual, developmental basis that is at the crux of dialogical theory of the self, I would suggest with van Meijl that the concept of a unifying dialogical self is ideologically untenable. Since the ideal of unification can only provide itself in a static frame that precludes further development, it would not follow from the central developmentally-oriented tenets of dialogical self theory.

To illustrate this point, let us ask what is required in order to declare that a dialogical self is internally disunited, that is, inconsistent. In making this declaration, a number of tacit assumptions that must be made. When describing a self as inconsistent, one erects boundaries that delineate certain aspects of the self as relevant to a judgment on consistency, and other aspects as irrelevant. First, it is necessary to have at least two aspects of the self to consider, along with a relation between them that fulfills the requirements necessary to declare "inconsistency." In a generalized schema, the requisite two aspects would be "A" and "it-is-not-the-case-that-A," or, for the sake of brevity, "non-A" (e.g. the self in question holds the belief that "it is ethical to eat this piece of meat" [A], and "it is not the case that it is ethical to eat this (same) piece of meat" [non-A]). Further, there is a tacit assumption made in this declaration of inconsistency that demarcates a certain historical period as pertinent to the self (e.g. one is said to safely delimit the same self within a ten second period of time within which he

or she makes these two statements, but delimiting the self as saying one of these two statements twenty years after the other could not be said to represent self-same inconsistency). The self is being analyzed within a specific time period; the scope used is wide enough to capture the inconsistent aspects, while blind to the self's past, intermittent, and future development. The self in this judgment is cut to form, and can only be considered inconsistent when viewed in this atemporal manner. To admit the salience of the entirety of the self, outside of these boundaries, could negate the ability to determine inconsistency, since some aspect of the self in this larger context could affect one of the seemingly inconsistent aspects so as to make it consistent with the self overall.

A further assumption is implicit in the determination of inconsistency within the self. The aspects that are said to be inconsistent are presumed to be comparable, in such a way that they could have the relation of inconsistency. This requires first that the aspects fit the schema of "A" and "non-A," and secondly that they be held *by the same self*. To achieve this, one must either consider the self as a whole (which, as aforementioned, would annul the possibility of inconsistency), or one must consider the self in comparable parts (Self at time X and at time X'), or must posit that the same self holds both aspects (Self from time X to time X'). Any one of these three positions establishes an ontological primacy of the posited self. To compare Self at time X and X' and declare her or him inconsistent is to privilege these two moments over the self at all other times, and to declare the two moments identical as far as the two aspects are concerned. However, these two aspects are not cloistered; on the contrary, they are informed by salient aspects of the self, which themselves are informed by still others. Since these other informing aspects would also change over time, to compare the two moments of the self as identical is untenable. Avoiding this difficulty by sectioning off one time span of the self makes the same misguided ontological determination of one segment of the self over all others. Lastly, to consider the self as a whole (creation to destruction) as inconsistent is considered either ludicrous ("I am not who I was when I was seven!") or inane ("Of course I hold "A" and "non-A" overall, I have developed!"). Therefore, the discussion of the self as inconsistent must either be misguided, or trivial.

The discussion of the inconsistency of the dialogical self, under the aforementioned misguided attempts at declaring ontological primacy of one part of the self over another, implies a theoretical underpinning in contemporary discussions that is fundamentally blind to the processual and developmental basis of the dialogical self. Analyzing the self as in disparity, as in a state where different I-positions are in contradiction, pins the self, or more accurately a mere phantom of the self, within an atemporal, static vacuum. To describe the self as internally inconsistent or contradictory leaves behind the theoretical progress that has been made toward a processual view of the self and reverts back to an essentialist, unchanging, homogenous perspective of the self. To take this position is to ignore the self for the ongoing, heterogeneous,

developmental process that it is and instead raise a ghost of the self in a time-slice, regarded in relation with other time-slices, shifting the focus from the integral on-going process that the self exists through.

The argument of priority of unity or disunity stems from the assumption that the self has internally inconsistent I-positions that may or may not be resolved. However, the self can only be said to be inconsistent if taken out of its living purlieu, into an atemporal space. There is a direct parallel with ancient Zeno's arrow paradox. Zeno posited that if one could imagine an arrow in flight and separate it out into discrete moments, then at each moment the arrow would be still, and therefore the arrow could never be said move from one place to another in the first place, and motion would be impossible. His example suggests that one cannot dissect a process into an aggregate of static parts. Likewise, one cannot dissect the processual self into an aggregate of moments of the self. In considering the self as inconsistent in a moment in time, one ignores and even refutes the inherent movement of the self by bracketing off specific parameters within which the self is to be considered. Any comparison of the self in one moment with the self in another regards only infinitesimal pictures of the self; moreover, no matter how many snapshots are taken and compared, the self as a process would remain overlooked. If we are to study the self as fundamentally developmental, dynamic, and processual, we must move away from this time-spliced analysis and adhere to an analytical framework that reveals the processual self.

Ewing's Case in a New Light

To bring this revised perspective on the dialogical self to task, we can look to van Meijl's analysis of Katherine Ewing's work (1990) as an example of the contented disunity of the self. Ewing gives an account of a Pakistani woman who sees conflict between her desires and her familial values. The woman in the example is making a choice about whether to marry a man she herself does not favor, but whom her parents want her to marry. As a result, she comes to the conclusion that she will try to convince her parents of the validity of her view, but she next says she must be a good daughter, and respect her parents' wishes. Ewing portrays this example as an indication that the woman does not herself understand how inconsistent she is over time, a characteristic, to Ewing, of people in modern times. She argues that we are essentially inattentive to just how contradictory we are.

Ewing's perspective on this example is contrasted by van Meijl with Naomi Quinn (2006), who instead takes the same example to characterize the self in modern times as "a cultural solution to the otherwise unbearable demands of formal deference in a severely hierarchical system of family relations" (373). Van Meijl uses this example in concluding that the dialogical self does not necessarily have any interest in unifying seemingly contradictory positions, but rather that the self can just as easily accept these different parts of the self remaining contradictory.

The example within Ewing's paper can be newly analyzed in a light that encompasses the various interpretations given. Ewing herself casts the Pakistani woman in a shifting light, as a self-in-conflict not conscious of her discrepancies. Quinn emphasizes the political incisiveness with which the woman positions herself first against her parents and then in solidarity with them. Hermans might take the same example and point out how the woman may have recognized positions within herself which were in contradiction, and sought unity through negotiating between these disparate positions into a mediated "self-as-good-daughter" position

Common to these cases is a processual recognition and semiotic engagement of conflict. The woman in the ethnographic case mediates her I-positions "I as spouse-chooser" through a recognition of conflict between this position and her representation of her parents' position, through a resolution of conflict into a new representative I-position "I as obedient daughter." Whether she were to orientate herself to the conflict as involving disparities needing to be unified, disparities to be accepted as they are, or otherwise, she employs semiotic tools to help her come to grips with what she sees as internally conflicting.

Contrary to Ewing, I do not take this development as a sign that the woman is keeping apart potentially conflicting parts of herself. Truly, there is little chance that the woman would not at all identify with her sentiments of a mere moment ago. I argue that she is instead acting in a fundamentally processual way, recognizing herself not necessarily as a person in flux, but rather the "fluxing person," not bound within her dynamism, but existing dynamically. Rather than sectioning off various parts of her self, she transmutes her self. She does not exist **in** different positions, nor does she move **through** positions, or **take** positions, for this implies that the positions are not her, as if she were internally a nomad, moving from temporary shelter to temporary shelter. Rather, she exists as a changing, developing self, constantly found in process -- to be understood as part of her historical developments, oriented toward her future developments, always developing, identifying, being.

The Processual Self[ing]

Both Toon van Meijl and Hubert Hermans discuss the effects of increases in uncertainty and unity in the self. Beneath, or beyond these effects, there is an underlying fundamental change in the way that the self is to be discussed, heralded in these works, but not fleshed out to its full potential. The shift to process-oriented research is imperative. Van Meijl recognizes that the roots of modern anthropological conceptions of identity and personality are deeply rooted in a static, unchanging idea of self. However, both in Hermans' conception of an inconsistent self striving to achieve unity and in van Meijl's counterargument of the self as unconcerned with unity, there remains the stickling underpinning of the self still seen as static.

The self is never to be analyzed as it is at one moment in time, which is what Hermans and van Meijl tacitly imply through their focus on the self in the moment of perceived inconsistency. One would never report that a time splice of oneself at the present would fundamentally represent who one is. I am not who I am in this moment, and nothing else. I am coming from my particular past, I am moving toward an ambiguous future. I am constantly reshaping, moving, reforming. Therefore, even if different parts of me are in conflict "now," they overall could be said to not be in conflict, viewed not as a whole per se, but processually. When we analyze the self via time slices, we construct a picture that leaves out this essentially dynamic, developmental, processual nature of the self.

Dialogical theory relies centrally on the notion of the dynamic, changing self. However, this essential foundation has yet to be realized to its full linguistic and analytical extent. In the current milieu, the self is photographed in moments of habitation of different positions, or in transit between positions. The movement categorized hereby is microgenetic, and a necessary piece to the puzzle of the dialogical self. However, these images of the self must be taken in context with the mesogenetic and macrogenetic, processual self. Self-as-process is not to be mistaken for the movements and stations of an agent within a dialogical world. Self-as-process is the movement of this world, from its inception through its self-presentation, oriented toward its continuation.

Within the anthropological discipline, van Meijl makes reference to Stuart Hall (1996), who engages in a parallel linguistic movement. Hall suggests that the anthropological concept of identity be changed to identification, to highlight the self precisely in the process of making identity. As van Meijl points out, anthropological notions of identity and culture were born within an essentialist conception of the self. As such, and most poignantly in the modern era of globalized individuals coming across a multitude of novel intercultural zones, anthropologists would do well to move to a processual view of the self, recognizing the self wholly by its constitutive dynamism in an unending process of being - of selfing.

There is a significant linguistic move to be made both in dialogical analysis and anthropological analysis, if the academy is to do justice to the processual nature of the self. The way we speak about the self must simultaneously acknowledge the self as fluid and changing, while not losing sight of the living, breathing, inextricably present self. Our ways of speaking have historically pinned the self like a butterfly to a wall, taking it out of its developmental context and reifying it only within the instantaneous. Even for those who had done away with the essentialist conception of the self, there was the post-modern self: untied from its essentialist moorings, adrift in change in a rapidly changing world, fragmentary and isolated. Rather than analyzing the self in an essentialist paradigm or a post-modern paradigm, I argue that we can meaningfully analyze and appreciate the self, in dialogical theory, anthropology, and all human

sciences, as a dynamic creature of fluidity and change, existing through processes both internal and in relation to other selves. This dialogical self-ing must be understood as motion; not merely as a time-slice, nor merely as a whole, but as process.

Conclusions: The Interdisciplinary Imperative

Van Meijl demonstrates aptly how modern anthropological discourse can benefit from the incorporation of dialogical self theory into anthropological conceptions of self, identity, and culture. Likewise, he provides clear and appropriate examples of how modern anthropology can provide a great amount of perspective and information for dialogical self theorists on the workings of the dialogical self, especially in the modern era of globalization. Truly, to analyze the person today is to consider that person in the globalized context. Wherever a person is, she or he lives in relation to a more diverse social and cultural environment than has ever before been possible. Thus, anthropological analyses of cultural processes provide a most useful perspective for dialogical self theorists to conscientiously and knowledgeably explore the dialogical self.

The static focus which dialogical theorists and many other social scientists employ in their analyses of the self must be left irrevocably behind. In its place, a perspective recognizing the processual fundament of the self can viably be embraced. This perspective would still engage in microgenetic exploration of the dialogical self's movement, as is practiced in current dialogical-theoretical methodologies, while engaging with the dialogical self in novel ways, as it is ever-mindful of the self's interpersonal- and interpersonal-temporal context. This mindfulness becomes more and more important to the analysis of the self every day, as globalization and intercultural contact continue to expand the limits of the dialogical self's context exponentially.

This shift in methodological perspective on self and culture in social science would best be achieved within an interdisciplinary discourse. As van Meijl has shown us, dialogues shared among diverse social sciences and humanities provide enlightening perspectives that may help heretofore disparate disciplines to step forward in tandem toward knowledgeable, tempered outlooks on the individual and the globalized world. Many methodological ships float upon this churning sea of the self, and the more ships that join together and share their stories and their sights, the better the view will be.

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