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Personal Chronotopes in the Dialogical Self: A Developmental Case Study

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...every entry into the sphere of meaning is accomplished only through the gates of the chronotope. (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 258)

This collection on developmental themes contributes to a spate of recent books on the dialogical self (e.g., Aveling et al., 2010; Hermans & Gieser, in press; Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). Their emergence confirms the growing importance of ‘dialogism’ for psychology and the social sciences (Holquist, 2002). In psychological traditions, ‘dialogical self theory’ (DST) has multiple roots: first, in the pragmatism of William James’ (1890) notion of an extended (social) self; second, in the social psychology of George Herbert Mead’s (1934) focus on ‘otherness’ as a source of self-reflection; and third (and above all), in an engagement with the concepts of ‘dialogue’, ‘polyphony’, ‘multi-voicedness’ and ‘mediation’ emerging in the Russian work of Bakhtin (1981, 1984, 1990) and Vygotsky (1978). Bakhtin’s dialogical epistemology, in particular, has made possible new linkages from literary and social theory to psychological studies of a more pluralist and relational self than the ‘self-contained’ one proposed by Enlightenment individualism (Sampson, 1985). The growing literature spawned by these linkages suggests that the dialogical approach is an important new innovation. At the cultural level, postmodern shifts in the possibilities for the self brought about by global electronic communication and by mass migrations, converge with these recent innovations. In short, more challenging theoretical frameworks are demanded for the study of the self; frameworks which reach beyond traditional Western conceptions of integration, self-containment and sovereign agency (Gergen, 1991).

I will begin here by outlining and summarizing the basic premises of DST as these are currently understood (see also Hermans & Gieser, 2011; Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). Then I will introduce Bakhtin’s neglected concept of ‘chronotope’. The text builds an argument that chronotopes provide an important tool for analysing

development and change in the dialogical self. These principles are then illustrated in a case study.

Dialogical Self Theory

The driving metaphors of DST are fundamentally *spatial*. First, that the self is better conceptualized in dialogical terms as a *conversation* between positioned speakers, and second, that the self functions something like a *society of mind*, with all the attendant coalitions and animosities that emerge in any society (Hermans, 2002). The key innovation in DST is to propose that the self is extended in space through processes of *positioning* (e.g., Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Raggatt, 2007, 2008, 2011). Rather than being construed as a central executive or omniscient author, the dialogical self is understood to be an extended ‘position repertoire’ (Hermans, 2001a). Fundamental to this repertoire are the concepts of ‘I-position’ and ‘counter-position’, which set up the grounds for extension and multiplicity (or ‘decentralization’) in the self. When the ‘I’ takes up a position in the world a range of potential counter-positions are also invoked or made possible. These positions can be either internal or external to the self. Hence, the extended repertoire may contain a variety of interacting internal positions (e.g., I as optimist, I as victim), external positions (e.g., the imagined voice of my mother), and outside positions (e.g., interlocutors, significant others).

In the wake of the spatial metaphor that drives this approach to the self, the temporal dimension has received relatively less attention in the literature (Barresi, 2011, Raggatt, 2006). As a consequence questions about *development* in the dialogical self beyond infancy have also been relatively neglected. This is an important omission because Bakhtin (1981) was at pains in his work to place great importance on the *combination* of time and space in human experience (Holquist, 2002). Bakhtin’s concept of *chronotope* (1981) (meaning literally, ‘time-space’) proposes a theoretical fusion of

time-space relations as a means to understand human development. I will argue here that chronotopes can be used to understand the historical unfolding of positions and counter-positions in the dialogical self as these emerge in time-space.

In this chapter I will use an adaptation of Bakhtin's basic conceptualization – I will call it the 'personal chronotope' – to consider questions about the emergence of the dialogical self over time and into adult life. If I-positions and counter-positions emerge in time-space, how can this process be theorised and observed? I tackle this problem first by asking the question: What would the structure of a personal chronotope look like? The answer I propose is that chronotopes are formed in a process of 'third-term' mediation between positions and counter-positions that are 'threaded' across time-space. The basic constituent of the personal chronotope is a triad defined by an I-position, a counter I-position, and a third term 'interpretant' (Peirce, 1931-1955). Interpretants, such as significant persons, objects, ideas, or events, serve an important function in the development of the dialogical self because of their *structurally ambiguous meaning value*. Ambiguous 'thirds' simultaneously mediate both integration and differentiation across positions and counter-positions in the self.

Using this triadic formulation, the *personal chronotope* is conceptualized as a plaited semiotic chain or 'meaning thread' of *multiple* triads, involving the same two positions and a sequence of ambiguous thirds. The personal chronotope has both temporal extension (a *succession* of happenings in story form), and spatial extension (a *simultaneity* of positions, counter-positions, and ambiguous thirds).

Chronotopes in Physics, Biology and Literary Theory

In what follows I first elaborate the concept of chronotope, beginning with Bakhtin's original ideas. In the second part of the chapter I will illustrate the developmental emergence of chronotopes using a case study. Bakhtin offers no generic definition for the

chronotope. With reference to the novel he defines the chronotope as the “intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed...”

(1981, p. 84). In the literary chronotope, he continues:

spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot, and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope. (p. 84)

In his historical analysis of the genesis of the novel, Bakhtin traces the development of a series of literary chronotopes that are characterized by the gradual emergence, in modern forms, of the story of an individual responding to real historical events [the ‘modern’ (auto)biographical account]. In the early Greek forms of what became the novel, Bakhtin observes, there is no ‘emergence’ – the image of the hero lacks development and there is no sense of ‘placement’ in historical time-space. Only in the much later modern novels of ‘historical emergence’ is real historical time assimilated into the account; heroes emerge along with the world, and individual and social change can shape each other (Morson & Emerson, 1990).

Tracing these gradual historical developments will not be our main concern. More germane here, while Bakhtin studied chronotopes in literary narrative he believed they were fundamentally important in human development more generally (Holquist, 2002; Morson & Emerson, 1990). In 1925, Bakhtin attended a lecture by the Russian physiologist, A. A. Ukhtomsky, on chronotopes in the biological world. Different species, Ukhtomsky observed, were governed by different time-space patterns and rhythms. This was the source of the concept in Bakhtin’s work. He was inspired in Ukhtomsky’s lecture by the links he perceived not only with applications to the expression of chronotopes in literature and in the human world more generally, but even with links to Einstein’s theory of relativity (Morson & Emerson, 1990). While Bakhtin

(1981, p. 84) emphasised that the link to relativity theory was “almost, but not entirely” metaphorical, it remains important for sound *dialogical* reasons (Holquist, 2002). Not only did Einstein emphasise the fusion of time-space relations in the physical world, he showed that any object, including time itself, was the product of mediated experience; of *dialogue*. Holquist (2002) writes:

For Einstein there is no chronology independent of events. The movement of a clock’s hand, if that movement is to be an event – if it is to mean anything to a human being perceiving it – must always be correlated with something happening outside the clock. An event, in other words, is always a dialogic unit in so far as it is a co-relation: something happens only when something else with which it can be compared reveals a change in time and space....As soon as co-being is recognized as an event’s necessary mode of existence we give up the right to anything that is immaculate [or] in-itself...(p. 116)

Applying the idea of time-space mediation from physics to the realm of poetics, Bakhtin saw that the same principles apply in human experience. That is, time and space categories are always relative because they can only be known by comparison with some other set of coordinates that can serve as a system of reference. It is this inter-locking of time-space relations in the *mediated* experience of ‘events’ that provides the very grounds for the creation of human chronotopes. Different social activities suggest different kinds of fused time and space relations. For example, the rhythms and spatial organisation of the assembly line, agricultural labour, sexual intercourse, overseas travel, provincial life, and parlour conversation all differ markedly (Morson & Emerson, 1990). It follows that there must be a multiplicity of chronotopes, or a wide variety of “temporal-spatial world-views” existing at the same time and available for individuals to represent their experience and make their lives meaningful (Sampson, 1993).

Personal Chronotopes in a Dialogical Self

How can the literary concept of chronotope be aligned with dialogical self theory? As noted, the question has not received the attention it deserves in the literature. Do the

kinds of structures Bakhtin envisions in ‘artistic narratives’ and cultural-historical epochs, find parallel formations in personal chronotopes? One example, the chronotope of ‘the road’ or the path of a life in the adventure novel, invites clear parallels in the life narratives or life paths of individuals. The potential linkages, then, between literary, cultural, and personal chronotopes invite further theoretical work.

By its very definition, the chronotope melds extension in both time and space via processes of *mediation*. In the adventure novel, the road travelled is the semiotic mediator along which time and space ‘thicken’, or ‘take on flesh’. In personal chronotopes as well, the road can be read as both a literal and metaphoric (or symbolic) thread. But while the road suggests a kind of generic architectonics for genres of narrative at the socio-cultural level, at the psychological level we need to consider other forms of mediation. That is to say, while the road is a metaphor for spatial extension, the dialogical self, as was observed earlier, is *also defined using spatial metaphors of extension (i.e., in terms of ‘positions’ and ‘counter-positions’)*. Here I will argue that the personal chronotope can be thought of as having the properties of both simultaneity, in the form of positions and counter-positions in space, and historicity, in the form of a developmental unfolding or evolution of these positions over time.

Thirdness and Mediation

If the dialogical self is an amalgam of positions and counter-positions in time-space, the question remains as to how such formations uniquely emerge. In order to address this question I have found it useful to apply the thinking of the American pragmatist philosopher C. S. Peirce (1931-1958). For Peirce, most of what is important in human experience is mediated by what he called ‘thirdness’ [see also Bradley (2010), Raggatt, (2010) for extended discussions]. In Peirce’s epistemology, mediation always involves a triad of terms – a ‘First’ that is pure sensation devoid of context (e.g., the sensation of

cold); a ‘Second’ that acts on a First, as, for example, when two people collide with one another on an icy street corner; and a ‘Third’, which Peirce called the ‘interpretant’ and which equates to cultural and semantic knowledge that mediates meaning in the relations of Firsts and Seconds. In Peirce’s original semiotic triad, an object (First) and its signifier (Second) are useless (meaningless) without cultural interpretants (Thirds). How can we apply this approach to the dialogical self?

One way would be to examine mediation between *pairs* of I-positions in relation to *third term mediators* that are structurally ambiguous. That is to say, such mediators conjoin but simultaneously *differentiate* positions and counter-positions. From this perspective Bakhtinian dialogism is entirely compatible with Peirce’s triadic epistemology. The Bakhtinian scholar Michael Holquist (2002) makes this link clear in the following set of remarks about Bakhtin’s theory of self. He writes:

The self... is an event with a structure... [T]hat structure is organized around the categories of space and time. They articulate what has been called the “law of placement” in dialogism... Our places are different not only because our bodies occupy different positions... but also because we regard the world from different centres in cognitive time/space... Dialogism, like relativity [theory], takes it for granted that nothing can be perceived except against the perspective of something else: dialogism’s master assumption is that there is no figure without a ground... This way of conceiving things is not, as it might first appear to be, one more binarism, for in addition to these poles, dialogism enlists the additional factors of situation and relation that make any specific instance of them more than a mere opposition of categories. (pp 21-22)

....The self, then, may be conceived as a multiple phenomenon of essentially three elements (it is – at least – a triad, not a duality): a centre, a not-centre, and the relation between them. (p. 29)

Here, the Peircean and Bakhtinian frameworks find common ground by enlisting mediation between oppositions. But it is a mediation born out of a *simultaneous* resemblance and difference. A contemporary of Bakhtin, the linguist Sergei Karcevskij noted that “true differentiation pre-supposes a simultaneous resemblance and difference” (cited in Holquist, 2002, p. 26). Third term mediators are ‘two-faced’. Like Janus, the

Roman god of transitions, they peer simultaneously at two conflicting positions. Holquist (2002) observes that “the self and the other exist not as separate entities but as relations between two coordinates...each serving to differentiate the other” (p. 26). Applying this principle to questions about *mediation* between I-positions yields a ‘dialogical triad’ of the form shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 about here

Here the basic constituent of the personal chronotope is a triad defined by an I-position, a counter I-position, and a third term ‘interpretant’ (Peirce, 1931-1958). The interpretant may be another person, an object, an event, or another position in the self. Its distinguishing feature is its *structurally ambiguous signification*. For example, if a spouse or partner creates continual conflict for you by being alternately accepting and rejecting, then *decentralizing* movements in the self may result. Here, the dialogical triad is comprised of two opposing I-positions (accepted self, rejected self) that are *simultaneously* polarized and attracted by an ambiguous third position, the spouse or partner that is alternately supportive and hostile. Hence, ‘ambiguous thirds’ provide one of the keys to understanding our multiplicity.

If we use dialogical triads to model simultaneity and spatial extension in the chronotope, temporal extension can then be captured in a succession of such triads, yielding a basic structure for the personal chronotope, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 about here

In this formulation, the personal chronotope is conceptualized as a plaited semiotic chain or ‘meaning thread’ comprised of multiple triads. The triads are defined by the same counter-posing I-positions and a sequence of ambiguous thirds. The personal chronotope invokes *both* centralizing and decentralizing movements. It integrates strands of meaning in the self, but is itself fundamentally dialogical and multi-voiced (there is no single author). Indeed Bakhtin (1981) observed different competing time-space threads in the

work of the authors he studied, writing that: “Within the limits of a single work and within the total output of a single author we may notice a number of different chronotopes and complex interactions among them, specific to the given work or author” (p. 252). In what follows, I will aim to illustrate precisely this pattern of emerging and interlocking chronotopes, distilled from the life history data of a single male participant at midlife. Chronotopes capture central developmental themes in the emergence of the dialogical self over time.

Case Illustration: Chronotopes in the Case of Sean, a Recovered Addict

In the remainder of this chapter I will describe a method for distilling chronotopes from life history data using the triadic formulation developed in the foregoing section. For this purpose I will use a case history about which I have written previously (Raggatt, 2002). The aim here is to re-interpret key aspects of the case material using the model for personal chronotopes depicted in Figure 2. In essence, the case material will be used to fill in the details of Figure 2, while at the same time, elaborating a model that contains *multiple* chronotopes.

Method in Outline

The method I use (called the Personality Web Protocol), assumes that important recurring I-positions and counter-positions have a narrative structure which can be identified. In essence, it is assumed that positions and counter-positions have their own internally coherent stories to tell. Hence I use a narrative approach to assessment of the dialogical self, examining positioning processes in written accounts, in quantitative assessments, and in in-depth interviews (see Raggatt, 2000, 2006, for detailed accounts of the methodology). During the assessment process participants are interviewed and must complete a series of questionnaires and rating scales. Initially, participants are asked

to list and provide brief written descriptions for 24 life history constituents, including 6 significant people, 6 life events, 8 objects and places, and 4 aspects of body image (liked and disliked body parts). Participants then sort these constituents into associated groups or clusters (typically, between two and six clusters are produced from 24 constituents). Finally, participants are asked to provide a self-relevant identifier or label for each cluster (e.g., artistic self, practical self). In this way, important positions and counter-positions are revealed, under the assumption that these positions are comprised of agglomerations of life history details. Using also a quantitative approach, participants are asked to rate their constituents, pair-wise, for similarities and differences using a 9 point scale. These ratings are used in multidimensional scaling analyses to reveal clusters of associated constituents. This quantitative data can be analysed and interpolated with the participants' subjective sorts of constituents, and with their commentary on the life history material given in audio-taped interviews. Interviewing takes typically about two hours and may be conducted over two sessions. The interview focuses first on each individual constituent, exploring its meaning, before turning to an exploration of the constituent clusters and the I-positions they represent. Proceeding by this means, a series of narratives about each I-position crystallizes from an examination of the constituents making up each position (Raggatt, 2000, 2006).

Case Material: Synopsis of the Life of Sean

To help contextualize the analysis which follows, I will begin by summarizing a previously published synopsis of the major events in Sean's life (Raggatt, 2002). Sean is 43 years old. He was born in Northern Ireland and immigrated to Australia with his working class family as a 10 year old. His father was a foundry worker who played soccer for Northern Ireland as a young man. But now Sean describes his father as "a violent alcoholic". His mother suffered from prolonged bouts of depression and was

repeatedly hospitalized throughout Sean's childhood. Crucially, Sean remembers being "mothered" as a young boy by his sister who was 11 years older than him. When Sean was 7 years old, however, his sister secretly immigrated to Australia by herself. Sean describes being very traumatized by this event. Three years later, the rest of the family also immigrated to Australia. Sean's teenage years were marked by success on the sports field, but also by ongoing family trauma. At 18, Sean was left at home to care for his mother who was dying of cancer. He began at this time, to use both heroin and alcohol, and this led to addiction, overdoses, and chronic alcoholism. For a time in his 20's Sean was an outcaste from society. In his 30's Sean joined Alcoholics Anonymous and formed a lasting relationship with a counselor. These decisions eventually helped bring about positive change in his life.

Sean's I-Positions in the Personality Web Protocol

When clustering his life history constituents, Sean identified I-positions that he called, in chronological order of their emergence, the "Good Guy", the "Lost Boy", the "Addict", and the "Magician". These positions emerged both in the qualitative sorts of constituents, and in the multidimensional scaling analyses using the quantitative proximity ratings (see Raggatt, 2002, for the details of the multidimensional scaling analysis).

A distinctive feature of the four positions described by Sean is their *temporal organization*. What begins as a simpler structure in childhood (at least, as described by Sean) defined by one position (the Good Guy), splits in later childhood, and then splits again in adolescence and in adulthood to form four positions. The positions are not just sequential, however; they are also *simultaneous* in Sean's experience. As Sean describes them, each remains alive in his experience to the present time. Without this simultaneity, of course, there can be no chronotope.

First, I will focus on the initial formation of positions and counter-positions in Sean's childhood experience (the Good Guy vs. the Lost Boy). A series of dialogical triads are formed using these two positions and ambiguous thirds drawn from the life history data. The model for the chronotope shown in Figure 2 is used to organize the data. This process is then repeated to describe the emergence of the Addict I-position (using dialogical triads involving the Lost Boy and the Addict), and finally the emergence of the Magician I-position (using dialogical triads involving the Addict and Magician). I propose that the layering of these triad strings (or meaning threads) reveals a cascading series of personal chronotopes. To lay out the terrain, the entire analysis is summarized in the 'chronotopic chart' shown in Figure 3. Note that the figure is an elaboration of the basic conceptual model for the chronotope shown in Figure 2. In what follows I will discuss in turn each of the three personal chronotopes shown in Figure 3.

*** Figure 3 about here***

Chronotope 1: Good Guy – Lost Boy

In the interview Sean tells me that the Good Guy and the Lost Boy are positions that he recognizes from childhood, but that they also remain important in his current life. Early in childhood the Good Guy was linked to his older sister as primary caregiver, and later, to his achievements in the sporting arena. As a young man Sean was an elite-level cricketer, playing in Australia's national competition. But while Sean's sister and his life as a cricketer are important for the Good Guy, *at the same time* these symbols of esteem are implicated in the emergence of the Lost Boy. As noted, when Sean was seven years old his sister secretly immigrated to Australia. About this experience Sean says, "My sister *was* my mother. It was the first great absence in my life." Hence, as Sean tells it this traumatic event is the kernel for the emergence of the Lost Boy as counter to the Good Guy. The sister is a key *ambiguous third* in these positioning dynamics. Consistent

with this interpretation, Sean included his sister twice as a constituent in the life history assessment procedure, i.e., in *both* his Good Guy and Lost Boy constituent clusters.

Looking now at the first row of triads in Figure 3, the sequence shows a hypothetical segment of Sean's extended position repertoire for the chronotope of the Good Guy vs. Lost Boy. Temporal succession in the chronotope is specified by a chain of three dialogical triads. In childhood, Sean's sister, who hitherto had been his surrogate mother, abandons him. This event is a kernel for decentralizing movements in Sean's developing sense of selfhood. Sean's father is a second ambiguous marker defining the chronotope (see Figure 3). The father had been a sports champion, but by the time Sean reached his teens the father had become an alcoholic. This is the same script that is recapitulated in Sean's adult life, and so the father stands for both the Good Guy sportsman in Sean, and the Lost Boy who later succumbs to addiction. A significant event from adulthood completes the third triad shown in the first panel of Figure 3. In this event, Sean abandons his cricket team at an airport and goes on an alcoholic 'bender', disappearing for three days. Here, the Good Guy and the Lost Boy are represented in the ambiguous symbol of the 'star cricketer', drunk, lost, abject and derelict.

Chronotope 2: Lost Boy – Addict

The third I-position in Sean's repertoire, the Addict, appears in adolescence as a dialogical response to the plight of the Lost Boy, and so these two positions define the development of a second chronotope in Sean, represented by the middle row of triads shown in Figure 3. When Sean was 18 his mother died of bowel cancer, an event that hastened the disintegration of the family. In Sean's words:

My sisters fell apart emotionally. My father fell apart emotionally....So I took care of her... I was there all the time for my mother, but I slipped out at night when she

was asleep. And that is when I started drinking and taking heroin. It was...emotional pain....Early on I discovered the anaesthetic power of drugs.

As Sean constructs it then, the Addict is a 'reply' to the abandonment of the Lost Boy. But for a decade, it became the dominant position in Sean's world. Sean succumbed both to alcohol and heroin addictions. Horrifying narrative accounts of the Addict dominate the later period of this time in his life, culminating at the age of 31 in an episode which he labels "The Pariah of Dixon's Creek" (see Figure 3). In this episode Sean goes on a six week 'bender' using ethyl alcohol while living alone in a country farmhouse.(see Raggatt, 2002).

The second row of triads in Figure 3 is formed using the 'objects' of Sean's addictions as third-term mediators. Heroin provided a reprieve from the pain of experiencing his mother's dying and eventual death (the Lost Boy). But it was also a danger to his own life through the possibility of overdose (the Addict). Similarly, alcohol signifies the abandonment of his first wife, as well as the 'alternative' life of the bingeing alcoholic, and the binge on ethyl alcohol was both the product of his isolation in the bush (the Lost Boy), and a turning point in his life of addiction ("I was just a madman in the bush") (see Figure 3).

Chronotope 3: Addict – Magician

Sean describes the Magician as "a kind of spiritual self". In the role of "savior", it is the counter voice to the Addict. The Magician in Sean is the charmed survivor and great escapologist. But the Magician also tells stories of salvation and of "giving over ones will to higher (moral) powers". Some readers may recognize the source of Sean's quote as the third step in the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) abstinence program. While seeking treatment in hospital Sean befriended an AA support worker and subsequently attended his first AA meeting. He was still attending these meetings 12 years later.

The final row of triads in Figure 3 are defined by mediators that are linked to Sean's problems with addiction, but *at the same time* they signify Sean's 'escape' from that addiction – the AA meetings, Sean's addiction counselor (who became his second wife), and a beach house property, which signifies both inner-city escape (from drugs) and 'sea-change' renewal. Just as the chronotopes of the Lost Boy and the Addict repeat themes of abandonment, isolation and anaesthesia, in the chronotope of the Magician there are recurring episodes that repeat and rework a fable of *magical rescue*. Sean's second and present wife, for example, has been instrumental in facilitating a range of magical rescues – from addiction, from being lost or alone, from poverty.

While Sean now leads a relatively comfortable life (represented in the Good Guy and the Magician), he also has an ongoing history of lapses involving binge drinking (the most recent was only months prior to interview). Much to his partner's dismay, he also occasionally disappears suddenly (like his sister) for days without warning or explanation (the Lost Boy). These episodes are important from the perspective of simultaneity and decentering in Sean's dialogical self. They reveal that positions with distant origins may re-emerge or be reactivated.

Discussion

The flowchart shown in Figure 3 attempts to portray the 'landscape' of the dialogical self as series of inter-locking threads in time-space, each thread taking the form of a chronotope (Bakhtin, 1981). The ambiguous thirds which complete the triads in each chronotope are the Janusian heads or fulcrums around which decentering movements in the self emerge and develop. For Sean, his sister and father are profoundly Janusian, occupying the space of both his most pleasant and unpleasant memories from childhood and adolescence. The chronotopes of the Addict and the Magician are similarly structured by thirds that produce decentralizing movements in the self. All of these

ambiguous thirds are *doubled* - the sister as *both* mother and betrayer; the father as *both* champion and drunkard; heroin and alcohol as both anaesthetic and addictive. It is these semiotic mediators that make visible the positioning dynamics at play in Sean's temporal-spatial world.

It is also worth observing here that in Sean's chronotopes his I-positions occupy different *physical* as well as *metaphorical* spaces. The Good Guy is very social; he is still a member of his cricket club. He is a "raconteur" in these spaces. The Lost Boy, on the other hand, is always alone in space, whether abandoned or abandoning others. The Addict is a creature of inner city 'zones', while the Magician attends regular AA meetings at the same place, is a wizard in the kitchen, and an occasional puppeteer for school groups. Hence, each position takes up, relative to its neighbors, different physical as well as semiotic spaces in the chronotope.

It will be helpful here to summarize the Bakhtinian formulation of the chronotope in order to reflect on what the findings in the case of Sean might mean for human development. For this purpose I will refer to a useful summary provided previously by Morson & Emerson (1990, pp. 367-369) in their discussion of Bakhtin's *prosaics*. Here, I adapt their main points:

1. In the chronotope, time and space are not separable, but intrinsically connected. There is a fusion in the experience and rendering of time and space.
Figure 3 is an attempt to distil such a fusion.
2. There are a variety of senses of time-space fusion available. We live in a universe of 'heterochrony' or multi-temporality.
3. Chronotopes are present not just in animal life, but in novels, and in narratives of individual experience.

4. There is a multiplicity of chronotopes available to the person. These may change over time, and compete with one another. Chronotopes, therefore, have both *historical* and *dialogical* properties.
5. Chronotopes are not so much ‘visibly present’ as they are the *ground* for making possible the representation of events in time-space.

I interpret this last point to mean that chronotopes are difficult to ‘see’ because they emerge into view only in the mediation between I-positions performed by a third term: an other, object, or event with multi-stable meanings. In the chronotope, thirdness is alloyed to history in a thread of signifiers that destabilize the centre, and make the self (to use Bakhtin’s term) ‘unfinalizable’. In developmental terms, then, there is no ‘resting place’ for the self; no final solution. The individual is always emerging out of the objects and events that refract experience away from a quiescent centre. The result developmentally is a tendency towards greater differentiation (not integration) as we move from childhood to adolescence to adulthood. We see this clearly in the case of Sean. At the same time, however, the chronotope gives a form of stability (a centralizing tendency, not a unity) captured also in the mediating process – a fabric which organizes time-spaces, while also multiplying them.

Conclusion

I have argued that semiotic mediation is crucial to the dynamics of positioning processes in the dialogical self. From a developmental point-of-view, I have suggested that the concept of ‘thirdness’ provides an important tool for understanding the emergence of personal chronotopes in time-space (see also Raggatt, 2010). Ambiguous thirds reveal how chronotopes are built from semiotic relations. Using a case example, I have shown how this approach allows us to plot the *formation* of I-positions, counter-positions, and chronotopes, via an analysis of *dynamic relations among life history data*. While

ambiguous thirds multiply the self, their multi-stability also provides the grounds for integration.

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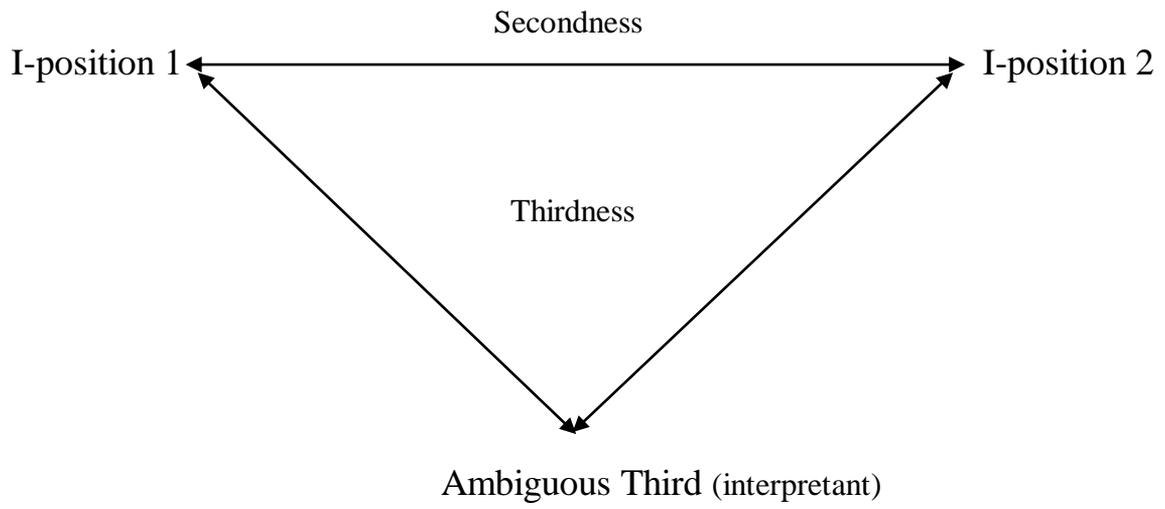


Figure 1 A dialogical triad

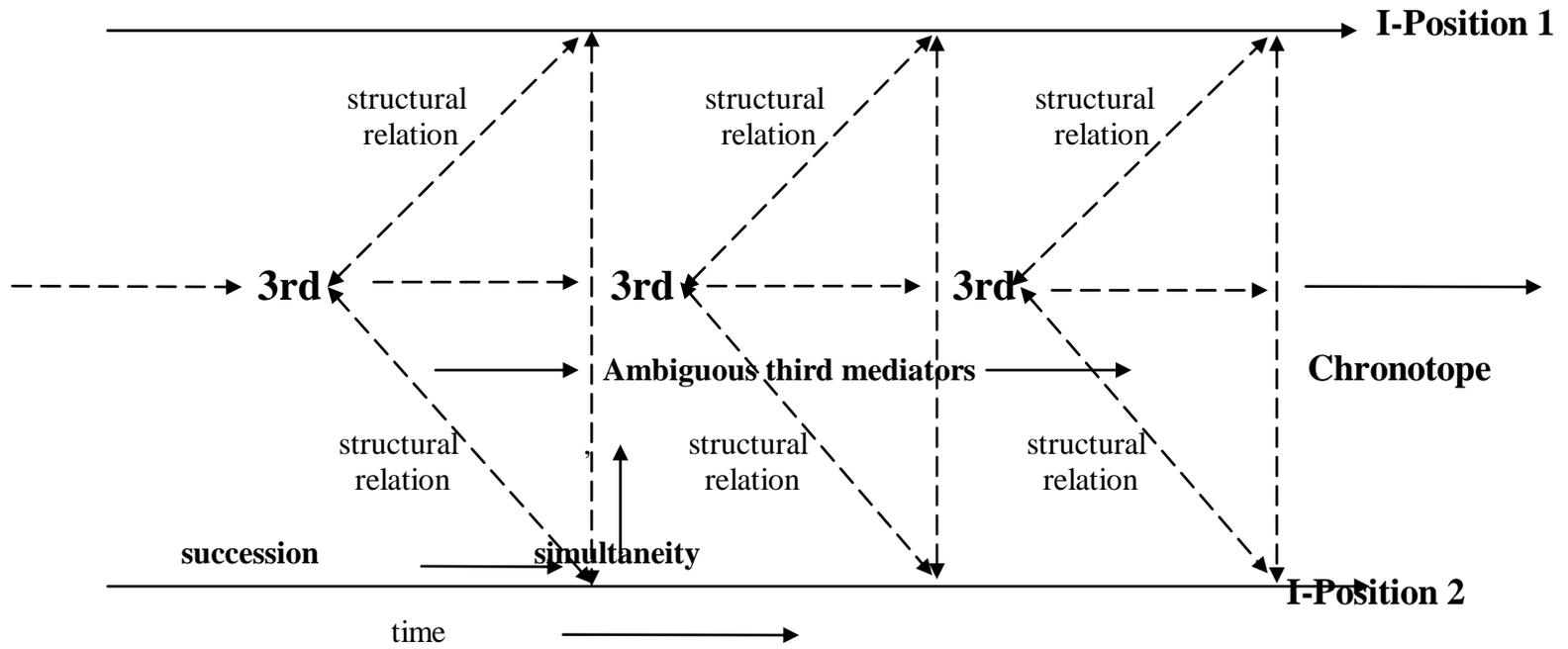


Figure 2 Hypothetical structure of a personal chronotope