

NARCISSISM AND BRAND NAME CONSUMERISM

Constantine Sedikides, Sylwia Cisek, and Claire M. Hart

Not on this skirt. It's Armani!

—A (narcissistic, presumably) woman brushing a cat from her hair

The empirical portrait of everyday narcissists, albeit still under construction, is well advanced. Narcissists are self-centered, self-aggrandizing, show-offs, and prone to illusions of superiority and specialness (Campbell & Foster, 2007; Morf, Horvath, & Torchetti, 2011). The interpersonal orientation of narcissists is, of course, important to study, but so is their material orientation. Indeed, a person's identity may reside in material possessions more than it resides in others (e.g., friends, relatives; Ellis, 1985; McCarthy, 1984). In this chapter, we examine how narcissism is manifested in consumer behavior.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Consumer behavior is prevalent, affects many facets of everyday life, and is crucial to one's sense of self (Benson, 2000; Dittmar, 1991; Dittmar & Drury, 2000; Fromm, 1976; Kasser & Ryan, 1993). William James (1890) pioneered the idea that possessions are part of the self-concept: "A man's Self is the sum total of all that he CAN call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, . . . his lands, and yacht and bank-account" (p. 291). Similarly, Sartre (1943/1958) stated that, "The totality of my possessions reflects the totality of my being. I am what I have" (p. 591). Various researchers have also opined or demonstrated that people are what they possess (Abelson, 1986; Belk, 1988), possessions are incorporated into the self-concept (Dixon & Street, 1975; Sirgy, 1982), the self is invested in material objects (Beaglehole, 1932; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981), and consumption is used for self-expression purposes (Solomon, 1983; Veblen, 1899).

Individuals are motivated to protect, maintain, or enhance the positivity of their self-concept (Alicke & Sedikides, 2009; Sedikides & Gregg, 2008). Consumption serves, in part, to increase self-positivity; it serves to make people feel good about themselves. Consumer choices align with self-beliefs, as individuals make purchases that allow them to see themselves as competent, moral, and lovable (Dunning, 2007). This is especially true in cultures that value economic accomplishments (Kasser & Ryan, 1993). In such cultures, the self is often enhanced via conspicuous consumption, including the purchase of high-prestige products or "brand names" (Ryan, 1993; Zhang & Schrum, 2009). We submit that there is a particular type of self that is likely to be enhanced through conspicuous consumption, and this is the narcissistic self.

Preparation of this chapter was supported by the Leverhulme Trust grant F/00 180/AM.

NARCISSISTIC SELF-ENHANCEMENT

Narcissists are addicted to self-esteem (Baumeister & Vohs, 2001) and are hypermotivated to self-enhance (Sedikides & Gregg, 2001). They are unable to contain their egocentrism (Vazire & Funder, 2006), have a strong need to validate themselves in the presence of others (Wallace & Baumeister, 2002), are callous toward others (Campbell & Buffardi, 2008), persist with shameless self-promotion despite its long-term personal and occupational costs (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001), and are status-driven and power-driven (Bradlee & Emmons, 1992; Horton & Sedikides, 2009; Sedikides, Campbell, Reeder, Elliot, & Gregg, 2002).

The above literature suggests that narcissists need to feel, not just good, but *great* about themselves. Narcissists may satisfy this need through materialism or conspicuous consumption. We address these issues next.

NARCISSISTIC MATERIALISM

To begin with, narcissists may view money (an indicator of status and power; Belk, 1985) as a tool for sustaining their grandiose self-image, flaunting their competence, and influencing others' opinions of them. Narcissists may use the display of material possessions as an impression management strategy. After all, affluent (relative to nonaffluent) individuals are judged as capable (e.g., intelligent, self-disciplined) and sophisticated (e.g., cultured, successful; Christopher & Schlenker, 2000). These are agentic attributes that are highly valued by narcissists (Campbell, Radich, & Sedikides, 2002). Affluent individuals are also judged as less considerate (e.g., less kind, likable, or honest; Christopher & Schlenker, 2000), but these are communal attributes that narcissists do not value (Campbell et al., 2002). In addition, thoughts of money activate a sense of self-sufficiency, which decreases prosocial orientations such as helping (Vohs, Mead, & Goode, 2006). Moreover, individuals preoccupied with money tend to be egocentric (Belk, 1985) and often feel alienated and disconnected from others (Kasser, 2002). Self-sufficiency, reduced willingness to help, egocentricity, and poor interpersonal relationships are typical narcissistic qualities.

More to the point, there is direct evidence that narcissism is linked to materialism (Sedikides, Gregg, Cisek, & Hart, 2007). Narcissism correlates positively with desire for material possessions (P. Cohen & Cohen, 1996) and compulsive buying (Rose, 2007). Narcissism also correlates positively with economic aspirations (Roberts & Robins, 2000), and wealth or fame aspirations (Kasser & Ryan, 1996).

There is some evidence in the literature that materialistic individuals are particularly likely to purchase high-prestige products, for appearance and status concerns (Richins, 1994). Many individuals who buy fast, expensive cars, for example, partly buy into an image: They buy a car to improve their self-image (Kressman, Sirgy, Herman, Huber, & Lee, 2006). If narcissists are prone to materialism, are they also prone to choice or acquisition of such products for image-improvement purposes? We next turn to the issue of conspicuous consumption.

NARCISSISTIC PREFERENCE FOR BRAND NAMES

We propose that narcissists express their materialism through a distinct consumer behavior pattern: preference for brand names. In particular, narcissists (relative to non-narcissists) manifest a preference for symbolic products, or a disdain for utilitarian products. Symbolic products are flashy, ostentatious, and expensive (e.g., designer clothes, expensive jewelry, top-range cars, rare antiques), whereas utilitarian products are common, practical, and affordable. Narcissists, we believe, will opt for symbolic products as a way of proving that they are up-to-date, on the ball, and know what's "in." They want to show that they are fashionistas, always aware of the latest label.

We conducted a preliminary study to test the idea that narcissists, relative to non-narcissists, prefer symbolic products (or disfavor utilitarian products). Participants completed two booklets. The first booklet contained the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988). The second booklet contained a consumer decision-making paradigm, in which participants were presented with four types of products: mobile phones, MP3 players, hair conditioners, and sunglasses. Each booklet page displayed two pictorial and descriptive examples of each product. One example represented a symbolic choice, that is, superior attractiveness but inferior practicality. The other example represented a utilitarian choice, that is, superior practicality but inferior attractiveness. Participants were instructed to "look at the pictures and read the descriptions carefully" and then "choose which product you would most likely buy."

We computed an overall symbolic product score by summing the number of symbolic choices that participants made (range = 0–4). We entered the symbolic choice score in a regression analysis with narcissism as the predictor. Narcissism significantly and positively predicted the number of symbolic products chosen. Furthermore, narcissism explained a significant proportion of variance in the number of symbolic choices made. In all, this study suggested that narcissists, relative to non-narcissists, favor symbolic products (or disfavor utilitarian products).

Vazire, Naumann, Rentfrow, and Gosling (2008) obtained converging results. Narcissists were more likely than non-narcissists to have a neat and organized appearance that seemed to require a lot of preparation, and to wear expensive and stylish clothes. Female narcissists were more likely (than female non-narcissists) to wear makeup, have plucked eyebrows, and show cleavage. Male narcissists (compared to male non-narcissists) were less likely to wear glasses.

In a recent meta-analysis, Holtzman and Strube (2010) found that narcissists not only see themselves as particularly attractive, but they are also rated by observers as particularly attractive. "Given that narcissists are more attractive than average," the authors ask, "the new question is why?" The research findings that we reviewed in this section provide a preliminary answer to the "why" question. Narcissists are perceived as particularly attractive because of their brand name consumerism. That is, narcissists are attractive "because they take better care of themselves" (Holtzman & Strube, 2010, p. 136; see also Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001).

NEED FOR ADDITIONAL EMPIRICAL SUPPORT FOR NARCISSISTIC BRAND-NAME PREFERENCES

The findings of our preliminary study will need to be replicated with a consumer paradigm that uses different (and more) symbolic and utilitarian products. In addition, future research would do well to look into mechanisms underlying narcissistic preferences for symbolic products. For example, do narcissists (relative to non-narcissists) look at symbolic products for longer (as assessed by eye-tracking)? Do narcissists report that they read and analyze more carefully information regarding symbolic products? Do they pay more attention to pictorial than descriptive information pertaining to symbolic products?

More importantly, what are the proximal mediators of narcissistic preferences for symbolic products? One possibility is the hedonic value of such products. Vigneron and Johnson (1999) claimed that the distinction between a symbolic and utilitarian product lies in the aesthetic appeal of the product—that is, in the product's perceived hedonic value. Narcissists are approach-oriented: they report having goals that promote positive outcomes such as having fun (Foster & Trimm, 2008) or maximizing profits (Foster, Misra, & Reidy, 2009). Narcissists are also fun-seeking (Miller et al., 2009). Narcissists (relative to non-narcissists) may imagine the purchasing of symbolic products to be more hedonic. That is, they may find it more pleasurable to think about owning such a product and the benefits this might bring (J. O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2002). It follows that the hedonic value of consumerism will mediate the

association between narcissism and preference for symbolic products. That is, narcissists will buy symbolic products due, in part, to the high hedonic value of this type of consumerism.

Another possible mediator of narcissistic preferences for symbolic products is impulsivity (Zhang & Schrum, 2009). Impulse-buying is positively linked to perceived social status of buying and to materialism (Yurchisin & Johnson, 2004). Narcissism and impulsivity are correlated (Vazire & Funder, 2006), although this relation is rather complicated and may be due in part to the narcissistic propensity for excitement or novelty-seeking (Miller et al., 2009). Regardless, it follows that impulsivity (or excitement/novelty-seeking) will mediate the relation between narcissism and preference for symbolic products. That is, narcissists will purchase symbolic products due, in part, to their high impulsivity.

WHY DO NARCISSISTS PREFER BRAND NAMES? DISTAL ETIOLOGY

We review two distal explanations as to why narcissists are attracted to brand name products. One states that this consumption pattern further glorifies narcissistic disposition. The other explanation states that a brand name consumption style compensates for inner fragility. Although the two explanations are equally potent, we devote more room to the second one, as it requires more detailed exposition.

Narcissistic Glorification

This explanation is straightforward and applies to everyday narcissism, as assessed by the NPI. Narcissists are grandiose, extraverted, exhibitionistic, entitled, and antagonistic toward others (Miller & Campbell, 2008; Morf et al., 2011; Sedikides et al., 2002). They strive to boost their self-regard by giving off impressions of themselves as successful, special, and superior. The preference, pursuit, and acquisition of brand names simply allow everyday narcissists to express themselves with a bang. Brand names provide the platform through which narcissists shine, announcing their uniqueness, haughtiness, and dominance to the world. Brand names are just aids in the narcissistic pursuit of public affirmation and glory.

Inner Fragility

A second explanation links narcissistic brand name preferences with inner fragility. Explicit measures are congruent with this idea. Narcissists' affective states are more unstable than those of non-narcissists, both in everyday life (Emmons, 1987; Rhodewalt, Madrian, & Cheney, 1998) and in response to experimental manipulations (Bogart, Benotsch, & Pavlovic, 2004). Also, narcissists' state self-esteem is more amenable to fluctuation as a function of negative life events (Zeigler-Hill, Myers, & Clark, 2010; Zuckerman & O'Loughlin, 2009). Moreover, the positivity of narcissists' self-presentations increases as the likelihood of detection of their liabilities increases (Morf, Davidov, & Ansara, 2010). Finally, narcissists aggress without clear provocation (Reidy, Zeichner, Foster, & Martinez, 2008), and their aggression is activated by worthlessness: Narcissistic (compared to non-narcissistic) men respond faster to aggressive target stimuli after having been exposed to a worthlessness-related subliminal prime (Morf, Horvath, & Zimmermann, 2010).

Implicit measures are also relevant to the issue of narcissistic ego fragility. Some studies have showed that narcissists (relative to non-narcissists) have lower implicit self-esteem or higher ego fragility (Boldero et al., 2007; Gregg & Sedikides, 2010; Jordan, Spencer, Zanna, Hoshino-Browne, & Correll, 2003; Rosenthal, 2005; Zeigler-Hill, 2006). Other studies, however, have not replicated this pattern (Bosson & Prewitt-Freilino, 2007; Campbell, Bosson, Goheen, Lakey, & Kernis, 2007).

Although this research topic is complex and in need for further empirical clarification (Bushman et al., 2008; Zeigler-Hill & Jordan, Chapter 9, this volume; Zeigler-Hill & Myers, 2008), it is our belief that the weight of the evidence appears to be in favor of narcissistic inner fragility. Note that the research we reviewed in this section also tests everyday (NPI) narcissists.

Compensatory tactics. Inner fragility (or insecurity or self-doubt) and materialism are related. Tuan (1980) had an insight: "Our fragile sense of self needs support, and this we get by having and possessing things because, to a large degree, we are what we have and possess" (p. 472). This insight has largely been supported by evidence. Individuals who focus on their sadness (arguably, an index of insecurity) are willing to spend relatively high amounts of money on product consumption (Cryder, Lerner, Cross, & Dahl, 2008). Insecurity, as reported in dreams (T. Kasser & Kasser, 2001) or as a result of death cognitions (Kasser & Sheldon, 2000), is associated with materialism. In their research on self-completion theory, Wicklund and Gollwitzer (1982) showed that, when one experiences insecurity, the addition of objects to one's collection is compensatory in that it restores a sense of worth. Ger and Belk (1996) found that insecure individuals (i.e., those doubting their self-worth) displayed high levels of materialism. Schmeide and Dugal (1995), however, did not replicate this pattern. Braun and Wicklund (1989) examined domain-specific insecurity and materialism. They demonstrated that individuals expressing inadequacy in a certain domain were particularly likely to own materialistic displays that reinforced the domain-specific identity. For example, committed but novice tennis players who felt inadequate about their skills were more likely to wear branded clothing compared to expert tennis players who presumably were more confident about their skills.

More direct evidence for a link between insecurity and materialism was reported by Chang and Arkin (2002). In Study 1, participants completed a measure of self-doubt (e.g., "More often than not, I feel unsure of my abilities," "I often wish that I felt more certain of my strengths and weaknesses," "Sometimes I feel that I don't know why I have succeeded at something") and a measure of materialism (e.g., "Buying things gives me a lot of pleasure," "I'd be happier if I could afford to buy more things," "The things I own say a lot about how well I'm doing in life"). Self-doubt predicted materialism. In Study 2, participants memorized either a set of words that conveyed self-doubt (e.g., "insecure," "uncertain," "doubtful") or a set of words unrelated to self-doubt (e.g., "unique," "double," "inside"). Subsequently, participants completed a scale of state materialism. Participants primed with self-doubt words expressed higher levels of materialism compared to control participants.

In short, the bulk of the evidence suggests a link between insecurity or self-doubt (operational equivalents of inner fragility) and materialism. Both chronically and momentarily insecure individuals report relatively strong materialistic values. Arguably, materialism helps restore in these individuals a sense of self-worth.

An important caveat. The idea of narcissistic inner fragility originated in psychodynamic thinking and referred to clinical narcissism. Freud (1914/1957) argued that, in clinical narcissists, appearances disguise reality: Narcissists have an inner shaky self, which they mask with a puffed-up persona (see also Lowen, 2004). The fragile narcissistic self has been attributed to inadequate parental practices (Kernberg, 1975; Kohut, 1976).

Clinical narcissism is closely aligned today with vulnerable narcissism (Davis, Claridge, & Cerullo, 1997; Miller & Campbell, 2008; Miller et al., 2010; Morf et al., 2011). Vulnerable narcissists, although interpersonally antagonistic like everyday narcissists, are introverted, negative-affect laden, and emotionally unstable (Miller & Campbell, 2008; Miller et al., 2010).

It is likely, then, that our discussion of inner fragility as a distant etiology of conspicuous narcissistic consumption is mostly pertinent to vulnerable narcissists. However, we should note that all indices (both explicit and implicit) of inner fragility that we discussed in our literature review were assessed among grandiose narcissists, in samples of undergraduate students. We cannot preclude the possibility that the levels of inner fragility observed were due to the clinical narcissists in the samples, but we would think that the percentage of clinical narcissists among undergraduate students is rather negligible.

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EMPIRICAL VALIDATION OF INNER FRAGILITY DRIVING NARCISSISTIC BRAND-NAME PREFERENCES: CAN NARCISSISTS BE “REHABILITATED”?

Narcissistic brand name preference would need to be linked directly to inner fragility. There are three relevant questions to be asked. First, is inner fragility partially responsible for preferences for symbolic products? Second, whose inner fragility is it—grandiose or clinical vulnerable narcissists? Third, does choice or purchase of symbolic products solidify the inner world of narcissists?

Does inner fragility drive preferences for symbolic products? Two lines of research are consistent with this idea that inner fragility drives consumption. Chaplin and John (2007, Study 1) found that materialism increases from middle childhood to early adolescence. In Study 2, these researchers primed self-esteem. In the high self-esteem condition, participants (children and adolescents) received a “Nice Things about Me” paper plate that contained positive peer feedback about them (e.g., cool, pretty, funny). In the control condition, participants were informed that they would be given the plate at the end of the experimental procedure. Then, all participants completed a measure of materialism. High self-esteem reduced reported materialism. In fact, self-esteem decreased expressed materialism among adolescents to such an extent that age differences in materialism were cancelled out. In all, a sense of psychological security (e.g., high self-esteem) curtailed the need for materialism.

Sivanathan and Pettit (2010) showed that individuals consume status-enhancing products (e.g., brand names) for the reparative effects that such a consumption pattern has on the self. In Study 1, participants whose self-esteem was threatened (through negative performance feedback) were willing to pay more than their control counterparts for a photograph when it was described as rare, unique, and infused with high status. Thus, participants sought brand names in order to restore self-integrity (i.e., reestablish psychological security). This point was illustrated more directly in Study 2. All participants’ self-esteem was threatened, again via negative performance feedback. Then, half of the participants were self-affirmed, and half were not. Participants in the self-affirmation condition were presented with a list of values (e.g., health, family relationships, well-being) and were asked to select the value that was most important to them and explain in writing why so. Participants in the control condition were presented with the same list of values, but were asked to choose the least important value to them and explain in writing why so. Then, participants thought of a watch that was exclusive and worn by a select group of people. Self-threatened participants were willing to pay more for the watch than control participants, thus replicating Study 1. However, self-threatened participants who had self-affirmed offered to pay less than self-threatened participants who had not self-affirmed. Thus, when individuals are provided with an alternative route to self-worth repair (via self-affirmation), their need to acquire high-prestige products is negated. Motivation to elevate self-worth, then, is what drives brand name consumption. This conclusion was reinforced by Study 3, testing a representative sample of U.S. consumers. In this study, the relatively low self-esteem of low-income individuals drove their willingness to consume high-status goods.

An implication of these findings is that the narcissistic penchant for symbolic products can be cancelled out: Narcissistic consumers can be “rehabilitated.” In fact, recent research indicates that the narcissistic interpersonal style may be more flexible than previously thought. For example, narcissists increase their relational commitment following cognitive activation of communal attributes (Finkel, Campbell, Kumashiro, & Rusbult, 2009), and they become less aggressive following either activation of communal concerns (e.g., sharing a birthday or a fingerprint type with the other person; Konrath, Bushman, & Campbell, 2006) or self-affirmation (Thomaes, Bushman, de Castro, Cohen, & Denissen, 2009). Analogously, the narcissistic consumer style may become more flexible (i.e., more amenable to utilitarian products), following self-affirmation. For example, participants would complete either a self-affirmation task or

a control task (Thomaes et al., 2009). Then they would be presented with a display of symbolic and utilitarian products from which to choose. Self-affirmation might lessen or eliminate narcissists' inclination toward symbolic products. That is, self-affirmed narcissists might be as likely to select utilitarian products as non-narcissists.

Whose inner fragility is it? The associations among types of narcissism, inner fragility, and consumption patterns would need to be clarified. Future research could assess both grandiose and vulnerable (PDQ) narcissists and subsequently examine both levels of inner fragility and consumption. Such research can address two crucial questions. Are grandiose narcissists more or less fragile than vulnerable narcissists? And is inner fragility (either of grandiose or vulnerable narcissists) associated with brand name preferences?

Does symbolic product preference solidify the inner world of narcissists? The paradoxical finding that individuals who earn the least spend the greatest fraction of their income on conspicuous consumption (Banerjee & Duflo, 2007) is consistent with the idea that the acquisition of symbolic products increases psychological security. Sivanathan and Pettit (2010, Study 4) put this idea to the test. All participants performed an achievement task. Before receiving feedback, half of them thought and wrote about owning a new car that was pretested to have high status (i.e., BMW), whereas the other half thought and wrote about a car that was pretested to have low status (i.e., Kia). Next, all participants received negative performance feedback and proceeded to report their feelings on threat-related items (e.g., insecure, frightful, tense). Participants who had pondered owning a high-status car reported lower levels of self-threat than participants who had pondered owning a low-status car. These findings suggest that high-status consumption affords individuals a psychological buffer against self-threat. Conspicuous consumption shields the self from future threat, thus soothing psychological insecurity.

It would be interesting to transfer this idea and experimental paradigm to the domain of narcissism. Narcissists (and non-narcissists) would perform a task, imagine owning a symbolic versus utilitarian product, receive negative feedback, and report their felt self-threat. It is likely that narcissists who pondered the ownership of a symbolic product would feel less self-threatened than narcissists who pondered the ownership of a utilitarian product. Furthermore, narcissists who pondered the ownership of a symbolic product would report similar levels of self-threat to those of non-narcissists. Yet, given the fluidity of the narcissistic psyche (e.g., instability of self-esteem), it is possible that narcissistic insecurity will dip immediately following the symbolic product imagery but will peak soon thereafter. Stated otherwise, the duration of narcissistic equanimity will also need to be assessed.

DOES THE PURSUIT OF BRAND NAMES BRING ABOUT HAPPINESS IN NARCISSISTS?

Materialistic individuals believe that possessions are central to one's life, and that possessions determine success and define happiness above and beyond close relationships or spiritual involvement (Fournier & Richins, 1991). Yet, materialism is negatively correlated with subjective well-being (Belk, 1988; Kasser & Ryan, 1993; Richins & Dawson, 1992; Rokeach, 1973). Based on these research findings, one would expect that narcissism would also be correlated negatively with subjective well-being. Surprisingly, narcissism is positively related with subjective well-being (Sedikides, Rudich, Gregg, Kumashiro, & Rusbult, 2004).

It is not clear what the reasons for this discrepancy are. A line of reasoning points to the social comparative nature of needs and desires, including materialism (Passas, 1997). A materialistic person would compare his or her means, aspirations, and wealth to ever-new societal levels of affluence, reference groups, and products. This is an exhausting process, bound to yield disappointment and unhappiness, especially when one would need to search constantly for newer and better acquisitions in order to maintain the same level of happiness (Schwartz, 1994). This process would explain why materialists are relatively unhappy.

But why are narcissists, with their high levels of materialism, relatively happy? It is possible that narcissists avoid direct social comparison, as they are not overly troubled by aversive social environments (Zuckerman & O'Loughlin, 2009). In fact, grandiose narcissistic individuals are quite resilient to life's adversities (Gebauer & Sedikides, 2010; Miller & Campbell, 2008).

Another possible reason for the discrepancy is proffered by Burroughs and Rindfleisch (2002). They provided empirical evidence that the link between materialism and subjective well-being is moderated by one's value system. High scorers on a materialism scale who also reported high levels of collective-oriented values (e.g., concern for family) subsequently suffered higher stress and anxiety levels. They claimed that their individual orientation of materialism conflicted with their collective-orientation, producing psychological tensions and lowering subjective well-being. Narcissists' lack of communality may thus buffer them from the detrimental effects of materialism and may be a moderator of the link between materialism and subjective well-being.

It is also possible, however, that materialism takes a toll on narcissistic happiness. For example, prospective analyses show that narcissism does not predict changes in subjective well-being (Zuckerman & O'Loughlin, 2009). These issues deserve priority in the empirical agenda.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Several other theoretical issues await future empirical testing. Are narcissists on the constant lookout for the latest and greatest products, thus wasting time (e.g., on the Internet) searching the relevant markets? Are narcissists more susceptible to advertising by celebrities than common mortals? Are narcissists more likely to join or strive to join exclusive clubs, restaurants, hotels, or guest lists? Are they likely to spend more lavishly in the presence of an audience, especially a high-status one? Also, is there a possibility of a bidirectional relation between narcissism and materialism? That is, does materialism result in greater narcissism?

Regardless, we argued in this chapter that narcissism is related not only to materialism, but also to a distinct consumer behavior pattern: a preference for symbolic products, or a disfavor of utilitarian products. Narcissists prefer symbolic products as a way to boost their appearance and social image. For narcissists, life is a lot about show. Returning to the opening example, if it were a Siamese cat, the narcissistic woman would have certainly let her jump on her knee.

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