

Four phases in the scientific work of Hubert Hermans



First phase: Motivation (1965-1974)

PMT: PRESTATIE MOTIVATIE TEST (Achievement Motivation Test) (1968) includes three scales with multiple choice items:

- **Achievement motivation scale:** Achievement need that leads to higher achievements in challenging task situations
- **Debilitating anxiety scale:** Anxiety that decreases performance in stressful task situations
- **Facilitating anxiety scale:** Inner tension that improves performance in stressful task situations

PMT-K: PRESTATIE MOTIVATIE TEST VOOR KINDEREN (1971) (Achievement Motivation Test for Children: includes the same scales as the PMT but adds a fourth scale to measure **social desirability**)



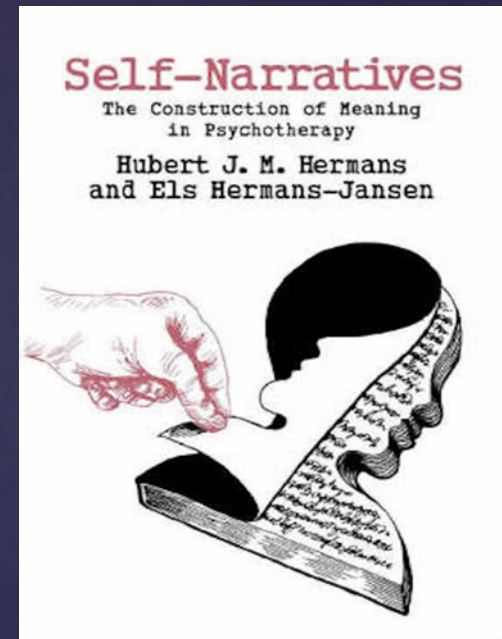
Limitations of the motivation project

The PMT and PMT-K, like most psychometric tests within the individual differences paradigm, have the following limitations:

- They are **standardized** so that the items do not allow space for the specific life situation of the testee.
- They are **impersonal**: the test itself provides no space for personal communication because it includes items which apply in a generalizing way to all people of the target group
- Because these tests are based on the assumption of **stability of traits over time**, they are not sensitive to change and development and do not take into account the personal **history** of the testee
- The test items do not provide **avenues for change** and for the future development of the person

Second phase: Self-Confrontation Method (1974-1995): First step towards a dialogical self

- An **idiographic** method for self-reflection, self-investigation and self-development. The person gives his own answers to open questions.
- A **relational** method with space for the personal relationship between psychologist and person. This relationship is not objectifying but **cooperative**.
- Self-investigators are invited to **tell their story** about themselves with attention to their past, present, and future and with attention to the emotional component of the story.
- There is a **gradual transient between assessment and change**: self-investigation results in action plans intended to change one's personal meaning system.



Limitations of the Self-Confrontation Method

The Self-Confrontation Method has some limitations:

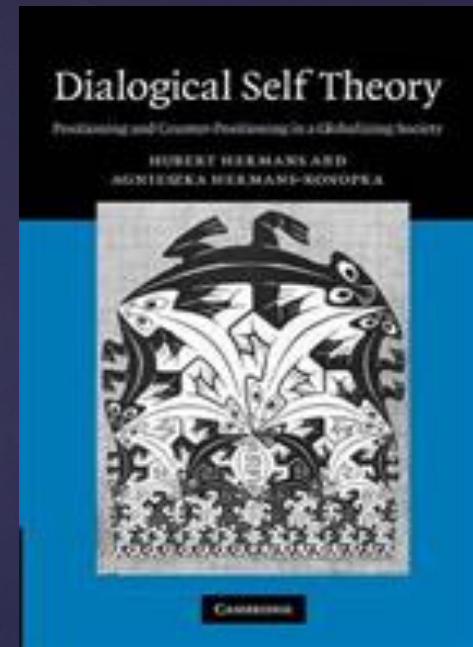
- The method is quite **complex** and **not easy to explain**
- In comparison with most psychological tests, the method is **time-consuming**.
- It requires **extensive training** for the researcher or psychotherapist to develop the necessary skills to apply the method in practice.
- Although the method has the form of a dialogue between psychologist and client, its essence is on **individual self-reflection**. There is no explicit attention to culture and society.

Third phase: Dialogical Self Theory (1992-2017)

opening the self to the other

The self is defined as a **dynamic multiplicity** of *I*-positions in the landscape of the mind, intrinsically connected with the **minds of others**. *I*-positions have a **voice** so that they can **communicate** with other *I*-positions in the self or with *I*-positions of other people.

- This theory is open to the inclusion of other people, as ‘**others-in-the-self**’.
- It allows to study not only one’s personal positions but also the **collective positions or voices** of groups, teams, organizations and cultures.
- As a ‘**bridging theory**’ it allows to transcend the boundaries of subdisciplines and disciplines.
- Due to its **simplicity** the theory is easy to explain and as an **open theory** it can be easily combined with other theories.



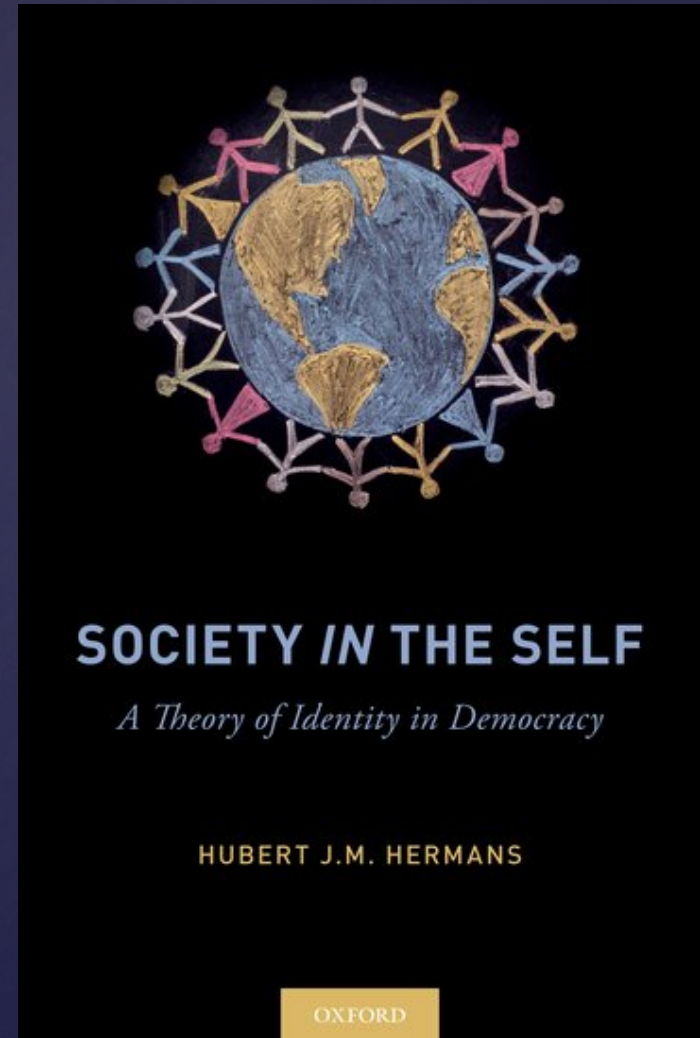
Limitations of DST

Despite its openness to other theories and its power to generate ideas and research, DST has several limitations.

- Because of its emphasis on dialogue and voice, its applications are more focused on verbal phenomena than on **nonverbal phenomena**.
- There is not one method that is accepted by researchers or practitioners in the field. Instead, a **multiplicity of methods** are generated in the course of time, the results of which are only partly comparable.
- Although the theory is oriented to the development of individual and collective positions, it is not clear what it contributes at the **level of society**.

Fourth Phase: Democratic Self (2014 -2018): Towards a more dialogical society

- Further development of Dialogical Self Theory at the **interface of self and society**
- Basic idea: self as a society of mind has the potential of functioning as a **democratic society of mind** and contributes to democracy of the society at large
- A model is presented with three levels of inclusiveness: **personal** level (I as individual), **social** level (I as group member) and **global** level (I as human), with the self moving between the levels in a dialogical way.
- The democratic self functions in a **field of tension** between **dialogue** and **social power**.



Place in psychology as a whole

There are four *basic metaphors* in psychology (Pepper, 1942; Sarbin, 1986):

- FORMISM: Organization of the world on the basis of the **form of objects**. The focus is on their similarities and differences. Examples: trait theories, types of dysfunctions, classifications of people. **The PMT and PMT-k fit with this metaphor**
- MECHANICISM: Mind as working like a machine: a steam engine or a computer. Based on **cause-effect relationships**. Examples: stimulus-response relationships in behaviorism.
- ORGANICISM: Considers the world as an organism with parts functioning like organs in a growing body. A fully developed organic structure is the end of **progressive stages of maturation**. Examples: humanistic theories of Rogers and Maslow.
- CONTEXTUALISM: The central element is **the historical event** located in **time and space**. Events are the basis of narratives and stories. Examples: narrative theories of self and identity. **The Self-Confrontation Method, Dialogical Self Theory, and the Democratic Self fit with this metaphor.**

Main publication for each phase

- ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION:

Hermans, H. J. M. (1970). A questionnaire measure of achievement motivation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 54, 353-363.

- SELF-CONFRONTATION METHOD:

Hermans, H.J.M., & Hermans-Jansen, P.C. (1995). *Self-Narratives: The Construction of Meaning in Psychotherapy*. New York: Guilford Press.

- DIALOGICAL SELF THEORY:

Hermans, H.J.M., & Hermans-Konopka, A. (2010). *Dialogical Self Theory: Positioning and Counter-positioning in a Globalizing Society*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- DEMOCRATIC SELF:

Hermans, H.J.M. (2018). *Society in the Self: A Theory of Identity in Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.