Do Others Bring Out the Worst in Narcissists?: The "Others Exist for Me" Illusion

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> *I hate every human being on earth. I feel that everyone is beneath me, and I feel they should all worship me. "*
> -Roseanne Barr in an interview at *Gear* magazine, October 2000

The cognitive revolution gave social and personality psychology a heuristically useful metaphor, the central processing unit (CPU) (Foddy & Kashima, chap. 1, this volume). The CPU was considered a robust, powerful, and efficient controller of mental processes-so efficient, in fact, that it was assumed to process information about the self in a virtually identical manner as information about other persons, non-human animals, and inanimate objects (Ostrom, 1984). It was this one-controller-fits-all notion that permeated theorizing on the self in the late 1970s, 1980s, and even early 1990s. The assumption asserted the relative invariance both of the self as a cognitive structure (Greenwald & Banaffl, 1989; KihIstrom et al., 1988; Rogers, Kuiper, & Kirker, 1977) and of the sources of incoming in-

formation (social vs. nonsocial; Hamilton, 1988; Ostrom, 1984; Srull & Wyer, 1989).

The invariance assumption was based, in part, on a rather implicit thesis, namely, that the guiding force (i.e., motive) behind information processing is a concern for accuracy. Humans are truth seekers. They single-mindedly pursue knowledge that is accurate and impartial, regardless of whether such knowledge pertains to the self, other persons, or environmental objects. After all, the pursuit of accuracy is both rational and functional. It is rational because it follows logical rules. It is functional because it provides the individual with valuable insight not only into others but also into the individual's relative position in family systems, occupational hierarchies, and societal structures.

The invariance assumption was also based on research agenda priorities. Perhaps because it was considered a reasonable starting point, the top item on the agenda was intrapsychic processing. Research foci aimed at explicating processes such as how individuals reflect on themselves, ruminate, resolve internal conflict, set goals consistent with their self-concept, evaluate the success of their goals as a function of internal standards, and experience emotions on the basis of subjective evaluations of goal attainment.

However, by the mid 1990s, the shortcomings of the invariance assumption had come to light. The accuracy assumption was shown to be only half correct. Humans indeed have accuracy concerns, but mostly when they process information about unfamiliar persons or objects (Sedikides & Green, in press; Smith, 1998; Wyer & Carlston, 1994). When it comes to processing information about the self, accuracy concerns give way to positivity concerns. Humans strive to protect, retain, repair, or increase the positivity of the self-concept-in short, they are driven by the motive to self-enhance (Brown & Dutton, 1995; Sedikides & Strube, 1997; Wheeler & Miyake, 1992).

The accuracy assumption was also challenged by waves of research on the role of the self in relational (Murray, 1999), intra- or intergroup (Onorato & Turner, chap. 7, this volume), and cultural (Heine, Lchman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999) contexts. Such research highlighted the complex interplay between intra-psychic processes on the one hand, and interpersonal, group, and cultural processes on the other. It became clear that context can change the individual self in remarkable ways (Foddy & Kashima, chap. 1, this volume; Sedikides & Brewer, 2001).

We believe that the research described in this chapter captures the zeitgeist of the late 1990s and the beginning of the new millennium. To begin with, we fully endorse the well-founded notion that thinking about the self is colored by the self-enhancement motive. In an effort to map out the boundaries of how this motive afrects self-perception, we zero in on a

rather extreme manifestation of the motive: narcissistic self-enhancernent. At the same time, we give serious consideration to contextual influences, as we examine the extent to which narcissistic self-enhancement is constrained by the interpersonal milieu. What sort of influence does an interpersonal bond have on the narcissistic self, if any? We postulate the existence of a narcissistic illusion, which we term the "Others Exist for Me', illusion. Bearing out this illusion are research findings that point to narcissists becoming competitive in interpersonal contexts and using other persons for own psychological advantage. Stated otherwise, we use an extreme example of egocentricity and self-enhancement to argue that what is believed to be a personality trait (i.e., narcissism) is actually, at least in part, a critical interpersonal phenomenon, an interpersonal extension of the individual self. We review relevant research findings, draw implications, and discuss issues that warrant further research attention.

NARCISSISM

Conceptual Definition

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV;* American Psychiatric Association, 1994) classified narcissism as a personality disorder that distorts several areas of psychological functioning. Narcissists are highly self-focused and egocentric, think of themselves in extraordinarily positive ways, have persistent needs for attention and admiration, have a strong sense of uniqueness, specialness, and entitlement, and have recurrent fantasies of power, success, and fame. In the classic personality and social psychological tradition (e.g., Emmons, 1987; Raskin, Novacek, & Hogan, 1991a; Rhodewalt & Morf, 1995), we conceptualize narcissism as a personality variable on which the population lies on a continuum.

Operational Definition

Narcissism has most commonly been operationalized via the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Hall, 1979). The NPI is a forced choice scale that has adequate reliability and validity (Raskin & Terry, 1988; Rhodewalt & Morf, 1995). The scale consists of seven components: authority, entitlement, exhibitionism, exploitativeness, self-sufficiency, superiority, and vanity. Most of the research that we review in this chapter has used the NPI to sort out narcissists from their humbler brethren. For the purposes of this chapter, we consider "narcissists" those individuals who score above the median (or are relatively high) on the NPI, and ".normals" those who score below the median (or are relatively low) on the NPI.

THE "OTHERS EXIST FOR ME' ILLUSION

We propose that narcissistic thinking about the self in relation to others is characterized by the "Others Exist for Me" illusion. At the core of this illusion are self-centeredness and self-admiration, perceptions of others as vastly inferior, and the belief that others care or should care as much about the narcissist's psychological welfare as the narcissist does. Other persons are expected to bow to narcissistic superiority, are exploited for personal gain (i.e., the affirmation of narcissistic perceptions of superiority), and are met with hostility when they display behaviors that the narcissist finds uncongenial.

We begin by providing a rationale for the "Others Exist for Me" illusion. We proceed with reviewing four classes of evidence that support the illusion. These are (a) narcissistic perceptions of one's own superiority, (b) narcissistic manifestations of one's own superiority in independent tasks, (c) narcissistic perceptions of others' inferiority, and (d) narcissistic use of others for self-enhancement in interdependent tasks.

Rationale

Underlying our proposal for the "Others Exist for Me" illusion is our conviction that the crucial distinction between narcissists and normals is not simply that narcissists engage in more blatant self-enhancement. Instead, the crucial distinction rests in the interpersonal price that narcissists are willing to pay in order to self-enhance. The price is damage to an interpersonal bond. In some sense, other persons bring out the worst in narcissists. Narcissists appear to be energized by others, to perceive the interpersonal situation competitively, to expect others to cater on them. They then take advantage of others, and become hostile when the script does not go as planned.

It is informative to consider normals as a reference point. Normals are prone to keeping their self-enhancement tendencies in check when an interpersonal bond has been formed, no matter how superficial this bond is. In other words, normals show contextual sensitivity. For example, they automatically describe themselves more humbly to persons who know them well (i.e., friends) than to strangers (Tice, Butler, Muraven, & Stillwell, 1995). On the contrary, the narcissistic self agenda remains uncompromisingly rigid and transparent: Narcissists ruthlessly pursue the aggrandizement of the individual self, even at the price of diminishing others and at the risk of sacrificing the interpersonal bond. The narcissistic self relates to the social world in fundamentally different ways than the normal self.

Why do narcissists fail to show contextual sensitivity? Why are they so rigid in their self-enhancement patterns? How have they formed the "Others Exist for Me" illusion in the first place? According to psychodynamic theorizing, one theme that runs through the life of the narcissists is the antagonism between the need for self-enhancement and the ability to maintain healthy interpersonal relationships-be it romantic relationships or friendships. This theme first appeared in Greek mythology when Narcissus forsook the advances of Echo and a host of prospective partners, and eventually fell in love with his own reflection in a pool of water. This theme was also central to Freud's (1914/1957) analysis of narcissism. Freud emphasized that love is a limited psychological resource. As a result of narcissists' libidinal cathexis with the self, libido becomes unavailable for cathexis with other ob ects. In plain English, narcissists spend all of their love on themselves, and, as a result, have none left over for close others.

Following Freud's lead, several psychodynamically oriented theorists, notably Kernberg (1975), Kohut (1977), and Millon (1981), focused on disfunctional parent-child relationships as the source of narcissism. Kernberg reckoned that the child's construction of an inflated self-concept was a defense against the emotional abandonment by parents and also the child's rage resulting from such abandonment. Narcissists use relationships to feel good about themselves, and thus avoid experiencing intense feelings of loss and anger. Koluit proposed that the child's construction and maintenance of an inflated self-concept were the outcome of unmet psychological needs (e.g., attention, comfort, love). Narcissists use relationships to feel good about themselves, and thereby compensate for the absence of loving attention that they received in childhood and the intense negative affect that accompanied it. Millon (1981), on the other hand, presented a dramatically contrasting view of narcissism. Narcissism is the result of parental over-attention, overly positive feedback, and excessive levels of admiration. The child is getting used to this royal treatment and generalizes the expectancies of deservingness and entitlement to adult relationships. When these expectancies are violated, the child feels betrayed and responds with rage, hostility, and aggression.

Narcissistic Perceptions of Own Superiority

Narcissists self-aggrandize to an extraordinary degree, as correlational evidence suggests. Narcissism is positively correlated with self-esteem (jackson, Ervin, & Hodge, 1992; Raskin & Terry, 1988), body image (jackson et al., 1992), belief of possessing extraordinary talents (Tobacyk & Mitchell, 1987), lack of a discrepancy between the actual and ideal self (Rhodewalt & Morf, 1995), self-focus (Emmons, 1987; Raskin & Shaw, 1988),

agency (Bradlee & Emmons, 1992), need for uniqueness (Emmons, 1984), need for status and power (Bradlee & Emmons, 1992; Carroll, 1987), and machiavellianism (McHoskey, 1995).

Narcissistic Manifestations of Own Superiority in Independent Tasks. Independent tasks involve settings in which participants work alone (Sedikides, Campbell, Reeder, & Elliot, 1998). Self-enhancement in such tasks does not implicate others directly. That is, judgments about the self or attributions about one's performance do not necessitate a direct comparison with another person. Self-enhancement in independent tasks does not require the explicit derogation or diminishment of another person.

Independent tasks afford the researcher the opportunity of contrasting narcissistic with normal self-enhancement. As we have emphasized, the crucial distinction between narcissists and normals lies in the interpersonal price that narcissists are willing to pay in order to enhance the individual self. However, based on the already reviewed evidence for narcissistic selfperceived superiority, we maintain that narcissistic self-enhancement will surpass normal self-enhancement even in tasks that do not involve other persons: Narcissists will be more self-enhancing than normals on independent tasks. That is, although others are sufficient to energize narcissists and activate their superiority beliefs and competitive tendencies, they are not necessary.

A good portion of the literature is supportive of the proposition that narcissists self-enhance even on independent tasks. Gabriel, Critelli, and Ee (1994) asked participants to rate their own intelligence and physical attractiveness in relation to the average college student. The researchers compared these ratings both to the results of an intelligence test that participants took following the self-ratings and tojudges' ratings of the participants' attractiveness. Relative to normals, narcissists overestimated the degree to which they were intelligent and attractive. Likewise, compared to normals, narcissists were overoptimistic about their current and final course grade, and about the success of their performance at an upcoming laboratory task (Farwell & Wohlwend-Lloyd, 1998).

Narcissists self-enhance in additional ways. Participants in a study by Kernis and Sun (1994) received randomly determined positive or negative interpersonal feedback and subsequently rated the diagnosticity of such feedback. Compared to normals, narcissists regarded the feedback as more diagnostic when it was positive and as less diagnostic when it was negative. John and Robins (1994) examined the perceptions of master's of business administration (MBA) students participating in a group discussion task. At the end of the discussion, participants evaluated their own overall positive contribution to the group in comparison to their fellow discussants' positive contributions. In disagreement with observers or

peers, narcissists, relative to normals. rated their own performance as more impactful. These findings were conceptually replicated by Gosling, John, Craik, and Robins (1998), and by Raskin and Shaw (1988).

Nevertheless, other lines of research seem to blur the clear picture that these findings present. This research examines attributions for one's own performance, and specifically the empirically robust self-serving bias. This valid signature of the self-enhancement motive refers to individuals taking responsibility for successful task outcomes, but denying responsibility (by displacing it to other persons or circumstances), for unsuccessful task outcomes (Arkin, Cooper, & Kolditz, 1980; Campbell & Sedikides, 1999; Mullen & Riordan, 1988).

In a study by Rhodewalt and Morf (1995. Study 1), participants filled out the Attributional Style Questionnaire (Rhodewalt, Strube, Hill, & Sansone, 1988), in which they made attributions for hypothetical negative or positive events. Participants attributed the cause of each event to factors that were internal versus external, stable versus unstable, and global versus specific. Participants also indicated the extent to which they were responsible for each event. True to form, narcissists manifested a selfserving attributional pattern with regard to positive outcomes: They attributed such events to internal, stable, and global causes. Surprisingly, however, narcissists did not differ from normals in their attributions for negative outcomes. That is, narcissists did not surpass normals in attributing these events to external, unstable, and specific causes.

We supplemented this correlational study with several experimental investigations of narcissistic self-enhancement in independent tasks. (Note that in this, as in all of our experiments, we statistically removed from narcissism the contribution of self-esteem.) Participants in one of our published studies (Campbell, Reeder, Sedikides, & Elliot, 2000, Experiment 2) took the "Lange-Elliot Creativity Test," an ostensibly well-validated measure of %ndividual creativity" (Bartis, Szymanski, & Harkins, 1988). Each participant listed as many uses as possible for two objects: a brick and a candle. The number of unique object uses that each participant generated would be her or his score on the test. Upon test completion and scoring, each participant received false success or failure feedback. Next, participants were told that creativity is a function of many factors, and it is near impossible to tell what percentage of their score is due to test-taker characteristics or to chance circumstances. Thus, participants were asked to estimate the degree to which they thought that they were individually responsible for their score on the test. They also indicated whether the test outcome was due to Internal factors (ability and effort) or to external factors (difficulty and luck). We derived an overall measure of internal attributions by subtracting the scores on the external factors from the scores on the internal factors (e.g., Stephan, Rosenfield, & Stephan, 1976).

Finally, participants indicated the degree to which they regarded creativity as an important trait to have. This constitutes an indirect measure of self-enhancement (Wyer & Frey, 1983). A self-enhancing pattern would be one in which participants valued the trait more following success than following failure.

In general, participants manifested the self-serving bias: Those who succeeded assumed more responsibility for the outcome of the test than those who failed. In addition, success feedback participants made more internal attributions, and valued creativity more, than failure feedback participants. However, none of these effects was qualified by narcissism to a statistically significant degree. Apparently, narcissists were as likely as normals to display the self-serving bias, to make an internal attribution for the successful completion of the test, and to value creativity mostly in the face of success. We conceptually replicated these findings both in a published study (Campbell, Reeder, Sedikides, & Elliot, 2000, Experiment 1) and in an unpublished experiment (Campbell, Reeder, Sedikides, & Elliot, 2001).

Taken together, evidence for the proposition that narcissists self-enhance on independent tasks is somewhat mixed. Narcissists are not invariably and robustly more self-enhancing than normals. Instead, narcissists manifest a mildly higher self-enhancement pattern than normals on independent tasks.

Narcissistic Perceptions of Others' Inferiority

Correlational studies provide suggestive evidence for the proposal that narcissists do not consider others as equals. Narcissism is inversely related to perspective taking or empathy (Watson, Grisham, Trotter, & Biderman, 1984), need for intimacy (Carroll, 1987), agreeableness (Hendin & Cheek, 1997; Rhodewalt & Morf, 1995), affiliation (Bradlee & Emmons, 1992), and gratitude (Farwell & Wolilwend-Lloyd, 1998). In fact, narcissists seem to have antagonistic relational patterns with others. Narcissism is positively related to competitiveness (Raskin & Terry, 1988), exploitativeness (Bennett, 1988; Biscardi & Schill, 1985), anger (McCann & Biaggio, 1989), hostility (Rhodewalt & Morf, 1995; Raskin, Novacek, & Hogan, 1991b), and aggression (Baumelster, Bushman, & Campbell, 2000). Furthermore, narcissists enjoy competitive tasks more than normals do (Morf, Weir, & Davidov, 2000).

Narcissistic Use of Others for Self-Enhancement in Interdependent Tasks

Interdependent tasks involve collaboration between or among participants (Sedikides et al., 1998). Success or failure of the dyad (or the team) depends on the joint rather than unique contribution of its members.

When performance is evaluated, the feedback refers to the quality of the dyadic, rather than the individual, performance. As such, interaction, coordination of effort, and an amiable working relationship between dyad members are prerequisites for an optimal task outcome. Importantly, selfenhancement in interdependent tasks implicates the real or imagined presence of other persons. That is, judgments about the self or attributions about one's performance require a direct comparison with another person. Thus. self-enhancement in interdependent tasks necessitates the derogation or belittlement of another person.

At the core of the "Others Exist for W' illusion is the tenet that narcissistic self-enhancement will be substantially and robustly discrepant from normal self-enhancement in interdependent tasks. Narcissists will devalue the interpersonal bond, and will opt to boost their self-concept even at the expense of the working relationship. Bluntly put, they will have no qualms about using the relationship for individual psychological gain (i.e., selfenhancement). Thus, the narcissistic self thrives in interpersonal settings. Narcissists frame the interpersonal situation in a way that it will allow them to gain a competitive advantage.

Direct evidence is strongly supportive of the already mentioned tenet. In one of our published studies (Campbell, Reeder, Sedikides, & Elliot, 2000, Experiment 1), participants completed the "Lange-Elliot Creativity TesC in dyads. They were told that each unique object use that they had generated would count toward scores on a dyadic creativity test. The experimenter had no way of knowing individual input to the test. The feedback would pertain to the success and failure of the dyad as a unit, not of individual members. Following completion of the test, participants received false success or failure feedback at the dyadic level (e.g., "your dyad did well," or "your dyad did poorly.") Next, participants made a comparative judgment: They indicated who (i.e., the participant vs. the other dyad member) was more responsible for the combined performance and outcome of the test. This relativistic attribution measure allowed us to determine whether participants were willing to denigrate their partner's performance for own gain. Finally, participants expressed the importance that they assigned to the creativity test. This measure was considered to reflect an individual (i.e., noncomparative) judgment. Participants did not need to belittle the other dyad member in order to assert their perceived superiority.

The results were revealing. In the comparative measure, narcissists manifested the self-serving bias. They regarded themselves more responsible than normals for the dyadic success, but less responsible than normals for the dyadic failure. Narcissists were fired up by the competitive situation and strove to take the psychological lead over their partner. However, in the noncomparative measure, narcissists did not differ significantly from nor-

mals, as the two categories of participants assigned equivalent importance to creativity following success and equivalent importance to it following failure. This finding conceptually replicates previously reviewed experiments utilizing independent tasks: Narcissists do not necessarily selfenhance more than normals, unless an opportunity of gaining a competitive advantage over another person is provided.

In an unpublished experiment (Campbell et al., 2001), we replicated and extended these findings. The procedure and dependent measures were identical to those of the already mentioned study (i.e., Campbell, Reeder, Sedikides, & Elliot, 2000, Experiment 1). However, we included two additional measures. First, we asked participants whether the outcome of the test was due to internal factors (ability and eflort) or external factors (difficulty and luck). We derived an internal attribution index by subtracting the external factors score from the internal factors score. Second, we asked participants to provide free responses both immediately following feedback (i.e., 1ist all thoughts that cross your mind") and on completion of the dependent measures (i.e., 'Justify your responses on the prior scale").

We begin by reporting our findings on the outcome responsibility measure (Table 5. 1). When the dyad succeeded, narcissists tended to take greater responsibility for the outcome of the creativity test than when the dyad failed. Normals, in contrast, allocated responsibility in a more evenhanded manner. Clearly, narcissists were willing to denigrate the partner's performance for individual gain.

However, the results on the internal attribution index told another story. Note that this measure is a noncomparative measure of self-enhancement. It is not necessary to diminish the partner in order to elevate the self. In replication of previous findings, narcissists did not differ significantly from normals: They were equally likely to attribute the successful task outcome to internal qualities, and to attribute the unsuccessful task outcome to forces beyond their control. This pattern was also obtained with the importance measure, another indicator of noncomparativejudgment. Narcissists and normals were equally likely to brand creativity an important trait when they succeeded, and to brand it a relatively unimportant trait when they failed.

TABLE 5.1
Responsibility for Task Outcome as a Function of Narcissism and Feedback in Campbell, Reeder, Sedikides, and Elliot (2001)

	Success Feedback	*Failure Feedback*
Narcissists	6.22	5.10
Normals	5.80	5.76

Note. Higher scores indicate perceptions of greater personal responsibility.

Of particular interest were the free-response measures, as they are likely to provide additional insight into the reasons that may make narcissists behave the way they do. All free responses were coded by two research assistants. The two free-response tasks were coded on several dimensions, two of which yielded statistically significant results and are particularly relevant to the present discussion. With regard to the free-response task following feedback, the relevant dimension was presence of thoughts regarding the partner (100% coder agreement). With regard to the free response task following the dependent measure, the relevant dimension was presence of positive thoughts regarding the self (9 1 % agreement, with the few disagreements resolved through discussion).

We analyzed these two indexes using hierarchical regression analyses. Independent variables were feedback (success, failure) and narcissism. On the free-response task following feedback, narcissism was negatively related to the presence of thoughts regarding the partner. Thus, to the extent that participants were narcissistic, they were less likely to think about their partner after getting either success or failure feedback. When we entered presence of thoughts regarding the partner into a regression equation with self-esteem, narcissism, and feedback, thoughts regarding the partner did not predict outcome responsibility. Moreover, we obtained no evidence of mediation when we entered the interaction of feedback and thoughts regarding the partner into the full model. Clearly, thoughts about the partner did not mediate the relation between narcissism and the self-serving bias.

On the free-response task following the completion of the dependent measures, narcissism was related positively to the presence of favorable thoughts regarding the self. Thus, narcissists justified their self-serving attributions by making positive statements about the self. We were unable to conduct conclusive mediational analyses because participants made their justifications after the measurement of the self-serving bias. Nevertheless, we went ahead and examined the role of positive statements as a mediator. When we entered the interaction of positive self-statements and feedback into the full model (along with the positive self-statements main effect), evidence of mediation emerged. Specifically, the interaction between positive self-statements and feedback was significant, whereas the significance of the interaction between narcissism and feedback dropped to marginality. In an effort to better understand this effect, we examined the success and failure conditions separately. In the success condition, positive selfstatements were related positively to taking responsibility for the task outcome. In the failure condition, positive self-statements were related negatively to taking responsibility for the task outcome. In summary, the free-response measures yielded some clues as to why narcissists display the self-serving bias. Narcissism was related negatively

to thinking about one's partner, and narcissism was related positively to justifying responses on the dependent measure by referring favorably to oneself. Further analyses revealed that thinking about the partner did not mediate the relation between narcissism and the self-serving bias. On the other hand, positive thoughts about oneself did mediate the relation between narcissism and the self-serving bias. Because this justification measure was taken after the dependent measure, however, its role as a mediator can not be confirmed conclusively. We believe that the gist of these findings is that the rigidity of narcissistic self-enhancement in interdependent tasks is partly due to narcissists' undue focus on the self (and thus overvaluation of their own contribution) at the expense of their partner.

Corroborating Evidence

Although we were unable to locate any other studies that examined narcissistic self-enhancement in interdependent tasks, we wish to report on a handful of investigations that focused on the ways narcissists respond socially to unfavorable feedback. In some of these experimental settings, narcissists were given the opportunity to express their views of the evaluator. The study by Kernis and Sun (1994) is a case in point. Narcissists who received negative feedback at a performance task rated the evaluator (in comparison to normals) as incompetent and unlikeable. Smalley and Stake (1996) replicated these findings.[1]

In another experimental setting, narcissists were offered the opportunity to express their views of a participant who outperformed them. Morf and Rhodewalt (1993) examined the role of narcissism in self-evaluation maintenance (SEM; Tesser, 1988). The SEM model predicts that individuals will attempt to retain a positive self-evaluation by derogating close others who perform well on a task that is highly self-relevant. Participants engaged in a self-relevant task (i.e., a test of "social sensitivity"), after which they were informed that they had performed worse than a close other. Of course, the feedback was bogus. Narcissists were more likely than normals to derogate the successful close other.

Not only do narcissists express negativity toward unfavorable evaluators, they also behave aggressively toward them. In a study by Bushman and Baumeister (1998), narcissists and normals wrote an essay and were informed that their essay would be evaluated by another participant. In actuality, it was the experimenter who provided a written essay evaluation. The feedback consisted either of negative or positive ratings on organization, originality, argument persuasiveness, writing style, clarity of expression, and overall quality. A negative ("This is one of the worst essays 1 have read") or positive ("No suggestions, great essay!") written comment accompanied the corresponding type of feedback. Next, participants en-

gaged in a competitive reaction time task (Taylor, 1967), which was actually a measure of aggression. Participants learned that the faster respondent on each trial would be in a position to punish the slower respondent by controlling the intensity and duration of a blast of noise. The combination of these two measures constituted the aggression index. On the first and most telling trial, narcissists were more aggressive toward the fictitious competitor than normals, but only when the feedback was unfavorable (Experiment 1). Furthermore, this aggression was not displaced; instead, it was targeted to the specific assumed source of unfavorable feedback (Experiment 2).

THE "OTHERS EXIST FOR MW ILLUSION: IMPLICATIONS

Next, we evaluate the empirical status of the "Others Exist for W' illusion and discuss its implications for narcissistic patterns of relatedness.

Summary

The fundamental aspect of narcissistic self-enhancement is the nature of responsiveness (or non-responsiveness!) to interpersonal context. Narcissists build an inner shrine to themselves. They consider themselves to be at the epicenter of their social world, a world that is, or should be, their fan club. They expect all inhabitants of this world to be devoted to promoting their emotional welfare. When their naive expectancies are not met, they react with rage and hostility-as the opening Roseanne Barr quote illustrates.

We believe that the "Others Exist for W' illusion captures the essence of narcissistic self-enhancement. Narcissists self-enhance when they engage in independent tasks or make noncomparative judgments, but their enhancement patterns are only equivocally more pronounced than those of normals. Narcissists, however, self-enhance rigidly when they perform in interdependent tasks or make comparative judgments. The distinctive feature of narcissists is that they pursue self-enhancement even when doing so means detracting from the accomplishments of a coworker. Narcissists selfishly exploit the interpersonal context in pursuit of this selfenhancement. They sacrifice interpersonal bonds in general, and diminish close others in particular, to feel better about themselves.

Perhaps Millon (1981) captured the gist of narcissistic self-enhancement. He emphasized that narcissists feel entitled in their interpersonal relationships. Indeed, narcissistic entitlement, interpersonal exploitativeness, and forcefully negative responding to disapproval are all indicators

(albeit indirect) of overgeneralized relatedness patterns. An important reason why narcissists expect the royal treatment from adult partners may be that they were socialized in such a treatment.

Narcissists and Relationships Do Not Mix

How is narcissistic self-enhancement received by others? Are others forgiving or unforgiving of narcissistic behavior? When first encountered in social settings, narcissists give off a positive impression. They appear energetic, confident, and intense. However, as interpersonal encounters accumulate (indeed, by the seventh weekly social interaction: Paufflus, 1998), narcissists are perceived as show-offs (conceited and self-centered), who are more interpersonal liabilities than interpersonal assets (Buss & Chiodo, 1991; Leary, Bednarski, Hammon, & Duncan, 1997; Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Narcissists manage to alienate others by violating rules of politeness and norms of social conduct.

The bitter aftertaste that narcissistic exploitativeness leaves in others will naturally have repercussions for narcissists' interpersonal relationships (e.g., coworkers, friendships, romantic partnerships). The most obvious repercussion is that narcissists are likely to drive away many relational partners, assuming that few persons are interested in a relationship with an individual who is nongracious when it comes to sharing collective credit and achievement. The second, and perhaps more subtle, repercussion is that narcissists' relationships will lack the mutuality of status, caring, and respect that characterizes functional adult relationships. Narcissists will have trouble being genuinely concerned for their partner (i.e., lack of communal or prosocial orientation: Clark & Mills, 1979; Van Lange, Agnew, Harinck, & Steemers, 1997), incorporating the partner into their self-concept (Aron & Aron, 1997), trusting the partner (Holmes & Rempel, 1989), committing to the partner (Campbell & Foster, 2000), accommodating to the partner's need (Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus, 1991), and sacrificing for the partner (Van Lange et al., 1997). Narcissists believe that they are intrinsically superior to their relationship partners, and this belief will likely cut short their chances of having a close relationship.

Yet narcissists cannot help but have spells of closeness and intimacy, assuming that the "need to belong" (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) is a universal motive among humans. If so, how do narcissists fulfill their closeness and intimacy needs? It is likely that, in the initial stages of romantic courtship, narcissists look for a partner who appears to have the potential for facilitating their pursuit of self-enhancement. A narcissist may seek out a partner who not only accepts narcissistic claims of the lion's share of credit for the various successful projects on which the couple engages, but also

displays open admiration for him or her (similar to Kohut's [19771 concept of "mirroring"). Alternatively, a narcissist may also be attracted to highly successful or attractive others so that he can bask in their reflected glory (Cialdini et al., 1976) or gain self-esteem via reflection processes (Tesser, 1988; see also Kohut's [19771 concept of "idealization"). Moreover, a narcissist may be repelled by prospective partners who offer intimacy, because this intimacy does not fit with the narcissists' view of relationships as an arena for competition and self-inflation. All these narcissistic patterns of relatedness were supported empirically by Campbell (1999).

Narcissism may influence the course of romantic relationships as well. One possibility is that the narcissistic self-orientation leads to relatively short-lived romantic involvements. The relationship may be quick to end once the romantic partner finds out that, under the initially appealing exterior, the narcissist thinks only of himself. Another area of inquiry is the development of the narcissistic self in the context of romantic involvement. Theory and research point to the role of romantic relationships in the maintenance of the self-concept (Drigotas, Rusbult, Wieselquist, & Whitton, 1999; Murray, 1999; Swann, de la Ronde, & Hixon, 1994), but the role of narcissism in this process has not been examined. Perhaps narcissists will remain in relationships with persons who are willing to constantly show them attention and admiration. The one type of person who would be most unwilling to play the role of admirer, however, is another narcissist. This suggests the possibility of a pattern of assortative mating, with narcissists selecting those partners who are particularly low on narcissism.

How Narcissists Navigate the Interpersonal Realm

We have discussed so far the apparent troubles that narcissists have in their relationships. A set of important issues needs to be addressed: Are narcissists aware of others' (frequently tacit) rejection of them? Do narcissists even care about the possibility of being rejected? Are they affected by rejection?

Existing evidence, although neither plentiful nor definitive, points to narcissists being aware of the interpersonal costs of unabashed self-enhancement: Narcissists are as accurate as normals in perceiving unfavorable feedback as such (Kernis & Sun, 1994; Smalley & Stake, 1996). Narcissists likely know, at some level, that they overstay their welcome. Still, why do narcissists seem not to learn from feedback? Why are they so unresponsive to interpersonal context? Why do they self-enhance so rigidly at the expense of the interpersonal bond? Why do they seem not to care about social rejection?

Explanations for the rigidity of narcissistic self-enhancement in interpersonal settings (i.e., for the "Others Exist for W' illusion) converge in

proposing that narcissists engage in implicit or explicit cost-benefit analysis. Narcissists calculate the benefits of maintaining psychological stability and the cost of alienating others, and the self-favoring side wins out. According to one explanation, narcissists, due to their unduly positive but fragile self-concept and self-esteem, are invested in intensely seeking selfaffirmation from other persons, with interpersonal bonds being often times the unfortunate victim (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). According to another explanation, narcissists regulate their self-esteem by manifesting Interpersonal patterns of dominance, grandiosity, and hostility (Raskin et al., 1991b).

Sedikides and Gregg (2001) proposed another explanation, which is complementary to the already mentioned ones. Sedikides and Gregg used the analogy of "high functioning autistics" to characterize narcissists, as these individuals appear to be unable to appreciate fully the long-term repercussions of social rejection, to benefit from constructive feedback, and to improve. Furthermore, Sedikides and Gregg called for investigations that explored neuroanatomical correlates of narcissistic responding to social rejections.

Are narcissists affected, in the long run, by interpersonal rejection? Apparently, they are not affected as much as one would expect. In fact, narcissists may even emerge unscathed from social rejection, a feat that would explain their persistent self-enhancement patterns in social settings. How is it possible for narcissists to remain unaffected? To begin with, "there is somebody for everybody." a catchphrase that may be applicable to narcissists. As discussed earlier, narcissists likely date those persons who pay attention to them and express admiration for them, especially if these persons are successful (Campbell, 1999). Narcissists may also manage to establish a small network of admiring (certainly nonnarcissistic!) and friends. In fact, not only do narcissists report equivalent levels of social support with normals, but they surpass normals in reporting self-esteem support. That is, narcissists believe that there is a good number of persons who think highly of them (Rhodewalt & Morf, 1995, Study 3). This belief may partially explain why narcissists seem to manifest levels of psychological adjustment (i.e., subjective well-being, loneliness, sadness, anxiety) that parallel those of normals (Rudich & Sedikides, 2001).

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

In line with the central theme of this volume, our chapter highlights motivational systems and the interpersonal context. Furthermore, our chapter conceptualizes motivation and interpersonal context as a two-way street.

The context can affect how (at least some) individuals think of themselves, and self-views can also shape some parameters of the social context.

We attempted to accomplish our objectives by focusing on narcissism. This practice allowed us to challenge the plausibility of the CPU inetaphor, to test both relatively flexible and rigid forms of self-enhancement, and to explore the nature of boundary (i.e., contextual) constraints on self-enhancement. The CPU metaphor is outdated, as it does not take sufficiently into account motivational concerns, such as the concern to selfenhance. The self-enhancement motive can be manifested both flexibly and rigidly. For example, normals self-enhance in independent tasks, but tend to refrain from self-enhancement in interdependent or interpersonal tasks. On the other hand, narcissists self-enhance rigidly regardless of contextual subtleties.

We believe that the present review has several implications for our understanding of self-enhancement. Traditionally, research has focused on either documenting self-enhancement (Brown & Dutton, 1995) or testing its prevalence over other self-evaluation strivings, such as the striving for self-concept accuracy (self-assessment motive) or the striving for selfconcept consistency (self-verification motive) (Sedikides, 1993). Although this approach has yielded interesting insights, empirical attention has recently been redirected at other questions (Sedikides & Strube, 1997). Central to these questions is the search for moderators of the self-enhancement motive.

Classes of relevant moderators are person moderators (i.e., who is most likely to self-enhance?) and situational moderators (i.e., in what situations is self-enhancement most likely to occur?). An example of research addressing person moderators is that of Roney and Sorrentino (1995), who showed that participants who score high on the need to resolve uncertainty are less likely to self-enhance. An example of research addressing situational moderators is that of Dunning (1993) demonstrating that participants are more likely to self-enhance on ambiguous than unambiguous tasks. The research reviewed in support of the "Others Exist for W' illusion adds to this growing body of literature by presenting a model of selfenhancement that includes both a person moderator (i.e., narcissism) and a situational moderator (i.e., independent versus interdependent tasks). Person and situational factors have a synergistic relation-a relation that needs to be fully explored for a more complete understanding of selfenhancement phenomena.

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