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THE DIALOGICAL SELF: RESEARCH AND APPLICATIONS

The paper presents dialogical self theory and its current theoretical and empirical status. We start with some inspirations from philosophy and literature and then describe the main thesis of the theory - self-multiplicity conceptualized in terms of I-positions and the dynamic relations between them. In the next section we present examples of empirical explorations of inner dialogical activity. Although dialogical self theory is generally perceived as a qualitative approach, there is a growing number of quantitative studies conducted both in correlational and experimental designs. Moreover, numerous interesting and promising topics are still open for further research - e.g. temporal dialogues, dialogical interpretations of personal identity, values and valuation, relations between self and culture. After reviewing these empirical results we try to explore the relations between the dialogical and the cognitive approach to self-multiplicity. We propose that those two approaches can be seen as complementary rather than competing. The last section discusses some practical implications of dialogical self theory for psychotherapy and counseling.

Key words: dialogical self, self-multiplicity, inner dialogues

The perception of a human being as a dialogical entity was already well established in ancient philosophy. Dialogue, as a valuable "tool" of reasoning, was appreciated above anything else by Socrates. In the modern period, it is the philosophy of dialogue that looks at human existence as an encounter and perceives dialogue as the core of human existence (Oleś, 2009b). Martin Buber (1958) argued that psychological conceptualization is insufficient to recognize the fundamental nature of dialogue. Philosophical thinking and reasoning is in essence different from psychological conceptualization and it should be basically perceived as a point of reference for psychologists. However at some level of abstract reasoning the two perspectives may be complementary to each other. Undoubtedly, dialogue

is an interdisciplinary object of research. Psychology tends to justify the dialogical nature of the self by scientific exploration and verification. The aim of this paper is to introduce dialogical self theory as an interesting and promising proposal for psychological research. The theoretical background of the theory will be discussed, as well as current trends in empirical research. Finally, we aim to demonstrate the practical applications of the presented approach in therapy and psychological counseling.

Introduction to the dialogical way of thinking

The idea of *homo dialogicus* sounds uncontroversial at the general level. Dialogicality as a principle organizing human thinking and psychological functioning is less obvious. However, in our daily life we experience many signs of our dialogical mind. When considering some dilemma we may take the point of view of another person and anticipate a possible answer (Marková, 2003). After an inspiring meeting or a fruitful discussion we tend to continue the discussion in our mind and imagine even several scenarios. Taking the point of view of another person when preparing for a speech enables us to predict probable reactions, questions or critiques. These examples are expressions of the dialogical nature of the self (Asmolov & Asmolov, 2009; Hermans & Kempen, 1993). There are several complementary hypotheses as to the origins of dialogicality in a human's ontogenesis (Oleś & Hermans, 2008): 1. social interactions as a basis for human development and functioning; 2. usage of symbols and ability for meaning-making (interpretation); 3. ability to represent the external world with all its complexity in one's own mind (see: Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Cooper, 2003; Marková, 2003). The last argument is a principle of the dialogical theory of the self, according to which dialogue is a core quality of the self. "Thus in this perspective, a multiplicity of voices of the mind derives largely from the appropriation onto the inner mental plane of specific historical experiences of interacting with various external influences and agents (such as parents or peers), and these appear in internal conversation in the mind of the adolescent as he or she constructs a personal belief and values system" (Pratt, Arnold, & Mackey, 2001, pp. 230-231).

Dialogical conceptualization of the self stems from William James' (1890) distinction between I and Me. According to this division, I refers to 'self-as-knower', whereas Me symbolizes 'self-as-known', which is acknowledged by the objective agent – I. In other words, I as a subject perceives I as an object (Me/Mine). Furthermore, the dialogical approach clearly refers to the theory of literature. We refer to the notion of a polyphonic novel, elaborated by Mikhail Bakhtin (1973). His analysis of Fyodor Dostoevsky's novels resulted in the idea that there was no single author managing various characters, subordinated to his individual vision, but numerous perspectives and worlds represented by figures in the story. He discovered the existence of many co-authors of the novel. The Bakhtinian examination revealed

the spectacular organization of Dostoevsky's works and promoted the idea of a polyphony of voices, which became the cornerstone of dialogical theory of the self.

Taking into account the aforementioned concepts of James and Bakhtin, H. J. M. Hermans and H. J. G. Kempen (1993) introduced the concept of the dialogical self. The dialogical self is defined as a "dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous I-positions in the landscape of the mind" (Hermans, Rijks & Kempen, 1993, p. 215). I as a subject moves among different I-positions and endows them with a voice, which represents their distinctive points of view. Positions differ in their relative importance in the system, where a constant exchange of ideas, changes between active ("speaking") and passive ("hearing") roles of the positions and/or changing relation of their dominance takes place.

As in the external world, the self is described in terms of space and time. The I shifts from one voiced position to another, with its own perspective, which is frequently discrepant. For example I strongly oppose my parents because I want to emphasize my autonomy. However, just after that opposition I have a feeling of guilt, understanding the reasons of their caring (I-positions: *I as an independent person* versus *I as a loved child*). The process of continuous positioning and repositioning occurs according to changeable situational circumstances and requirements. The voices express their particular points of view and they have their own stories to tell, created in relation to others. Various voices express their visions of reality - together building a narratively structured self. The I moves not only among various points of view but also among different time perspectives. One can get back to a particular moment in the past or envisage one's self in the future. Imagination allows one to experiment with different imagined and even unrealistic experiences.

One can differentiate between two types of positions: internal and external. The first one refers to those aspects of the self that are perceived as parts of one's self (e.g. *I as a teacher, I as a troublemaker, I as an optimist*). The second one refers to external positions symbolizing everything from the outer world, which is internalized and perceived as significant (e.g. *My mother/father, My peers*). I-positions address each other in internal dialogue, which is conceptualized as an exchange of thoughts, experiences etc. This communication results in a narratively structured, dynamic, multifaceted self (Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Hermans, Rijks & Kempen, 1993). Internal and external dialogues intertwine and we often switch between them in daily life, occasionally releasing our internal divagations.

Voices relate to each other, and this exchange potentially rearranges the self system (Hermans, 2003). As a result of such a confrontation new interpretations of one's life experiences may come forward. When two or more positions confront each other (in argument, negotiation, cooperation etc.) the self system may alter, as the distances and relationships in the dialogical space change. A few possible innovations of the system exist, e.g. a new I-position appears or a position that was initially in the background becomes salient (or the other way around, when a central position becomes marginal). When the voices come to agreement, a coalition of

voices may emerge and a new subsystem may be constituted. Positions that acquire dominance potentially have greater impact on self-regulation (Hermans, 1996).

A self system, like society, is composed of heterogeneous elements engaged in constant interaction in the form of conflicts, mediations, collaborations etc. (Hermans, 2002). The dialogical self contains individual voices as well as collective voices, representing social groups (Asmolov & Asmolov, 2009; Hermans, 2001a). Other individuals and groups of people, represented by particular positions and their voices (e.g. my partner, my colleagues, a member of my sports team), reside in the self.

The dialogical notion of the self deconstructs the self. It is multivoiced and decentralized, unified as well as multiple. The self is perceived as a heterogenic entity, where an ongoing process of (re)organization takes place. Its individuality is in constant evolution. The dynamic nature of the self system is two-fold. Its internal changeability is intertwined with its dependency on context.

Explorations in the dialogical self

Although numerous investigations have been performed (in Poland: e.g. Chmiel-nicka-Kuter, 2005; Oleś, 2009a; Puchalska-Wasyl, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006, 2007; Stemplewska-Żakowicz, et al., 2005), the empirical status of dialogical self theory hasn't been established firmly yet. The central theses of the theory have been well elaborated theoretically. There are numerous case studies and qualitative surveys presenting and explaining its basic assumptions (e.g. Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 2004; Josephs, 2002; Pratt, Arnold & Mackey, 2001; Sokolova & Burlakova, 2009; Stiles, et al., 2004). Nevertheless, various arguments still remain unconfirmed empirically.

The language of the theory is often metaphorical, abounding and even flourish-ing with examples. These characteristics, though impressive, are hard to convert to an operational level where hypotheses are offered and then verified in empirical research. At the beginning, research on this approach was inspired primarily by phenomenological methodology. Dialogical self theory has roots in narrative psy-chology, hence it is commonly perceived as a strictly qualitative approach, which is misleading. Dialogical assumptions have already been verified quantitatively in several studies (Pallard, 2008).

K. Stemplewska-Żakowicz, J. Walecka, and A. Gabińska (2006) tested experi-mentally whether each I-position is able to create a narrative from its particular standpoint. To evoke self-narratives the subjects were positioned in a particular role, so that he/she could tell a story from this perspective (Mother's child, Father's child, Partner, Pupil, Friend). The experimenters applied several types of positioning (e.g. explicitly asking the person to address his/her utterance to a significant other, or asking the person to imagine the significant other and then to create a story about his/her own life). Experimental investigations resulted in effects showing that self-narratives generated from various I-positions are characterized by different qualities

such as: verbal productivity, type and intensity of emotions, style of social relations between storyteller and protagonist, etc. It has been proved that positions differ in their psychological characteristics and can be treated as relatively independent centers of the self system.

Another theoretical presupposition is that dialogicality can be expressed in a particular manner of thinking. Dialogical thinking is probably a peculiar way of reasoning, different from the categorical and narrative modes distinguished by J. S. Bruner (1990). It can be conceptualized and measured as a trait, called internal dialogical activity (Oleś, 2009a). It turns out that those three modes of thinking lead to different results in problem solving and subjective well-being (Młynarczyk, 2008).

Internal dialogical activity is defined as "mental engagement into dialogues with imagined figures, simulation of social verbal relationships, changing point of view and mutual confrontation of different I-positions relevant for personal or social identity" (Oleś & Oleś, 2006). The Internal Dialogical Activity Scale (IDAS) by P. K. Oleś (2009a) is a questionnaire designed to measure the extent to which a person is prone to use internal dialogical activity in everyday life. Apart from the general score, seven subtypes are distinguishable: pure dialogical activity, identity dialogues, supportive dialogues, ruminative dialogues, dissociative dialogues, simulation of social dialogues and taking different points of view. So far, several studies have been conducted to explore the nature and correlates of internal dialogical activity (Oleś & Hermans, 2008). Regarding personality traits – Five Factor Model of Personality – the studies confirmed that internal dialogical activity is moderately associated with openness to experience. There is also low but significant correlation between dialogical activity and neuroticism, however it basically concerns particular types of dialogue: ruminative and dissociative (Oleś et al., 2010; Puchalska-Wasyl, Chmielnicka-Kuter & Oleś, 2008).

Several measures of the self concept and personality measured by the Adjective Check List by H. G. Gough and A. B. Heilbrun do not correspond with a level of dialogicality in a consequent (replicable) manner. However there is a clear positive correspondence between internal dialogical activity and secure attachment and a negative correspondence between dialogicality and avoidant and anxious attachment (in terms of styles of attachment measured by Experiences in Close Relationships - Revised by R. C. Fraley, N. G. Waller and K. A. Brennan) (Buszek, 2008). To sum up, the findings suggest that internal dialogical activity is rooted in the social or relational aspect of the self, has predispositions in personality traits and might be connected to a specific organization of self-knowledge.

Another important field of research is connected with contemporary technological development. Nowadays, face-to-face interaction is being replaced systematically and overwhelmingly by various types of technological tools. Civilization intensely modifies the way in which the self is constructed (Hermans, 2004a; van Halen & Janssen, 2004). Dialogue mediated by media constitutes a special space for communication (Asmolov & Asmolov, 2009). M. B. Ligorio and P. Spandaro (2005)

examined the way people create "digital identities" in virtual reality. Individuals feel free to create their spectacular image, quickly switch between I-positions or construct some new *ad hoc*. Depending on the situation, virtual context enables one to modify one's identity rapidly. The dynamic nature of multivoiced self is extremely evident in on-line communication. Cyberspace stimulates self creation and changeability.

Challenges for further research

Speaking about the self in terms of positions and voices is an inspiring metaphor. Self-complexity from a dialogical point of view offers a new paradigm for research in the field of identity. Dialogical activity contributes to the understanding of identity formation and as the research shows, may have a significant impact on its structural changes (Batory, in print). Temporal dialogues of the self located in the personal past, present and future seem to be a very promising topic (Sobol-Kwapińska & Oleś, 2010). Preliminary results suggest a positive influence of such dialogues on meaning of life and affective state in students; as well as a positive impact of life story construction on exploration of identity, and a positive impact of life story telling from imagined future perspective (e.g. "I as an old person") on meaning of life in adolescents (Oleś, Brygoła, & Sibińska, in print).

From this perspective identity is a dynamic multiplicity, and its changeability refers not only to life-span transitions but also to situational re-organizations of the self. It seems that traditional conceptualizations of identity are insufficient to grasp the personal repercussions of the contemporary complexity of the socio-cultural world. Maintaining a stable identity towards an erratic environment becomes a challenge. One may claim that fluid identity is an expected answer to this state of affairs (see Giddens, 1991). The dialogical perspective establishes identity as a process of constant negotiation between individual and environment. It is never completed. Constant interplay takes place among multiple self elements, as well as between internal complexity and the external world (Annese, 2004; van Halen & Janssen, 2004). However, from the dialogical viewpoint the vision of internal and external world (self and society) is essentially different from the conventional standpoint.

Writing about culture and self Hermans (2001, 2001a, 2002, 2004a) uses an analogy to society and identity. Self and culture are intertwined. Culture enters the dialogical self and as a result certain I-positions emerge (e.g. *I as a modern art lover, I as a member of Amnesty International, I as a member of a religious community*). Therefore we can describe self as culture inclusive, and vice versa – culture as self inclusive (e.g. when individuals participate and influence their cultural environment).

To meet the requirements of contemporary cultural "flux and flow" we are expected to take into account the increasing complexity and heterogeneity of human experience (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). The dialogical framework enables one to grasp these new trends and make sense of these phenomena. Regarding this point

of view, one may pose the question of the relationship between self changeability and psychological maturity. Note that inner dialogues focused on life dilemmas promote wisdom-related performance, in a similar way as conversation with a friend or a personal mentor (Staudinger & Baltes, 1996).

The emphasis on dynamics and heterogeneity provokes a discussion in relatively distant domains of science. One of the probable spheres of influence is the area of moral values. On the one hand, according to Hermans (2004) dialogical perspective encourages one to acknowledge the heterogeneity of the "Other" and his/her culture. Multivoicedness somehow becomes a principle of equality, which calls for accepting multiplicity in the world. On the other hand, the dialogical approach tends to conceive values as being relative to the effects of social and internal negotiations.

Dialogue is a space for exchange, where different roads meet. Searching for the truth, individuals communicate and construct a shared reality. Statements reached at the point of such an agreement may be socially valuable, being obtained by democratic expression of numerous worldviews. Objective values (which are de-contextualized abstracts) need individual interpretation. According to valuation theory the person is an active agent who gives personal meaning to general values, including his/her unique reinterpretation of them (Hermans & Oleś, 1994, 1996). Meanings connected with values are related to personal experiences as well as to the broad context: culture, society, historical époque etc. The socio-cultural background shapes the individual's understanding of them. Vice versa, personal interpretations of commonly shared values have an impact on people's behavior and consequently influence society. For a consensus or agreement to be reached among various individuals requires dialogical openness as a social attitude.

Building bridges between the dialogical and cognitive approach

It has to be emphasized that dialogical self theory concerns not only dialogicality. First of all it is a conceptualization of self-complexity, which is elaborated in a particular manner. In the last three decades perceiving self as a unified entity has been systematically displaced by standpoints promoting self-complexity. Dialogical theory goes in line with those trends and could be analyzed in relation to recent developments in the cognitive theories of the self focused on self-heterogeneity, especially since the dialogical theory was partly inspired by George Kelly's personal construct theory.

Linking dialogical and cognitive conceptions is in agreement with Hermans' (1996) statement that multivoiced self theory is open to cognitive methodology, and thus may result in mutual profit. In line with that proclamation we can predict many rewarding consequences of incorporating the cognitive methodology into dialogical science.

Dialogical self theory is open to cognitive conceptions and methodology. On the other hand, it is expected that cognitive theorists should take into account the

dialogical nature of the self (Hermans, 1996). Both approaches could benefit from mutual exchange. To indicate fields of common interest Hermans articulated the following question: "To what extent do actual, ought, ideal, and possible self components function in a dialogical way?" (1996, p. 44). The components of self listed in this question and their regulative functions are key problems in cognitive models of self-regulation e.g. by E. T. Higgins (1987, 1997, 2000). Hermans asks whether they can be conceptualized in dialogical terms.

Piotr K. Oleś (2005), and Wacław Bąk (2009) have proposed an integrative approach to the cognitive and dialogical points of view. They argue that separate self-concepts can be treated as I-positions creating their particular voices, and potentially taking part in internal dialogues. Another important assumption is that each of these positions is characterized by specific psychological functions. Under such conditions we can consider each position as a relatively autonomous agent, with its own resources (e.g. personality traits). In the study by A. Mochnaczewska (in: Oleś, 2005, pp. 171-174) discrepancies within self, originally described by the cognitive approach (Higgins, 1987), were analyzed in terms of dialogical relationships between divergent self elements. The study revealed that different patterns of affect are connected with particular dialogical relations between analyzed I-positions (actual, ideal and ought self).

An analysis of the dialogical and cognitive approach reveals essential similarities as well as significant differences (Bąk, 2008, 2009). Both theories share the idea of self multiplicity and changeability, but describe it in different terms. Cognitive theories define the self as a complex cognitive structure composed of different beliefs about one's self; to mention a few: actual self, ideal self (desired or undesired), ought self, or possible selves (Higgins, 1997; Ogilvie, 1987; Carver & Scheier, 1998; Markus & Nurius, 1986). In both approaches the relations between self elements (I-positions/self-schemas) are especially important. Dialogical conceptualization describes dialogical relationships within the self in terms of oppositions, agreements, disagreements, contradictions or negotiations between I-positions (Hermans, 2002, p. 148). Cognitive models, on the other hand, portray self dynamics in terms of self-discrepancies. Both theories, however, emphasize that self is ever changing and dependent on actual context (Markus & Wurf, 1987). For this reason, one may ask whether these differences between the two perspectives are not reducible to the usage of different words. Even so, there are indeed some elementary disparities.

One of the most important distinctions between dialogical and cognitive approaches concerns the relations between self elements. In the "society of mind" (Hermans, 2002) dialogical relations happen between relatively independent subjects – external and internal I-positions. In contrast, the cognitive approach refers to the relationship between various elements of self-knowledge (e.g. discrepancies between actual, ideal and ought self). Thus, in the dialogical perspective we have a multiplicity of subjective I-positions (different embodiments of self as a subject),

while in the cognitive approach there is multiplicity of objective Me-aspects (self as an object). Inner dialogues as well as self-discrepancies are used to describe the processes of self-regulation, but the nature of those processes differs. In the dialogical approach self-regulation is understood as a process of negotiation and interchange of opinions, emotions, arguments etc. Meanwhile, the cognitive approach defines self-regulation as a process of approaching some possible desired self-states and avoiding some possible undesired self-states, which is essentially the process of integration of the elements of self-concept.

Both approaches could be viewed as complementary rather than mutually exclusive (Bąk, 2008). Cognitively oriented researchers have gathered huge amounts of data regarding different aspects of self-knowledge, relationships between them and the dynamic processes of self-regulation. This is, however, knowledge concerning only that aspect of self which James called the empirical "Me". Even if any subjective "I" is taken into account it is one single and coherent "I". The theory of dialogical self indicates a broader perspective, where the possibility of multiple I-positions is proposed. Combining both perspectives, we can assume that each I-position could have its own actual and can self, its own ideal, ought and undesired standards. Each I-position can be characterized as a self-governing system of auto-regulation (which doesn't depreciate the global level – a multitude of positions and their interplay). If this proposition were to be accepted, every separate I-position would be a potential subject for cognitively oriented research. However, at the same time the possible existence of different systems of self-knowledge rooted in different I-positions should be taken into account. In order to describe those higher-level processes (that operate between I-positions), methods developed within dialogical approach are needed. Apparently building bridges between dialogical theory and cognitive psychology is not only probable, but also potentially rewarding.

Implications for psychological practice

Self-complexity has an essential impact on health. Therapeutic practice suggests that maintaining a certain repertoire of voices is a condition of effectively managing the multiplicity of the external world (Dimaggio, 2008; Dimaggio & Lysaker, in print; Pollard, 2008; Sokolova & Burlakova, 2009). The multitude of experiences located in the variety of voices provides resources necessary in the confrontation with various life events (see also: stress buffering, Linville, 1985). Nevertheless, the mere existence of multiple self aspects is insufficient for a condition of well-being. The individual has to recognize his/her internal world. When lacking such auto-reflection, one may perceive his/her acts as inconsistent. If a person does not notice the origins of his/her multifarious behaviors, he/she may experience distress and inability to cope with internal variety. Missing the aforesaid awareness of one's complexity may cause problems with psychological adaptation. According to the dialogical theory, pathology is connected with the absence of voices as well as an

unawareness of their existence, and inaccessibility or repression of undesirable voices (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 2004; Jacobsen, 2007).

Internal dialogues are a widespread phenomenon. We enter into internal conversations spontaneously, sometimes beyond conscious decision. However, the role they may play in psychological functioning has not been widely explored yet. Up till now, we are not sure when they support healthy psychological functioning. However, there are some appealing results showing that the functions of internal dialogue are manifold and potentially can improve subjective well-being. Seven meta-functions of internal dialogical activity were revealed in empirical research (Puchalska-Wasyl, 2005b, 2005c, 2006, 2007; Puchalska-Wasyl, Chmielnicka-Kuter, Oleś, 2008): 1. support; 2. substitution; 3. exploration; 4. bond; 5. self-improvement; 6. insight; 7. self-guidance. The extent to which an internal dialogical activity may fulfill the abovementioned functions depends on the form of this activity and the type of imaginary interlocutor. It was found that there are four emotional types of inner interlocutors: Helpless Child, Faithful Friend, Ambivalent Parent and Proud Rival. The specificity of dialogue with the Helpless Child stems mainly from the meta-function of Self-improvement. This means that people having an imaginary conversation with a helpless and hopeless figure try to learn how not to make the same mistakes in the future. A dialogue with the Faithful Friend is related to the meta-function of Support. It is, for example, a source of hope, it gives feelings of safety and sometimes even contributes meaning to life. Additionally, like a dialogue with the Ambivalent Parent, it offers the certainty of being understood by a close one (Bond), it enables the person to stand back from his/her own problem or to receive advice (Insight). Sometimes it is also a form of seeking new experiences (Exploration). The most important meta-function fulfilled by the Proud Rival is Substitution. This means that if our imaginary interlocutor is characterized by feelings of superiority or self-confidence, usually the dialogue is a form of seeking arguments to convince him or her, or of catharsis if actual contact is impossible.

A variety of internal dialogues may be grouped into different categories according to distinct criteria. In the study by Puchalska-Wasyl, several formal criteria were taken into account, which differentiated the dialogues e.g. with respect to the problem discussed, and the relationship between interlocutors, as well as the individual's frame of mind after the dialogue. A detailed analysis revealed different patterns of functions, depending on the category the dialogue represented (for an extensive analysis see: Puchalska-Wasyl, 2006, 2007).

Several rules concerning psychological health may be set up on the basis of dialogical self theory. In the light of the theory we may assume that in a healthy personality each voice should have the potential capacity to express its point of view, although even in a well functioning self-system there are some suppressed or silent, almost unheard voices. Access to them is difficult, although not impossible. Therapy should be focused on permitting them to express their own stance. Another important criterion of health, related to accessibility of voices, is a flexible exchange

of dominance between voices. Power is allocated to the voices in accordance with the changes in time and space - however, in a dysfunctional system it may be limited. Extreme asymmetry in the power relations can lead to the monological self, where one position is so dominant that it suppresses others (Hermans, 2004a)

Conclusions

Dialogical self theory convincingly describes the reality of human functioning, but this reasoning has same weaker points that need to be clarified. Moreover the theory lacks a firm empirical background. The metaphorical language of the theory is fruitful, but gives substantial freedom in the operationalization of variables. Moreover, the explanation is frequently restricted to dialogical relations, whereas other processes and mechanisms are neglected.

The scientific status of dialogical self theory still needs more discussion. The theory has already established its position in the academic world. International Dialogical Conferences, which take place every two years, attract more and more scientists and practitioners who are developing this approach (The Sixth International Conference on the Dialogical Self will take place in Athens, Greece, in 2010). It is possible that the popularity of the theory is connected with its interdisciplinary openness. The metaphor of dialogue is particularly attractive and might be elaborated from many perspectives. Though this is encouraging, it is also risky because of the danger of scientific eclecticism. The theory appears as a promising field of research.

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