THREE FACES OF NARCISSISM:
THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MEASUREMENT OF
THE ARROGANT, SHY, AND PSYCHOPATHIC EXPRESSIONS
OF A GRANDIOSE BUT VULNERABLE SELF

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B Psych (Hons)

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINIALITY

The thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University’s Digital Repository**, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968. **Unless an Embargo has been approved for a determined period.

__________________________________
Louise Houlcroft
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Excerpts and summaries from several chapters of this thesis have been presented as conference papers, including:


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ABSTRACT

We are often required to deal with the potentially destructive effects of difficult people, particularly in the workplace, where narcissistic traits are commonly used to describe difficult employees (Kemelgor, Sussman, Kline, & Zurada, 2007). Consequently, a better understanding of narcissism may improve strategies for the identification and management of difficult people. In particular, although clinical and empirical literature on narcissism increasingly distinguishes between an arrogant and grandiose expression and a shy and vulnerable expression (Cain, Pincus, & Ansell, 2008), there is emerging evidence for an aggressive and antisocial expression of narcissism (Houlcroft, Bore, & Munro, 2012; Ronningstam, 2005; Russ, Shedler, Bradley, & Westen, 2008). This thesis explored the cogency of differentiating between three expressions of narcissism, through four studies that aimed to develop a reliable and valid measure of the three expressions of narcissism.

The psychometric properties of the Arrogant-Shy-Psychopathic Narcissism (ASP-N) scale indicated that, beyond shared relationships with central constructs such as entitlement and antagonism, three subscales produced divergent nomological networks. Specifically, the Arrogant Narcissism subscale was associated with excessive assertiveness and immodesty, the Shy Narcissism subscale was associated with neuroticism and distress, and the Psychopathic Narcissism subscale was associated with aggression and antisocial tendencies. Evidence of different defensive responses to negative performance feedback on an alleged intelligence test further supported the distinctiveness of the three expressions of narcissism. Additionally, the identification of differences according to one's position in an organisational hierarchy demonstrated the utility of distinguishing between the three expressions of narcissism.
In providing evidence for the validity and reliability of the ASP-N scale, as well as support for recognition of the aggressive and antisocial expression of narcissism, this thesis highlighted the importance of incorporating the range of narcissistic functioning in an expanded understanding of the construct. A conceptualisation that captures this diversity has specific implications for the accurate identification and effective management of narcissism, which may promote more meaningful engagements that not only assist narcissistic individuals but those around them. It is expected that the ASP-N scale will be useful in future research examining the expressions of narcissism, and will contribute to the ongoing conceptual development of the construct.