

Extended essay cover

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The extended essay I am submitting is my own work (apart from guidance allowed by the International Baccalaureate).										
I have acknowledged each use of the words, graphics or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.										
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Name of supervisor (CAPITAL letters)

Comments

Please comment, as appropriate, on the candidate's performance, the context in which the candidate undertook he research for the extended essay, any difficulties encountered and how these were overcome (see page 13 of the extended essay guide). The concluding interview (viva voce) may provide useful information. These comments can help the examiner award a level for criterion K (holistic judgment). Do not comment on any adverse personal circumstances that may have affected the candidate. If the amount of time spent with the candidate was zero, you must explain this, in particular how it was then possible to authenticate the essay as the candidate's own work. You may attach an additional sheet if there is insufficient space here.

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have read the final version of the extended essay that will be submitted to the examiner.

To the best of my knowledge, the extended essay is the authentic work of the candidate.

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Date: 1/7/0/

Student Name:

Subject: Psychology

Candidate Number:

Supervisor:

Exam Session: May 2009

Comments:

has presented a unique psychoanalytical and pathological question, investigating the etiology and prevalence of narcissistic personality disorder (NPD). While her Extended Essay is verbose in terms of a scientific research paper, the essay is also well organized, properly researched and cited, and analytically savvy. The most interesting aspect of her research consisted of the contradiction presented by the beneficial characteristics of NPD from the evolutionary perspective compared to the detrimental dysfunctional characteristics of the disorder. is grateful for the Extended Essay experience, since it has allowed her to established efficient time management skills and developed proper research abilities that she will be able to utilize at the collegiate level. In conclusion, has a sufficient product and is confident she will not receive a mark lower then Excellent.

IB Psychology

Narcissistic Personality Disorder: Nature Overpowered by Nurture Effect Psychology Extended Essav Session: May 2009 Word Count: 3,982

Abstract

This research paper sought to investigate the theoretical differences among the biological and sociological factors that trigger the Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). As supported by

research obtained from psychoanalysts and research studies, both biological and sociological

factors (defined in the realm of psychology as the nature vs. nurture effect) are co-dependent of

each other when it comes to the development of NPD. Yet, the pioneers in the study of

narcissism such as Freud, among others, attribute the "innate" state of narcissism (as they

summon up) to evolve into NPD primarily due to nurture influences. Hypothetical causes and

results retrieved from longitudinal correlation studies proved that NPD was developed after

traumatic events occurred to the participants in which exorbitant lack of care by loved ones

predominated. The question then becomes, to what extent do nurture influences overpower and ZG-

undermine genetic vulnerability to the NPD pathology and inheritance of personality? These

findings support the argument exerted in this research paper in which nurture or sociological

factors involving the environment of the individual overshadow any genetic or nature influence

that prompt NPD.

Word Count: 179

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Narcissistic Personality Disorder: Nature Overpowered by Nurture Effect

Narcissism, defined as excessive self-love and self-admiration based on one's own ego, was first used in relation to human thought and behavior by Sigmund Freud on his 1914 essay, "On Narcissism" (Freud, 1914). This egocentric human behavior has traces dating back to the Greco-Roman society through mythology. Psychoanalysts have been intrigued by ages with the Greco-Roman society for being able to capture human intrapsychic life, evolution, and conflicts all recompiled in the art and symbol of myths (Javanbakht, 2006). The prelude to all Freudian theories on narcissism and to any clinical research leading to the classification of any pathology in relation to narcissism, lays on the myth of Narcissus. Narcissus was a Greek young man renowned for his beauty and also the son of a river god and a nymph (Nadelson, 2000). A nymph Echo falls in love with Narcissus, but he rejects her love and as consequence the gods grew angry with him. They caused him to fall in love with his own reflection in the waters of a river (Nadelson, 2000). As he gazed at his captivating but inaccessible image, Narcissus fell into the water and died (Javanbakht, 2006). While the Freudian Theory of Narcissism claims that selflove might be a component in the human psyche, Narcissus tragic end gives light to the extreme and dysfunctional form of narcissism/Heinz Kohut labels pathology through the Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). NPD is a personality disorder that drives the person with NPD to have an inflated sense of their own importance and a deep need for admiration to one's self (Narcissistic Personality Disorder, 2007). The etiology of NPD is unknown and pinpointing the 7 cause to one, diminishes its complexity. There might be a genetic vulnerability to developing NPD as suggested by Livesley et al., paper "Genetic and environmental contributions to dimensions of personality disorder" (1993), whereas there is evidence that links the cause of NPD

to a dysfunctional childhood correlated to environmental components that shape a personality, as argued by German psychiatrist Karen Horney.

According to Javanbakht and many of the most renowned psychoanalysts as Horney, Kohut, and Kernberg all pioneers towards the classification of NPD, this disorder and the awe of narcissism does not lay in a shallow observance of an individual's over-exorbitance to love one's self; but rather in the factors that trigger this behavior in the psyche thus leading to debatable theories on the acquisition of NPD and the inheritability of personalities based on the nature vs. nurture effect. The myth of Narcissus was critical to psychoanalysts studying the psychosocial development theory because it proved that there is consistency in humans' behavior. This consistency alluded to a pattern that justifies the presence of certain characteristics in humans; suggesting they must be innate characteristics. As the brain matures so will these innate characteristics, sprouting slowly until each stage is grown out of through the psychosocial development.

Defending a uniform behavioral pattern, Freud incorporates the biological perspective combining both physiological and psychological factors towards the projection of behavior, in his 1914 essay "On Narcissism: An Introduction". This natural inclination of self-love is regarded by Freud as primary narcissism in the Freudian Theory of Narcissism. More specifically, Freud defined primary narcissism as the complimentary sexual drive to the ego, thus ego-libido, rather than to others, object-libido. While Freud does incorporate biological components through a universal age of ego and narcissistic acquisition, the means on which an individual's ego and narcissistic value is acquired is attributed to external stimuli; thus validating social psychology ideals. Freud argued that the ego universally develops during infancy, as an individual's environment, influenced primarily by parental figures, intrudes in him primary

narcissism. Through observation the individual knows the standards set-up in his surroundings and can now work to form the ideal ego, a perfect image of what the ego should aspire to be driven by instincts to survive in regards to the environment and prompted by the object-libido, love to others and love wanted from others.

Yet, Freud draws attention to the disruption in his universal arousal stage of ego development and narcissistic formation, through what he calls secondary narcissism. According to Freud, the normal build-up of narcissism on the child occurs as the child constantly gives self-love to people and objects, the first of which is the mother because the exchange of self-love will be compensated by affection and caring returned to the child (Freud, 1914). In other words the object-libido compliments and replenishes the ego libido. However, a disruption in this symbiotic relationship between the exchanges of object-libido to replenish the ego-libido triggers the pathological condition as the child is only giving self-love expecting his ego-libido to be boosted when in reality there is only the lack of. The extreme form of the pathological condition of narcissim, according to Freud is when the libido withdraws completely from objects that are not the self (Pines, 1982); a complete indulgence in the individual's ego-libido and in the case of NPD the search to fuel the ego-libido with no exchange through the object-libido.

A personality disorder is the term applied to a mental illness in which the course of thinking, perceiving situations and relating to others are dysfunctional. Having a personality disorder means you have a potentially self-destructive pattern of thinking. Kohut believed that after NPD was triggered by a traumatic event in relation to the disillusionment that resulted from the idealization of the parent, then NPD became a component in the development of resilience.

Thus, by creating a protective shield hidden by an over-indulgence on the self, there is a self-destructive pattern of thinking as the actual ego-libido is weak and vulnerable to external stimuli.

The lack of empathy is a characteristic of NPD, and sufferers find it difficult to understand others' and their own emotional states. This makes maintaining close or intimate relationships harder (Bjorklund, 2000). Depending on the severity, some might find it difficult to perceive or admit this; as after all the level of grandiosity and arrogance vary with the person's value system and are subjective to each NPD case. Hallmark characteristics by NPD patients include:

- Rationalization a justification for the self-centered behavior,
- Overreactive response to criticism,
- Exaggeration to one's own importance,
- Inventing unrealistic events to fuel exaltation to one's self,
- Seeking constant attention and positive reinforcement,
- Explosive nature,
- Arrogant and proud behavior,
- Using denial as medium to weaken inadequacies, reverse psychology; and
- Being easily jealous.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), defines NPD as "a pervasive pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration, and a lack of empathy."(DSM, 1994) Within personality disorders, NPD falls under cluster B on the DSM-IV criteria, which are personality disorders characterized by dramatic, overly emotional behavior. The epidemiology of NPD is estimated at 1% in the general population and in the clinical population between the range of 2% to 16%. In order to be clinically diagnosed with NPD, at least five of the following must be met (DSM, 1994): ✓

- Believes that he or she is special and unique
- Having a grandiose sense of self-importance

- Requires excessive admiration
- Worries about fantasies of infinite power, success, or beauty
- Believes in a sense of privilege
- Is interpersonally abusive
- Lacks empathy
- Is envious of others, or contradictory believes others are envious of him
- Displays arrogant or conceited behavior

NPD is an uncommon personality disorder affecting less than one percent in the United States. It affects more men than women. NPD usual age of onset is during early adulthood. Although some adolescents may seem to have traits of narcissism, yet this is normal and regarded as healthy narcissism. Healthy narcissism exists in all individuals. Freud says that healthy narcissism is the original state from which the love object is developed and an essential part in normal development. The feeling of greatness and satisfaction come as product of healthy narcissism in which structural truthfulness of the self is achieved (Mayo Clinic, 2008).

Personality is the combination of thoughts, emotions and behaviors that makes an individual, individual. It is the medium to view, understand and relate to the outside world or external stimuli, as well as introspectively. Although there are several hypothetical causes to NPD such as: an oversensitive temper at birth, overindulgence and overvaluation by parents, excessive admiration that is never balanced with constructive criticism, and severe emotional childhood abuse; there are only two main strong causes that have been correlated to NPD and these are inherited tendencies and the environment. Inherited tendencies or a person's genetics, embodies the aspects of personality passed on my parents, and it is the nature aspect of the nature vs. nurture debate. The environment is the surroundings and individual grows up in, events that

took place, and personal relationships with family members and other social interactions. For the most part its influence on triggering NPD focuses on the type of parenting such as abusive or loving; this is the nurture part of the nature vs. nurture debate. This supports Kohut's theory that an ideal parent figure is essential in the development of narcissism or the self-esteem development of an individual. If any traumatic event occurs at this stage then damage occurs in this psyche characteristic, and thus exerts influence to the degree that narcissism becomes and outgrown characteristic and permanent in the ego.

The findings published by Livesley et. al (1993), concluded that NPD had a 64% heritability rate and thus was a common inherited trait when compared to the other personality disorders being assessed through a standardized test, the Dimensional Assessment of Personality Pathology. The subjects from the sample population were 175 volunteer twin pairs from the general population, of which 90 were identical twins and 85 fraternal. Yet, the validity of this study is undermined when the there is no consistency in the subjects tested using both fraternal and identical twins; and thus this study fails in delivering the inheritance probability accurately with respect to pathological personality disorders. In addition, the journal article published does not mention if the subjects had any personality disorder or if their parents had any personality disorder. As well, a standardized test might fail to control all external variables and thus increase the margin of error. Thus, this study cannot assert validity to the biological component in the inheritance of personality or personality disorders; thus it is not enough to support the nature component of the nature vs. nurture debate.

Contrary to the Freudian Narcissism Theory, Karen Horney a German psychiatrist began to develop her own theory of psychoanalysis in the late 1930s. Although she acknowledged Freud's work and respected him considering him the founder of psychoanalysis, she was very

tentative and critical of his work arguing that opposed to unconscious drives in the psyche, personality is shaped mainly by social, cultural and environmental factors. Horney felt Freud was wrong to assume the relationships, attitudes and feelings common in his culture, thus local and not generalized, were driven by biological factors and applied universally. Thus, Freud and Horney embody a nature vs. nurture conflict in which Horney did not posit or address a primary narcissism but saw the narcissistic personality as the product of a certain kind of early environment acting on a certain type of temperament (Paris, 1994). For her, narcissistic needs and tendencies are not inherent in human nature but rather develop as the role of praise is furthred in the life of a child; positive reinforcement. Although Freud argues that narcissism is high correlated to biological or nature stimulus, Horney argues that environmental facture thus nurture exert greater influence on narcissism which I believe is true. Environmental factors thus nurture exert greater influence in NPD than do biological factors, as environmental factors will inhibit individual's from growing out their narcissistic outlook and thus any trauma during Freud's argued "critical periods" will those lead to an intensification in the present characteristics to the point of achieving NPD and thus Horney does corroborate Freud's theory.

Supporting the nature stimulus of NPD, and furthering Freud's perspective, is Heinz Kohut a Viennese physician and psychiatrist. Best known for his development of Self Psychology, that introduces a psychoanalytic theory within the psychodynamic field, he said that a child will tend to fantasize about having grandiose self and ideal parents (Kohut, 1966). Kohut extended his idea by theorizing that as we mature, grandiosity gives way to self-esteem, and the idealization of the parent become the framework for core values. But, as Freud asserted, when trauma disrupts this process the most primitive and narcissistic version of the self remains unchanged. Kohut was the one to call this/condition NPD (Kohut, 1966). Likewise to Freud,

Kohut claims that there is a relationship and connection between the ego's formation and external stimulus that is natural in human beings and that one is suppose to grow out of, yet individuals that don't may develop NPD. Yet, Kohut is more specific in noting the external stimulus as a child's grandiose fantasy of the ideal parents. In this process the parents exert the greater stimulus on the child's self-esteem rather than in itself, as Freud suggested, because the parent serves and functions as a protective shield to the child. Yet, by stating this both Kohut and Freud indirectly to admit that although narcissism can be a natural characteristics we are all born with and present in the psyche, there must be a stimulus that according to its degree of severity, will harm the individual by inhibiting to grow out of or overcome narcissism. Such stimulus may be highly affected and altered by nurture components that thus give the nurture perspective a higher degree of spur towards the potential of developing NPD. Kohut supports nurture's influence by acknowledging narcissism being part of a stage in normal development, in which caregivers provide a strong and protective presence for the child to identify with and reinforce his growing sense by seeking a figure to mirror his good qualities. If the caregiver fails to provide this adequately, the individual's self-concept is flawed (Kohut, 1966).

In accordance to Kohut's point of view, Otto Kernberg a psychoanalyst believes that narcissism refers to the role of self in the regulation of self-esteem. He regarded normal, infantile Narcissism to be dependent on the affirmation of others and the acquisition of desirable and appealing objects, which should later develop into a healthy and mature self-esteem (Consollini, 1999). Once more, referring to the idea of children learning empirically, through observations, Kernberg emphasizes that a healthy narcissism is only such when dependent upon an integrated sense of self, that incorporates images of the internalized affirmation of those close to us and such is regulated by the super ego and ego ideal, internal mental structures that assure and

individual's value of its own worth and respect. Kernberg claims that when infantile narcissism fails to develop in a healthy adult form, it becomes pathological (Siniscalco, 2001). Although the overall layout of Kohut's idea and Kernberg match, they differ in that Otto Kernberg states that there are three types of narcissism; normal adult narcissism, normal infantile narcissism, and pathological narcissism. Pathological narcissism is further divided into three types: regression to the regulation of the infantile self-esteem, narcissistic choice of object, narcissistic personality disorder, with narcissistic personality disorder being the most severe of all. Although both focused on narcissistic, borderline, and psychotic patients, the focus and content of their theory and treatment has been considerably differentiated. Their major diversities emerged in response to their conceptualizations regarding the relationship between Narcissistic and Borderline personalities, normal vs. pathological narcissism, their ideas about narcissistic idealization and the grandiose self, as well as the psychoanalytic technique and the Narcissistic transference (Consolini, 1999). In synthesis, all these psychoanalysts, whether they directly identify the fuel of narcissism as biological or social stimuli, they do seem to agree that any trauma at the time period where he or she will have a transition into maturing the degree of narcissism, will result in forms of damage to the individual's ego and may develop into forms of narcissistic disorders.

There are various types of narcissism, all of which Freud, Horney, Kohut, and Kernberg do not limit their theories to. Yet, through Horney's and the support of certain assets other? psychoanalysts point out, NPD will be proven to be essentially stimulated by social factors that surround an individual to drag it into to the point of forming a pathology, as Kernberg points out. Although it is true that narcissism is a characteristic in the human psyche present as socializing is a natural feature in humans, such can be affected to various degrees upon the surroundings of the individual influencing the individual's extent of social interaction from extrovert to introvert.

Likewise, narcissism is driven and stimulated by biological aspects which Freud points stating that it "is the libidinal compliment to the egoism of the instinct of self-preservation" or simply the go not matured in individuals, the raw form or ego in other words; but such is greatly affected by nurture aspects more than nature, and thus NPD is affected more by the overexposures or lack of exposure to certain interactions as child's, thus proving correct the theory that the environment in which one interacts with affects the individual's interaction and development.

As clinical experiences have revealed in the research of NPD, pathological narcissism occurs in a spectrum of severity. As Dr. Elan Golomb asserts in her study, NPD results from a person's belief that he or she is flawed in a way that makes the person fundamentally unacceptable to others. This belief is withheld below the individuals conscious awareness, thus in its unconscious driving the individual to deny such response if questioned. From Golomb's study, it was perceived in the participants that in order to protect themselves against the intolerably painful rejection and isolation they imagine would occur if others became aware of their supposed defective nature, then such people would try to manipulate others' view of them and their behavior to them. In general psychologists believe that pathological narcissism results from impairment in the quality of the person's relationship with their primary caregivers, supporting the nurture perspective in psychology further nore) than Karen Horney extends her argument. Usually NPD parents were unable to form a healthy, empathic attachment to (them)? Because of this, the child perceives himself as unimportant and unconnected to others, and they have this approach of finding themselves with faulty personalities making them unvalued and unwanted.

According to Dr. Rappoport, NPD patients as parents may demand certain behavior from their children because they see the children as extensions of themselves, and feel the need for the children to represent them in the world in ways that meet the parents' emotional needs. In his article "Co-Narcissism: How we adapt to narcissistic parents:, he claims the example of "X" narcissistic father. This father was a lawyer, and his son who has always been treated with favoritism, demands his son to enter the legal profession. When the son chose another career, the father reacted in rejecting him (Rappoport, 2005). There is no importance or special relationship with the example portraying males, since studies have not conclusively proven any ethic, social, cultural, economic, genetic, or professional predilection to NPD. Yet, evidence for heritability greater to other personality disorders has been reported. Some narcissistic traits are common and a normal developmental phase. When these traits are compounded by a failure of the interpersonal environment and continue into adulthood they may intensify to the point where NPD is diagnosed.

It has been suggested by many psychologists that NPD's severity may be increased by the onset of aging and the physical, mental, and occupational restrictions it imposes (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). To avoid such situations, narcissistic people withdraw socially and may pretend modesty or humility. There is a broad continuum of pathologically narcissistic personalities, styles, and reactions; from the very mild, reactive and transient, to the severe and inflexible NPD. Though individuals with NPD are often ambitious and capable, the inability they present to tolerate setbacks, disagreements or criticism, along with lack of empathy, make it difficult for such individuals to work cooperatively with others or to maintain long-term professional achievements (Golomb, 1992). With NPD, the person's perceived fantastic grandiosity, often coupled with a hypomanic mood, is typically not commensurate with his or her

real accomplishments. Hypomanic mood is a feature of NPD, characterized by persistent and pervasive elated or irritable mood and thoughts and behaviors that are consistent with such as mood state. It is distinguished from obsession or mania by the absence of psychotic symptoms and by its lower degree of impact functioning. Thus, the exploitation, sense of entitlement, lack of empathy, disregard for others, and constant need for attention inherent in NPD, adversely affects interpersonal relationships. Individuals with NPD frequently select as mates, and engender in their children, "co-narcissism" meaning a co-dependent personality style that organize themselves around the needs of others. They feel responsible for others, accept blame readily, are eager to please, defer to others' opinions, and fear being considered selfish if they act assertively (Rappoport, 2005).

The nature vs. nurture argument, supported under the field of social psychology, will be interpreted differently from previously mentioned psychoanalysts. When social psychology implements scientific references into its field, it refers to the empirical method approach of investigation. Thoughts, feelings and behaviors are psychological variables that are measurable in a human being through scientific bases. The nature versus nurture characteristics, study the relative importance of an individual's innate and biological qualities, thus the nature perspective as with nativism, philosophical empiricism, innatism; opposed to personal experiences and one's environment, or the nurture perspective (Allport, 1985). In this case nurture is the primary influence that causes differences in the physical state and in the behavioral interactions an NPD subject sustains, as claimed by Karen Horney. This argument introduces the theory of a "tabula rasa" or blank state, which was considered to be a division of developmental influences, but since both types of factors are known to play such interacting roles in development, many modern psychologists consider the question and argument to be naïve, representing an "joutdated"

state of knowledge" (Ridley, 2003). In very few cases are traits due almost entirely to nature, or almost entirely to nurture. There are diseases there is actual higher leniency for the causes to be almost entirely nature as with Huntington's diseases being 99.9% genetic. Yet traits, as one's native language, are entirely environmentally determined. Research by linguists has proved that any child, as long as the child is capable of learning any language at all, can learn any human language with equal facility.

As in all psychological traits though, there is a transitional mix of nature and nurture, and opinions about the relative importance of each will often vary widely. Nature in the area of linguistics brings in factors as Wernike's and Broca's area, and the left cerebral hemisphere. Concrete behavioral traits that patently depend on content provided by the home or culture, which language one speaks, which religions one practices, which political party one supports, are not heritable at all; but rather are drawn from our own perceptions or instilled in us through the indirect or direct influence of others. But traits that reflect the underlying talents and temperaments, for example: how proficient with language a person is, how religious, how liberal or conservative, are partially heritable (Pinker, 2004). Just like NPD and the state of narcissism in general, there is not one specific trigger whether biological or social, whether nature or nurture, that is responsible for not growing out of this innate characteristic (that is primarily biological during the normal childhood stage). Yet, as Karen Horney and Heinz Kohut claim and as supported by my essay, the primary component that leads to NPD, are high levels of nurture influences in the psyche of the individual.

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This complex essay makes soveral nicioire possits to essay is drown from a commendable menter of relivant sources and in general a sound argument is froduced. Occasionally the sentence construction is flawed and is made difficult for the reader to follow.

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Assessment form (for examiner use only)

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