

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320886753>

The Dark Personality and Psychopathology: Toward a Brighter Future

Article in *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* · October 2017

DOI: 10.1037/abn0000305

CITATIONS

14

READS

1,455

4 authors, including:



Sander Thomaes
Utrecht University

95 PUBLICATIONS 2,111 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



Joshua D Miller
University of Georgia

294 PUBLICATIONS 15,850 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Five Factor Machiavellianism Inventory [View project](#)



Psychometrics and Personality Psychology [View project](#)

**The Dark Personality and Psychopathology:
Towards a Brighter Future**

Sander Thomaes

Utrecht University

Eddie Brummelman

Stanford University and University of Amsterdam

Joshua D. Miller

University of Georgia

Scott O. Lilienfeld

Emory University and University of Melbourne

Date of submission: July 1, 2017

The writing of this article was supported, in part, by funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 705217 to Eddie Brummelman.

Abstract

The young field of research on dark personality traits (i.e., socially aversive traits such as psychopathy, narcissism, and Machiavellianism) is gaining momentum. This Special Section examines the nature, origins, development, and sequelae of dark traits, underscoring their largely unappreciated relevance to abnormal psychology. The articles in this section adopt diverse perspectives (e.g., clinical, developmental, organizational, social-personality), use diverse methods (e.g., longitudinal, experience sampling), and sample diverse populations (e.g., offenders, psychiatric outpatients, school children). As an introduction to the Special Section, this article identifies key conceptual and methodological challenges to the field of dark personality research. Its aim is to spur novel approaches to how dark personality traits are implicated in psychopathology and abnormal behavior more broadly.

The Dark Personality and Psychopathology:

Towards a Brighter Future

Fifteen years ago, scholars first called for a unified approach to explore the most prominent socially aversive features of human nature, often termed the Dark Triad (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). The triad originally included psychopathy, narcissism, and Machiavellianism. Although each of these traits¹ had received ample scrutiny in the psychological (and to a lesser extent, psychiatric) literature, they had only rarely been examined in concert, raising important questions regarding their nature, overlap, and specificity. The field of dark personality research has begun to answer these questions. As a 15-year-old field, dark personality research is in its adolescence: a time of both opportunity and risk, and a time when long-term goal setting is needed to continue to thrive (Arnett, 1999; Crone & Dahl, 2012; Steinberg, 2014). We organize this introduction to the Special Section around the themes of opportunity, risk, and goal setting as they apply to the field of dark personality research.

An Introduction

The term “dark” connotes social aversiveness. At their core, dark personality traits share an antagonistic interpersonal orientation (Vize, Lynam, Collison, & Miller, in press). Individuals with pronounced dark traits are often perceived as braggarts, cheaters, manipulators, sadists, trolls, bullies, or downright aggressors (Paulhus, 2014). They tend to be disagreeable (Jacobwitz & Egan, 2006; Paulhus & Williams, 2002), socially dominant (Ho et al., 2015), manipulative and callous (Jones & Figueredo, 2013; Muris et al., 2017), prejudiced towards outgroup members (Hodson, Hogg, & MacInnis, 2009), promiscuous and sexually exploitative (Jonason,

¹ We use the term “traits” to follow conventional terminology. Note, however, that psychopathy, narcissism, and Machiavellianism themselves comprise several different traits and are most accurately viewed as multidimensional configurations of traits.

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

Li, Webster, & Schmitt, 2009), and physically, verbally, and relationally aggressive (Baughman, Dearing, Giammarco, & Vernon, 2012; Jones & Paulhus, 2010; Thomaes, Bushman, Orobio de Castro, Cohen, & Denissen, 2009). Although they are not necessarily incompetent when it comes to understanding other people's perspectives, they display reduced empathic concern towards others (Vonk, Zeigler-Hill, Ewing, Mercer, & Noser, 2015; Wai & Tiliopoulos, 2012).

Despite their overlap, dark personality traits differ in important ways. For example, compared with their psychopathic and Machiavellian counterparts, narcissistic individuals are more strongly invested in garnering attention and admiration from others—up to a point at which they become so aversive that they are rejected (Leckelt, Küfner, Nestler, & Back, 2015; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001; Paulhus, 1998). And when they are rejected, narcissistic individuals may lash out in retaliation (Twenge & Campbell, 2003). Conversely, psychopathic (and to a lesser extent Machiavellian) individuals are more likely to engage in criminal activities than are their narcissistic counterparts (Furnham, Richards, & Paulhus, 2013; Paulhus, 2014).

What underlies such phenotypic differences between dark personality traits?

Individuals with pronounced dark traits strive for social dominance and tend to exploit others to serve their own goals, but they may do so for different reasons. For instance, narcissistic individuals view establishing social dominance as a means to being admired by others, whereas psychopathic and Machiavellian individuals tend to view establishing social dominance as an end in itself (Thomaes & Brummelman, 2016). Thus, even when dark traits overlap in their surface features, their underlying goals may differ.

Because dark traits engender distress in others (i.e., family members, romantic partners, friends, co-workers, or even one's own offspring; Miller,

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

Campbell, & Pilkonis, 2007), some have argued that these traits are more akin to “bad” than “mad,” and thus tangential to psychiatric nosology (e.g., Frances, 2016, 2017). We disagree. Bad and mad are not mutually exclusive; in fact, the same traits that harm others often harm the self as well. For example, narcissistic individuals’ retaliatory aggression harms others, but also harms their own social relationships and well-being (Leckelt et al., 2016; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). Unfortunately, however, our understanding of how dark traits are implicated in psychopathology is still limited. We initiated this Special Section to help begin to fill this gap.

This Special Section

This Special Section brings together exciting examples of research on the nature, origins, development, and sequelae of the dark personality traits. Our overarching goal was to improve our interdisciplinary understanding of how dark personalities are implicated in abnormal behavior and maladaptation more broadly. Although dark traits are prevalent in non-clinical populations, they do place individuals at risk for maladjustment, including psychopathology. To help understand processes of risk and resilience, we selected exemplars of dark personality research conducted in both at risk (i.e., forensic, clinical) and population-based samples. We also included research in population-based samples to highlight important, unresolved methodological issues with which the field needs to grapple.

Although traditional dark personality approaches are triadic (focusing on psychopathy, narcissism, and Machiavellianism), more recent approaches have been more inclusive, casting neighboring personality traits (e.g., everyday sadism; Buckels, Jones, & Paulhus, 2013) as dark as well. Here we adopted an inclusive approach that considers personality traits as “dark” to the extent that they entail an antagonistic interpersonal orientation—e.g., dishonest, cynical, self-aggrandizing, self-absorbed,

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

manipulative, and/or callous. We prioritized manuscripts that examined two or more dark traits simultaneously so as to highlight their shared and unique features, although we allowed exemplars of excellent research on a singular dark trait as well.

We encouraged research from diverse disciplinary perspectives (e.g., clinical, developmental, organizational, psychobiological, social-personality), and adopting diverse methods (e.g., longitudinal, experience sampling, experimental). Because we selected manuscripts from letters of intent that described research questions and methods, but not necessarily findings, this Special Section offers an unbiased picture of hypotheses receiving support and those that do not.

A Time of Opportunity

The classic stereotype of adolescence is that it is a time of storm and stress. Contemporary thinking, however, emphasizes that adolescence is a time of opportunity as well: When adequately prepared for their new life-stage, many adolescents learn and grow at a rapid pace (Arnett, 1999; Crone & Dahl, 2012; Steinberg, 2014). Similarly, part of the excitement that surrounds the field of dark personality research is that it is expanding rapidly with many new avenues of inquiry available for exploration.

One such avenue—which is the focus of this Special Section—is the study of how dark traits are implicated in psychopathology and may help to explain the processes involved in psychological maladjustment. Scholars have begun to examine the distinctions (if any) between everyday and pathological manifestations of dark traits (Miller & Campbell, 2008; Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010; Widiger, 2006). Similarly, they have begun to explore how these traits play a role in the onset and maintenance of maladjustment—ranging from antisocial behaviors such as aggressive, violent, or criminal activity (Chabrol, Van Leeuwen, Rodgers, &

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

Séjourné, 2009; Skeem & Cooke, 2010; Wright, Morgan, Almeida, Almosaed, Moghrabi, & Bashatah, 2017) to internalizing problems such as depression and phobias (Blonigen, Hicks, Krueger, Patrick, & Iacono, 2005; Jonason, Baughman, Carter, & Parker, 2015; Miller et al., 2010). Furthermore, scholars have begun to explore when and how dark traits arise in development (Blair, Peschardt, Budhani, Mitchell, & Pine, 2006; Brummelman et al., 2015; Jonason, Lyons, Bethell, 2014), and how they come to shape longer-term mental health and adjustment (Gretton, Hare, & Catchpole, 2004; Miller et al., 2007; Reijntjes et al., 2016).

Another avenue concerns the question of when and how dark traits may, paradoxically, yield interpersonal benefits. Individuals with dark traits are often adept at acquiring resources for themselves, such as status and power. Moreover, their hard, persuasive, and charismatic leadership styles may pay off in certain occupational settings, especially those in need of new visions, reforms, or bold decision-making (Sedikides & Campbell, 2017). Unsurprisingly, dark personality features appear to be overrepresented among those in top management and political positions, although systematic research examining this issue is relatively scant (Babiak, Neumann, & Hare, 2010; Smith & Lilienfeld, 2013; Watts et al., 2013). One exciting challenge that faces dark personality research is that it needs to clarify how dark traits contribute to maladjustment in some individuals and some contexts, while they may benefit other individuals in other contexts.

A Time of Risk

Despite the understandable excitement surrounding these research opportunities, we propose that the field faces a number of risks. Just as adolescents need to continually adapt to rapidly occurring changes to avoid developmental delay or derailment, several features of dark personality research will require reorganization

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

to enable the field to continue to grow and make enduring contributions. We next address several vital risks and future directions for enhancing the quality of dark personality research. Some of these concern methodological rigor, whereas others concern theoretical precision and comprehensiveness.

Methodological Rigor. First, most research on dark traits is cross-sectional. Cross-sectional research has been key to fleshing out the nomological network that surrounds dark traits, but it is not especially well-suited to examining their origins or outcomes. Indeed, research examining potential determinants of dark traits (e.g., socialization experiences) has often been based on retrospective reports. Similarly, the assumption that dark traits may precede or even cause mental health outcomes has largely remained untested. We should complement cross-sectional methods with prospective longitudinal and experimental methods (e.g., randomized controlled trials) to better understand the potential causes and consequences of dark traits. One example of such a prospective longitudinal approach can be found in Dotterer et al. (this issue). They followed youth from early childhood up to early adulthood, and identified developmental antecedents of three components of psychopathy—boldness, disinhibition, and meanness (Patrick, Fowles, & Krueger, 2009)—in key developmental stages (i.e., preschool age, pre-adolescence, and mid-adolescence). Such long-term, developmentally-sensitive longitudinal research will be key to improve our understanding of the origins of dark traits.

Second, research in this field often relies on single-informant reports, most commonly self-reports, to assess both dark traits and behavioral or psychopathological correlates. This reliance can be problematic, largely because individuals with dark personality traits may report their behaviors and vulnerabilities dishonestly, or may have limited self-insight (Miller, Jones, & Lynam, 2011). In

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

addition, the exclusive reliance on single-informant reports is likely to yield inflated effect sizes arising from method covariance. The field will benefit from the increased use of multi-method approaches (including observations, objective measures, or comprehensive, multi-informant reports) to assess the correlates of dark traits.

Third, as illustrated by Sleep and colleagues (this issue), there are concerns about the pervasive data analytic approach of “partialing”—removing shared variance among dark personality constructs in analyses of their correlates. Researchers often use this approach in an attempt to uncover distinctive nomological networks of individual dark traits. Sleep et al. argue that partialing can yield underappreciated interpretive problems (see also Lynam, Hoyle, & Newman, 2005; Meehl, 1971). They show how partialled and non-partialled dark trait constructs correlate differently with both basic and pathological personality traits and other important outcomes, especially for narcissism and Machiavellianism. Consequently, it is challenging to integrate findings from bivariate and multivariate dark personality research into a unified, cohesive nomological network. Researchers should therefore develop shared practices to analyze and interpret associations involving partialled and non-partialled dark traits.

Fourth, as is true for all psychological and medical fields, the dark personality field will need to take measures to alleviate concerns with reproducibility. With each study they conduct, researchers face methodological and analytic decisions that may influence the significance of their findings (Lilienfeld & Waldman, 2017; Simmons, Nelson, & Simonsohn, 2011). Questionable research practices such as *p*-hacking and HARKing (hypothesizing after results are known) have long been prevalent in psychology and related disciplines, undermining the reproducibility of our findings (Open Science Collaboration, 2015; Pashler & Wagenmakers, 2012). As is true for

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

other fields, embracing the values of openness and transparency will be critical to help the dark personality field go forward. For instance, in the coming years, we hope to see more studies in this field incorporate pre-registered hypotheses and analytic plans.

Theoretical Precision and Comprehensiveness. In addition to risks involving methodological rigor, the field faces risks surrounding theoretical precision and comprehensiveness. First, although it is well-established that dark traits consist of several core dimensions, or building blocks (e.g., Krizan & Herlache, in press; Miller, Lynam, Hyatt, & Campbell, 2016; Patrick et al., 2009), researchers rarely examine those dimensions directly. This can be problematic because each of those dimensions may have distinct etiologies or outcomes (Smith, McCarthy, & Zapolski, 2009). Watts and colleagues (this issue) examine divergences among the dimensions underlying psychopathy, narcissism, and Machiavellianism and argue that these divergences are too often overlooked in the dark personality literature. Based on a series of factor analyses, they question whether the classic triadic structure among psychopathic, narcissistic, and Machiavellian traits is tenable. Similarly, Ro and colleagues (this issue) distinguish between six dimensions (or “facets”) underlying the antagonistic core of the dark personality (i.e., manipulativeness, grandiosity, attention-seeking, hostility, callousness, and deceitfulness) and demonstrate that these dimensions have divergent associations with multi-method assessments of psychosocial functioning. Future research should increasingly examine the core dimensions underlying dark personality traits.

Second, the study of dark traits has developed largely within disciplinary silos. Dark personalities lie at the intersection of normal and abnormal personality psychology: Healthy individuals differ from each other in the extent to which they possess dark traits; at the same time, higher levels of these traits may compromise

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

psychological health or place individuals at risk for maladjustment. As such, our understanding of dark traits is likely to benefit from an interdisciplinary approach that elucidates both normal and abnormal personality functioning. As it stands, such interdisciplinary approaches are rare. As one example of an interdisciplinary approach, Wright and colleagues (this issue) report a momentary assessment study among psychiatric outpatients oversampled for personality pathology. They show that narcissistic individuals are emotionally reactive to others' dominant behaviors, to which they react with quarrelsomeness. This study is interdisciplinary in that it builds on basic social psychological theory and research on narcissism (Bushman & Baumeister 1998; Thomaes Bushman, Stegge, & Olthof, 2008) to provide unique insights into the dynamics that underlie interpersonal maladjustment among individuals suffering from personality pathology.

Third, the label “dark” traits and the names of questionnaires to assess them (e.g., Dirty Dozen) suggest that dark traits are inherently evil or maladaptive. This presumption may inadvertently bias the questions we pose and the conclusions we draw. As is true for all personality traits, the (mal)adaptiveness of dark traits may be context-dependent; they are costly in some settings but may yield certain benefits in others (Ferguson & Lievens, 2017; Lilienfeld, Watts, & Smith, 2015; Sedikides, Rudich, Gregg, Kumashiro, & Rusbult, 2004). Language matters, and the field would benefit from using more impartial terms that do not risk biasing our conceptualizations of dark personalities as exclusively problematic.

A Time of Long-Term Goal Setting

Adolescence is a time that calls for long-term goal setting. Even if the here and now is full of excitement, teenagers need to make decisions that bear important ramifications for their future (e.g., “How much do I invest in my schoolwork?”). Here

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

we outline three research priorities that we see as critical to enhancing our understanding of the dark personality and its linkages to psychopathology. In doing so, we hope to offer the rudiments of a research agenda that should foster the field's growth in the upcoming years.

Priority 1: Understanding the Etiology and Development of Dark Traits.

One priority is to adopt a developmental psychopathology approach to understanding dark personality traits. When, how, and why do dark traits emerge? How do they develop over the course of life? And how do developmental changes in dark traits contribute to the emergence and maintenance of (vs. recovery from) psychopathology? Although developmental psychopathology work along these lines exists (Brummelman et al., 2015; Fontaine, Rijdsdijk, McCrory, & Viding, 2010; Frick, Ray, Thornton, & Kahn, 2014; Tuvblad, Wang, Bezdjian, Raine, & Baker, 2016), we have only just begun to explore these important questions.

Developmental psychopathology is guided by a few overarching principles (Cicchetti & Toth, 2009; Hinshaw, 2015). First, it views processes of maladaptation as deviations in normative development. For example, narcissism may be the outcome of normative self-development gone awry—a proposition that yields testable hypotheses on the age when narcissism first emerges (i.e., after children are cognitively able to form global self-views, at about age 7), and the developmental stages when normative changes in narcissism are to be expected (e.g., narcissism may normatively increase in adolescence, when children typically become more egocentric and sensitive to others' evaluations of them; Thomaes, Brummelman, & Sedikides, in press). Second, a developmental psychopathology approach casts development as an outcome of reciprocal processes unfolding over time; constitutional factors transact with environmental factors to shape the emergence and development of dark traits.

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

Developmental psychopathology research should examine, for example, how children's temperamental traits elicit certain socialization practices from their parents, which in turn shape their personality development (Brummelman, Nelemans, Thomaes, & Orobio de Castro, in press). Third, a developmental psychopathology approach encourages the study of heterotypic continuity, that is, how the same trait can be manifested in various ways across development. Dark personality researchers are hunting a moving target. For example, whereas narcissism may be expressed as grandiose fantasies in childhood (e.g., fantasies of being extremely powerful and successful), it may be expressed as concrete status-seeking behaviors in adulthood (e.g., trying to rise through the ranks in a corporation). Fourth, a developmental psychopathology approach encourages the exploration of equifinality (i.e., different developmental pathways leading to the same outcome) and multifinality (i.e., similar developmental pathways leading to different outcomes; Cicchetti & Rogosch, 1996). For example, researchers could explore why one type of socialization experience fosters narcissism in some individuals but not in others (Brummelman et al., in press; Thomaes, Brummelman, Reijntjes, & Bushman, 2013). Fifth, a developmental psychopathology approach accords as much emphasis on processes of resilience as it does on processes of risk (Masten, 2001; Rutter, 2012): Why do some youth maintain healthy development despite exposure to risk factors, or resume a healthier course of development after initial dark trait development? A better understanding of resilience will help researchers to develop targeted, more effective interventions.

This Special Section contains several examples of a developmental psychopathology approach. For example, De Clercq and colleagues (this issue) examine the co-development of several building blocks of the dark personality—aggression, dominance, impulsivity, lack of empathy, narcissism, and resistance—

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

from childhood to emerging adulthood. On average, individuals' aggression, dominance, and impulsivity decreases over time, whereas their lack of empathy, narcissism, and resistance remains stable. Importantly, these core traits, assessed in childhood, predict dark traits in adulthood. These findings show that dark personality traits trace their roots to early life and tend to be relatively stable over time, raising the possibility that early intervention is beneficial. Similarly, Dubas and colleagues (this issue) examine dark traits as they develop in adolescence. They use a person-centered developmental approach to identify three groups of adolescents—a low risk group, an impulsive group, and a “dark” impulsive group (i.e., youths high in callousness-unemotionality, grandiosity-manipulativeness, and impulsivity). These dark impulsive youths are at risk of an earlier and more severe trajectory of risk behaviors (e.g., substance abuse, sexual risk) than their impulsive-only counterparts, illustrating the potential repercussions of early emerging dark traits for psychological health.

Priority 2: Creating a Diverse and Non-WEIRD Knowledgebase. A

developmental psychopathology approach also requires that dark traits are studied in diverse samples and contexts, including forensic, clinical, and occupational contexts. As an example of the latter, Tokarev and colleagues (this issue) demonstrate that in organizations in which leaders are perceived as high in narcissism and psychopathy, employees feel more bullied, which in turn leads them to suffer from more symptoms of depression. This finding is consistent with the notion that leaders with elevated levels of dark traits may create adverse, “toxic” workplace conditions (O’Boyle, Forsyth, Banks, & McDaniel, 2012), which compromise the psychological health of employees.

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

Edwards and colleagues (this issue) recruited a sample of adult offenders with various criminal histories, and validated a recently proposed distinction between constellations of dark traits: a ‘dark’ constellation (i.e., dark traits marked by callousness, including interpersonal-affective psychopathic traits and grandiose narcissism) and a ‘vulnerable dark’ constellation (i.e., dark traits marked by emotional vulnerability, including lifestyle psychopathic traits, vulnerable narcissism, and borderline traits; Miller et al., 2010). They find that dark traits are mainly associated with crimes against persons (e.g., assault, murder/manslaughter), deceit and conning, whereas vulnerable dark traits are mainly associated with impulsive property crimes (e.g., theft, robbery) and drug-related crimes. Harrop and colleagues (this issue) recruited samples of community members, many of whom had attempted suicide in the past, as well as student and military samples, to explore links between dark traits and suicidality risk factors. Their findings point to a number of positive associations between (dimensions of) dark traits and both suicidal desire and capability, thus adding to growing evidence on how dark traits may place individuals at risk for serious internalizing problems that may boost the risk for suicide attempts.

As is true for most psychological knowledge, our current understanding of dark personality traits is WEIRD (i.e., based largely on research conducted in Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic populations; Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). This limitation is unfortunate not only because these nations house only a minority of the world’s population, but also because cross-cultural investigations that include samples from non-WEIRD nations may uncover important differences in both mean levels and (psychopathological) correlates of dark traits (Foster, Campbell, & Twenge 2003; Jonason, Li, & Czarna, 2013; Sullivan & Kosson, 2006).

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

That said, cross-cultural research on dark traits should strive to do more than comparing means and correlates across cultures. Rather, it should try to understand differences from the value-systems and social norms that characterize cultures. It is possible, for example, that dark traits are pervasive across cultures, but manifest differently depending on the expectations and norms that characterize those cultures. For example, the pancultural tendency to self-enhance, which is at the heart of narcissism, manifests in different ways in Western and Eastern cultures (Sedikides, Gaertner, & Toguchi, 2003): Westerners self-enhance on attributes relevant to the cultural ideal of individualism (e.g., being self-reliant, unique), whereas Easterners self-enhance on attributes relevant to the cultural ideal of collectivism (e.g., being respectful, socially connected). Future research should examine universal and culture-specific processes underlying dark personalities.

Priority 3: Clarifying the Structure and Boundaries of Dark Traits. The “triad” conceptualization of the dark personality has been a helpful heuristic, as it has drawn attention to three especially salient manifestations of antagonistic traits. At the same time, the structure and boundaries of dark personality traits will require better delineation and clarification. Which constructs should be subsumed by the dark trait umbrella? There is a wealth of historically and clinically important constructs that are socially aversive but have not been included in the dark personality family so far (e.g., authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, ideological extremism, paranoid personality disorder, passive-aggressive personality disorder, intermittent explosive disorder, spitefulness, cynicism, and Type A personality; Marcus & Zeigler-Hill, 2015).

Why have these constructs been excluded? Institutional tradition may be a prime culprit. Several of the constructs (e.g., authoritarianism) have originated largely

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

within the political psychology literature, others (e.g., paranoid personality disorder) within the psychopathology literature, others (e.g., spitefulness) within the social psychology literature, and still others (e.g., Type A personality) within the health psychology literature. Breaking down the longstanding intellectual barriers that have artificially separated these research domains should help us to better understand the boundaries of the broad dark trait construct. As it stands, there are neither pressing conceptual nor pressing empirical reasons to limit our conceptualizations of the dark trait family to triad or tetrad models.

Furthermore, some have attempted to parsimoniously account for dark traits in terms of the Big Five (e.g., Vize et al., in press) or Big Six models of personality (e.g., Muris et al., 2017). For example, grandiose narcissism may be equivalent to the combination of antagonism and extraversion; vulnerable narcissism may be equivalent to the combination of antagonism and neuroticism; and psychopathy may be equivalent to the combination of antagonism and disinhibition. Such a basic trait approach has been used profitably in the psychopathy literature (e.g., Lilienfeld, Watts, Francis Smith, Berg, & Latzman, 2015; Miller, Lynam, Widiger, & Leukefeld, 2001; Patrick et al., 2009) and may provide parsimonious models of the dark personality traits more broadly. A priority for future research will be to form a taxonomy of dark traits and to clarify its underlying structure.

Coda

The articles in this Special Section advance our understanding of dark traits and their implications for psychopathology and processes of maladjustment. They identify early precursors of dark traits, map developmental trajectories, illustrate methodological challenges, subject influential theories to scrutiny, and explore dark trait sequelae, all insofar as these are relevant to psychopathology. We have sought to

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

add to these contributions in this introduction by identifying key methodological and conceptual challenges for the field and suggesting research priorities. We hope this Special Section will help scholars in the field contribute to another 15 years of growth in understanding the nature, etiology, development, and consequences of dark traits.

References

- Arnett, J. J. (1999). Adolescent storm and stress, reconsidered. *American Psychologist, 54*, 317-326.
- Baughman, H. M., Dearing, S., Giammarco, E., & Vernon, P. A. (2012). Relationships between bullying behaviours and the Dark Triad: A study with adults. *Personality and Individual Differences, 52*, 571-575.
- Babiak, P., Neumann, C. S., & Hare, R. D. (2010). Corporate psychopathy: Talking the walk. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law, 28*, 174-193.
- Blair, R. J. R., Peschardt, K. S., Budhani, S., Mitchell, D. G. V., & Pine, D. S. (2006). The development of psychopathy. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 47*, 262-276.
- Blonigen, D. M., Hicks, B. M., Krueger, R. F., Patrick, C. J., & Iacono, W. G. (2005). Psychopathic personality traits: Heritability and genetic overlap with internalizing and externalizing psychopathology. *Psychological Medicine, 35*, 637-648.
- Brummelman, E., Nelemans, S. A., Thomaes, S., & Orobio de Castro, B. (in press). When parents' praise inflates, children's self-esteem deflates. *Child Development*.
- Brummelman, E., Thomaes, S., Nelemans, S. A., Orobio de Castro, B., Overbeek, G., & Bushman, B. J. (2015). Origins of narcissism in children. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, 112*, 3659-3662.
- Buckels, E. E., Jones, D. N., & Paulhus, D. L. (2013). Behavioral confirmation of everyday sadism. *Psychological Science, 24*, 2201-2209.
- Bushman, B. J., & Baumeister, R. F. (1998). Threatened egotism, narcissism, self-

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

- esteem, and direct and displaced aggression: Does self-love or self-hate lead to violence? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75, 219-229.
- Chabrol, H., Van Leeuwen, N., Rodgers, R., & Séjourné, N. (2009). Contributions of psychopathic, narcissistic, Machiavellian, and sadistic personality traits to juvenile delinquency. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 47, 734-739.
- Cicchetti, D., & Rogosch, F. A. (1996). Equifinality and multifinality in developmental psychopathology. *Development and Psychopathology*, 8, 597-600.
- Cicchetti, D., & Toth, S. L. (2009). The past achievements and future promises of developmental psychopathology: The coming of age of a discipline. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 50, 16-25.
- Crone, E. A., & Dahl, R. E. (2012). Understanding adolescence as a period of social-affective engagement and goal flexibility. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 13, 636-650.
- Ferguson, E., & Lievens, F. (2017). Future directions in personality, occupational, and medical selection: Myths, misunderstandings, measurement, and suggestions. *Advances in Health Sciences Education*, 22, 387-389.
- Fontaine, N. M., Rijdsdijk, F. V., McCrory, E. J., & Viding, E. (2010). Etiology of different developmental trajectories of callous-unemotional traits. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 49, 656-664.
- Foster, J. D., Campbell, W. K., & Twenge, J. M. (2003). Individual differences in narcissism: Inflated self-views across the lifespan and around the world. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 37, 469-486.
- Frances, A. (2016, September 6). Trump is breaking bad, not clinically mad. *The*

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

- Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/allen-frances/trump-is-breaking-bad-not-clinically-mad_b_10362128.html
- Frances, A. (2017, January 31). Trump isn't crazy. *Psychology Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/saving-normal/201701/trump-isnt-crazy>
- Frick, P. J., Ray, J. V., Thornton, L. C., & Kahn, R. E. (2014). Annual research review: A developmental psychopathology approach to understanding callous-unemotional traits in children and adolescents with serious conduct problems. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 55, 532-548.
- Furnham, A., Richards, S. C., & Paulhus, D. L. (2013). The Dark Triad of personality: A 10 year review. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 7, 199-216.
- Gretton, H. M., Hare, R. D., & Catchpole, R. E. (2004). Psychopathy and offending from adolescence to adulthood: a 10-year follow-up. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 72, 636-645.
- Henrich, J., Heine, S. J., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). Most people are not WEIRD. *Nature*, 466, 29-29.
- Hinshaw, S. P. (2015). Developmental psychopathology, ontogenic process models, gene-environment interplay, and brain development: An emerging synthesis. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 124, 771-775.
- Ho, A. K., Sidanius, J., Pratto, F., Levin, S., Thomsen, L., Kteily, N., & Sheehy-Skeffington, J. (2012). Social dominance orientation: Revisiting the structure and function of a variable predicting social and political attitudes. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 38, 583-606.
- Hodson, G., Hogg, S. M., & MacInnis, C. C. (2009). The role of "dark personalities"

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

(narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy), Big Five personality factors, and ideology in explaining prejudice. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 43, 686-690.

Jakobwitz, S., & Egan, V. (2006). The dark triad and normal personality traits. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 40, 331-339.

Jonason, P. K., Baughman, H. M., Carter, G. L., & Parker, P. (2015). Dorian Gray without his portrait: Psychological, social, and physical health costs associated with the Dark Triad. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 78, 5-13.

Jonason, P. K., Li, N. P., Webster, G. D., & Schmitt, D. P. (2009). The dark triad: Facilitating a short-term mating strategy in men. *European Journal of Personality*, 23, 5-18.

Jonason, P. K., Lyons, M., & Bethell, E. (2014). The making of Darth Vader: Parent-child care and the Dark Triad. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 67, 30-34.

Jones, D. N., & Figueredo, A. J. (2013). The core of darkness: Uncovering the heart of the Dark Triad. *European Journal of Personality*, 27, 521-531.

Jones, D. N., & Paulhus, D. L. (2010). Different provocations trigger aggression in narcissists and psychopaths. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 1, 12-18.

Krizan, Z., & Herlache, A. D. (in press). The narcissism spectrum model: A synthetic view of narcissistic personality. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*.

Leckelt, M., Kufner, A. C., Nestler, S., & Back, M. D. (2015). Behavioral processes underlying the decline of narcissists' popularity over time. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 109, 856-871.

Lilienfeld, S. O., & Waldman, I. D. (2017). *Psychological science under scrutiny*:

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

Recent challenges and proposed solutions. Wiley.

Lilienfeld, S. O., Watts, A. L., & Francis Smith, S. (2015). Successful Psychopathy: A Scientific Status Report. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 24, 298-303.

Lilienfeld, S. O., Watts, A. L., Francis Smith, S., Berg, J. M., & Latzman, R. D. (2015). Psychopathy deconstructed and reconstructed: Identifying and assembling the personality building blocks of Cleckley's chimera. *Journal of Personality*, 83, 593-610.

Lynam, D. R., Hoyle, R. H., & Newman, J. P. (2006). The perils of partialling: Cautionary tales from aggression and psychopathy. *Assessment*, 13, 328-341.

Marcus, D. K., & Zeigler- Hill, V. (2015). A big tent of dark personality traits. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 9, 434-446.

Masten, A. S. (2001). Ordinary magic: Resilience processes in development. *American Psychologist*, 56, 227-238.

Meehl, P. E. (1971). High school yearbooks: a reply to Schwarz. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 77, 143-148.

Miller, J. D., & Campbell, W. K. (2008). Comparing clinical and social- personality conceptualizations of narcissism. *Journal of Personality*, 76, 449-476.

Miller, J. D., Campbell, W. K., & Pilkonis, P. A. (2007). Narcissistic personality disorder: Relations with distress and functional impairment. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, 48, 170-177.

Miller, J. D., Dir, A., Gentile, B., Wilson, L., Pryor, L. R., & Campbell, W. K. (2010). Searching for a vulnerable dark triad: Comparing factor 2 psychopathy, vulnerable narcissism, and borderline personality disorder. *Journal of Personality*, 78, 1529-1564.

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

- Miller, J. D., Jones, S. E., & Lynam, D. R. (2011). Psychopathic traits from the perspective of self and informant reports: Is there evidence for a lack of insight? *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 120*, 758-764.
- Miller, J. D., Lynam, D. R., Hyatt, C. S., & Campbell, W. K. (2017). Controversies in narcissism. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology, 13*, 291-315.
- Miller, J. D., Lynam, D., Widiger, T. A., & Leukefeld, C. (2001). Personality disorders as an extreme variant of common personality dimensions: Can the five-factor model represent psychopathy? *Journal of Personality, 69*, 253-276.
- Morf, C. C., & Rhodewalt, F. (2001). Unraveling the paradoxes of narcissism: A dynamic self-regulatory processing model. *Psychological Inquiry, 12*, 177-196.
- Muris, P., Merckelbach, H., Otgaar, H., & Meijer, E. (2017). The malevolent side of human nature: A meta-analysis and critical review of the literature on the Dark Triad (Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy). *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 12*, 183-204.
- O'Boyle, E. H., Forsyth, D. R., Banks, G. C., & McDaniel, M. A. (2012). A meta-analysis of the dark triad and work behavior: A social exchange perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 97*, 557-579.
- Open Science Collaboration. (2015). Estimating the reproducibility of psychological science. *Science, 349*, aac4716.
- Pashler H., Wagenmakers E. J. (2012). Editors' introduction to the special section on replicability in psychological science: A crisis of confidence? *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 7*, 528-530.
- Patrick, C. J., Fowles, D. C., & Krueger, R. F. (2009). Triarchic conceptualization of

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

- psychopathy: Developmental origins of disinhibition, boldness, and meanness. *Development and Psychopathology*, *21*, 913-938.
- Paulhus, D. L. (1998). Interpersonal and intrapsychic adaptiveness of trait self-enhancement: A mixed blessing? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *74*, 1197-1208.
- Paulhus, D. L. (2014). Toward a taxonomy of dark personalities. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *23*, 421-426.
- Paulhus, D. L., & Williams, K. M. (2002). The dark triad of personality: Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *36*, 556-563.
- Pincus, A. L., & Lukowitsky, M. R. (2010). Pathological narcissism and narcissistic personality disorder. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, *6*, 421-446.
- Reijntjes, A., Vermande, M., Thomaes, S., Goossens, F., Olthof, T., Aleva, L., & Van der Meulen, M. (2016). Narcissism, bullying, and social dominance in youth: a longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, *44*, 63-74.
- Rutter, M. (2012). Resilience as a dynamic concept. *Development and Psychopathology*, *24*, 335-344.
- Sedikides, C., & Campbell, W. K. (2017). Narcissistic force meets systemic resistance: The energy clash model. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *12*, 400-421.
- Sedikides, C., Gaertner, L., & Toguchi, Y. (2003). Pancultural self-enhancement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *84*, 60-79.
- Sedikides, C., Rudich, E. A., Gregg, A. P., Kumashiro, M., & Rusbult, C. (2004). Are normal narcissists psychologically healthy? Self-esteem matters. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *87*, 400-416.

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

- Simmons, J. P., Nelson, L. D., & Simonsohn, U. (2011). False-positive psychology: Undisclosed flexibility in data collection and analysis allows presenting anything as significant. *Psychological Science, 22*, 1359-1366.
- Skeem, J. L., & Cooke, D. J. (2010). Is criminal behavior a central component of psychopathy? Conceptual directions for resolving the debate. *Psychological Assessment, 22*, 433-445.
- Smith, S. F., & Lilienfeld, S. O. (2013). Psychopathy in the workplace: The knowns and unknowns. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 18*, 204-218.
- Smith, G. T., McCarthy, D. M., & Zapolski, T. C. (2009). On the value of homogeneous constructs for construct validation, theory testing, and the description of psychopathology. *Psychological Assessment, 21*, 272-284.
- Steinberg, L. (2014). *Age of opportunity: Lessons from the new science of adolescence*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Sullivan E. A., & Kosson D. S. (2006). Ethnic and cultural variations in psychopathy. In C. J. Patrick (Ed.), *Handbook of Psychopathy* (pp. 437-458). Guilford Press.
- Thomaes, S., & Brummelman, E. (2016). Narcissism. In D. Cicchetti (Ed.), *Developmental Psychopathology* (Vol. 3, pp. 679-725). Wiley.
- Thomaes, S., Brummelman, E., Reijntjes, A., & Bushman, B. J. (2013). When Narcissus was a boy: Origins, nature, and consequences of childhood narcissism. *Child Development Perspectives, 7*, 22-26.
- Thomaes S., Brummelman E., & Sedikides C. (in press). Narcissism: A social-developmental perspective. In V. Zeigler-Hill & T. Shackelford (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Personality and Individual Differences*. Sage.
- Thomaes, S., Bushman, B. J., Orobio de Castro, B., Cohen, G. L., & Denissen, J. J.

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

- (2009). Reducing narcissistic aggression by buttressing self-esteem: An experimental field study. *Psychological Science, 20*, 1536-1542.
- Thomaes, S., Bushman, B. J., Stegge, H., & Olthof, T. (2008). Trumping shame by blasts of noise: Narcissism, self-esteem, shame, and aggression in young adolescents. *Child Development, 79*, 1792-1801.
- Tuvblad, C., Wang, P., Bezdjian, S., Raine, A., & Baker, L. A. (2016). Psychopathic personality development from ages 9 to 18: Genes and environment. *Development and psychopathology, 28*, 27-44.
- Twenge, J. M., & Campbell, W. K. (2003). "Isn't it fun to get the respect that we're going to deserve?" Narcissism, social rejection, and aggression. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 29*, 261-272.
- Vize, C., Lynam, D. R., Collison, K., & Miller, J. D. (in press). Differences among dark triad components: A meta-analytic investigation. *Personality Disorders: Theory, Research, and Treatment*.
- Vonk, J., Zeigler-Hill, V., Ewing, D., Mercer, S., & Noser, A. E. (2015). Mindreading in the dark: Dark personality features and theory of mind. *Personality and Individual Differences, 87*, 50-54.
- Wai, M., & Tiliopoulos, N. (2012). The affective and cognitive empathic nature of the dark triad of personality. *Personality and Individual Differences, 52*, 794-799.
- Watts, A. L., Lilienfeld, S. O., Smith, S. F., Miller, J. D., Campbell, W. K., Waldman, I. D., ... & Faschingbauer, T. J. (2013). The double-edged sword of grandiose narcissism: Implications for successful and unsuccessful leadership among US presidents. *Psychological Science, 24*, 2379-2389.
- Widiger, T. A. (2006). Psychopathy and DSM-IV psychopathology. In C. J. Patrick (Ed.), *Handbook of Psychopathy* (pp. 156-171). Guildford Press.

DARK PERSONALITY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

Wright, J. P., Morgan, M. A., Almeida, P. R., Almosaed, N. F., Moghrabi, S. S., & Bashatah, F. S. (2017). Malevolent forces: Self-control, the Dark Triad, and crime. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, *15*, 191-215.