Narcissism and the Empty Self: To Have or To Be.

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Abstract:
The author examines narcissism from a broad perspective, looking at the impact of sociocultural, historical, political, and economic factors. Using this perspective, narcissism is characterized as a "disease" based upon overconsumption. A number of theorists provide an analysis of narcissism as a product of sociocultural influences. This idea is compared and contrasted with Individual Psychology. Using Cushman's (1990) work on the empty self, the author illustrates both the contributions and limitations of a postmodern critique of narcissism. The work of Erich Fromm (1976) is used to correct for the limitations of postmodernism, allowing for narcissism to be understood as both a spiritual and social problem. Again, parallels with Individual Psychology are discussed.

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