

# Preface

What is the origin of this book? Together with my colleagues, I published the first article on the dialogical self in the *American Psychologist* in 1992. This article marked the beginning of a period of more than 20 years of research, which led to the production of several hundreds of books and articles in a wide variety of scientific journals. At the same time, some practice-oriented psychologist did the painstaking and laborious job to develop new and original methods for assessing and stimulating a dialogical self and applied them systematically in their own coaching and counselling settings. With some of these colleagues I stayed in close connection and followed them over the years. I noticed that their work was not only inspired by Dialogical Self Theory but also powerful enough to enable clients to change their life or career situation. After studying my colleagues' work and discussing it with them, I decided to select nine methods of high theoretical significance and practical utility for publication in this book. I invited the authors of these methods to describe their techniques in detail, to sketch their protocols, to show how the method works in a realistic case study and to explain when and where to apply it. In their systematic theoretical scope and practical relevance, all methods can be considered as emerging from a scientist-practitioner paradigm.

I'm proud to have the opportunity to bring these imaginative methods together in one book. What do they have in common? They have three main features. First, they appeal to the *self-organizing capacity* of the person. They are not simply assessing a trait or personality characteristic, but they invite the participants to bring their hidden, neglected or suppressed energies to the surface in profound processes of self-reflection and self-dialogue. Second, *assessment and change coincide* in all procedures. That is, the methods are not only intended to create a picture of the organization of the different self-parts but also, and at the same time, give this organization an impulse in the direction of the desired change. Third, the professionals who apply these methods are not expected to take a stance as 'distanced observers' but as dedicated professionals who realize a *cooperative relationship with their clients*. In other words, the methods are explicitly relational procedures, stimulating a dialogical space to emerge between counsellors and their clients and, at the same time, creating a similar generative space in the selves of the clients.

My purpose with this book is to inspire both scientist and practitioners and those who combine both scientific and practical interest in themselves, to apply one or more of the presented methods, including their combinations, in their own setting and to adapt them in the service of their own purposes. The book will primarily be useful to social, cultural and organizational psychology practitioners and to young researchers worldwide for master and doctoral dissertations. Research and method courses within industrial/organizational psychology master programs are ideal settings for a systematic use of the book. It will be relevant also for undergraduate students interested in understanding how Dialogical Self Theory could be grounded in empirical/practical contexts. Educators can find this work of interest for their practices.

Finally, I warmly thank all authors of the book for their stimulating enthusiasm, for their dedicated effort and for their persistence to survive an editor who did not give up his attempts to create the necessary coherence in a broad variety of dialogical approaches.

Pragmatism is perhaps America's most distinctive contribution to philosophy. Developed by Pierce, Dewey and James in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, pragmatism holds that both the meaning and the truth of any idea are the functions of its practical outcome. The pragmatists rejected all forms of absolutism and insisted that all principles be regarded as working hypotheses that must bear fruit in lived experience. See more at <http://www.philosophytalk.org/shows/american-pragmatism#sthash.x8MTNfwI.dpuf>

The Netherlands  
26 February 2016

Hubert Hermans



<http://www.springer.com/978-3-319-32481-4>

Assessing and Stimulating a Dialogical Self in Groups,  
Teams, Cultures, and Organizations

Hermans, H. (Ed.)

2016, XXVI, 175 p. 15 illus., 4 illus. in color., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-32481-4