Narcissistic Acts in Everyday Life

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ABSTRACT This article presents a series of studies on narcissism, a person-
ality syndrome receiving increasing theoretical and practical attention. Four
empirical studies were carried out to (*a*) identify narcissistic acts in everyday
life, (*b*) identify the acts subsumed by dispositions that are seen as central
components of narcissism, (*c*) identify which acts and which dispositions are
most and least central to narcissism, (*d*) test the hypothesis that the concep-
tually specified component dispositions of the narcissistic personality disorder
indeed covary sufficiently to merit the designation of narcissism as a syn-
drome, (*e*) identify sex differences in the acts through which narcissism is
manifested, (*f*) validate the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (a major person-
ality instrument developed to assess narcissism), and (*g*) locate narcissistic act
performance within each of three major taxonomies of personality psychology.

An important goal of clinical assessment is to preserve the links between
psychodiagnostic classifications and manifestations of psychopathology
in everyday conduct (Buss & Craik, 1986). Manifestations of psycho-
pathology are typically first noted in a person's everyday life, either
by observers or in the subjective phenomenology of the person. The
inability to work or play, displays of unusual ideation, expressions of
subjective distress, and behaviors injurious to self or others initially
come to the attention of the person, family, friends, coworkers, or other
members of society. It is these acts that occur in everyday life that
call attention to the need for some kind of diagnosis, treatment, or
intervention from mental health professionals.

The act frequency approach to personality (Buss & Craik, 1983) and psychopathology (Buss & Craik, 1986, 1987) provides a conceptual framework and set of methods for revealing the links between diagnostic classifications and the psychopathology of everyday conduct. This article provides an empirical illustration of this framework and methods using the narcissistic personality disorder—a syndrome that has received increasing attention in the past decade (Emmons, 1987; Morrison, 1986; Raskin & Terry, 1988).

Personality Disorders as Syndromes of Clinically Relevant Dispositions

Axis II of the DSM-III and DSM-III-R (American Psychiatric Association, 1980, 1987) describes 11 basic personality disorders. A major emphasis in the new DSM-III-R is on separating *descriptions* of a particular disorder from explanations proposed to account for the etiology and proximate mechanisms involved in the disorder. In emphasizing the descriptive component, the DSM-III-R manual provides behaviorally oriented criteria for each of the 11 personality disorders.

Careful analysis of these diagnostic criteria reveals that they are composed primarily of *dispositional terms* that have been taken from the natural language. The act frequency approach to psychopathology starts with the premise that personality disorders can be analyzed as syndromes of dispositions taken from the natural language. This lexical approach assumes that dispositional constructs have evolved in the natural language to capture important performance phenomena. Features of behavior that have endangered self or others (Maher & Maher, 1985), that have caused subjective distress to self or others, or that show adaptive inflexibility, the tendency to generate self-defeating cycles, or tenuous stability under stress (Millon, 1981) have become codified as descriptive predicates in the natural language. The natural language provides an important starting point for the analysis of the psychopathology of everyday conduct.

Indeed, most of the DSM-III-R personality disorders are contained as trait-descriptive terms within the natural language. Terms such as *dependent, histrionic, narcissistic, antisocial, compulsive, passive, aggressive,* and *avoidant* have been used for centuries by people, presumably to describe certain classes of behavioral phenomena, cognitive styles, and interpersonal tendencies. The natural language is also replete with clinically relevant terms that may or may not find their way

into formal diagnostic classifications. These include anxious, bizarre, insane, perverted, exploitable, licentious, macabre, caustic, chameleonic, hypersensitive, idolatrous, inarticulate, insatiable, intolerant, lachrymose, masochistic, maudlin, mysogynic, and mysterious. Apparently, language users have found the phenomena to which these terms refer important to describe.

The diagnostic criteria for the narcissistic personality disorder include both dispositional and nondispositional descriptors. The dispositional descriptors include: grandiose, exhibitionistic, exploitative, self-centered, and self-aggrandizing. The DSM-III-R narcissistic personality disorder also includes descriptors that, although not technically trait-descriptive adjectives, can be readily understood in dispositional terms, such as sense of entitlement and lack of empathy. The act frequency approach to psychopathology starts with the premise that personality syndromes such as narcissism can be described in part by identifying these dispositionally relevant descriptors, and by identifying the classes of acts to which each corresponds.

Clinically Relevant Dispositions as Classes of Acts

Dispositions are conceptual units that summarize general trends, or act frequencies, in conduct. After clinically relevant dispositions have been identified, the next step in the act frequency analysis focuses on identifying the acts subsumed by each syndrome-relevant disposition. Dispositional constructs such as grandiose and exhibitionistic are treated as categories of acts occurring in everyday conduct. For example, "He bragged about his accomplishments" and "She undressed with the curtains opened" were nominated by an undergraduate panel as grandiose and exhibitionistic, respectively. The acts subsumed by each disposition are themselves topographically distinct. They may occur at different points throughout the natural flow of a person's everyday conduct. Because single acts are rarely invariantly diagnostic of dispositions or syndromes, act trends or multiple-act criteria based on composites of performed acts over a specified period of observation become the central units of analysis (Buss & Craik, 1986; see also Livesley, 1984).

Act trends and their dispositional designations are descriptive rather than explanatory. Stating that "Carol is exploitative," for example, does not explain *why* she used another's possessions without asking, befriended someone because that person knew the "right" people, bor-
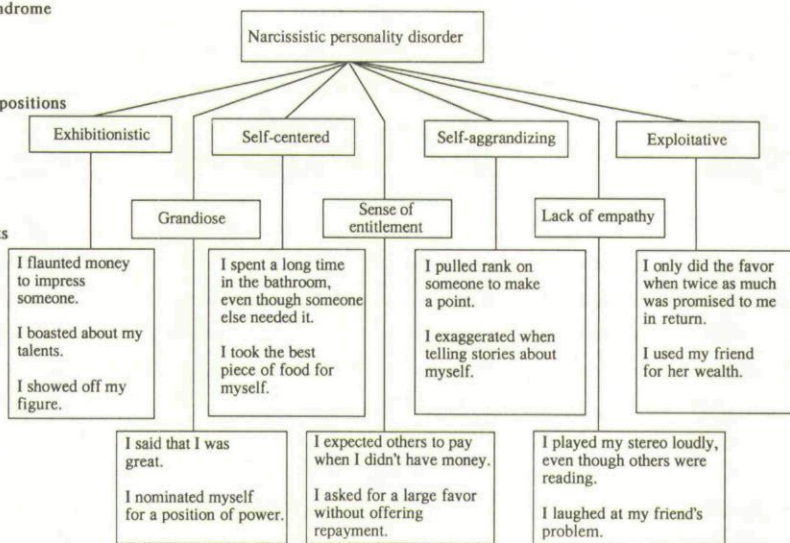
Figure 1
Narcissistic Syndrome: Disposition and Acts

rowed money without repaying, or used someone to make her loved-one jealous. Explanatory accounts of act trends must be advanced subsequently. In this sense, the act frequency approach shares with the DSM-III-R the orientation of separating descriptive from explanatory tasks in the analysis of personality disorders. This conception of the narcissistic personality disorder is shown in Figure 1.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder:
Clinical Description

The study of narcissism has received increasing attention in the past decade, both theoretically (Kernberg, 1976, 1980; Kohut, 1976; Millon, 1981) as well as empirically (Emmons, 1987; Raskin & Hall, 1981; Raskin & Shaw, 1988; Raskin & Terry, 1988). Much of the discussion surrounding this personality disorder has focused on matters of etiology and internal dynamics. For example, is narcissism due to parental rejection resulting in defensive withdrawal, distrust of love of others, and consequently self-love, *or* is it due to failure to idealize parents stemming from their indifference?

There is greater agreement, however, on the behavioral description of narcissism (Emmons, 1987; Millon, 1981; Raskin & Terry, 1988).

Narcissism involves a turning inward for gratification, a reliance on self rather than others for safety and self-esteem. Narcissists tend to be pre-occupied with power and prestige, enhancing themselves with beliefs that they are stronger and more important than others, greater in their abilities, or more beautiful to behold.

Empirical research has focused on measures of individual differences in narcissism and on identifying its major components. Raskin and Hall (1979) developed the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI), an instrument that has been validated in several ways. High scorers on the NPI, for example, tend to use personal pronouns (e.g., "I did X") in written expression more frequently than low scorers (Raskin & Shaw, 1988). Those who score high on the NPI, especially on the exploitation/entitlement subfactor, tend to score low on measures of empathy (Watson, Grisham, Trotter, & Biderman, 1984).

Studies of the factor structure of the NPI have yielded four or seven components, depending on the investigator. Emmons (1984, 1987), in two separate studies, found evidence for four principal factors: exploitativeness/entitlement, leadership/authority, superiority/arrogance, and self-absorption/self-admiration. In contrast, Raskin and Terry (1988) found evidence for seven components of the NPI: authority, self-sufficiency, exhibitionism, exploitativeness, vanity, entitlement, and superiority.

The DSM-III and DSM-III-R descriptive criteria include these clinically relevant features: (a) *grandiose* sense of self-importance and uniqueness; (b) *exhibitionistic* in the sense of requiring attention and admiration from others; (c) *sense of entitlement* in expecting that wishes should automatically be met and special favors granted without reciprocity; (d) *interpersonally exploitative* in using others merely as objects for selfish gains; (e) *self-centered* in their behavior toward others and in their illusions about their talents; (f) *self-aggrandizing* in presenting an inflated self-image to others and exaggerating achievements; and (g) *lacking empathy* for the rights and feelings of others and disregarding social conventions in ways that violate others.

The DSM-III-R description of the narcissistic personality disorder also contains components that are less readily characterized in dispositional terms, such as the oscillation between overvaluing and devaluing others. These oscillations as well as phenomenological states such as a sense of humiliation, precarious self-esteem, shame, rage, and yearnings for uniqueness (Morrison, 1986; Reich, 1960) are not well captured by the current approach, which instead focuses on the act manifesta-

tions of narcissism in everyday life. Nonetheless, many of the essential features of the narcissistic personality disorder are well-described in the above set of trait-descriptive terms, which forms the basis for the following empirical studies of this disorder. The act frequency approach to narcissism we use, as well as the more traditional phenomenological measurement approaches, complement one another, and together they potentially provide a more complete depiction of narcissism.

Narcissistic Acts in Everyday Life

The act frequency approach requires as a first step the generation of a pool of acts relevant to each personality disorder syndrome and to the dispositions subsumed by each syndrome. Act nomination procedures have been developed for this purpose (Buss & Craik, 1984). Act nominations can occur "on line" from direct observation by peers, family members, or clinicians, or they can occur retrospectively. Thus, the first of this series of studies identified a large number of acts in everyday life that are considered to be (*a*) exemplars of narcissism, and (*b*) exemplars of each of the subsumed dispositions (e.g., exhibitionistic, exploitative, lacking in empathy).

Once a large set of topographically diverse acts is identified, the second step requires documenting which acts are most central and which are most peripheral to the category of narcissism. Thus, a second study was designed to assess the prototypicality of each nominated act. This study simultaneously identifies which acts are central to narcissism as well as which clinically relevant dispositions are most central to narcissism.

A third critical step is to assess performance frequencies of narcissistic acts in the everyday lives of individuals. A third study was designed that employed two separate data sources, self-report and reports by an intimate observer, to record the performance of acts judged to be subsumed by narcissism or its component dispositions. In addition to providing important information about the incidence of narcissistic acts in everyday life, this study yields data that permit analysis of whether or not the dispositions subsumed by narcissism indeed form an empirically coherent syndrome.

A fourth goal of this study was to locate narcissistic act performance within several major taxonomies of personality. To accomplish this goal, four personality instruments were used: the NPI, the Interpersonal Adjective Scales (IAS; Wiggins, 1979), the Eysenck Personality

Questionnaire (EPQ; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975), and a measure of the "big-five" personality dimensions that have emerged repeatedly in personality research over the past 30 years (Digman & Inouye, 1986; Goldberg, 1983; John, 1989; McCrae & Costa, 1987; Norman, 1963).

Analysis of the links between the NPI and narcissistic acts in everyday life provides a method for validating the NPI and its subscales. The IAS yield a reasonably comprehensive assessment of interpersonal dispositions, and thus permit locating narcissistic act performance within the major axes of the interpersonal components of personality. The EPQ and "big-five" measures purport to capture the major dimensions of the personality sphere, and are perhaps the two most widely accepted taxonomies of dispositions in personality psychology today. Their inclusion permits the location of narcissistic act performance within these taxonomic systems.

In summary, we designed four studies to (a) identify narcissistic acts in everyday life, (b) identify the acts subsumed by narcissistic dispositions, (c) identify which acts and which dispositions are most and least central to narcissism, (d) provide a preliminary gauge of the incidence of narcissistic act performance in everyday life, (e) test the hypothesis that the conceptually specified dispositions of the narcissistic personality disorder indeed covary sufficiently to merit the designation of narcissism as a syndrome, (f) validate a major personality instrument developed to assess narcissism, and (g) locate narcissistic act performance within each of three major taxonomies of personality psychology.

Preliminary Study:
Identifying Narcissistic Acts in Everyday Life

The major goal of this study was to identify a large number of topographically diverse acts performed in everyday life that fall within the boundaries of the category of narcissism and the dispositions subsumed by it. Toward this end, nominations of such acts were solicited from a large number of subjects, rather than relying on the intuitions of one or a few investigators. This procedure capitalizes on the larger exposure and experience of members of this culture in witnessing narcissistic acts. It simultaneously reduces the problem of theoretically driven "investigator bias" that could occur if the acts were derived exclusively from the investigators.

METHOD

Subjects

Subjects were 70 males and 100 females from the University of Michigan. Subjects participated in order to fulfill a 1-hour lab requirement for an introductory psychology course.

Procedure

Each subject received the following instructional set:

Below are listed *categories* of behavior. In this study, please think of three people you know who typify each category, and write down three acts or behaviors that demonstrate or exemplify that category. For example, if the category is "athletic," you might write down "played basketball" or "hit a home run in baseball." These are specific behaviors or acts. Do *not* write down synonyms or adjectives such as "He is strong." We are interested in acts or behaviors that reflect each category.

The first category is *narcissistic*. Think of the three most narcissistic people you know. With these people in mind, write down three acts or behaviors that demonstrate or reflect their narcissism. Do the same for the categories that follow.

In addition to nominations for narcissism, subjects were asked to produce acts for the following dispositional categories: grandiosity, exhibitionism, entitlement, interpersonal exploitation, self-aggrandizement, lack of empathy, and self-centeredness. Subjects were also asked for their comments on the act nomination procedures.

RESULTS

The set of act nominations was reduced by the investigators by eliminating redundancies, adjectives, and statements considered too vague to constitute an observable act. Many acts were redundant. For example, the act of looking at oneself in a mirror was nominated for the category of narcissism 84 times. Acts that possessed even partial distinctiveness were retained for subsequent studies. Thus, this selection procedure erred in the direction of overinclusion for the category of narcissism, a process that would attenuate any bias the investigators might have in selecting acts from the pool. A total of 60 narcissistic acts were retained. A total of 140 acts were retained for the seven dispositions. Thus, a total of 200 acts relevant to narcissism were used in subsequent studies—a sample of acts that represent a distinct contribution to

the understanding of narcissistic acts manifested in everyday contexts. Sample acts from each of the categories are as follows:

Narcissistic acts. He looked in the mirror constantly; she baited others for compliments; he asked others how he looked; he bragged about his academics and other accomplishments (e.g., athletics); she asked others questions, insulting their intelligence; he compared himself favorably to others; she put others down (e.g., accomplishments, appearance); he told people he could date anyone.

Exhibitionistic acts. He became the life of the party; she flaunted money to impress someone; she talked loudly so that others would hear her story; he disagreed for the sake of attention; she became wild at the party; he walked around with no shirt on; she kissed passionately in public; he showed off his possessions.

Grandiose acts. He expected others to step aside when he walked by; she avoided talking to people she considered to be "low life"; he said that he was great; she took charge of the meeting; he claimed that he was the best at something; she exaggerated her role in the sporting event; he nominated himself for a position of power.

Self-centered acts. He did not ask his partner what she wanted before making the decision for the two of them; she assumed that someone else should pay for dinner when she was low on cash; he insisted that he be heard, but would not listen; she refused to share her food with others; he cut into a long line ahead of his turn; she turned the TV to her channel without asking what the others wanted; he asked others to conform to his schedule.

Acts of entitlement. He used something without replacing it; she asked a large favor without offering repayment; he showed up at an odd hour and expected to be entertained; she invited herself to a social event; he demanded sexual favors because of love; he made a collect call to a friend; she took the last piece of dessert without asking if anyone else wanted it; he told his parents that they should do things for him because they were his parents.

Self-aggrandizing acts. He pulled rank on someone to make a point; she played up her achievements; he discussed how much money he had;

she associated only with people of high status; he talked about his good points; she pointed out the faults of others; he appointed himself director when he saw what was needed; she arrived late to make a grand entrance; he talked about his success with the opposite sex.

Lack of empathy acts. He did not show much feeling when his friend was upset; she did not get upset over the death of a friend; he did not listen to other people's problems; she did not understand someone because she kept interrupting them; he refused to have pity for people with economic problems because he figured it was their own fault; she threw stones at an animal she didn't like; he ignored a friend who was sad.

Exploitative acts. He used his friend to gain a better social life; she asked her parents for extra money; he insisted that his friend drop everything to see him; she did the favor only when twice as much was promised in return; he spent time with her only when no one else was around; she used her friend for her wealth; he asked someone else to do his work for him.

In sum, this first stage of research, act nominations, contributes to the identification of a class of acts corresponding to the narcissism syndrome and to clinically relevant dispositions subsumed by narcissism. These acts shed light on the nature of everyday conduct involved with the narcissistic personality disorder, and provide a foundation for further empirical study of the disorder.

Study 1:
Prototypicality Judgments of Narcissistic Acts
METHOD

The primary purpose of Study 1 was to identify the relative centrality of each of the 60 acts nominated as narcissistic from the Preliminary Study. A secondary goal was to explore similarities and differences between layperson and "expert" conceptions of narcissism.

Subjects

Two samples of subjects were used for Study 1. The first consisted of 39 undergraduate students, 19 males and 20 females, each of whom participated as part of a class requirement in introductory psychology. The second sample consisted of 25 graduate students who were enrolled in a Ph.D. program in clinical psychology. This sample had some familiarity with the DSM-III-R person-

ality disorders, although their theoretical orientations differed, and included representatives from psychoanalytic, family systems, DSM-III-R (atheoretical, descriptive), and cognitive perspectives (see Results). This sample had on average 3.5 years of graduate school training in clinical psychology. This sample of judges is referred to for convenience as "expert" to distinguish it from the presumably more "naive" sample of undergraduate judges who had received no formal clinical training; it does not imply that these judges qualify as experienced clinicians.

Procedure

Each subject received the following instructional set:

> This study has to do with what we have in mind when we use words which refer to categories. Let's take the word *red* as an example. Close your eyes and imagine a true red. Now imagine an orangish red . . . imagine a purple red. Although you might still name the orange-red or the purple-red with the term *red,* they are not as good examples of red (as clear cases of what *red* refers to) as the clear "true" red. In short, some reds are redder than others.
>
> In this specific study you are asked to judge how good an example of a category various instances are. The category is *narcissism.* Below are listed a series of acts. You are to rate how good an example of that category each act is on a 7-point scale. A "7" means that you feel the act is a very good example of your idea of what narcissism is; a "1" means you feel the act fits very poorly with your idea of what narcissism is (or not a member of the category at all). A "4" means you feel the act fits moderately well. Use other numbers of the 7-point scale to indicate intermediate judgment.

In addition to the above instructional set, subjects in the "expert sample" were asked to describe their theoretical orientation. This brief questionnaire requested information on their knowledge of the psychodynamic conception of narcissism, and of the DSM-III-R conception of narcissism. In addition, they were asked to describe their education and professional training. Half of the subjects received descriptions of acts where a woman was the actor (e.g., *She* bragged about her accomplishments); the other half received act descriptions where a man was the actor (e.g., *He* demanded that others pay attention to him).

RESULTS

Reliability of Prototypicality Judgments

Alpha reliability coefficients (Cronbach, 1951) were computed for each panel overall, as well as separately for male and female raters and "he"

and "she" actor conditions. For the undergraduate panel, the male and female raters achieved α coefficients of .80 and .82, respectively. The α coefficients for the "he" and "she" conditions were .80 and .84, respectively. Over all raters and conditions, the panel attained an α of .89.

The reliability coefficients were similar for the expert panel. The male and female raters achieved coefficients of .77 and .86; raters in the "male-as-actor" condition attained an α of .85, whereas those in the "female-as-actor" condition attained an α of .82. Across all raters and conditions, the overall α for the expert panel was .91. These results suggest that adequate composite reliability exists in these ratings of the relative centrality of acts to the category of narcissism.

Most Prototypical Narcissistic Acts

Table 1 shows the acts judged to be most prototypical of narcissism, as judged by the undergraduate panel. Also shown in Table 1 are the mean ratings for each of the 20 most prototypically narcissistic acts.

Perusal of these prototypically narcissistic acts suggests themes of *self-centeredness* (e.g., He talked about himself, but did not listen to anyone else), *self-absorption* (e.g., looking in a mirror while talking with others), *exhibitionism* (e.g., showing off body while others are watching), *self-aggrandizement* (e.g., telling others that the best way to pick up women is to be like him), and *grandiosity* (e.g., coming right out and saying that they are beautiful or great). Thus, many of the components contained in the DSM-III-R description of this personality disorder are also contained in acts nominated by laypersons as narcissistic and judged by a panel of laypersons as narcissistic.

Fifteen of the 20 prototypically narcissistic acts also emerged in the top 20 by the "expert" panel. The 5 acts judged by "experts," but not by the undergraduates, as in the top 20 were: He gave everyone a picture of himself; she demanded attention when performing any kind of act; he went out in public only if he looked perfect; she brushed her hair and put on makeup several times in a brief period; and he dressed extravagantly in order to attract attention.

Similarities and Differences between "Expert" and Undergraduate Samples

The similarities between the expert and undergraduate panels are more striking than the differences. Among the 20 most prototypical narcissis-

Table 1

20 Most Prototypical Narcissistic Acts: Undergraduate Sample

	Male actor		Female actor		
Rank	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Act
1	5.85	1.46	6.53	0.84	She came right out and said how beautiful she was or how great she was.
2	5.50	1.28	6.21	0.98	He told his friend that the best way to pick up women was to be as much like him as possible.
3	5.70	1.56	5.95	1.68	She said to the boys, "How could anyone not like this body?"
4	5.80	1.47	5.74	1.41	He had a picture of himself and said that he should be in a man's model magazine (e.g., *GQ*).
5	5.55	1.19	5.90	1.05	She cut someone off in a conversation to talk about herself.
6	5.45	1.28	6.00	0.94	He bragged about his physical features.
7	5.60	1.14	5.58	0.90	She "showed off" her body when others were watching.
8	5.40	1.47	5.68	1.11	He flaunted his body (e.g., he made muscles in his arm, wore tight clothing).
9	5.25	1.45	5.84	1.39	She claimed that everyone was jealous of her.
10	5.05	1.50	5.84	1.34	He talked about himself and did not listen to anyone else.
11	5.15	1.84	5.68	1.11	She told people that she could date anyone.
12	5.15	1.87	5.42	1.71	He looked in the mirror while talking to others.
13	5.20	1.74	5.32	1.53	She looked in the mirror constantly.
14	5.25	1.74	5.11	1.70	He carried his own picture around.
15	4.90	1.48	5.42	0.96	She bragged about her academics and other accomplishments (e.g., athletics).
16	5.05	1.43	5.16	1.80	He thought he was so wonderful that he walked around without a shirt on.
17	4.85	1.57	5.32	1.06	She praised herself a lot.

Table 1
Continued

Rank	Male actor		Female actor		Act
	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*	
18	4.50	1.50	5.58	1.50	He only went out in public if he looked perfect.
19	4.95	1.64	5.05	1.13	She put on a show every time someone watched her.
20	4.95	1.15	5.00	1.29	He baited others for compliments.

Note. Sex of actor is alternated in the act descriptions shown in this and subsequent tables.

tic acts, 15 were selected by both panels. A more precise index is provided by the correlation between the mean ratings derived from the two panels. This correlation is $+.81$, suggesting considerable agreement about which acts are central to the category of narcissism. To identify potential differences in conceptions of narcissism between the two panels, t tests were computed for each of the 60 narcissistic acts. Eight showed statistically significant differences, where roughly 3 would be expected by chance alone. No consistent themes appear to characterize these few panel differences.

Theoretical Orientation and Conceptions of Narcissism

To examine whether theoretical orientation affected one's conception of narcissism, dummy variables were created for each of the four theoretical orientations, contrasted with those not holding that orientation. These four variables were then correlated with the 60 prototypicality judgments. The behaviorist orientation showed no significant correlations; the cognitive orientation showed one; the psychoanalytic orientation showed two. Approximately three correlations would be expected to be significant by chance alone for each orientation.

Only the DSM-III-R orientation showed slightly greater than chance relationships with the prototypicality judgments: Five of the 60 correlations were statistically significant. These were: Asked others questions, insulting their intelligence ($r = .43$, $p < .05$); put others down (e.g., accomplishments, appearance, etc.) ($r = .41$, $p < .05$); refused to go

out with someone who wasn't "good enough" ($r = .45$, $p < .05$); bought clothes that would keep him/her in the "status quo" ($r = .53$, $p < .01$); and sunbathed ($r = .47$, $p < .05$). The first three acts suggest that those with a DSM-III-R orientation view *condescension* as more central to narcissism than do those holding other theoretical orientations. Nonetheless, the small sample size and relative paucity of significant correlations suggest that no firm conclusions can be drawn about the effects of theoretical orientation on conceptions of narcissism.

DISCUSSION

The results from the Preliminary Study and Study 1 are encouraging regarding the application of act frequency methods for discovering a wide range of narcissistic acts in everyday life, and for identifying which of these acts are most central to the category of narcissism. The agreement between "expert" and lay panels lends confidence to the use of laypersons for identifying the relative centrality of acts to narcissism. Although the sample size is too small to draw strong conclusions, the present study finds little evidence that theoretical orientation affects conceptions of the centrality of acts to the category of narcissism. This obviously does not preclude the possibility and even likelihood of strong differences in views about the etiology and dynamics involved in narcissism, nor does it rule out the possibility that experienced clinicians and psychiatrists might *nominate* different acts of narcissism.

Although the results from these studies provide important information about how narcissism is manifested in acts in everyday life, it does not yield information about which of the *dispositions* presumably subsumed by narcissism are most and least central. This was the goal of Study 2.

Study 2:
Prototypicality of Subcomponents of Narcissism
METHOD

The primary goal of Study 2 was to identify which acts drawn from the seven target dispositions subsumed by narcissism are most central, and which are least central, to the construct of narcissism. Toward this end, the investigators selected 20 acts from each of the seven dispositions (exhibitionistic, self-centered, exploitative, etc.) based on correspondence between each act and the dictionary definition of each disposition. Judgments of the centrality of each

of the 140 acts to the category of narcissism were then made by an independent panel to reveal (a) which acts subsumed by the clinically relevant dispositions are most prototypical of narcissism, and (b) an ordering of these dispositions from most to least important in defining, operationalizing, and assessing the construct of narcissism.

Subjects and Procedure

Subjects were 60 undergraduate students, 30 males and 30 females, who were enrolled in a large undergraduate psychology class. Participation fulfilled a class requirement. Half of the males and half of the females judged the centrality of acts in the "male-as-actor" condition; the other half of each sex judged the centrality of acts in the "female-as-actor" condition. Subjects in this study received the same instructional set as did subjects in Study 1.

RESULTS

Reliability of Prototypicality Judgments

Alpha reliability coefficients were computed for all rater and actor conditions by sex separately, as well as for all judges overall. Male and female raters achieved α coefficients of .86 and .91, respectively. Male raters in the "male-as-actor" condition attained an α of .74, while females in the same condition attained an α of .87. Males in the "female-as-actor" condition attained an α of .77, while females in the same condition attained an α of .78. The α computed for all judges was .94.

Sex of Rater

To examine whether male and female raters differed in their conceptions of narcissism, t tests were conducted for each of the 140 acts. Only 1 act reached statistical significance, whereas approximately 7 would be expected by chance alone. It was concluded that male and female raters did not differ in their conceptions of the centrality of these 140 acts to the category of narcissism.

Sex of Actor

To examine whether acts were judged to be more central or peripheral to narcissism if they were performed by a man as opposed to woman,

Table 2
20 Most Narcissistic Acts from Seven Subdispositions

Mean	Category	Act
6.20	Grandiose	I expected others to step aside when I walked by.
5.92	Exploitative	I insisted that my friend drop everything to see me.
5.78	Grandiose	I said that I was great.
5.75	Self-centered	I insisted on being heard, but would not listen.
5.75	Grandiose	I claimed that I was best at something.
5.70	Exhibitionistic	I boasted about my experiences with member of the opposite sex.
5.67	Self-aggrandizing	I boasted about my abilities and intelligence.
5.63	Lack of empathy	I interrupted someone who was telling something important in order to convey my own news.
5.59	Self-centered	I flirted with someone else and ignored my spouse's feelings.
5.54	Self-aggrandizing	I talked about my success with members of the opposite sex.
5.54	Self-centered	I demanded attention.
5.52	Exhibitionistic	I boasted about my talents.
5.50	Self-aggrandizing	I arrived late to make a grand entrance.
5.50	Grandiose	I avoided talking to people that I considered to be "low life."
5.48	Exploitative	I put someone down to make me feel better.
5.47	Grandiose	I mentioned that I was sexy.
5.45	Lack of empathy	I laughed at my friend's problems.
5.42	Exploitative	I asked my friend to listen to my troubles, but would not return the favor.
5.35	Self-aggrandizing	I boasted about my past accomplishments.
5.34	Self-centered	I exaggerated my problems to receive attention.

Note. Possible scores range from 7.00 (good example of narcissism) to 1.00 (poor example of narcissism).

140 t tests were computed for sex-of-actor. Because of the large number of t tests computed, a more stringent significance criterion of $p < .01$ was adopted. Twenty-two acts were considered more narcissistic when performed by males.

The acts in Table 2 are considered to be more narcissistic when performed by males. There are no acts considered to be more narcis-

sistic when performed by females at this significance level. Of the acts suggesting greater narcissism when performed by males, all of the sub-dispositions are represented, with exploitation, entitlement, and lack of empathy being most represented. Exhibitionism was least represented, having only one act with a significant sex difference.

Most Prototypically Narcissistic Acts from Seven Dispositions

Table 2 shows the 20 acts judged to be most prototypically narcissistic from the set of 140 acts nominated for the clinically relevant narcissistic dispositions. Also shown in the table are the mean prototypicality ratings and the clinically relevant disposition for which the initial act was nominated.

Grandiose acts make the strongest appearance among the most prototypical narcissistic acts. Indeed, three of the top five narcissistic acts in this study were initially nominated as grandiose: expecting others to step aside, emphasizing one's greatness, and claiming to be the best at something. Self-centered (e.g., insisting on being heard, but not listening) and self-aggrandizing (e.g., boasting about abilities and intelligence) behaviors also show up strongly among the most prototypically narcissistic acts. Three of the top 20 acts were initially nominated as exploitative, including insisting that a friend drop everything, putting others down to make oneself feel better, and asking a friend to listen to one's troubles, but not reciprocating.

Exhibitionistic acts (e.g., boasting about success with opposite sex) and acts indicating lack of empathy (e.g., interrupting someone who was telling something important) each make two appearances in the top 20 narcissistic acts. Only entitlement has no acts appearing in the top 20.

DISCUSSION

Three general conclusions can be reached based on these results: (a) Many acts are conceived of as more centrally narcissistic when performed by men than when performed by women, (b) six of the seven subcomponents of narcissism are well represented among those acts judged to be most central or prototypical of narcissism, and (c) although the dispositions of self-centeredness, self-aggrandizement, and interpersonal exploitation were judged to be slightly more central to nar-

cissism than the other four components, all were seen as moderately central to the syndrome of narcissism.

Study 3:
Performance of Narcissistic Acts in Everyday Life

There were several major goals of Study 3: (*a*) to examine the empirical covariation among the clinically relevant narcissistic subdispositions to test whether the designation of "syndrome" is warranted, (*b*) to identify which narcissistic acts are performed more and less frequently in everyday life, (*c*) to examine sex differences in narcissistic act performance that are replicable across data sources, (*d*) to provide validity data on a major instrument purported to assess narcissism, the NPI, and (*e*) to locate narcissistic act performance within three major taxonomies of personality.

Subjects

Subjects were 214 individuals composing 107 newlywed couples. These couples were used to obtain observer-based act reports to supplement self-reports of act performance. It was reasoned that spouses, although not having perfect access to their partner's behavior, would at least be in a position to observe and hence report on many of the acts that their partner had performed.

Procedure

Subjects received a packet of instruments that they completed in their spare time at home. These included only those instruments that were self-report, including the personality measures EPQ, IAS, and 40 bipolar adjective scales. In addition, they completed two act reports, one based on the 60 narcissistic acts nominated in Study 1, and the other based on the 140 acts nominated for the clinically relevant subdispositions. Subsequently, a testing session was scheduled in which subjects completed reports about their partner. These included the 40 bipolar adjective scales, a 60-act narcissistic act report, and a 140 observer-based act report (based on the narcissistic dispositions). Spouses were physically separated for the duration of the testing session to preserve independence.

Narcissistic act report. Subjects received the following instructional set: "Below is a list of acts. Please read each act and *circle* the response that best indicates *how often* you have performed this act *in the past six months*." Following these instructions were 60 acts (e.g., I baited others for compliments; I bragged about my physical features; I lashed out at those who were mildly critical of me) phrased in the first-person singular. The four response options for each act were: never, rarely, sometimes, and often.

During the separate testing session, spouses of the subjects received a parallel observer act report with a parallel instructional set: "Below is a list of acts. Please read each act and circle *how often your wife* (or husband) has performed this act *in the past six months*." Following these instructions were the 60 acts, phrased in the third-person singular (e.g., She asked others about how she looked; she talked about herself and did not listen to anyone else; she cut someone off in conversation to talk about herself). The use of two data sources to assess retrospectively the act performance of subjects largely circumvents limitations associated with exclusive use of self-report (cf. Block, 1989).

Clinically relevant dispositions of narcissism. Act reports were also completed by subjects (self-report) and their partners (spouse-observer report) for the 140 acts previously nominated as being exemplars of the clinically relevant dispositions associated with narcissism. The instructional set was as follows for the self-report version: "Below is a list of acts or behaviors that people sometimes perform. Please *circle* the response after each act that best reflects whether or not you have performed it *within the past 6 months,* and if so, how often. Please be totally honest. Your responses are confidential." Following these instructions were the 140 acts previously nominated, intermingled from the different categories and not identified by the category from which it was derived. The response options were: never, rarely, sometimes, and often.

A parallel version of this act report was completed by the spouses of the subjects during the testing session. Like the narcissistic act report, acts were phrased in the third-person singular (e.g., He flaunted his money to impress someone; he showed up at an odd hour expecting to be entertained; he kissed passionately in public). Like the narcissistic act report, the use of two data sources to assess performance frequency circumvents many problems associated with exclusive use of self-report.

Narcissistic Personality Inventory. The NPI yields a global index of overall narcissism, as well as seven subscales: authority, self-sufficiency, exhibitionism, exploitativeness, vanity, entitlement, and superiority (Raskin & Terry, 1988). It has been validated by the authors of the instrument (e.g., Raskin & Hall, 1981), as well as by independent researchers (e.g., Emmons, 1984, 1987).

Trait ratings by three data sources. Trait ratings were made on each target subject by three sources: self, partner, and two independent interviewers. Traits representing the five-factor model were assessed through 40 bipolar adjective pairs which represent the categories of surgency, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and culture. These adjective pairs were drawn from the highest loading pairs of adjectives from factor analyses conducted by Goldberg (1983). Each member of an adjective pair anchored one side of the 7-point rating scale.

The informational basis for trait ratings by partners stemmed from prior knowledge of, and interaction with, the target subjects. In addition, each couple was interviewed by a pair of interviewers, one male and one female, drawn from a rotating team of eight interviewers. Interviewers first witnessed a trial interview, practiced the protocol on several nonparticipating couples, and were given suggestions for improving their technique by the senior author, an experienced interviewer. Questions posed during the interview included how the partners met, what initially attracted them to each other, what their similarities and differences were, and what the probability was that they would be together in a year. Directly following the interview, each interviewer independently rated each subject on the 40 bipolar trait pairs. Judgments from the two interviewers were summed to achieve more reliable indices. The composite reliabilities for the five scales were: surgency (.75), agreeableness (.76), conscientiousness (.76), emotional stability (.73), and culture (.74).

Interpersonal Adjective Scales-Revised (IAS-R). The IAS were developed to operationalize a circumplex model of personality. The 64-item version, the IAS-R, was used, which yields scores for eight variables. The major orthogonal axes of the circumplex model are dominance-submissiveness and quarrelsomeness-agreeableness. The 64 adjectives are rated on a 9-point scale. Eight items are then composited for each of the eight scales.

Eysenck Personality Questionnaire. The EPQ is a 90-item instrument that is scored for three substantive scales and one validity scale. Scores are obtained for extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism. A Lie scale is also scored to reflect "a tendency on the part of some subjects to 'fake good,' " although substantive personality content appears also to be associated with Lie scale scores (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975, p. 7).

RESULTS

Empirical Covariation among Clinically Relevant Dispositions

Finding the essential clinically relevant components of the DSM-III-R description of narcissism among the highly prototypically narcissistic acts provides evidence that laypersons believe that these components are central to the concept of narcissism. But they do not provide evidence that these components covary among persons in their actual day-to-day act performance.

Within each data source, the 20 acts comprising each disposition were summed. The correlations among these composites were all strongly positive, ranging from $+.50$ to $+.85$ for the self-report data source and from $+.53$ to $+.88$ for the spouse-reported data source. These data suggest that the dispositional components of narcissism covary, providing convergent evidence for the viability of the concept of narcissism as a syndrome subsuming somewhat diverse dispositional components.

Factor Analyses of Seven Dispositions

To further test for the empirical coherence of these seven dispositions, six principal components analyses were conducted on the seven composites: one for each data source separately and one for the unit-weighted total scores based on the sum of the self-recorded and observer-recorded acts, for males and females separately, to preserve independence. Scores were standardized (z-scored) prior to analysis.

The results of the six principal components analyses were close to identical. In each analysis, one large factor emerged with eigenvalues ranging between 4.93 and 5.44 and accounted for at least 70% of the total variance. In no analysis did any other factor exceed or even approach an eigenvalue of 1.00. For the self-report data source, the first

principal component had an eigenvalue of 5.28 for males and 4.93 for females, and accounted for 75.5% and 70.4% of the variance, respectively. The second factor had eigenvalues of only .68 for each sex. The communalities for the seven dispositions ranged from .58 to .85 for males and from .51 to .82 for females.

For the observer-report data source, the first principal component had eigenvalues of 5.18 and 5.44 for males and females, respectively, and captured 74.0% and 78.0% of the variance. The second component had eigenvalues of only .69 and .59 for males and females, respectively. Communalities ranged from .63 to .83 for males and from .63 to .87 for females. On the assumption that composite measures across data sources would reduce error variance, we conducted principal components analyses on the seven unit-weighted composite measures of the seven dispositions. These analyses also produced one large component with an eigenvalue of 5.22 for males and 5.15 for females, and accounted for 74.5% and 73.5% of the variance. The second component had eigenvalues of only .72 for males and .70 for females. Communalities ranged from a low of .61 to .84 for males and from .53 to .88 for females. These results provide support for the empirical coherence of narcissism in a nonclinical population, and suggest that the syndrome designation is appropriate.

Most Frequently Performed Narcissistic Acts

The most frequent themes among the most frequently performed narcissistic acts are *condescension* (e.g., insulting others' intelligence, refusing to go out with someone who was not "good enough," avoiding talking to people who were "low life," associating mainly with high-status people, pointing out the faults of others) and *extreme attention to one's physical appearance* (watching one's biceps, looking in a mirror while talking to others, commenting on weight loss, walking around with one's chest out, frequent grooming). Interestingly, six of the seven narcissistic dispositions are represented among this frequently performed set; only lack of empathy is not represented.

Sex Differences in Performance Replicable across Data Sources

Tables 3 and 4 show those acts that show sex differences that are statistically significant across both data sources. Males appear to perform

Table 3

**Sex Differences in Performance Replicable across Data Sources:
Narcissistic Acts Performed More Frequently by Males**

Self-report			Observer report			Act
Male[a]	Female[a]	t test	Male[a]	Female[a]	t test	
0.50	0.25	2.45*	0.39	0.16	2.60**	He watched his biceps when he did pull-ups.
0.32	0.13	2.42*	0.16	0.05	2.31*	He threw stones at an animal that he didn't like.
0.35	0.18	2.45*	0.55	0.26	3.01**	He played his stereo loudly even though others were reading.
1.72	0.95	5.32***	1.77	0.87	7.02***	He walked around with no shirt on.
1.22	0.64	5.02***	1.37	0.75	4.87***	He turned the TV to his channel without asking what the others wanted.
0.69	0.41	2.80**	0.68	0.42	2.48*	He claimed that he was best at something.
0.58	0.26	3.43***	0.35	0.17	2.21*	He exaggerated his role in the sporting event.
1.22	0.46	6.63***	1.20	0.35	7.69***	He displayed no emotion during the sad movie.
0.35	0.10	3.66***	0.18	0.08	2.03*	He yelled at her and told her to stop crying.
1.23	0.96	2.23*	1.27	0.95	2.52*	He expected someone else to do the cooking and cleaning.
0.95	0.61	2.95**	0.64	0.33	3.06**	He challenged people to try to beat him.

a. Values given are means.
*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$
***$p < .001$.

Table 4

**Sex Differences in Performance Replicable across Data Sources:
Narcissistic Acts Performed More Frequently by Females**

	Self-report			Observer report		Act
	Male[a]	Female[a]	t test	Male[a]	Female[a]	t test	
1.12	1.70	−5.89***	1.10	1.48	−3.47***	She asked others about how she looked.
0.37	0.59	−2.42*	0.36	0.75	−3.45***	She only went out in public if she looked perfect.
0.31	0.52	−2.43*	0.27	0.56	−3.18**	She dressed extravagantly in order to attract attention.
0.35	0.75	−4.18***	0.40	0.80	−3.95***	She spent a lot of money on clothes and accessories.
0.33	1.11	−6.99***	0.30	1.12	−7.50***	She continued to try on outfit after outfit to see which looked best.
0.27	0.47	−2.28*	0.30	0.56	−2.82**	She strutted around in sexy clothes.
0.40	0.63	−2.19*	0.43	0.64	−1.98*	She commented on how much weight she had lost.
1.24	1.57	−2.45*	0.90	1.44	−4.17***	She sunbathed.
0.80	1.07	−2.20*	0.65	0.95	−2.74**	She wore expensive clothes.
0.26	0.44	−2.35*	0.36	0.61	−2.60**	She spent a long time in the bathroom even though someone else needed it.
1.08	1.47	−3.35***	1.07	1.40	−2.61**	She dressed in "classy" clothing.
0.79	1.10	−2.91**	0.64	0.96	−2.76**	She got mad when she did not get appropriate attention.
0.71	1.04	−2.79**	0.67	0.91	−2.12*	She showed off her figure.
0.75	1.18	−3.65***	0.72	1.39	−5.93***	She wore sexy clothes.

a. Values given are means.
*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$
***$p < .001$

a higher frequency of acts signifying *lack of empathy* (e.g., throwing stones at animals; displaying no emotion during the sad movie). Indeed, this cluster is the only one of the seven that shows significant sex differences at the composite level within both data sources.

Table 4, showing acts for which female performance is reported by both data sources to be greater, reveals acts almost exclusively centered around *physical appearance*. This includes asking others about her appearance, dressing extravagantly, sunbathing, showing off her figure, strutting around in sexy clothes, and commenting about how much weight she had lost. The marginal exceptions to the greater female frequency of acts centering on appearance occur with the acts of spending a long time in the bathroom and getting mad when she did not get appropriate attention.

Narcissistic Personality Inventory

For reportorial efficiency and data source generalizability, we generated composites, based on unit-weighting, for each of seven narcissistic subdispositions. These composites were then correlated with scores from the NPI, IAS, EPQ, and five-factor adjective scales. The correlations with the NPI total score and its seven subscales are shown in Table 5.

Most relevant is the first column, which shows the correlations between the NPI total score and the cross-data-source narcissism act composites. Highly significant positive correlations are seen for all except the lack of empathy act composite. The strongest links with the NPI total score are with exhibitionism, self-aggrandizement, and grandiosity.

A second issue centers on validation for the seven components of the NPI identified by Raskin and Terry (1988). Three of these seven components carry the same nominal designation as the act-based dispositions—exhibitionistic, exploitative, and entitlement. All three NPI subscales show their highest correlations with the corresponding act-based composites, although NPI entitlement shows equally high correlations with self-centered acts and acts of entitlement (both +.26). This is strongest for exhibitionism (.44) and weakest for exploitative (.14). Taken together, these results provide encouraging act-based and data-source generalizable validity for the NPI and several of its subscales. It is noteworthy that the NPI superiority scale did not show significant correlations with any of the act-based measures of narcissism.

Table 5

Correlations between the Narcissistic Personality Inventory and Components of Narcissism

	Narcissistic Personality Inventory and subscales							
	Total	Authority	Self-Sufficiency	Superiority	Exhibitionism	Exploitativeness	Vanity	Entitlement
Total[a]	32***	28***	-13	-02	38***	13	18**	24***
Exhibitionism	37***	31***	-06	12	44***	12	25***	19**
Self-aggrandizing	39***	37***	-06	12	37***	14	13	22***
Self-centered	27***	20**	-16*	05	32***	07	12	26***
Sense of entitlement	27***	24***	-17*	04	29***	12	06	26***
Exploitative	23***	18*	-16*	01	31***	14*	01	24***
Lack of empathy	10	11	-14*	-07	15*	06	-02	16*
Grandiose	40***	43***	-12	12	38***	13	08	24***
Total[b]	33***	29***	-11	08	34***	13	10	24***

Note. Decimals for correlations are omitted.

a. Total = sum of 60 acts nominated as narcissistic.

b. Total = total score based on sum of 140 acts nominated for the seven dispositions of narcissism.

*p < .05

**p < .01

***p < .001.

Interpersonal Adjective Scales

The IAS provide reasonably comprehensive coverage of the major dimensions of the interpersonal sphere of personality. Table 6 shows the correlations between the eight IAS and the cross-data-source act composites. The total score shows the strongest links with IAS arrogant-calculating (positive) and unassuming-ingenuous (negative). Specific dispositions of narcissism, however, show stronger links with other IAS subscales. Exhibitionism, self-aggrandizement, and grandiosity show the strongest positive correlations with the ambitious-dominant IAS subscale. Lack of empathy, in contrast, shows its strongest links with cold-quarrelsome (positive) and warm-agreeable (negative).

Eysenck Personality Questionnaire

Correlations between the three EPQ scales and the cross-data-source narcissism act composites are shown in Table 7. In this three-dimensional system, narcissistic act performance is most clearly linked with high scores on extraversion and psychoticism. It should be noted that psychoticism is saturated with impulsivity items, and does not necessarily reflect a disposition toward psychosis. Among the narcissistic subdispositions, exhibitionism, self-aggrandizement, and grandiosity show their strongest links with extraversion. In contrast, self-centeredness, entitlement, exploitativeness, and lack of empathy show their strongest links with psychoticism.

The narcissistic act components are also consistently negatively correlated with the EPQ Lie scale. On the surface, these correlations might suggest that people who report performing many narcissistic acts, and whose spouses report that they perform many narcissistic acts, are *less* prone to "fake good," a tendency that might contaminate the apparent links between personality characteristics and narcissistic act performance. To check for this possibility, we recomputed all these correlations, partialling out the Lie scale. The strongest zero-order correlations decreased in magnitude trivially by just a few correlation points. For example, the correlation between the NPI total score and the total narcissistic act composite based on 140 acts summed across two data sources decreased from $+.33$ ($p < .001$) to $+.30$ ($p < .001$); the strongest correlate of EPQ extraversion was with exhibitionistic acts, which decreased from .46 ($p < .001$) to .44 ($p < .001$). Thus, partialling out the EPQ Lie scale did not materially affect the correlations between personality characteristics and reports of narcissistic act performance.

Table 6

Correlations between the Interpersonal Adjective Scales-Revised
(IAS-R) and Components of Narcissism

	PA	BC	DE	FG	HI	JK	LM	NO
Total[a]	17*	18**	09	−27***	−23***	−19**	−04	21**
Exhibitionism	28***	26***	12	−35***	−34***	−23***	−11	31***
Self-aggrandizing	33***	25***	17*	−17*	−31***	−27***	−20**	17*
Self-centered	09	25***	22***	02	−12	−27***	−23***	00
Sense of entitlement	12	25***	26***	−06	−15*	−26***	−21**	04
Exploitative	04	26***	23***	−06	−09	−29***	−19**	03
Lack of empathy	02	28***	42***	03	−09	−30***	−38***	−09
Grandiose	34***	31***	15*	17*	−32***	−32***	−24***	15*
Total[b]	19**	30***	24***	−13	−23***	−31***	−25***	11
NPI total	49***	23***	12	−19**	−49***	−18**	−20**	22***

Note. The scale abbreviations for the IAS-R are: PA = assured-dominant; BC = arrogant-calculating; DE = cold-hearted; FG = aloof-introverted; HI = unassuming-submissive; JK = unassuming-ingenuous; LM = warm-agreeable; NO = gregarious-extraverted. NPI = Narcissistic Personality Inventory. Decimals for correlations are omitted.

a. Total = sum of 60 acts nominated as narcissistic.

b. Total = total score based on sum of 140 acts nominated for the seven dispositions of narcissism.

*p < .05

**p < .01

***p < .001.

Table 7
Correlations between the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire
and Components of Narcissism

	Extraversion	Neuroticism	Psychoticism	Lie scale
Total[a]	35***	17*	11	−21**
Exhibitionism	46***	01	16*	−29***
Self-aggrandizing	35***	07	14*	−33***
Self-centered	15*	08	30***	−43***
Sense of entitlement	22***	02	36***	−36***
Exploitative	19**	12	30***	−37***
Lack of empathy	10	−04	29***	−31***
Grandiose	36***	00	20**	−38***
Total[b]	31***	05	27***	−41***
NPI total	38***	−17*	14	−13

Note. NPI = Narcissistic Personality Inventory. Decimals for correlations are omitted.
a. Total = sum of 60 acts nominated as narcissistic.
b. Total = total score based on sum of 140 acts nominated for the seven dispositions of narcissism.
*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$
***$p < .001$.

Further scrutiny suggests that the correlations between the EPQ Lie scale and narcissistic act reports may be substantive rather than suggesting an artifact of measurement. The EPQ manual reports that "there are certain difficulties in regarding scores [on the Lie scale] as nothing but indicators of dissimulation. The main difficulty seems to be that . . . the L scale also measures some stable personality factor which may denote some degree of social naïveté. . . . Thus, under conditions of little motivation to dissimulate, the L scale score may be used as a measure of whatever personality function is being measured by the scale" (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975, p. 7).

An examination of the content of the Lie scale items provides a clue about what this personality factor might be. Low Lie scale scorers tend to answer "yes" to the items: Have you ever taken praise for something you knew someone else had really done?; have you ever blamed someone for doing something you knew was really your fault?; have you ever taken anything (even a pin or a button) that belonged to someone else?; do you sometimes talk about things you know nothing about?; do you sometimes boast a little?; have you ever insisted on having your own way? Many of these items seem to have content overlap with the con-

Table 8
Correlations between the "Big-Five" Factors of Personality
and Components of Narcissism

	Surgency	Agreeable	Conscientiousness	Emotional stability	Openness-intellect
Total[a]	27***	−14*	−13	−17*	−06
Exhibitionism	44***	−07	−16*	02	15*
Self-aggrandizing	38***	−27***	−08	−09	21**
Self-centered	18**	−36***	−31***	−15*	07
Sense of entitlement	21**	−25***	−27***	−09	06
Exploitative	19**	−23***	−28***	−12	01
Lack of empathy	09	−30***	−19**	05	−04
Grandiose	42***	−22***	−10	01	29***
Total[b]	31***	−27***	−22***	−06	13
NPI total	46***	−06	−10	18**	32***

Note. NPI = Narcissistic Personality Inventory. Decimals for correlations are omitted.
a. Total = sum of 60 acts nominated as narcissistic.
b. Total = total score based on sum of 140 acts nominated for the seven dispositions of narcissism.
*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$
***$p < .001$.

struct of narcissism, including calling attention to oneself, displaying a sense of entitlement, and aggrandizing the self. Thus, the mysterious "stable personality factor" to which the EPQ manual refers may be narcissism, at least in part. Combined with the finding that partialling the Lie scale from the personality-by-narcissistic act composites does not materially affect the magnitude of the correlations, we may tentatively conclude that the negative correlations between the EPQ Lie scale and narcissistic act reports (by both self and spouse) are best interpreted as being caused by content overlap rather than by a contaminating response set.

The Five-Factor Taxonomy of Personality

Table 8 shows the correlations between the components of narcissism and the measures of the five-factor model of personality. The five factor measures are composites, with unit weighting, across three separate data sources: self-report, partner report, and independent reports by

interviewers. In this five-dimensional system, the narcissism act composites are generally linked with high scores on surgency, low scores on agreeableness, and low scores on conscientiousness.

The subcomponents of exhibitionism, self-aggrandizement, and grandiosity show the strongest links with surgency—a pattern also found with the IAS ambitious-dominant and EPQ extraversion scales. In contrast, self-centeredness, entitlement, exploitativeness, and lack of empathy are most strongly linked with low agreeableness and low conscientiousness. Interestingly, grandiosity, self-aggrandizement, and exhibitionism also show significant correlations with the Openness-Intellect scale from the five-factor model. Perhaps those high on openness-intellect may be more "open" to discussing their accomplishments.

The NPI and Taxonomies of Personality

Does the NPI show links to major personality variables that are similar to the links found between narcissistic act performance and personality? To address this question, the NPI total score was correlated with the variables from the IAS, EPQ, and five-factor inventory, as shown in the last rows of Tables 6, 7, and 8. Overall, the pattern of correlations was similar: both the NPI and the narcissistic act composites correlated positively with IAS ambitious-dominant and arrogant-calculating, and negatively with IAS lazy-submissive, unassuming-ingenuous, and warm-agreeable. Both correlated positively with EPQ extraversion and five-factor surgency. The major difference between the two is that high scorers on the NPI tended to be low on EPQ neuroticism and high on five-factor emotional stability. In contrast, the sum of 60 narcissistic acts was positively correlated with neuroticism and *negatively* correlated with emotional stability, and the component act summaries were largely uncorrelated with these indices of adjustment. These results suggest that the NPI and narcissistic acts show similar personality correlates, differing primarily in that narcissism on the NPI is positively linked with personality measures reflecting adjustment, whereas the act reports of narcissism are not so linked.

DISCUSSION

Taken together, these results suggest that narcissism and its dispositional subcomponents may be coherently located within each of several

major taxonomies of normal personality functioning. They also support a growing body of literature that the personality disorders of the DSM-III-R may be understood in the context of basic dimensions of personality (e.g., Wiggins, Phillips, & Trapnell, 1989; Wiggins & Pincus, 1989).

In addition to locating the components of narcissism within these personality frameworks, however, these results also illuminate the nature of the major factors of personality. They show, for example, that it is part of being surgent to be exhibitionistic and self-aggrandizing; that part of disagreeableness is lacking empathy and acting in a self-centered fashion; that part of being unconscientious is exploiting others; and that part of being high on intellect and openness is to perform acts of grandiosity. Thus, these results take us one step closer to understanding the links between major taxonomies of personality and actions performed in everyday life.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

These empirical studies are limited in several ways. First, they deal with nonclinical populations and thus may not be generalizable to clinical populations that are seriously disordered. They focus instead with narcissistic acts in the everyday lives of persons with no known clinical problems. Perhaps clinicians observing the behavior of diagnosed narcissistic persons would identify acts that are more subtle or complex than those discovered in the present studies.

A second limitation is that not all features of the DSM-III-R and clinical descriptions of narcissism could be included in the present analysis. Oscillations between extremes of overvaluation and devaluation of others, yearnings for uniqueness, and precarious self-esteem, for example, would be difficult to capture with the present act frequency methods. Therefore, the present methods complement, but in no way supplant, more traditional assessment methodologies to assess the syndrome of narcissism. A third limitation is that these studies do not permit a differentiation between the narcissistic personality disorder and related personality disorders (e.g., borderline personality disorder, histrionic personality disorder) with which it shares dispositional features (Alder, 1981; Buss & Craik, 1986; Widiger & Frances, 1985; Widiger & Kelso, 1983). These limitations must be addressed by future studies that deal with clinical populations containing persons diagnosed in several of the Axis II personality disorders.

Given these limitations, several conclusions and future research directions merit note. First, these studies provide a foundation for preserving the links between diagnostic classifications and the psychopathology of everyday conduct. In particular, by identifying dispositions of narcissism and the acts subsumed by each of these dispositions, these studies document the classes of acts to which a diagnosis of narcissism is likely to correspond.

Second, the fact that the major constituents appeared among the most prototypical narcissistic acts lends support to the DSM-III-R description of the narcissistic personality disorder. The basis for this finding, however, remains unclear. Perhaps these constituents are part of lay conceptions because laypersons have observed over time the covariation of these attributes. Alternatively, these results could simply be part of a network of semantically similar dispositions that share features. Future research is needed to identify the basis of these lay conceptions, as well as the intriguing correspondence between them and the clinical distillation that has emerged in the form of the DSM-III-R description.

A third conclusion is that empirical support is found for the notion of a narcissistic syndrome that subsumes several distinct constituent dispositions (cf. Emmons, 1987; Raskin & Terry, 1988). The strong empirical covariation of these constituents, obtained through two data sources, points to the value of conceptualizing personality disorders at the syndrome level rather than solely at the level of their constituent elements.

Fourth, men and women differ in the acts through which narcissism is expressed. Men differed from women in their tendency to express narcissism through a lack of empathy (e.g., throwing stones at animals; playing stereo loudly while others were reading). Women differed from men in their tendency to express narcissism through extreme concern with physical appearance (e.g., focus on clothing, accessories, sexiness, appearance, makeup, public reactions to appearance). Because current theoretical formulations do not include accounts of sex-differentiated manifestations of narcissism, these results point to an important avenue of needed theoretical development.

Fifth, narcissistic act trends were located within each of three major taxonomic systems of normal personality functioning. Narcissistic act trends in general, and exhibitionism, self-aggrandizement, and grandiosity in particular, are most closely linked with dominance, surgency, and extraversion—especially the less agreeable or less socially desirable manifestations of these dispositions. The act trends of self-

centeredness, entitlement, exploitativeness, and lack of empathy are located in the low agreeable and low conscientious factor space in the five-factor model. Taken together, these results suggest that narcissistic act performance represents a dominant and even aggressive display of self-centered impulses with little concern for the negative consequences that such displays might have on others. These results also suggest that the narcissistic personality syndrome can be coherently located as a particular pattern within the factor space of the major existing taxonomies of personality. Finally, the coherent connections between each major personality factor and the seven narcissistic dispositions illuminates the nature of each of these factors, and in so doing illuminates the concomitants of these factors for everyday action.

This research must be regarded as just the start of an exploration of the links between diagnostic classifications and everyday conduct. As a general conceptual framework and set of methods, it is not tied to any particular diagnostic scheme such as the DSM-III-R or psychoanalytic categories. The utility of this conceptualization and methodology with the narcissistic personality disorder, however, lends optimism to the premise that diagnostic frameworks and clinical assessment can be directly linked to manifestations of psychopathology in everyday life.

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