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Narcissism and Interpersonal Self-Regulation

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At the icy heart of narcissism is the conviction that one is better than others; higher in status, more attractive, smarter, more influential. Ironically, the narcissist's ability to stand alone and above others is highly dependent on the behavior of those others. One cannot be admired without someone doing the admiring; one cannot associate with the rich and famous without close proximity to those rich and famous. Without social relationships, a narcissist would have to engage in more isolated forms of self-regulation—living in a cabin and struggling to engage with others by writing manifestos, perhaps.

In psychological terms, narcissists' use of others to enhance the positivity of the self can be thought of as interpersonal self-regulation. Relationships for narcissists are largely instrumental in that they serve the purpose of maintaining or increasing the positivity of the narcissistic self. For example, a man might start dating an attractive woman because her beauty will serve as an enhancing fashion accessory for him. He buys the woman designer clothing and suggests that she wear a particular outfit to a company party, which might be interpreted as an act of affection. After the grand entrance to the party, however, he starts flirting with another woman and later makes jokes at his significant other's expense to the amusement of his co-workers at the bar. This unfortunate sequence of events might occur repeatedly. (Please note: throughout this chapter we try to use both male and female examples and pronouns rather than he/she in each example. This is an effort to increase readability. The greater use of male examples is an effort to reflect the naturally occurring higher levels of narcissism in males (estimated 50–75% clinically, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM-IV), American Psychiatric Association, 1994; $r = .12$ in a large Internet sample, Foster, Campbell, & Twenge, 2003).

In this example, the narcissist's behavior is part of a broad campaign of self-regulation. He drapes his girlfriend in designer clothing so he looks impressive. He flirts with another woman so he feels attractive and important. He makes jokes at his girlfriend's expense so he is viewed positively by the crowd at the bar. The other individuals are conscripted in order to make this whole system work.

Importantly, the perception that others have of him varies greatly. His girlfriend really likes him initially, but then grows to hate him. The woman with whom he is flirting thinks he is charming. The folks at the bar find him the life of the party.

There is a downside as well, however, from this pattern of self-regulation. He does not have a stable, long-term romantic relationship; he might develop a reputation as a player; he might run out of people to date and to impress. Those in relationships with the narcissist have mixed outcomes as well. Some will find him a great new boyfriend or entertaining party guest. Others will think he is an arrogant, manipulative, two-faced weasel. Overall, then, narcissistic self-regulation involves trade-offs both for the narcissist and for those interacting with him or her.

In the present chapter, we focus on narcissists' interpersonal self-regulation. Although we discuss briefly some of the literature on narcissistic personality disorder (NPD), we focus primarily on the personality trait of narcissism or normal narcissism: that is, narcissism that does not contain the degree of pathology found in NPD. We begin with a brief definition and background of narcissism. We present an interpersonal agency model of narcissistic self-regulation. We then focus on some of the trade-offs that are associated with narcissistic self-regulation across a range of relationships. Finally, we examine the links between our approach to narcissism and several other self and self-in-relationship models.

BACKGROUND

Freud

Narcissism has both the blessing and the curse of a long history in psychology and related disciplines. It began as a construct from myth: a youth, Narcissus, who fell in love with his own image in a pool of water and died. The often-forgotten interpersonal dynamics in this myth supply its power and timelessness. Narcissus set out on a mission to find a mate, but was not satisfied with anyone. He met the beautiful Echo, who repeated everything he said, but he rejected her and she faded away. Thus the original narcissist was unable to love because he could not lower himself to connect with others, and another person suffered because of this narcissism. A similar interpersonal dynamic can be seen in many relationships with narcissists today.

The name of Narcissus was initially adopted by Havelock Ellis (1898), a British sexologist. It was Freud (1914/1957), however, who made the construct of narcissism central to psychological theorizing. Freud described narcissism in many different domains, including a normal developmental stage and a potentially pathological state. However, Freud's view of narcissism as central to interpersonal self-regulation holds the most interest for us. Freud made a very early case for a two basic approaches to love, a *narcissistic* type and an *anaclitic* type. The former was focused on a form of self-enhancement in love and the latter on a form of intimate connection. This approach has presaged much of the work on the interpersonal circumplex (e.g., Leary, 1957) and is central to how we think about the

operation of narcissistic self-regulation in relationships. Freud later wrote about narcissism as an adult personality construct or individual difference (1931/1950). The narcissistic libidinal type was aggressive, self-sufficient, independent, and energetic. Although Freud identified benefits to narcissism, there were psychological costs as well. Notably, the libido invested in the self could not be invested in others; the narcissist would thus suffer from a lack of love and concomitant long-term psychological problems (Freud, 1914/1957).

Whatever criticisms may be leveled at Freud and his ideas, it is safe to say that he thought more deeply about self-regulation and the role of internalized others, or "objects" in this process than anyone before him. Without Freud, we might not have some of the great interpersonal theories in social/personality psychology, like attachment theory, or even some of the social cognitive work on relationships. Freud also was a pioneer at building bridges from clinical constructs to psychodynamics, child development and family life, normal personality, dyadic social relationships, group processes, and social, cultural and religious history. This effort to span levels of analysis can be seen in more recent work, in which narcissism has been conceptualized as both a psychological disorder and a normal personality variable. We briefly discuss each of these.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder

Probably the biggest confusion in the study of narcissism is a result of the difference between narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) and what might be called narcissistic personality or normal narcissism. According to the DSM-IV, the diagnosis of NPD requires the presence of five of nine specific criteria. Briefly, these include: (a) grandiose self-importance, (b) preoccupation with grandiose fantasies, (c) a sense of specialness and uniqueness, (d) a need for excessive admiration, (e) entitlement, (f) exploitativeness, (g) a lack of empathy, (h) envy of others or belief that others envy him or her, and (i) arrogant behaviors. While this might sound like many a boss, co-worker or ex-spouse, according the APA, the prevalence rate of NPD is less than 1% of the population—about the same as schizophrenia (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). It is unclear why the estimated base rates for NPD are so low. One possibility is that the criteria for NPD are quite stringent. For example, while we might argue that most people need some degree of admiration, there is a point at which the need might become pathologically excessive. Another possibility is that an NPD diagnosis also requires significant impairment. However, most individuals with these symptoms might be able to navigate happily and successfully through the world—perhaps even ending up with their own reality TV shows or Fortune 500 companies. A third and related possibility is that clinicians simply encounter only a small sample of narcissists in psychiatric settings (Campbell, 2001). Most individuals who see themselves as profoundly special and unique do not cross paths with clinicians. Finally, the diagnostic criteria for NPD seem to assess a fair amount vulnerability or neediness. In the DSM-IV, those with NPD "require" admiration, are "preoccupied" with fantasies of success, and are envious of others. These criteria separate in a subtle but powerful way those with NPD from those with high levels of narcissistic

personality. Individuals with normal narcissism like admiration and seek it out, but do not "require" it (Campbell, 1999). Likewise, they fantasize about power, but are not "preoccupied" with these fantasies (Raskin & Novacek, 1991). This choice of language in the DSM-IV is likely a result of the conceptualizations of narcissism by Kernberg (1974, 1975) and Kohut (1977), both of whom saw narcissism as primarily defensive.

Given the current confusion about the link between NPD and normal narcissism, we think it is safest to consider NPD as both an extreme form of normal narcissism and a variant of normal narcissism that is associated with some form of pathology and vulnerability. Pathology is likely to be primarily interpersonal (e.g., those with NPD will experience troubled work or romantic relationships). As we will describe, individuals scoring high on the personality dimension of narcissism report many problems similar to those experienced by individuals with NPD, but these problems typically are counterbalanced by many benefits.

Narcissistic Personality

As noted, Freud's description of narcissism as a personality type did not include pathology (Freud, 1931/1950). Rather, narcissists were described as active, assertive, and natural leaders. Henry Murray also took a personality approach to narcissism, which he termed narcism or egophilia. He developed what we believe was the first self-report measure of narcissism, and he published the first correlation of narcissism with an outcome variable (Murray, 1938).

Even though narcissism has been considered as a normal personality variable over three quarters of a century (significantly longer than it has been considered a personality disorder), research into the personality variable of narcissism did not begin in earnest until the 1980s after Raskin and Hall created the *narcissistic personality inventory* (NPI, Raskin & Hall, 1979). Furthermore, the publication of two short versions of the scale by Emmons (1984) and Raskin and Terry (1988) shifted narcissism research into high gear.

The NPI was based largely on the clinical definition of NPD, but designed specifically for use in normal populations. As such, it does not pick up significant pathology. Rather, the NPI captures many of the features of NPD as well as many features of narcissistic personality described by Freud (1931/1950) such as extraversion, energy, and leadership. Narcissism as measured by the NPI is also a continuous variable. Indeed, there is no latent taxon for narcissism as measured by the NPI (Foster & Campbell, 2007).

The vast majority of research findings described throughout this chapter rely on the NPI. Furthermore, when we use the term "narcissists" and "nonnarcissists" in our discussion, we are using this terminology as shorthand for "individuals scoring high on the NPI." There is no discrete typology for normal narcissism; we use the clinical terminology (i.e., NPD) to describe narcissistic personality disorder. We turn next to elaborating our definition of narcissism.

DEFINING NARCISSISM

Although narcissism might appear to be a confusing construct, at its core are three components: a positive and inflated self, a relative lack of intimacy or closeness (or the absence of a need for intimacy), and an arsenal of self-regulatory strategies that maintain and enhance the self. These three components cover the DSM-IV's nine criteria ((a)–(i)) discussed previously. A positive self is seen in (a) grandiose self-importance, (c) a sense of specialness and uniqueness, and (e) entitlement; the relative lack of intimacy can be seen in (g) a lack of empathy; and the self-regulatory strategies can be seen in (b) a preoccupation with grandiose fantasies, (d) a need for excessive admiration, (f) exploitativeness, (h) envy of others or belief that others envy him or her, and (i) arrogant behaviors. These same three components also cover most of what is known about narcissism in the social-personality literature. We now briefly review these findings.

Narcissists' self-concept positivity is not indiscriminate in focus; rather it is centered on domains about which narcissists care the most. These are largely in the category of *agency* (e.g., status, power, intelligence, creativity, uniqueness, physical attractiveness). For example, narcissists report that they are better than the average other—and even their current romantic partner—on agentic traits, but not communal traits (e.g., caring, warmth, morality; Campbell, Rudich, & Sedikides, 2002). Indeed, narcissists feel closer to their ideal self than do nonnarcissists on many attributes (Rhodewalt & Morf, 1995). This self-concept positivity is especially evident when comparing self-views to objective criteria. Narcissists overestimate their intellectual abilities and intelligence (e.g., Gabriel, Critell:, & Ee, 1994) and physical appearance (Gabriel et al., 1994) relative to more objective criteria. They even overclaim knowledge about bogus general knowledge items (Paulhus, Harms, Bruce, & Lysy, 2004).

The qualities of narcissists' self-concepts are also evident when comparing NPI scores to scores on a range of measures. Narcissists, for example, self-report high agency (Bradlee & Emmons, 1992). They also report high extraversion on the Big Five, which is a marker of agency (Bradlee & Emmons, 1992). Other data confirm these self-report differences: Narcissists show high nPower and nAchievement on the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) (Carroll, 1987). Likewise, narcissism is related to the self-reported need for uniqueness (Emmons, 1984) and entitlement (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004). Finally, narcissism is linked to approach orientation (Rose & Campbell, 2004) and sensation-seeking (Emmons, 1991), which can be seen experimentally in gambling studies (Campbell, Goodie, & Foster, 2004).

Narcissists' relative lack of interest in communal relationships can be viewed in several ways. (We use the term "relative" because, depending on the measure, narcissists generally report either negative or neutral interest in communal relationships, but the interest in communal relationships will invariably be less than the interest in agentic concerns.) Narcissists, for example, self-report communion scores at the scale midpoint and low agreeableness scores on the Big Five (Bradlee & Emmons, 1992). On the TAT, narcissists report low nIntimacy (Carroll, 1987).

As mentioned above, narcissists do not report being better-than-average on communal traits (Campbell, Rudich, et al., 2002).

If the narcissist thinks that he is better than others (and better than he actually is), he needs to self-regulate. If he seeks social validation for his inflated beliefs (as opposed to spending his time alone writing manifestos and cursing the small-minded fools who misunderstand him), he must have others play an important part in these regulation efforts. That is, he must adopt some interpersonal self-regulation strategies. If he possesses many agentic qualities (dominance seeking, extraversion, approach orientation) and has little interest in forming close, warm connections with others, his self-regulation will be directed in apparently paradoxical ways. For example, he can use his extraversion and confidence to pull individuals into his orbit, but then rely on his low need for intimacy to exploit these individuals for self-promotion. What looks on the surface like communal behavior on the narcissists' part (starting romantic relationships, going to parties) is actually agentic behavior that results in narcissistic self-regulation.

There is an almost unlimited range of potential self-regulation techniques that can be adopted by narcissists. Several of these self-regulation strategies have been reported in the literature. Narcissists seek attention, brag, and show-off (Buss & Chiodo, 1991). In conversation, they redirect the dialogue to their own positive qualities or simply let their eyes glaze over in an effort to establish status (Vangelisti, Knapp, & Daly, 1990). In an unstructured environment, narcissists will simply talk about themselves (Raskin & Shaw, 1988). More generally, narcissists are more likely to take on "colorful" personalities (Hogan & Hogan, 2001) and be entertaining (Paulhus, 1998). Donald Trump, whose reputation has risen and fallen more than a tech stock as marriages and bankruptcies have added up, still managed to become a billionaire reality TV star, with his eponymous buildings prominently featured. The Donald's vast popularity is largely a tribute to his larger-than-life persona: Who wouldn't want to spend time with someone as colorful and entertaining as The Donald?

An effective strategy for interpersonal self-regulation regarding agency is to compete and win, thus working one's way up the social dominance hierarchy. Narcissists report being highly competitive (Bradlee & Emmons, 1992; Emmons, 1984). This is even reflected in their performance. Wallace and Baumeister (2002), for example, found that narcissists outperformed nonnarcissists on a skills-based task when they thought the results of the task were going to be made public. Self-regulation can also take the form of self-serving attributional biases, particularly when they do not perform as well as they desired. This might include placing the blame for failure on teammates or co-workers, or stealing credit from these others in the case of success (Campbell, Reeder, Sedikides, & Elliot, 2000; Gosling, John, Craik, & Robins, 1998). In a related vein (Stucke, 2003), narcissists also show a willingness to attack the source of feedback that threatens the positivity of the self (ego threat), or social standing (disrespect) (e.g., Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Twenge & Campbell, 2003, respectively).

Finally, it is worth noting that narcissists' self-regulation strategies can occur intrapsychically. For example, narcissists are more likely than nonnarcissists to fantasize about having high agency (e.g., power and glory; Raskin & Novacek,

1991). Likewise, narcissists display a self-serving bias on individual tasks, where they blame external factors for failure (e.g., Campbell et al., 2000; Rhodewalt & Morf, 1995).

THE AGENCY MODEL OF NARCISSISM

Self-Regulatory Models of Narcissism

Self-regulation is clearly central to the conceptualization of narcissism, so most social-personality theories of narcissism have included some self-regulatory component. In general, there is a link between narcissistic self-beliefs, affect/emotions and behaviors. Typically, this link is either explicitly or implicitly self-reinforcing. For example, the narcissist will have a positive self-view, act confidently, and gain attention and this, in turn, will reinforce or further inflate the narcissist's positive self-view. We will describe several of the existing models of narcissistic self-regulation shortly.

What makes narcissists' interpersonal self-regulation of particular interest is that the self-regulatory strategies that keep narcissists looking and feeling good often require: (a) replacing others in the social environment when they are no longer useful, or (b) constantly increasing narcissistic behavior to capture the attention and admiration of others. For example, a narcissist might gain esteem from a trophy spouse, but will eventually need to trade up for a younger and more attractive trophy spouse to maintain the esteem benefits. Of course, the other might leave the narcissist because of shoddy treatment. Likewise, a narcissist can gain esteem from vanquishing an opponent, but this self-regulation strategy will require the addition of new, possibly tougher opponents to be vanquished. If you are the Harlem Globetrotters basketball team and you beat the Washington Generals every night, the self-enhancement benefits start to diminish. In terms of maintaining the attention and admiration of others, narcissists will need to keep elevating their performance. A narcissist can keep telling the story of how he was a star on the 2005 season of the TV show *Survivor*, but that tale will lose its luster after his associates hear it for the 80th time. The reasonable alternative, of course, is for the narcissist to keep joining new groups of people or bringing new people into his or her circle. The version of the agency model that we present below has been modified to include this interpersonal component.

One of the first self-regulatory models in the social-personality literature was proposed by Raskin and colleagues (Raskin, Novacek, & Hogan, 1991). In this model, narcissists' grandiose behaviors, beliefs, and fantasies serve the role of enhancing and maintaining narcissists' self-esteem. Campbell's (1999) self-orientation model focused directly on narcissists' interpersonal self-regulation, specifically their use of romantic relationships to bolster their social status, esteem, and importance. The self-orientation model focused on two specific mechanisms of self-regulation: associating or identifying with high status others, and being admired by others. Indeed, narcissists reported a relative preference for a romantic partner who had both high status and high admiration for them. Morf and

Rhodewalt's (2001) dynamic self-regulatory processing model emphasizes increasing and maintaining positive self-views and identifies four elements of narcissism—self-knowledge, intrapersonal self-regulatory processes, interpersonal behaviors, and social relationships—that interact and mutually reinforce each other. Importantly, these authors note that narcissists tend to apply their self-regulatory strategies in a coarse manner that will harm social relationships, which, of course, necessitates forming new social relationships in which the process repeats itself.

Three additional models of narcissistic self-regulation focus primarily on the affective and emotional outcomes of narcissistic self-regulation. First, Baumeister and Vohs (2001) proposed that efforts at narcissistic self-regulation can be experienced as an emotional "rush" or "high." If this is indeed the case, narcissistic self-regulation will take on aspects of an addiction. (The authors note that narcissism and narcotic share a similar etymology.) The experience of public success, glory, admiration, or attention will lead to a rapid and very positive emotional state. This will lead to the desire to repeat this behavior, and, if habituation occurs, increase this or similar behaviors. The narcissist, for example, might get a rush sailing around the harbor in her new boat. Eventually, however, she will need a bigger boat to get the same rush.

Second, Tracy and Robins (2004) have focused directly on the emotion regulation that underlies narcissism. They report direct evidence that narcissism is associated with two forms of pride, both the more socially acceptable form of achievement-oriented pride, and the more egotistic and arrogant form of hubristic pride (e.g., winning a contest and then rubbing the opponent's nose in it). In a sense, then, narcissism is useful for regulating the generally pleasurable experience of pride.

Third, both Sedikides and colleagues (Sedikides, Rudich, Gregg, Kumashiro, & Rusbult, 2004) and Rose (2002) have developed models of narcissism and psychological health. In a wide range of studies, narcissists report feeling relatively happy and untroubled. The key mechanism in these models is self-esteem. Narcissists will feel good to the extent that they generate or experience self-esteem.

A final model of narcissism worth noting is Paulhus' "minimalist model." Paulhus (1998) focuses on the underlying structure of narcissism: high egotism (which corresponds to what we are referring to as agency) and low morality (which we are referring to as communion).

The Agency Model

We label our approach to narcissism the agency model (Campbell, Brunell, & Finkel, 2006; Campbell & Foster, in press). In this chapter, we extend the agency model to focus more directly on the interpersonal aspects of narcissistic self-regulation. Specifically, we extend the agency model to incorporate others who are attracted into relationships with the narcissist. Before adding this element, however, we briefly review the previous version of the agency model.

The agency model borrows heavily from the models previously mentioned, but

differs in several important ways. First, we add narcissists' skills as an essential component of their interpersonal self-regulation. We argue that to be a successful narcissist, one needs to possess particular social skills. Without the ability to manipulate, cajole, attract, or exploit others, narcissists would have to rely increasingly on intrapersonal self-regulation. They would still remain narcissists if this intrapersonal self-regulation were effective, but as Festinger's classic dissonance work has shown, distorted beliefs are hard to maintain without social proof (Festinger, Riecken & Schacter, 1956). Second, we conceptualize self-esteem in the model as "narcissistic esteem." We address this point below.

The agency model is presented in Figure 4.1. The model begins with four mutually interacting and self-sustaining components of narcissistic self-regulation: basic qualities, interpersonal strategies, interpersonal skills, and narcissistic esteem. Basic qualities include high agency and relatively low communion, high approach orientation, desire for self-enhancement, a sense of entitlement, and inflated self-views. Narcissists also use a wide variety of strategies for interpersonal self-regulation, such as acquiring trophy romantic partners, public self-promotion, winning in competition, and materialistic displays of status. These strategies are enhanced by narcissists' social skills. For example, narcissists are socially confident, charming, extraverted, and charismatic. Finally, narcissism is associated with what we call narcissistic esteem. This is a variant of self-esteem that is associated with (1) social dominance (Brown & Zeigler-Hill, 2004), (2) the emotional experience of pride (Tracy & Robins, 2004), and (3) the experience of a rush or high (Baumeister & Vohs, 2001).

These components are mutually interactive (i.e., activation in one component will increase activation in the other components). For example, a narcissist might
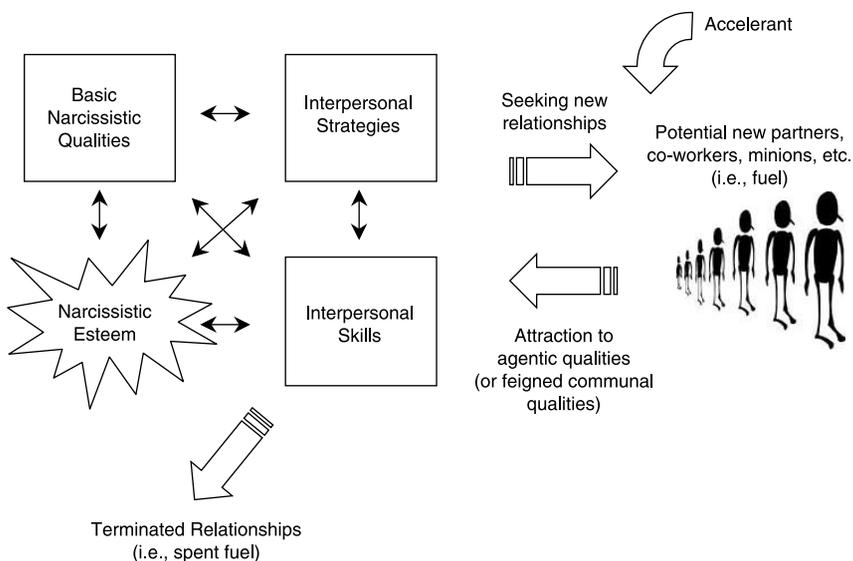

FIGURE 4.1   The agency model with an interpersonal component.

be highly approach-oriented (i.e., he is cued into success but ignores failures). The narcissist might go to a bar and try to form a relationship with every attractive woman there, which, after enough efforts, results in finding a romantic partner. This process gives the narcissist a sense of esteem, and also helps him hone his social skills. Two months later, he returns to the bar and tries to find a more attractive partner. He is successful, feels a short-term burst of esteem, and a longer-term increase in the positivity of his self-concept. He then decides that he deserves to belong to a higher status social group, so he frequents a higher-end social club, and so on. These components are also self-sustaining: the existence of each component reinforces the existence of the other components. In other words, the narcissist's social skills allow her to successfully use interpersonal self-regulation strategies. These strategies allow the narcissist's basic qualities (e.g., entitlement, agentic concerns) to stay intact and her esteem to stay high.

Extending the Agency Model with an Interpersonal Component

Most natural systems need to take in aspects of the world around them to continue to operate. In many cases, these aspects of the outside world serve as fuel. Forest fires need dry brush and timber, hurricanes need warm seas, cows need grass and feed. Likewise, narcissistic interpersonal self-regulation relies on fuel to operate effectively. (We modify this fuel notion from the psychodynamic literature for use in a social-personality model.) What is this narcissistic fuel? It is individuals who reinforce narcissists' basic qualities, narcissistic esteem, skills, and strategies. Note that we are limiting the discussion to human "fuel" because this chapter primarily addresses interpersonal self-regulation; a material good like a Maserati could serve a similar purpose. Individuals who directly increase narcissists' esteem may be considered the human fuel that helps a narcissist function at top speed. This would include those that give narcissists esteem via admiration, association, competition, blame, or direct status elevation. There are also individuals in the narcissist's environment who make the consumption of this fuel more rapid or efficient. This "accelerant" would include, for example, the person who introduces the narcissist to the high status crowd, the CEO's daughter who provides the narcissist access to her father, or the person who pays the narcissist's clothing bills.

If we accept the metaphor of narcissism as a self-regulating system that needs fuel from the outside, we must assume that (1) narcissists seek fuel, and (2) the fuel does what it is supposed to do. Evidence for the first is clear in the narcissism literature. Narcissists, for example, pay high attention to alternatives (i.e., potential future partners) in their dating relationships (Campbell, Foster, & Finkel, 2002). Narcissists also seek out opportunities to win the admiration of peers in a perform-ance setting (Wallace & Baumeister, 2002), or of partners in a dating context (Campbell, 1999). Less studied is the issue of how narcissists make sure the fuel does what it should. (It is trickier using people as fuel than it is using dry grass.) Nevertheless, there is evidence that narcissists use a variety of strategies for attracting people. Narcissists act in an entertaining and colorful manner, which leads to their being liked in the short-term (Paulhus, 1998). Narcissists' social extraversion also allows them to emerge as leaders in unacquainted groups

(Brunell, Gentry, Campbell, & Kuhnert, 2006). In romantic relationships, narcissists are charming and present a sense of confidence and status (Brunell, Campbell, Smith, & Krusemark, 2004). Narcissists also use material goods to convey a sense of status (Vohs & Campbell, 2006), and brag and draw attention to themselves (Buss & Chiodo, 1991).

We should also note two other relevant processes that might make themselves known when the "fuel" is particularly uncooperative. The first is aggression. Narcissists are prone to aggress in response to both negative evaluative feedback and social disrespect or exclusion (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Twenge & Campbell, 2003). Second, there is the possibility that the reflected appraisals will be distorted such that the narcissist sees admiration from others where none actually exists.

Narcissists actively seek out opportunities that allow their self-regulation strategies to work. Narcissists are able to attract this fuel with largely agentic qualities (extraversion, charm, status displays) although some anecdotal evidence exists that narcissists feign communal qualities to attract others as well (Campbell, 2005). One issue still to be addressed is: What kind of fuel is sought? Five types of fuel readily come to mind (though others certainly exist). These are admiration, association, competition, blame, or direct status elevation. Narcissists seek out people who admire them and this admiration increases narcissists' esteem and self-conceptions (Campbell, 1999). Narcissists also may find fuel in the form of high-status people with whom to associate (Campbell, 1999). For example, joining an exclusive club aids in the narcissistic self-regulation process. Competition is sought by narcissists because it offers the opportunity for glory and status (Wallace & Baumeister, 2002). Indeed, there is evidence that narcissists particularly enjoy competitive contexts (Morf, Weir, & Davidov, 2000). Finding someone to blame when things go poorly is useful for narcissists' self-regulation. We are not aware of any scientific evidence that narcissists actually seek out individuals who are potential scapegoats for their failings. Research does support the idea that the narcissist will blame whoever is most readily available, whether it is a work partner (e.g., Campbell et al., 2000) or an experimenter (Kernis & Sun, 1994). Finally, narcissists can find fuel in the form of individuals who directly increase their social status. For example, a narcissist might act in a sycophantic way toward a boss in order to gain a promotion. There is no direct empirical evidence for this process, although it is easy to think of real-world examples (e.g., the reality TV show *The Apprentice*).

In sum, we can think of narcissism as a self-regulating system that operates within a broader social context. Like the angler fish that uses a colorful lighted appendage to lure small fish to play the role of lunch, narcissists will lure others into their world to provide valuable self-regulatory functions. These functions range from providing esteem from association or simple admiration to being a scapegoat for blame. Still to be addressed in this model is: What becomes of the fuel that propels narcissistic self-regulation? Fuel use generally implies some change in state of the fuel; as the energy is extracted from the fuel, the fuel becomes less valuable. The dry grass consumed by a forest fire, for example, turns into cinders. The same arguably holds true for the fuel in narcissists' relationships.

To give a real-world example that one of us (Campbell) heard recently, a woman stated that her unfaithful, narcissistic husband "took her youth" and then took up with another woman. This experienced of being "used" in relationships is commonly reported by those in romantic relationships with narcissists (Campbell, 2005), which partly explains the large drop in satisfaction reported during relationships with narcissists (Foster, Shrira, & Campbell, 2003). Individuals who become involved with narcissists even use the term "burned" to describe their scarring experience. Unfortunately, there have been few empirical investigations of the long-term effects of interactions with narcissists. However, there is evidence of a cost born by others even in the short term, with the most extreme examples being sexual assault (Bushman, Bonacci, Van Dijk, & Baumeister, 2003) and aggression (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998).

THE INHERENT TRADE-OFFS IN NARCISSISTS' INTERPERSONAL SELF-REGULATION

Tesser (2000) has argued that individual differences (and theoretical ideas in psychology in general) can be either "sensual" or "boring." Individual differences are boring to the extent that they predict simple consistency outcomes. If, for example, we proposed that narcissism is invariably bad, and only predicts poor outcomes for both the self and other, the topic would be boring. Even if narcissism predicted positive outcomes for the self, but negative outcomes for others, it would only be moderately interesting. Fortunately, the approach that we are taking to narcissism assumes that narcissism can be considered either good or bad to the extent that it predicts both (1) positive and negative outcomes for self and (2) positive and negative outcomes for the other. Furthermore, these outcomes will vary as a function of context and time. (Although this does not make narcissism research overwhelmingly sensual, it is not boring to us!)

Narcissism, then, is better considered as a trade-off (e.g., Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001) or a mixed blessing (Paulhus, 1998). One vivid example of the trade-offs involved in narcissism can be seen in an experimental test of the classic resource dilemma paradigm (Campbell, Bush, Brunell, & Shelton, 2005). Narcissists' performance was better than others in the short term. Narcissists also outperformed their competitors in the long term, but because they destroyed the common resource (overharvested timber), everyone became worse off. The trade-off of this increased early success was the cost borne by the competitors, the forest, and, after the initial rounds, the narcissists themselves.

A slightly different pattern of trade-offs can be seen in narcissistic relationships. Across a variety of relationships, narcissists initially are liked and judged exciting or entertaining (Brunell et al., 2004; Paulhus, 1998). This is a short-term benefit *both* to the narcissists and to the other. In the longer term, however, narcissists take advantage of the other (a plus for the narcissist, a minus to the other). In romantic relationships, for example, narcissists display infidelity, game-playing, and controlling behavior (Campbell, 2006). Finally, the relationship usually ends because the narcissist is dumped or fired (a minus to the narcissist,

neutral to the other) or the narcissist moves on to another relationship (a plus to the narcissists, an ambivalent neutral to the other). What separates this relationship pattern from the pattern in the competitive commons dilemma is that the other in this example derives a short-term benefit from the relationship with the narcissist. Indeed, this short-term rush of excitement could plausibly explain why people repeatedly get involved in relationships with narcissists. In a sense, a romantic relationship with a narcissist is like eating chocolate cake: there is a very positive short-term benefit, but the prospect of a longer-term cost (Campbell, 2005).

A third pattern of trade-offs in narcissism can be seen in individual judgment and decision making. A classic example of this is the case of the individual self-serving bias, where narcissists take individual credit for success but blame situational factors for failure (e.g., Rhodewalt & Morf, 1996). This behavior suggests a short-term esteem benefit for the narcissist, but both short- and long-term costs may take the form of not learning from mistakes. One study looked at this self-view versus performance trade-off through the lens of overconfidence. When a penalty existed for making overconfident judgments, narcissists were more likely to be penalized and score lower than nonnarcissists, though they still believed that they outperformed others (Campbell, Goodie, & Foster, 2004). This long-term performance failure is illustrated most clearly in longitudinal research on university grades. Narcissists report that they are smarter than others in their early years at university, but their grades decline over time (Robins & Beer, 2001).

In sum, narcissistic self-regulation results in a complex series of trade-offs for the narcissist and the others interacting with him or her. Narcissism generally involves a trade-off of short-term benefits (particularly self-esteem or egoistic benefits) for longer-term costs. Narcissists' benefits often come at the expense of the others, who suffer short- and long-term losses from their involvement with narcissists.

LINKING NARCISSISM TO OTHER SELF AND RELATIONSHIP MODELS

Our approach to narcissism and interpersonal self-regulation has some important similarities and differences with a range of self and relationship models in the social-personality psychology literature. We discuss some intriguing links between models below. This list is certainly not exhaustive, but it does include a range of models from the more relational to the more cognitive.

"Win/Win" Models of the Self in Relationships

Like the agency model, several well-studied models in the social-personality literature explain positive changes in the self from close relationships. Whereas the agency model predicts that the relationship partner typically loses in the process of the relationship with the narcissist (a win/lose model), these models typically

predict long-term self-concept growth and enhancement by both partners (win/win models).

Murray and colleagues (e.g., Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996) have proposed and empirically verified a process by which an individual with positive self-views will see her partner as having positive qualities, and this will, in turn, lead her partner to have positive self-views. The partner, at the same time, reciprocates by seeing his partner as having positive qualities, which leads the partner to have positive self-views. These researchers argue convincingly that such "rose-colored glasses" are associated with positive relational outcomes.

Why do narcissists tend to derogate their partners (Campbell, Rudich, & Sedikides, 2002), whereas Murray et al.'s participants with positive self-views enhance their partners? One possibility is that the positive self-conceptions in Murray et al.'s research cover both agentic and communal traits. If this is the case, their participants might be more similar to the prototypical high self-esteem individual than narcissistic individual (Campbell, Rudich, et al., 2002). It is also possible that a win/win model does work in narcissists' relationships during the very early stages when those involved with the narcissist actually report great satisfaction (Campbell, 2006). These are interesting questions for future research.

A second, related win/win model is the Michelangelo phenomenon (Drigotas, Rusbult, Wieselquist, & Whitton, 1999). According to the Michelangelo phenomenon, if an individual sees her partner as close to his ideal self, she will behaviorally confirm his behaviors that are consistent with his ideal self. Over time, he will actually become his ideal self. Does this Michelangelo phenomenon occur in a narcissist's relationships? It is likely that the progression toward the ideal self is not mutual but unilateral—only for the narcissist. That is, the narcissist could become his ideal self as a result of his partner's behavioral confirmation, but he might not engage in behavioral confirmation of his partner or even be very aware of the contents of his partner's ideal self.

Sociometer

Leary and colleagues (e.g., Leary & Baumeister, 2000) proposed that self-esteem acts as a sociometer: the extent to which an individual feels accepted by a social group. The agency model suggests (as does work on narcissism and even the interpersonal circumplex) the possibility of extending the sociometer to include two primary gauges: a gauge of social belongingness and a gauge of social dominance. (The assumption we are making is that belongingness corresponds more strongly with communal concerns than with agentic concerns; if belongingness underlies both, however, our logic is not correct.) Theoretically, self-esteem could result from both of these processes. If this is indeed the case, research suggests that narcissists would pay much more attention to the dominance sociometer than the belongingness sociometer, or even that their belongingness sociometer is miscalibrated (Brown & Zeigler-Hill, 2004; Campbell, Rudich, et al., 2002). Indeed, a more complex multi-sociometer has been proposed (Kirkpatrick, Waugh, Valencia, & Webster, 2002). In this model, self-beliefs in a specific evolutionary domain (e.g., social belongingness, mating competition) will be the best predictor of

aggression following threat in one of those domains. In this research, the specific self-belief measures were better predictors than was narcissism. In sum, there is the possibility for self-esteem to be a "master" sociometer, narcissism to function generally with two sociometers (agency and communion), and more specific self-views to act as sociometers for far more specific social contexts.

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory provides a model of self and other that does seem to align reasonably well with the interpersonal circumplex, which suggests some correspondence between attachment and narcissism. A dismissing attachment style reflects a positive view of self and a negative view of others, which is consistent with findings regarding narcissism. Indeed, there is some evidence for a connection between narcissism and attachment. Narcissism, and particularly the entitlement subscale, correlates primarily with dismissing attachment (Campbell, Bonacci, et al., 2004; Campbell & Foster, 2002; Neumann & Bierhoff, 2004). We note, however, that we have not found the link between narcissism and attachment in some unpublished data sets, so we do not want to make too strong a case for the association with dismissing attachment.

The best developmental data that we have on narcissism are self-reports of parenting collected from high school and college samples (Horton, Bleau & Drwecki, 2006). Narcissism was associated with reports of parenting that stressed permissiveness and had less warmth. In a sense, to the extent that parents did not generally keep track of their children's behavior and showed relatively little affection, the children were more likely to be narcissistic.

The Self-Zoo

Tesser and colleagues (Tesser, Crepaz, Collins, Cornell, & Beach, 2000; Tesser, Martin, & Cornell, 1996) proposed that the multiplicity and diversity of self-esteem enhancement strategies be corralled into the term "self-zoo," and that one mechanism is substitutable for another. For example, self-affirmation following a task might result in reduced use of a self-serving bias, and vice versa. According to these findings, individuals apparently do not need to engage in several self-esteem enhancement mechanisms simultaneously or subsequently. Individuals appear to be satisficers of self-esteem rather than maximizers. Although narcissists' pervasive self-regulation is very consistent with the zoo model, we doubt that narcissists would satisfice, particularly in agency domains. For example, in one study (Campbell et al., 2000), participants were given randomly determined success or failure feedback on a dyadic "creativity" task and then given two opportunities to self-enhance/protect. Narcissists used both opportunities to self-enhance, whereas nonnarcissists only enhanced on one measure. This evidence suggests that narcissists may be self-esteem maximizers more than satisficers, and may be willing to use the entire zoo of enhancement mechanisms if available.

Mnemic Neglect and Other Memory Distortion Models

The mnemic neglect model (Sedikides, Green, & Pinter, 2004) attempts to account for the ways in which individuals process threatening self-referent information. Techniques from the person memory literature were appropriated to compare processing of and memory for self-referent versus other-referent information. In several experiments, recall of negative self-referent information pertaining to central traits was poor relative to recall of positive central self-referent information or negative central other-referent information (Green & Sedikides, 2004; Sedikides & Green, 2000). This mnemic neglect was found in a hypothetical feedback setting as well as a more realistic feedback setting, in which the behavioral information was presented as feedback from a highly reliable computer-administered personality inventory (Sedikides & Green, 2000).

One interesting question to ask is: How does narcissism link to mnemic neglect? In one investigation, greater mnemic neglect was shown by individuals high in narcissism than for individual low in narcissism (i.e., a greater disparity between recall of positive versus negative self-referent behaviors), but this effect was not replicated in a subsequent experiment (Green & Sedikides, 2006). This unreliable result possibly reflects the fact that the traits used in these studies were communal (i.e., trustworthy and kind). Future research will examine these processes with agentic traits.

Narcissism should also plausibly predict memory distortion in a self-enhancing direction (see Wilson & Ross, 2001). In one study, for example, Rhodewalt and Eddings (2002) investigated memory distortion by narcissists in response to romantic rejection. High and low narcissistic men reported their impressions of an interaction with a potential dating partner, were informed 1 week later that they had been accepted or rejected as a date, and then again reported their impressions of the initial interaction. Contrary to the pattern of low narcissists, narcissists who had been rejected reported more positive dating histories. These self-serving memory distortions by narcissists served the process of self-regulation. Future research could further investigate the self-regulatory role of mnemic neglect and memory distortion in narcissists.

CONCLUSIONS

What Can Work on Narcissism Gain from Other Self and Relationships Research?

Theoretical insights into narcissistic self-regulation are only possible because of the extensive research that has already gone into understanding basic self and relational processes. Narcissistic self-regulation is made apparent by plugging narcissism into a classic model of self or relationships. (e.g., the better-than-average effect; Alicke, Klotz, Breitenbecher, Yurak, & Vredenberg, 1995, or self-serving bias; Campbell & Sedikides, 1999).

We might even go as far as to argue that the understanding of narcissism in a field is only as good as the basic models it builds on. Narcissism started primarily as

a psychoanalytic or psychodynamic construct. Despite our fondness for Freud, the basic psychodynamic models of human behavior are sufficiently intractable that very little clear insight into narcissism has resulted. In contrast, narcissism's relatively brief 25 years in social-personality psychology has resulted in an explosion of understanding of the construct. This reflects the strength of the basic models of the personality, self-regulation and relationships in social-personality psychology as well as, more broadly, the benefits of scientific inquiry.

What Can the Study of Narcissism Add to Self Research?

The study of narcissism adds a good deal to the larger area of self research. First, research on narcissism, and the agency model in particular, highlights the importance of looking at self-enhancement and self-regulation in terms of both agency and communion. It is possible that for certain individuals, enhancement will occur primarily in one domain or the other.

Second, work on narcissism is a good example of the utility of individual difference variables for understanding general self-regulation processes. Indeed, because individuals are likely to use different and often contradictory self-regulation strategies, self-regulation will at times only be seen accurately with the inclusion of the relevant individual difference variable. For example, research has found that individual displays of the self-serving bias are constrained in close relationships (Sedikides, Campbell, Reeder, & Elliot, 1998). Further research, however, found that this "general" process actually reflected two processes: non-narcissists actually other-enhanced in these contexts, but narcissists self-enhanced (Campbell et al., 2000)

Third, work on narcissism is a nice example of a research program that bridges multiple levels of analyses. Narcissism can serve as a bridge between cultural factors, personality, self-concept, self-regulation, cognitive processing, interpersonal relationships, and more. Narcissism is not alone in serving this bridging function (self-variables, in general, are very useful for this purpose) but has proven to be very helpful in this context.

Finally, we think that narcissism provides a vivid example of *radically pervasive* self-regulation. Narcissists are adept at using a multiplicity of behaviors to self-regulate. One of us (Campbell) frequently receives emails from strangers describing narcissistic self-regulation efforts. The diversity of these efforts is unbelievable. One recent email, for example, described an individual who commented that his birthday was only a few days before Christmas, so he must be similar to Jesus. Of course, when one hears stories like this it is easy to say: These ridiculous narcissists are playing such an obvious game of self-regulation. Slightly more self-reflective individuals, however, might also ask: Wow, am I playing just as hard but at a different game?

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