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# Cynicism and narcissism: masking the good life?

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CYNICISM AND NARCISSISM:

MASKING THE GOOD LIFE?

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<u>MASTER'S THESIS</u>

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**Abstract**

Gratitude is a virtue capable of conferring a constellation of benefits. Research

on gratitude has mostly focused on these benefits, but in understanding the

construct fully an examination of moderating factors and inhibitors is important. A

recent study, utilizing a prospective design, revealed cynicism and narcissism as

significant inhibitors of trait and state gratitude over time (Solom, Watkins,

McCurrach, & Scheibe, 2016). The current study hoped to build upon those

results by examining whether these two possible inhibitors affect grateful

processing after a gratitude induction. I hypothesized that higher levels of

cynicism and narcissism would moderate the experience of grateful emotion

following a gratitude induction. Contrary to predictions, the putative inhibitors did

not significantly moderate the experience of gratitude, save narcissism, which

actually facilitated increases. In short, it seems likely that narcissism and

cynicism inhibit gratitude over time through a combination of effects leading to

reduced frequency and density of grateful experiences, rather than decreasing

the intensity of these events when they do happen.

**Cynicism and Narcissism: Masking the Good Life?**

"Cynicism masquerades as wisdom, but it is the farthest thing from it.
Because cynics don't learn anything. Because cynicism is a self-imposed
blindness, a rejection of the world because we are afraid it will hurt us or
disappoint us." - Stephen Colbert

Much has been revealed over the last decade and a half regarding the
constellation of benefits gratitude is capable of conferring, from its consistent
positive influence on subjective well-being to its ability to grow and bind one's
relationships (for a review, see Watkins & McCurrach, forthcoming). Wood, Froh,
and Geraghty (2010) suggested that gratitude is part of an orientation toward
perceiving and appreciating the positives in the world. If the mechanism by which
gratitude accomplishes its benefits involves opening one's eyes to the positives
of the world and others, it may be that cynicism, an attitude of bitter negativity
about human nature and existence, may well be the active process of blinding
oneself to it. While cynicism likely involves a negative orientation to interpersonal
relationships, narcissism—a personality construct associated with a "Dark Triad"
of personalities (Paulhus, 2014)—involves an elevation of the self in importance
and a sense of superiority, such that the trait may preclude some of the
recognitions involved in the experience of gratitude from taking place (Watkins,
2014). Recent research on these traits by Solom, Watkins, McCurrach and
Scheibe (2016) has associated them with declines in dispositional gratitude over

time. Solom et al. (2016) suggest that narcissism and cynicism, having a strong positive correlation, act in tandem to produce a cascade of effects that may mitigate gratitude.

Given that the last fifteen years of gratitude research has illuminated multifaceted benefits, including a significant (and seemingly causal) positive influence upon subjective well-being, the continued study of gratitude is of great importance. Much of the ongoing research has maintained a focus on elucidating the extent of these benefits, and for good reason. Yet, in fully understanding gratitude, studying the factors that moderate its experience and the positive effects that follow is also of significance.

The aim of this research is to build upon Solom et al.'s (2016) pioneering work in the study of potential moderators by implementing a quasi-experimental design to examine the effects of these inhibitory traits upon a gratitude induction. This study also seeks to examine the full conceptual range of the inhibitory variables by including measures of cynicism on a local and global level, and including measures of both vulnerable and grandiose narcissism.

In order to understand the importance of this study, and the mechanisms by which narcissism and cynicism may inhibit the experience of gratitude, it is important to examine the theoretical underpinnings of the involved constructs, most specifically: those which explain the experience of gratitude and why it is of such great benefit, and those which explain how cynicism and narcissism might inhibit that experience.

**Gratitude**

Gratitude is often defined as the positive emotion one feels when having been gifted an intentional benefit considered valuable and costly, even in the absence of a clear benefactor (Wood et al., 2010). McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons and Larson's (2001) seminal paper, which arguably set the gratitude movement in motion, posited gratitude as a moral affect. That is, it is born out of, and motivates further, other-focused behavior. They suggested that gratitude performs three primary functions: it acts as a moral barometer, responding to the generosity and prosocial actions within one's relationships; it acts as a moral motivator, generating a genuine desire within the grateful individual to engage in reciprocal prosocial behaviors, either to the benefactor or other close others; finally, it acts as a moral reinforcer, in that when it is expressed to the benefactor, it leads them to act in a prosocial manner on future occasions.

What is it that leads to the experience of grateful emotion? As gratitude contains significant cognitive elements, theories explaining the experience of gratitude have generally focused on situational and benefit appraisals. Watkins (2014), summarizing literature studying these appraisals, proposed the recognitions of gratitude. This explanation suggests four recognitions integral to creating and enhancing grateful experience. First, recognition of the gift: If one cannot see the benefit in the gift, or fails to see it as a gift, gratitude likely won't be experienced. Second, recognizing the goodness, or value, of the gift. If the beneficiary fails to see the gift as valuable, gratitude may be reduced. Third, the

recognizing of the goodness of the giver; viewing his/her intention as altruistic and not for his/her own benefit. Trust and belief in free will appear to be important components of this stage of experiencing gratitude, likely because an inability to trust the intentions of the benefactor, or a belief that they are compelled by an outside force, would preclude this recognition from occurring (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005; MacKenzie, Vohs & Baumeister, 2014; Watkins et al., 2015). Finally, recognizing the gratuitousness of the gift, or whether the beneficiary sees the gift as something beyond their expectations of the giver, enhances the experience of gratitude.

In seeking to explain the individual differences in benefit appraisals, Wood, Maltby, Stewart, Linley, and Joseph (2008) developed the social cognitive theory of gratitude. In short, this model suggests that the previously mentioned recognitions taken together determine the experience of gratitude, but are themselves strongly influenced by both the situation and the individual's grateful disposition.

Like all emotions, gratitude can be conceptualized in both state, or emotional, and trait, or dispositional, terms. Wood et al.'s (2008) research on the social-cognitive model examined the relationship between the state and trait forms of gratitude, suggesting that dispositional gratitude is characterized by a systematic tendency to appraise benefits and help-giving situations more positively. In addition, Watkins (2003) posited that the grateful disposition denoted a sense of abundance, an appreciation for simple pleasures, and an appreciation of others. Essentially, the grateful persona is one marked by

ubiquitous appreciation: A recognition of the serendipity of existence and an orientation toward the contributions of others to that existence.

Why is the study of gratitude, and thereby the study of its inhibitors, important? A windfall of research has suggested that gratitude is capable of conferring significant benefits. The most notable of these findings are those which show gratitude's strong association with subjective well-being, a positive relationship that has been tested in multiple ways across a large number of studies, both correlational and experimental (for reviews, see Emmons, 2012; Watkins & McCurrach, forthcoming; Wood et al., 2010). Exemplifying this association, a pair of studies in which participants participated in grateful recounting exercises showed that the activation of grateful processing led to higher levels of subjective well-being both directly after treatment and even in a later follow-up measurement (Seligman et al., 2005; Watkins, Uhder & Pichinevski, 2014). Watkins and McCurrach (2016) posit that this sustained effect may occur because the grateful processing that occurs fortifies cognitive processes that lead to further grateful thoughts, or positive biases in thoughts, interpretations, and attention. To explain the association between gratitude and well-being, Watkins and McCurrach (2016) posited that gratitude acts as an amplifier toward the good in one's life, enhancing awareness of the blessings and benefits bestowed upon the self by the world.

In addition to the findings on well-being, there has been a significant amount of recent research on gratitude's social binding qualities, supporting its conceptualization as a moral motivator (Algoe, 2012; McCullough et al., 2001).

Individuals who experience more instances of gratitude tend to be more prosocial than those who experience less (McCullough, Emmons & Tsang, 2002). Studies have shown that inducing gratitude increases social affiliation and facilitates socially inclusive behavior even at one's own detriment, this relationship shown through participants choosing to throw to a benefactor significantly more often than a neutral player after a gratitude induction, even when these throws meant missing out on a monetary reward given by throwing to a third player (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006; Bartlett et al., 2012). Additionally, these studies showed that the increase in prosocial behavior was separate from the standard effects of a positive affective state.

So widespread are the social benefits of gratitude that Algoe (2012) suggested integrating them into the find-remind-bind theory of gratitude, explaining that gratitude helps individuals find quality social relationships, reminds people of important existing relationships, and helps to bind the recipient to their giver. Recent research has confirmed that the construct's hand in initiation of new relationships, orientation to relationships already present, and motivation to invest in these relationships is significant (Gordon et al., 2012; Lambert & Fincham, 2011; Williams & Bartlett, 2015). Gratitude has been associated with a focus on the benefactor's positive characteristics, the motivation of relationship-enhancing behaviors toward the benefactor, and the formation of dyadic relationships with said benefactor (Algoe, 2008; Williams & Bartlett, 2015). Recent research has also suggested that gratitude aligns one's goals with the benefactor's, even when the goal is making money, something

more materially-oriented than is normally associated with grateful experience (Jia et al., 2014).

Thus, gratitude is a construct with important intrapersonal and interpersonal implications. It generates a distinct and enduring positivity within oneself and one's relationships, and is part of a larger willingness to acknowledge and bind oneself to benefactors and close others. With all of the work done illuminating the benefits of gratitude, it is clear that studying the individual differences that could potentially preclude these benefits from occurring would be a valuable addition to the literature.

**Cynicism**

The current understanding of cynicism is that it is a negativity in the way one views the world: the pervasive assumption that humanity is inherently bad, and that people and organizations are out to exploit others in order to further their own interests (Leung, Ip, & Leung, 2010). These characterizations are followed by a deep lack of trust. In the realm of psychology, the breadth of cynicism research outside of an organizational context is underwhelming. Still, it is often conceptualized in two ways: as social cynicism and as a personality trait. The findings, though hardly numerous, suggest that the nature of cynicism is fairly well represented by its definition, and provide a few possible implications as to how it might mollify the experience of gratitude.

Social cynicism as a psychological construct arose as part of the social axioms, which are five dimensions of general beliefs about the social and physical environment we live in (Leung et al., 2002). These dimensions include

reward for application, fate control, social complexity, religiosity, and social cynicism; and have been confirmed across a number of cultures (Leung & Bond, 2004). The social cynicism dimension is based upon a negative view of human nature, a pessimistic outlook on life, a belief that those who act morally and ethically will be exploited, and that social institutions seek to perpetuate social inequality. In line with this definition, social cynicism has been correlated with lower life and job satisfaction across multiple cultural groups (Lai et al., 2007; Leung et al., 2010). Singelis et al. (2003) found that social cynicism negatively correlated with interpersonal trust, and was related to less cognitive flexibility in interpreting social situations. Research has also suggested that those high in social cynicism are less likely to engage in conflict resolution styles entailing collaboration and compromise, possibly due to the view that others would use the opportunity to exploit them or betray the trust such styles would require (Bond et al., 2004). Despite these difficulties, there might be some emotional payoff for cynics; research on social cynicism suggests that it acts as a moderator against negative affect in relational conflict, likely achieving this moderation effect as a result of the cynic's low expectation for success within the relationship (Li et al., 2011). Taken together, these findings imply that those high in social cynicism have interpersonal difficulties, trust issues, and a rigidity in their interpretation of social events that may mitigate the extent of grateful processing or prevent it from occurring in the first place.

  A significant portion of the study of cynicism has examined it when measured as a personality trait, such as within the Minnesota Multiphasic

Personality Inventory (MMPI), wherein high scorers tend to suspect the motives of others, mistrusting them and seeing them as selfish (Tellegen et al., 2003). In a study where participants took the revised MMPI-2-Restructured Clinical (RC) Scales (Tellegen et al., 2003) as well as the revised NEO personality inventory, the cynicism scale of the MMPI-2 correlated negatively with trust, agreeableness, and warmth, and correlated positively with neuroticism, impulsivity, and measures of hostility (Sellbom et al., 2008). Another study, examining an even more recent revision of the personality inventory, the MMPI-2-RF, found that the cynicism scale correlated positively with measures of Machiavellianism and alienation (Ingram et al., 2011). Machiavellianism is a personality construct characterized by lack of principles and the belief that deceiving others is a valid means of attaining personal success. This correlation implies that not only does a cynical personality precipitate a negative view of others, but it may derive from the cynic's own willingness to extort, cheat or manipulate being projected upon the motives of others. These results are reinforced in "dark triad" research, where Machiavellianism, a trait characterized by manipulative behaviors and motivations, has been consistently correlated with cynicism (Paulhus, 2014).

**Narcissism**

Narcissism, as opposed to cynicism, is a widely studied construct due to its existence at both clinical and subclinical levels. Narcissistic Personality Disorder, as defined in the DSM-V, is a "pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy and behavior), need for admiration, and lack of empathy" (DSM-5, American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 645). Although the current study is

not specifically interested in narcissism as a disorder, these characteristics largely capture narcissism as a personality trait and exist on a dimension from mild to extremely maladaptive. In research, narcissism has seen an odd medley of both positive and negative consequences. Although causing marked interpersonal disturbances, it may be that narcissism is also adaptive in getting ahead on a personal level (Back et al., 2013).

In order to understand these differing results, recent research has begun to look into the facet levels of narcissism and its most popular measurements, and examine the possibility that there are multiple distinct forms of narcissism, a suggestion which has garnered significant support (Ackerman et al., 2011; Dickinson & Pincus, 2003; Miller et al., 2013). Much of this effort to distinguish between forms of narcissism has supported two characterizations in particular: *grandiose narcissism*, characterized by overt representations of overwhelming arrogance, a heightened sense of entitlement, and a reactivity to criticism, and *vulnerable narcissism,* which presents with shyness and muted expressions of confidence while still beholden to grandiose beliefs and expectations of themselves and others (Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010). No matter the form, narcissists are often characterized by long-term interpersonal troubles. Whether clinical or subclinical, narcissistic characteristics are generally perceived as socially aversive by observers (Leary et al., 1997).

The majority of narcissism research could be viewed as examining the grandiose form. Grandiose narcissists see themselves as emotionally intelligent and good leaders, often asserting themselves in a socially domineering way

(Furnham, Richards & Paulhus, 2013; Grijalva et al., 2014). These self-enhancing characteristics appear to influence an individual's appeal as a potential mate, and this effect is mediated by high physical attractiveness and high social boldness (Dufner et al., 2013). Despite seeing success in short-term relationships and engagements such as dates or job interviews, grandiose narcissists tend to flounder when it comes to meaningful or long-term romantic engagements (Back et al., 2013). These troubles likely arise as a result of an inability to commit to the romantic partner, or an inability to turn their attention away from themselves to focus on their significant other. Additionally, the narcissistic personality may wear on the patience of one's close others. Recent research has suggested that these somewhat contradictory results might be explained by differentiating the assertive and antagonistic aspects of narcissism (Back et al., 2013).  Grandiose narcissists seem to be blissfully unaware of the way their behavior negatively impacts their relationships, and report attachment styles suggestive of positive self-representations (Dickinson & Pincus, 2003). There is also ample research supporting the idea that narcissists are very invested in maintaining their self-perceived superiority, and are extremely aggressive in their approach to anything that threatens it, showing vulnerability to high achievement threats and aggressive responses in situations of upward comparison (Baumeister, Bushman & Campbell, 2000; Besser & Priel, 2010; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). These findings suggest that grandiose narcissists rely very little on interpersonal relationships in maintaining their sense of self-worth- as long as they are assured of their superiority, that is.

Somewhat paradoxically, grandiose narcissists seem to flourish on a personal level despite all of their interpersonal issues. There is a well-studied positive relationship between grandiose narcissism and self-esteem that necessitates controlling for the latter in certain research situations (Solom et al., 2016). Narcissism also shows a positive relationship with emotional stability in certain situations; narcissists appear to be more flexible in coping with stress (Ng, Cheung & Tam, 2014). The intrapersonal effects of narcissism are not all rosy, however.

Differing drastically from their grandiose counterparts, *vulnerable narcissists* are high in neuroticism, low in agreeableness and low in extraversion (Miller et al., 2010). Vulnerable narcissists seem to be less equipped to manage self-esteem within themselves, instead relying on the estimations of others to build and maintain their confidence. To make matters worse, their internal level of entitlement means that any social interaction not both positive and focused on them is a disappointing one, leading to social withdrawal, avoidance, and difficulties in forming and maintaining relationships (Dickinson & Pincus, 2003). Whereas grandiose narcissists are preoccupied with preserving their inflated self-perceptions against achievement and competition-based threats, vulnerable narcissists are far more concerned and threatened by interpersonal threats (Besser & Priel, 2010). Vulnerable narcissistic individuals report high interpersonal distress and attachment styles indicative of negative self-evaluations (Dickinson & Pincus, 2003).

**Inhibition of Gratitude**

As previously discussed, gratitude research has primarily focused on the benefits the moral affect is capable of bestowing. While this research has been and continues to be very fruitful (Watkins, 2014), research on the situations and traits that may inhibit gratitude are also important. Solom, Watkins, McCurrach and Scheibe's (2016) study on potential inhibitors of gratitude marks the only effort thus far. In their study, four putative inhibitory traits were examined: materialism/envy, cynicism, narcissism, and indebtedness. There was no distinction made between the grandiose and vulnerable narcissistic subtypes in that study, and the form of cynicism measured could largely be considered a "local" form of cynicism, focusing on one's personal relationships in the recent past rather than general attributions about the fallibility of humanity, as in social cynicism. These potential inhibitors were assessed along with trait and state gratitude at time 1. Two months later, these constructs were measured again. No manipulation or interventions took place. The results of the study revealed significant negative relationships between time 1 narcissism and cynicism and time 2 state and trait gratitude, after controlling for gratitude at time 1. Thus, narcissism and cynicism predicted declines in dispositional and emotional gratitude over a two-month period. In addition, semi-partial correlational analyses between cynicism and narcissism showed that the two traits had a reciprocal positive correlation over time, suggesting a particularly vicious cycle that may prevent gratitude.

Solom et al. (2016) put forth several suggestions as to why these inhibitory relationships materialized, and I have added a few more possibilities to the list. Narcissism, Solom and colleagues suggest, may inhibit gratitude as a result of the self-perceived superiority and entitlement that comes with it. In terms of the four recognitions previously discussed, they suggest that narcissism influences both the recognition of the gift, and the gratuitousness of the gift. It seems a lofty opinion of oneself and what one deserves would almost certainly diminish the value of gifts received, in some cases to the point of them seeing benefits as one's "just due", merely the deserved consequence of their continued excellence. Supporting this assertion, research has shown that narcissists are indeed more likely to take personal credit for any benevolence they happen to receive, yet blame others for negative outcomes (Miller et al., 2010). This process would likely generalize to both forms of narcissism.

In addition, it may be that the elevation of a benefactor is an appraisal of gratitude incompatible with the narcissistic persona, particularly the grandiose subtype. As previously mentioned, research strongly supports the idea that grandiose narcissists aggressively defend their sense of superiority and loathe situations involving upward social comparison (Baumeister, Bushman & Campbell, 2000; Besser & Priel, 2010; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). This perennial struggle to maintain their inflated ego could prevent elevation of the benefactor in one's mind, along with any acknowledgement of the benefactor's contribution. It may be that grandiose narcissists are occupying the only "pedestal" they have, and in receiving gifts find it next to impossible to place the benefactor on one as

well. In short, it may be difficult for grandiose narcissists to acknowledge the goodness of the giver.

Vulnerable narcissists, considering their markedly worse functioning in both interpersonal and intrapersonal contexts, may present even more hurdles to the experience of gratitude than their grandiose counterparts. In fact, the vulnerable narcissistic persona suggests gift-giving situations, normally positive, could end up damaging the relationship with the benefactor. To explain, the overt presentation of vulnerable narcissists as shy and lacking in self-esteem may give the impression they would be open to, and benefit from, a gift. However, the underlying entitlement and grandiosity could lead them to react with indifference, with the benefactor's potential reactance deteriorating the situation further.

With regard to cynicism, Solom et al. (2016) suggest that the inhibition occurs largely as the result of a lack of trust, positing that a pervasive suspicion regarding the motives of the benefactor would decrease recognition of the goodness of the giver. To be sure, believing someone has ulterior, potentially even malicious, motives for providing an ostensible benefit would prevent an appreciation of their contribution, and likely undermine the recognitions regarding the gift as a result. After all, no matter how indulgent and excessive a gift may seem, the perception that the giver is attempting to place them under a form of social debt might sour its image. The research by Singelis et al. (2003) associating social cynicism with low trust and rigidity in interpreting social situations  suggests that cynics have difficulty withholding cynical attributions in

potential gratitude scenarios, with these attributions undermining the recognition of the goodness of the giver.

Both cynicism and narcissism are marked by interpersonal difficulties, and therefore may inhibit gratitude more in the sense that they starve cynical or narcissistic individuals of opportunities to experience it, rather than preventing its experience in applicable situations. For example, those who are highly cynical may have few close others due to their negative view of interpersonal relationships, and through this cynicism stifle opportunities to experience gratitude. Likewise, narcissists of both subtypes do not flourish when it comes to the sorts of fruitful relationships likely to produce benefit-giving scenarios. Through the grandiose subtype's overt arrogance, and the vulnerable subtype's neurotic dependence on positive interpersonal interactions, they receive fewer opportunities to engage in grateful processing, and as a result grateful stimuli are likely less salient in other situations. The assertion by Watkins and McCurrach (2016) that grateful processing begets further grateful thoughts and interpretations alludes to this somewhat. Additionally, recent research by Jordan, Giacomin and Kopp (2014) showed that establishing a communal focus by orienting narcissists to situations where they felt empathetic or dependent on others reduced narcissism in the short term. Thus, it may be possible for a benefit situation to overpower the narcissistic personality.

While there is the possibility that those high in narcissism and cynicism simply have fewer opportunities to experience gratitude and have the potential to experience it just as significantly a less narcissistic or cynical individual given the

opportunity, it seems more likely that these constructs would act as moderators of the actual experience of gratitude in conjunction with the issue of reduced frequency. Much of the literature exploring the two constructs suggests that they would remain closed to gratitude's gifts for a number of reasons, be they lack of trust or a sense of entitlement.

The current study hoped to elaborate on Solom et al.'s (2016) work in a couple of ways. First and most significantly, I used a quasi-experimental design in order to examine how these inhibitory traits affect the actual experience of gratitude. This was accomplished by putting individual participants through a gratitude induction two days after they had pre-existing levels of cynicism and narcissism measured, with levels of state gratitude measured both initially and following the induction. Second, I sought to expand on the work of Solom et al. by distinguishing between subtypes of narcissism and measuring cynicism on both a global and local level. If the inhibitors' respective forms to differ in how they affect the experience of gratitude, it would give further insight regarding what specific aspects of these traits are most important to the process. The specific hypotheses for this study were as follows: Each of the inhibitory variables would moderate the increase of gratitude brought about by an induction. Specifically, both measured forms of gratitude and both measured conceptualizations of cynicism would moderate the increase in gratitude such that at higher levels of the putative inhibitors, the increase in gratitude would be mollified.

**Method**

**Design**

The study utilized a person * treatment quasi-experimental mixed-model design, occurring over two sessions that were separated by two days. Narcissism and cynicism were naturally occurring person variables in this study, and were coded as continuous. Self-esteem and trait gratitude were measured as possible third variables, and to measure the validity of our results against previous findings. After measurement of the person variables in session 1, in session 2 participants were randomly assigned to one of three emotion induction conditions: gratitude, pride, or neutral. The pride condition provided a positive emotion comparison condition, while the neutral condition was present as a control. The dependent variable, state gratitude, was measured twice, both during the initial stage of the study and again immediately following the inductions in the second stage.

**Participants**

Participants included 106 undergraduate psychology students from Eastern Washington University, who received course or extra credit in their classes for their voluntary participation in the study. Data were collected through in-lab and in-class participation. Of the 106 participants, 92 completed both stages of the study. This study was conducted in accord with the ethical principles of the American Psychological Association and the Internal Review Board of Eastern Washington University.

**Procedure**

The study took place in two stages, with the second coming exactly two days following the former, and in two contexts: in-class and in-lab. There were no significant differences between the contexts. In-lab participants signed up for the study using the online research participation system SONA, choosing an appropriate time for both stages. In-class participants were notified what days the study would occur, and of potential alternatives to participation.

For time 1, participants were walked through an informed consent form, and simply asked to complete a battery of questionnaires measuring all relevant variables. The questionnaires were arranged as follows: state gratitude, social cynicism, vulnerable narcissism, self-esteem, trait gratitude, local cynicism, and grandiose narcissism.  Following completion, participants were free to leave. Upon arrival to the second session, participants were instructed both verbally and by a prompt on the first page of the packet to disregard distractions and focus on the task at hand. They were informed that the task would be a memory recall procedure, and to follow the prompt given once the researcher had instructed them to turn the page. Upon turning to the second page, participants read instructions which took one of three forms depending on their assigned condition.

For the gratitude condition, they were asked to "recall an event where someone did something important and valuable for you." For the pride condition, participants were asked to "recall an event where you accomplished something important and valuable for yourself." The neutral condition merely requested that participants "recall the last day nothing truly notable happened: you completed

your daily routine without interruption, were about as productive as average, and spent your afternoon doing what you most often do." Following the induction, participants completed a pair of state emotion questionnaires with the goal of measuring the grateful response.

**Materials**

To measure trait gratitude, in order to account for it as a factor in final state gratitude scores and test the construct validity of the data set, I utilized the 16-item version of the Gratitude, Resentment and Appreciation Test (GRAT-S; Watkins et al., 2003), and the 6-item GQ-6 (McCullough, Emmons & Tsang, 2002). The GRAT is rated on a 9-point scale of strong disagreement to strong agreement, and contains statements such as "I think it's important to enjoy the simple things in life". The GQ-6 is rated on a 7-point scale, with participants rating their degree of agreement or disagreement with statements such as "I sometimes feel grateful for the smallest things". The GRAT-S demonstrated strong reliability, ($M = 7.24$, $SD = 1.05$, Cronbach's α = .87) while the GQ-6's reliability was lower than expected ($M = 6.21$, $SD = .77$, Cronbach's α = .66).

For the Narcissism measures, I used the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Hall, 1979), as well as the 10-item Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale (HSNS; Hendin & Cheek, 1997). The 40-item Narcissistic Personality Inventory is the most frequently used measure in narcissism research, used in this case as our grandiose narcissism measure, and demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, ($M = 13.15$, $SD = 6.72$, α = .86). In the measure, participants are forced to choose between two statements, either narcissistic or

non-narcissistic (Raskin & Hall, 1979). The narcissistic responses are then summed to create a narcissism score. The HSNS was used to measure vulnerable narcissism. It demonstrated high internal consistency in the present study ($M$ = 2.63, $SD$ = 1.05, α = .95) and was not redundant with the NPI, demonstrating an almost nonexistent correlation with the other narcissism measure ($r$ = .02). Items on the scale include statements such as "I often interpret the remarks of others in a personal way", and are rated on a 1 to 5 scale of *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree* (Hendin & Cheek, 1997).

In order to measure and control for self-esteem due to its positive relationships with both gratitude and grandiose narcissism, the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE: Rosenberg, 1965) was used. This measure asks participants to rate 10 statements, such as "I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others", on a 1 to 4 scale from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree.* These scores are then summed. The scale demonstrated strong internal consistency ($M$ = 37.32, $SD$ = 8.94, α = .91) in the study.

For measures of cynicism, the 22-item Cynicism and Lack of Trust scale (CLOT: Floberg, Sestrap, Bart, & Watkins, 2014) and the 13-item cynicism facet of the Social Axiom Survey (SAS: Leung et al., 2002) were used. The CLOT is a recently formulated measure and in this study demonstrated strong internal consistency, ($M$ = 3.61, $SD$ = 1.26, Cronbach's α = .93) . Statements in the CLOT largely focus on proximal and recent cynical attributions, such as: "Lately, I've noticed that when others do something for me they often have ulterior motives". The cynicism facet of the SAS demonstrates strong reliability, ($M$ = 2.73, $SD$ =

.59, Cronbach's α = .80), and its 13 items seem to be more focused on global, stable cynical attributions with statements like "it is rare to see a happy ending in real life" and "kind-hearted people are easily bullied". Both of these questionnaires are present to include the full breadth of cynicism, from local to global, and see if any differences exist in their effects on the experience of gratitude.

In order to measure state gratitude following the induction, the 20-item Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS: Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988) was used with the addition of the 3 adjectives from the Gratitude Affect Scale (GAS: McCullough et al., 2002). The PANAS is primarily a measure of positive and negative affect that can range from a measurement of present feelings, as it was used in this study, to general or chronic affect. It asks participants to rate how closely 20 adjectives, such as "distressed" or "enthusiastic", match to their feelings on a 1 to 5 scale, not at all to extremely.  For the purposes of this study it served to mask the dependent variable as measured by the GAS, which takes the form of the three adjectives: grateful, thankful and appreciative. The internal reliability of the GAS scores was ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.12$, Cronbach's α = .76).

**Results**

  We used a simple memory recall in order to induce a grateful state. A one-way ANCOVA examining the effects of the three conditions on the dependent variable, state gratitude, showed that the gratitude induction was indeed effective, $F(2, 89) = 4.95$, $p < .00$. Tukey's HSD post-hoc analyses showed that participants in the gratitude condition reported significantly higher state gratitude, $M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.81$, than those in the control condition, $M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.04$ ($p = .007$), but did not report significantly higher gratitude than those in the pride condition, $M = 4.02$, $SD = .93$ ($p = .594$). The pride and control conditions did not significantly differ, $p = .115$.

  Based on the results of Solom et al.'s (2016) study, I expected that the effects of a gratitude induction would be inhibited in people high in narcissism and/or cynicism. Thus, each of the putative inhibitors was examined as a possible moderator of state gratitude following an induction. In order to do this, I ran inhibitor (continuous variable) × task condition General Linear Model (GLM) analyses with time 1 state gratitude included as a covariate (in order to hold participants' baseline levels of state gratitude constant) and time 2 state gratitude as the dependent variable. Each inhibitor was analyzed separately. None of the measured inhibitors resulted in the hypothesized inhibitor × condition interaction, and one ran completely contrary to expectations (see Table 1 for all GLM effects).

**Table 1.** General Linear Model results for  dependent variable time 2 state gratitude, with time 1 state gratitude as covariate (and self-esteem as a covariate in grandiose narcissism analysis).   –If you want a shorter title, you could instead put some of this detail in the note at the bottom of the table.

| Independent Variable | Effect | *F* | *p* | $\eta^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grandiose Narcissism (NPI)  ($df_E$ = 84): | T1 State Gratitude | 48.15** | .000 | .36 |
| | Condition | 1.09 | .340 | .03 |
| | Grandiose Narcissism | 0.17 | .684 | .00 |
| | Self-Esteem | 0.37 | .546 | .00 |
| | Condition × G. Narcissism | 4.29* | .017 | .09 |
| Vulnerable Narcissism (HSNS) ($df_E$ = 85): | T1 State Gratitude | 44.55** | .000 | .34 |
| | Condition | 1.90 | .156 | .04 |
| | Vulnerable Narcissism | 0.31 | .577 | .00 |
| | Condition × V. Narcissism | 0.50 | .606 | .01 |
| Social Cynicism (SCS) ($df_E$ = 85): | T1 State Gratitude | 44.77** | .000 | .35 |
| | Condition | 0.327 | .722 | .01 |
| | Social Cynicism | 1.66 | .202 | .02 |
| | Condition × S. Cynicism | 1.07 | .347 | .03 |
| Local Cynicism (CLOT) ($df_E$ = 85): | T1 State Gratitude | 43.93** | .000 | .34 |
| | Condition | 1.85 | .164 | .04 |
| | Local Cynicism | .119 | .731 | .00 |
| | Condition × L. Cynicism | .354 | .703 | .01 |

*Note.* **$p$ < .01, *$p$ < .05

Grandiose narcissism, as measured by the NPI, proved to be the only proposed inhibitor to significantly moderate the experience of gratitude, but it did so positively, $F(2,84)$ = 2.18, $p$ = .017, $\eta^2$=.09.  The RSE was inserted into this model as a covariate, suggesting that this effect was independent of self-esteem (Solom et al., 2016). The grandiose narcissism main effect, however, was not significant in this model. In order to visualize the relationship, the Process macro for SPSS was used to plot the predicted scores from the interaction (see Figure 1). The plot shows increased narcissism contributing to higher scores in the

gratitude group, while decreasing scores in the control group and having no influence over scores in the pride group.

Vulnerable narcissism did not significantly moderate gratitude scores following the induction, nor did it achieve a significant main effect. Likewise, neither conceptualization of cynicism significantly moderated the experience of gratitude or resulted in a main effect. Thus, none of the putative inhibitors led to a decrease in the effectiveness of the induction, and one of them was even associated with increased gratitude.
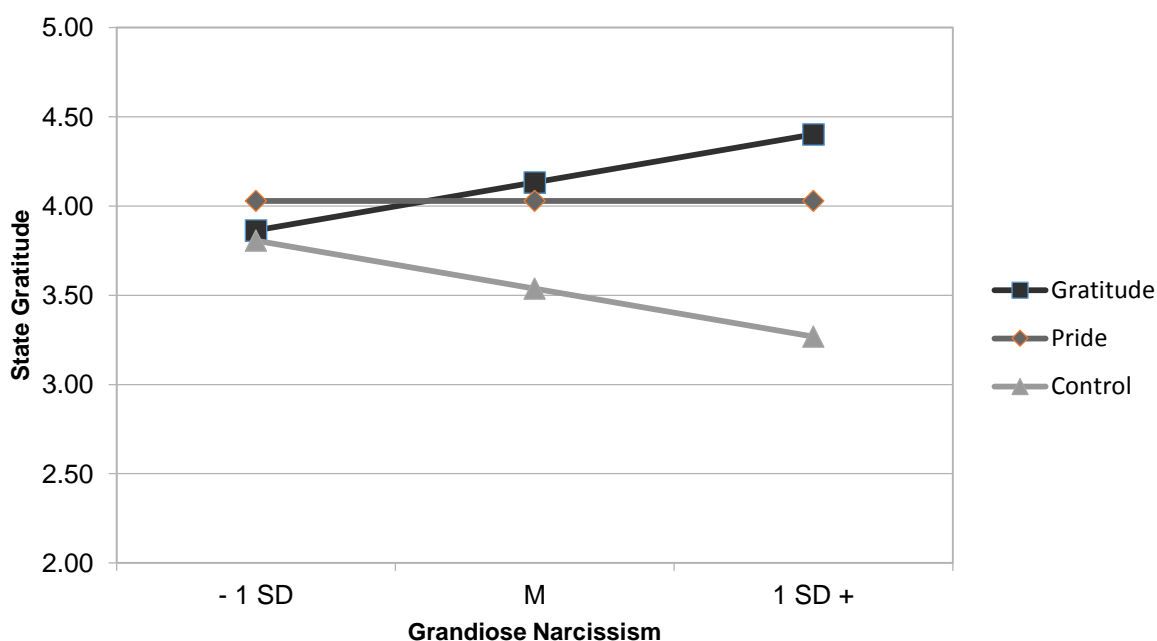


**Figure 1.** Grandiose Narcissism x Condition Interaction.

While these results were unexpected, those that examined relationships between time 1 variables were in line with previous findings. Cross-sectional correlations between the inhibitors and gratitude, in state and trait form, revealed

expected relationships, with the inhibitors seeing negative correlations with gratitude measures and several positive correlations with other inhibitors (see Table 2).  Specifically, vulnerable narcissism holds strong positive correlations with both forms of cynicism, and all of these inhibitors have significant negative correlations with trait gratitude and time 1 state gratitude. Though not to the extent one might expect, grandiose narcissism is negatively correlated with trait gratitude as well.

**Table 2. Bivariate Correlation**

**Discussion**

The primary hypotheses of the study were that the inhibitory traits cynicism and narcissism, in all forms measured, would mitigate the increase in gratitude following a gratitude induction. This did not end up being the case for any of the four potential inhibitors, and one of them (narcissism) had exactly the opposite effect. While none of the initial hypotheses were supported, and the findings (and lack thereof) were surprising, I do not believe that they necessarily contradict the findings of Solom et al. (2016) or theories of gratitude in general. They do, however, affect the conclusions that can be made regarding the possible inhibitory relationship of these traits with gratitude.

Why didn't the inhibitors mitigate increases in gratitude following an induction? There are several potential answers to this question. A study by McCullough, Tsang and Emmons (2004) might help to elucidate one of them. In their study, which examined how individual differences and situations impacted *grateful mood*, they found that levels of grateful mood on a day-to-day basis were positively associated with the frequency, or number of distinct gratitude events, the density, or amount of people contributing toward their gratitude, and the intensity of their grateful experiences. Interestingly, they found that for individuals high in trait gratitude, grateful mood was less affected by these three facets, and instead maintained a higher baseline level of grateful mood state, which was resistant to fluctuations in either direction. In other words, grateful events impacted the grateful mood of those low in trait gratitude more than those high in

dispositional gratitude. Thus, the grateful mood of those lower in trait gratitude was more dependent on the occurrence of blessings in a day than those high in trait gratitude (McCullough, Tsang, Emmons 2004).

Taking these findings into account, and the negative correlations typically found between the inhibitor variables and trait gratitude, perhaps the mechanism by which the inhibitors decrease gratitude over time is through suppressing the frequency (number of distinct events) and density (number of distinct benefactors) of grateful experiences. Indeed, as previously discussed, each of the putative inhibitors is associated with interpersonal dysfunction to varying degrees. This dysfunction could ostensibly reduce the amount of fruitful relationships one would expect to propagate grateful experiences. Both measured forms of cynicism, for example, are characterized by a lack of trust (Floberg et al., 2014; Leung & Bond, 2004), which implies cynics are selective about those they interact with. A smaller social circle in this case would restrict a cynic's potential for density. Vulnerable narcissists, though highly dependent on interpersonal evaluations for self-esteem, tend to avoid social interaction and have trouble forming and maintaining meaningful relationships (Dickinson & Pincus, 2003). Thus, through a neurotic need for positive evaluations and fear of negative interactions, they starve themselves of relationships that might bear fruit in the form of gratitude scenarios, lowering potential for frequency and density of gratitude. If this explanation were true, one would expect those high in inhibitory variables to be recalling grateful memories that are more temporally distant, and involve particularly close relationships.

Another potential explanation is that those high in cynicism and narcissism are, in fact, exposed to typical levels of frequency and density with regard to grateful experience, yet they fail to attend to all but the most salient of examples due to the attitudes and attentional biases characteristic of these respective traits. In addition, it may be that they do not attend to grateful memories by their own volition. To my knowledge, no research has specifically examined how cynicism affects biases in interpretation or memory recall, but it may be that as the grateful disposition facilitates grateful biases in the interpretation of social situations (e.g., Wood et al., 2008), the cynic interprets all but the most remarkable of gratitude-eliciting situations in a cynical manner—expecting exploitation or covert demands of future reciprocity. Among narcissists, it may be that attention is naturally focused inward, and the occurrence of positive interpersonal events escapes their attention as a result.

Alternatively, it may be that the inhibitory traits reduce the frequency of grateful experience through raising the bar for what qualifies as benefits appropriate for gratitude. Here, I return to the recognitions of gratitude integral to its experience (Watkins, 2014). In the current study, my gratitude manipulation simply requested that the participant recall and write about a salient experience in which someone did something valuable for them. It is very likely that this manipulation entailed the recall of a memory which passed the more stringent threshold of those high in the inhibitory traits, and successfully activated the four recognitions, which produced strong responses of gratitude in most of my participants. In other words, my gratitude induction seemed to overpower any

individual differences. An induction scenario necessitating an in-lab activation of these four recognitions could have different results, showing a distinct difference in what qualifies as a gratitude-eliciting event at different levels of the inhibitory traits. Methods exist that both involve these recognitions and can be modified to differentially satisfy them. I provide one example of how that could be accomplished in my discussion of future research directions.

While the previous explanations seek to describe the lack of a negative influence by the inhibitors on grateful experience, the most clear and significant result in the study was actually that which showed grandiose narcissism, as measured by the NPI, moderating an increase in gratitude such that it grew in the gratitude induction condition as levels of narcissism increased. In other words, contrary to my predictions, narcissists showed a greater increase in gratitude in response to the gratitude induction than did those lower in narcissism. Why did this occur? Recent findings have shown that orienting narcissists to situations of interdependence have resulted in decreases in narcissism, if only temporarily (Jordan, Giacomin and Kopp, 2014). This reveals the potential for narcissists to assume a communal orientation, at least in situations where they are compelled to engage in one. In the gratitude condition, narcissists were directed to a salient memory involving the receipt of something valuable from another, a situation in which they were forced to acknowledge the contributions of someone other than the self. In doing this task, they showed themselves to be wholly capable of grateful experience. Thus, it may be that while narcissists are stubborn with regard to recognizing the value of others, coercing them to do so is not

impossible, and can in fact temper their self-centeredness. This is a conclusion that relies largely on indirect findings, however, and should see further inquiry.

Though no empirical research has broached the topic, it may be that cynicism is subject to the same malleability, particularly at a local level. In order to maintain cynical beliefs in the context of frequent requests to recall grateful experiences, one would have to engage in willful ignorance of the occurrence and resultant benefits of those experiences. While this may very well be the case with cynics, it may also be possible that their cynicism results from a tendency to selectively attend to negative interpersonal events and stimuli, while remaining relatively oblivious to the positive.

Without exception, the putative inhibitory traits entail some amount of interpersonal dysfunction. The cynical mindset, for example, is one that is characterized by a lack of trust (Floberg et al., 2014; Leung & Bond, 2004). Narcissism entails an inflated level of self-focus that manifests itself in distinct ways between the subtypes— with the neurotic need for validation in vulnerable narcissists, and the overt arrogance of the grandiose narcissists. Gratitude, on the other hand, is a construct which exposes the individual to the good in others. The interpersonal dysfunction common in the inhibitory traits could therefore see improvement in the face of grateful experience. Thus, I move on to ideas for future studies that will both test the explanations offered in this discussion and the idea that inhibitory traits can be influenced by drawing attention to the contributions of others.

**Limitations & Future Directions**

There are several avenues for elaboration with regard to these findings. For example, this study only occurred over two time points, and examined only one powerful induction of gratitude: the recall of a significant gratitude-oriented memory, regardless of *when* it occurred. Potential improvements and avenues for expansion lie in the length of the study, the number of points in time at which gratitude is measured, and the nature of the gratitude treatment. A logical next step would be a longitudinal study involving multiple time points where state gratitude is measured. For example, a two-month study where inhibitor variables are measured prior to randomly assigning participants to one of two conditions. One condition entails the deliberate recording of grateful memories and their perceived power at the end of each week, and the other a simple measurement of state gratitude at the same time points. The recorded memories could then be examined in terms of the distinct benefactors present. This approach would help to discern which explanations offered in the discussion of the results are most applicable by revealing the actual frequency, density and intensity of grateful experiences among those high in inhibitory traits over time. If the conclusions offered in this study are on the mark, one would expect that those who report higher inhibitor traits initially would report fewer experiences of gratitude, attribute them to fewer benefactors, and experience lower state gratitude throughout the study.

In order to examine the possibility that these traits simply have a higher threshold for activating the recognitions of gratitude, future research could

examine gratitude manipulations of differing "power." To my knowledge, no studies have examined different gratitude scenarios specifically with respect to the amount of gratitude elicited as different aspects of the situation are changed. That being said, it could be possible to take effective gratitude manipulations that involve making the recognitions of gratitude during the experiment and modifying aspects of them that facilitate those recognitions.

For example, one manipulation that could be altered with regard to the recognitions is the DeSteno et al. (2010) computer induction, in which a research confederate posing as another participant ostensibly saves the real participant 10 minutes of work after a programmed "computer malfunction" threatens a loss of progress in the study. One could manipulate the "goodness of the gift" by changing at what point in the study the malfunction occurs: for example at 5, 10, or 20 minutes in. One could also manipulate the goodness of the giver and gratuitousness of the gift by changing the "benefactor" in the situation from an ostensible participant to a research confederate, who—while having provided a valuable benefit—has an interest in the participant successfully completing the study in a timely manner. Similarly, this could be done by suggesting that neither of the participants can leave the study until both of them are finished, thus inserting a potential ulterior motive for the participant-benefactor.

Additionally, future studies on inhibitors should measure the inhibitory variables, particularly narcissism, both before and after gratitude treatments. As alluded to in my discussion, it may be that, as the situation overpowers narcissistic attitudes with regularity, they result in diminished inhibitory traits over

the course of the study. Once again I point to the implications resulting from

Jordan, Giacomin and Kopp's (2014) findings of diminished narcissism in the

face of communal orientation as support for this idea. Though no empirical

research has broached the topic, it may be that cynicism is subject to the same

malleability, particularly at a local level. In order to maintain cynical beliefs in the

context of frequent requests to recall grateful experiences, one would have to

engage in willful ignorance of the occurrence and resultant benefits of those

experiences. While this may very well be the case with cynics, it may also be

possible that their cynicism results from a tendency to selectively attend to

negative interpersonal events and stimuli, while remaining relatively oblivious to

the positive.

**Conclusions**

In conclusion, the findings of this study hint at the possibility that inhibitory

variables likely exert their effect on gratitude through mitigating the frequency

and density of its experience in day-to-day living, rather than mitigating the

intensity of those experiences when they do happen. When it comes to directing

attention to a previous experience of gratitude, it appears that the power of the

situation overwhelms differences in personality. The induction was effective and

the suggested inhibitors were irrelevant to that process, save grandiose

narcissism which, contrary to initial predictions, influenced the outcome in a

positive way.

These results suggest a few possibilities. First, that individuals high in

cynicism and narcissism do not attend to grateful stimuli or memories on their

own, yet do so when directed and experience the requisite grateful emotion as a result. Second, that cynics and narcissists simply have a higher threshold for the elicitation of grateful emotion. Third, that the characteristic interpersonal dysfunction of the inhibitory traits leads to fewer actual opportunities to experience gratitude in day-to-day experience, yet those experiences elicit gratitude normally. Finally, that having grandiose narcissists attend to the contributions and value of relationships could provoke a reorientation from self-focus to communal focus. While it is too early to suggest definitively that coercing narcissistic (or cynical) individuals to attend to grateful memories or having them watch for the contributions of others in day-to-day experience would lead to any lasting change in personality, that possibility should not be ignored. Narcissism and cynicism are both traits that have been associated with pervasive interpersonal dysfunction, resulting at least in part from an expectation of disappointment from social interactions. It seems almost intuitive that gratitude, a moral affect associated with a resplendent array of benefits resulting from positive social interaction, could be the treatment for that dysfunction. If cynicism and narcissism could be, in part, characterized as having one's eyes closed to the good in the world outside of oneself, perhaps gratitude is both the method by which one's eyes could be opened and the result of such an action in turn.

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# APPENDIX

## QUESTIONNAIRES

## PANAS w/ GAS (State Gratitude)

This scale consists of a number of words and phrases that describe different feelings and emotions.  Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word.  Indicate to what extent **you feel that way right now, that is, at the present moment**, *not* necessarily how you feel generally or how you feel on average.  Use the following scale to record your answers.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very slightly<br>extremely<br>or not at all | a little | moderately | quite a bit | |

| | |
|---|---|
| _____ interested | _____ irritable |
| _____ distressed | _____ alert |
| _____ **grateful** | _____ ashamed |
| _____ excited | _____ inspired |
| _____ upset | _____ **thankful** |
| _____ strong | _____ nervous |
| _____ guilty | _____ determined |
| _____ scared | _____ attentive |
| _____ **appreciative** | _____ jittery |
| _____ hostile | _____ active |
| _____ enthusiastic | _____ afraid |
| _____ proud | _____ joyful |
| _____ sad | _____ feeling indebted |
| _____ contented | _____ resentful |
| _____ happy | _____ lonely |
| _____ pleasurable sensations | _____ unpleasant sensations |
| _____ delighted | _____ lively |
| _____ awe | |

# Social Cynicism Scale

The following is a series of statements about the world which you may or may not believe. To what extent do you believe these statements to be representative of reality? Please indicate your level of belief from 1 (Strong Disbelief) to 5 (Strong Belief) by using the scale to the right of each item.

| 1<br>Strongly<br>Disbelieve | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5<br>Strongly<br>Believe |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Young people are too impulsive and unreliable. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Too much money ruins one's character. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | It is rare to see a happy ending in real life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | Old people are usually stubborn and biased. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | Power and status make people arrogant. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | It is hard to make friends with people who have different opinions from yourself | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | Powerful people tend to exploit others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. | People will stop working hard after they secure a comfortable life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. | Kind-hearted people usually suffer loss. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. | Kind-hearted people are easily bullied. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. | People deeply in love are usually blind. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. | If one belongs to a minority group, it is difficult to gain acceptance from the majority group. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. | Caring about societal affairs only brings trouble for yourself. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale

Please answer the following questions by deciding to what extent each item is characteristic of your feelings and behavior.

1. I can become entirely absorbed in thinking about my personal affairs, my health, my cares or my relations to others.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |

2. My feelings are easily hurt by ridicule or by the slighting remarks of others.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |

3. When I enter a room I often become self-conscious and feel that the eyes of others are upon me.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |

4. I dislike sharing the credit of an achievement with others.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |

5. I dislike being with a group unless I know that I am appreciated by at least one of those present.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |

6. I feel that I am temperamentally different from most people.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |

7. I often interpret the remarks of others in a personal way.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

|       |       |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |

8. I easily become wrapped up in my own interests and forget the existence of others.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |

9. I feel that I have enough on my hands without worrying about other people's troubles.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |

10. I am secretly "put out" when other people come to me with their troubles, asking me for my time and sympathy.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |

## **RSE (Self-Esteem scale)**

Please decide to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.  Remember, there are no correct or incorrect responses.

Please answer each item using a number from 1 to 5, using the following scale:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree | | Neither agree nor Disagree | | Strongly agree |

\_\_\_  I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.

\_\_\_  I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

\_\_\_  All in all I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

\_\_\_  I am able to do things as well as most other people.

\_\_\_  I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

\_\_\_  I take a positive attitude toward myself.

\_\_\_  On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

\_\_\_  I wish I could have more respect for myself.

\_\_\_  I certainly feel useless at times.

\_\_\_  At times I think I am no good at all.

## **Short GRAT (Trait Gratitude Measure)**

Please provide your honest feelings and beliefs about the following statements which relate to you.  There are no right or wrong answers to these statements.  We would like to know how much you feel these statements are true or not true of you.  Please try to indicate your true feelings and beliefs, as opposed to what you would like to believe.  Respond to the following statements by filling in the number in the blank provided that best represents your real feelings.  Please use the scale provided below, and please choose one number for each statement (i.e. don't write in two numbers), and record your choice in the blank preceding each statement.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I strongly disagree | | I disagree somewh at | | I feel neutral about the stateme nt | | I mostly agree with the stateme nt | | I strongly agree with the statemen t |

\_\_\_\_\_  1.	I couldn't have gotten where I am today without the help of many people.

\_\_\_\_\_  2.	Life has been good to me.

\_\_\_\_\_  3.	There never seems to be enough to go around and I never seem to get my share.

\_\_\_\_\_  4.	Oftentimes I have been overwhelmed at the beauty of nature.

\_\_\_\_\_  5.	Although I think it's important to feel good about your accomplishments, I think that it's also important to remember how others have contributed to my accomplishments.

\_\_\_\_\_  6.	I really don't think that I've gotten all the good things that I deserve in life.

\_\_\_\_\_  7.	Every Fall I really enjoy watching the leaves change colors.

\_\_\_\_\_  8.	 Although I'm basically in control of my life, I can't help but think about all those who have supported me and helped me along the way.

_____ 9.	I think that it's important to "Stop and smell the roses."

_____ 10.	More bad things have happened to me in my life than I deserve.

_____ 11.	Because of what I've gone through in my life, I really feel like the world owes me something.

_____ 12.	I think that it's important to pause often to "count my blessings."

_____ 13.	I think it's important to enjoy the simple things in life.

_____ 14.	I feel deeply appreciative for the things others have done for me in my life.

_____ 15.	For some reason I don't seem to get the advantages that others get.

_____ 16.	I think it's important to appreciate each day that you are alive.

**CLOT Final (Cynicism)**

Please respond to the following items for how **you have been feeling recently about those around you**. There are no right or wrong answers, simply provide your most honest response. Circle the number below each item that best represents your agreement/disagreement for each statement.

Please use the scale below and insert a number in the blank to indicate your response for each of the following items.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Strongly Disagree* | | *Disagree* | | *Neutral* | | *Agree* | | *Strongly Agree* |

1. ___ Lately, I have found that it has been easier to trust others.

2. ___ When I think about the people I know, most of them can be trusted.

3. ___ The people I know in my work, school, and social life are largely just out for themselves.

4. ___ The people in my life are good people.

5. ___ Recently, people have been taking advantage of me.

6. ___ I would be making a lot more progress towards my goals if the people in my life could be more supportive.

7. ___ Recently, I've noticed that the people in my life have been exceptionally good to me.

8. ___ Lately, I've noticed that when others do something for me they often have ulterior motives.

9. ___ I'm really glad for the family that I have.

10. ___ Although they won't say it to my face, I believe that lately people have been criticizing me behind my back.

11. ___ When someone helps me in the store they're just trying to get me to buy something.

12. ___ When I think about what others have done for me recently, I'm amazed at how good they have been to me.

13. ___ Lately, I've noticed how selfish people are.

14. ___ I think that I give more to others than they give to me.

15. ___ Recently, I have noticed that my family has been very supportive of me.

16. ___ For some reason, lately I've noticed that people have been trying to impede my success.

17. ___ Of the people I know, most would cheat on a test if they knew they wouldn't get caught.

18. ___ Lately, I have noticed how kind people have been to me.

19. ___ I think that people could care less about how I'm really doing.

20. ___ Most people I know are really concerned for me as a person.

21. ___ I'm really glad for the friends that I have.

22. ___ Recently I have noticed that my friends have been very supportive of me.

# Narcissistic Personality Inventory

This inventory consists of a number of pairs of statements with which you may or may not identify.

Consider this example:

A. I like having authority over people

B. I don't mind following orders

Which of these two statements is closer to your own feelings about yourself? If you identify more with "liking to have authority over people" than with "not minding following orders", then you would choose option A.

You may identify with both A and B. In this case you should choose the statement which seems closer to yourself. Or, if you do not identify with either statement, select the one which is least objectionable or remote. In other words, read each pair of statements and then choose the one that is closer to your own feelings. Indicate your answer by writing the letter (A or B) in the space provided to the right of each item. Please do not skip any items.

1.      A. I have a natural talent for influencing people.

        B. I am not good at influencing people

2.      A. Modesty doesn't become me.

        B. I am essentially a modest person.

3.      A. I would do almost anything on a dare.

        B. I tend to be a fairly cautious person.

4.      A. When people compliment me I sometimes get embarrassed.

        B. I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so.

5.      A. The thought of ruling the world frightens the hell out of me.

        B. If I ruled the world it would be a better place.

6.      A. I can usually talk my way out of anything.

B. I try to accept the consequences of my behavior.

7.    A. I prefer to blend in with the crowd.

B. I like to be the center of attention.

8.    A. I will be a success.

B. I am not too concerned about success.

9.    A. I am no better or worse than most people.

B. I think I am a special person.

10.    A. I am not sure if I would make a good leader.

B. I see myself as a good leader.

11.    A. I am assertive.

B. I wish I were more assertive.

12.    A. I like to have authority over other people.

B. I don't mind following orders.

13.    A. I find it easy to manipulate people.

B. I don't like it when I find myself manipulating people.

14.    A. I insist upon getting the respect that is due me.

B. I usually get the respect that I deserve.

15.    A. I don't particularly like to show off my body.

B. I like to show off my body.

16.    A. I can read people like a book.

B. People are sometimes hard to understand.

17.    A. If I feel competent I am willing to take responsibility for making decisions.

B. I like to take responsibility for making decisions.

18.    A. I just want to be reasonably happy.

B. I want to amount to something in the eyes of the world.

19. A. My body is nothing special.

B. I like to look at my body.

20. A. I try not to be a show off.

B. I will usually show off if I get the chance.

21. A. I always know what I am doing.

B. Sometimes I am not sure of what I am doing.

22. A. I sometimes depend on people to get things done.

B. I rarely depend on anyone else to get things done.

23. A. Sometimes I tell good stories.

B. Everybody likes to hear my stories.

24. A. I expect a great deal from other people.

B. I like to do things for other people.

25. A. I will never be satisfied until I get all that I deserve.

B. I take my satisfactions as they come.

26. A. Compliments embarrass me.

B. I like to be complimented.

27. A. I have a strong will to power.

B. Power for its own sake doesn't interest me.

28. A. I don't care about new fads and fashions.

B. I like to start new fads and fashions.

29. A. I like to look at myself in the mirror.

B. I am not particularly interested in looking at myself in the mirror.

30. A. I really like to be the center of attention.

B. It makes me uncomfortable to be the center of attention.

31.    A. I can live my life in any way I want to.

       B. People can't always live their lives in terms of what they want.

32.    A. Being an authority doesn't mean that much to me.

       B. People always seem to recognize my authority.

33.    A. I would prefer to be a leader.

       B. It makes little difference to me whether I am a leader or not.

34.    A. I am going to be a great person.

       B. I hope I am going to be successful.

35.    A. People sometimes believe what I tell them.

       B. I can make anybody believe anything I want them to.

36.    A. I am a born leader.

       B. Leadership is a quality that takes a long time to develop.

37.    A. I wish somebody would someday write my biography.

       B. I don't like people to pry into my life for any reason.

38.    A. I get upset when people don't notice how I look when I go out in public.

       B. I don't mind blending into the crowd when I go out in public.

39.    A. I am more capable than other people.

       B. There is a lot that I can learn from other people.

40.    A. I am much like everybody else.

       B. I am an extraordinary person.

# INDUCTION PROCEDURES

### Induction Procedure (Gratitude)

The following task will ask you to recall a memory, as vividly as possible, and write a description of that event for five minutes. Please take a moment to clear your head and do your best to focus on this task, bringing yourself to where you were emotionally, situationally, and mentally.

Recall an event where **someone** did something important and valuable **for you**. What makes something important and valuable is up to you, but examples could include the giving of a gift, the doing of a favor, or the lending of a helping hand, among others. When given the researcher's signal, please describe the event and relevant feelings below for five minutes. The researcher will notify you when time is up.

### Induction Procedure (Pride)

The following task will ask you to recall a memory, as vividly as possible, and write a description of that event for five minutes. Please take a moment to clear your head and do your best to focus on this task, bringing yourself to where you were emotionally, situationally, and mentally.

Recall an event where **you** accomplished something important and valuable **for yourself**. What makes something important and valuable is up to you, but examples could include the completion of a difficult task, or making a correct decision that led to a beneficial outcome, among others. When given the researcher's signal, please describe the event and relevant feelings below for five minutes. The researcher will notify you when time is up.

### Induction Procedure (Control)

The following task will ask you to recall a memory, as vividly as possible, and write a description of that event for five minutes. Please take a moment to clear your head and do your best to focus on this task, bringing yourself to where you were emotionally, situationally, and mentally.

Recall the last day you had where nothing truly notable happened: You completed your daily routine without interruption, were about as productive as average, and spent your afternoon doing what you most often do. When given the researcher's signal, please describe the day below for five minutes. The researcher will notify you when time is up.

# CURRICULUM VITAE

## JOSHUA BELL

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## EDUCATION

**Master of Science, Experimental Psychology;** GPA: 3.98      June 2016
Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA

**Bachelor of Arts, Psychology**; Summa cum Laude      June 2013
Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA

**Associate of Arts**                      June 2011
Spokane Falls Community College, Spokane, WA

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

### *Dr. Philip Watkins's Positive Psychology lab, EWU*
**Graduate Research Assistant**
09.2014 - 06.2016

- Prepared and presented results as part of a symposium at the Western Psychological Association convention.
- Aided in coding data for studies on gender and indebtedness and optimal grateful recounting.
- Designed thesis exploring the effects of narcissism and cynicism on the experience of gratitude.
- Prepared poster presentation of an abridged version of an indebtedness scale.

### *Dr. Amani El-Alayli's Social Psychology lab, EWU*
**Graduate Research Assistant**
09.2015 - 06.2016

- Preparing a former graduate student's thesis, on narcissism and body perception, for publication
- Designed independent research study on digital piracy motivations, attained IRB approval, gathered and analyzed data.
- Aided in the conceptualization and application of studies examining biases in the perception of marijuana users.

**Research Assistant**
01.2012 - 06.2013

- Proctored computer-based psychology experiments to participants, individually and in groups.
- Used SONA system to grant research credit to participants.
- Coded, analyzed and interpreted data on studies involving prejudice and narcissism.
- Aided in conceptualization of proposed experiments conducted by the lab group.
- Prepared results of a study on narcissistic body perception for presentation at a regional conference.

***Dr. Jonathan Anderson's Neuropsychology lab, EWU***
**Graduate Research Assistant**
01.2015 - 06.2016
- Developed studies involving the use of a virtual reality (VR) headset (Oculus Rift).
- Carried out research using psychophysiological measures (HRM, GSR) in addition to self-report measures.

**Research Assistant**
03.2013 - 05.2014
- Proctored face-to-face psychology experiments to individual participants.
- Applied simple manipulations in study exploring music's effect on stressful task-completion.
- Coded data from experiments.
- Used SONA system to manage the application of a study.

## PEER REVIEWED POSTERS AND PRESENTATIONS

Watkins, P. C., Bell, J., Scheibe, D., Solom, R. (2016, June). Thieves of thankfulness: What factors inhibit the development of gratitude? Paper to be presented to the 8th Annual European Convention for Positive Psychology, Angers, France.

Bell, J., Frers, A., Pedersen, C., El-Alayli, A. (2016, May) Achieving the ideal self: Differences between narcissistic subtypes. Poster presented at the 28th Annual Association for Psychological Science Convention, Chicago, IL.

Pedersen, C., Bell, J., El-Alayli, A., Fountain, J. (2016, May) Marijuana use stereotypes may be stronger than racism or sexism in person perception. Poster presented at the 28th Annual Association for Psychological

Science Convention, Chicago, IL.

Bell, J., Mozafari, A., Duncan, A. (2016, April). Differences of motivation between forms of digital media piracy. Poster presented at the Annual Western Psychological Association Convention, Long Beach, CA.

Bell, J., & Watkins, P. C. (2016, April). Analysis of an abridged indebtedness scale. Poster presented to the Annual Convention of the Western Psychological Association, Long Beach, CA.

Duncan, A., Mozafari, A., Bell, J., El-Alayli, A. (2016, April). Discrimination against marijuana users: Medical vs. recreational. Poster presented to the Annual Convention of the Western Psychological Association, Long Beach, CA.

Mozafari, A., Duncan, A., Bell, J., El-Alayli, A. (2016, April). Self-versus partner-enhancing comparisons in relationships and its potential consequences. Poster presented at the Annual Western Psychological Association Convention, Long Beach, CA.

Bell, J., Watkins, P. (2015, May). Thieves of thankfulness: Identifying the inhibitors of gratitude. Poster presented at the Eastern Washington University Research Symposium, Cheney, WA.

Bell, J., Watkins, P. (2015, May) Gratitude predicts future joy. In Watkins, P. C. (Chair). *Joy and gratitude: Exploration of a relationship important to well-being.* Symposium presented to the Annual Convention of the Western Psychological Association, Las Vegas, NV.

Kennedy, M., Bell, J. (2014, May) The effect of music on stressful tasks. Presented at the Eastern Washington University Research and Creative Works Symposium, Cheney, WA.

Bell, J., Joynes, C., Brown, A. (2013, April). The role of narcissistic subtypes in body perception. Poster presented at the Western Psychological Association Convention, Reno, NV and at the Eastern Washington University Research and Creative Works Symposium, Cheney, WA.

**<u>TEACHING EXPERIENCE</u>**
**Graduate Teaching Internship: Seminar, Media Psychology**

01.2016-04.2016
- One-hour weekly seminar, 15 students.
- Composed class materials (inc. syllabus, presentations, assignments, tests)
- Evaluated assignments, tests; applied final grades.

**Graduate Service Appointment, EWU**
09.2014-06.2016
- Performed teacher's aide duties for several professors.
- Proctored and graded tests.
- Applied grades using Canvas.

## HONORS AND AWARDS
Graduated Summa cum Laude from Eastern Washington (2013)
EWU Dean's List (2011-2013)
SFCC President's List (2010-2011)

## PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS
Psi Chi member, 2012-present
Western Psychological Association (WPA) Member, 2012-present
Association for Psychological Science (APS) Member, 2016-present

## REFERENCES

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