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The Impact of Self-Presentations
on Self-Appraisals and Behavior:
The Power of Public Commitment

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Strategic self-presentations can have a far-reaching impact on an actor's identity. Subjects who presented themselves as sociable to an interviewer, compared with those who did not present themselves, later raised their self-appraisals of their own sociability, behaved more sociably (i.e., spoke sooner, more frequently, and longer) in a different situation, were viewed as more sociable by a confederate and by judges, and recalled personal experiences that indicated they were more sociable. Strategic self-presentations thus produced both a phenomenological and a behavioral carry-over that influenced the actor's identity in a new situation with a new audience. Two further experiments explored the processes responsible for these effects and found that private self-reflection was not sufficient to produce the changes. Rather, public commitment to the identity portrayed in the self-presentation was a crucial antecedent of changes in self-appraisals.

Self-presentations symbolically communicate information to others about how actors prefer to be regarded and treated (Goffman, 1959; Jones & Pittman, 1982; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Schlenker, 1980; Schlenker & Weigold, 1989; Tedeschi & Norman, 1985). A by-product of the self-presentation process is that the actors' behavior, which initially may have been intended to create a desired impression on others, may come to influence the actors' own view of self. Early social theorists such as Baldwin (1897), Cooley (1902), and Mead (1934) stressed that the concept of self is constructed during social interaction, as actors come to infer their qualities from the roles they enact and other people's reactions to them. Consistent with this view, research has shown that subjects' strategic self-presentations influence their own

subsequent self-appraisals, affecting both their global self-evaluations (Gergen, 1965; Jones, Rhodewalt, Berglas, & Skelton, 1981; Rhodewalt & Agustsdottir, 1986) and the corresponding contents of their self-beliefs (Schlenker & Trudeau, 1990). Further, these changes are most likely to occur when strategic self-presentations can be justified as representative of self (Schlenker, 1980, 1986).

UNDERLYING PROCESSES

Distinctions have been drawn between two broad classes of processes that could account for the impact of self-presentations on self-beliefs. For the sake of brevity, these can be referred to as active versus passive processes (Schlenker, 1986). Active processes involve motivated rationalization designed to protect or enhance the actor's desired identity. They are usually accompanied by heightened arousal that is experienced as anxiety. Motivated rationalization seems to be more likely to occur when desired identity images are personally important and are jeopardized, as when an actor (a) appears to be responsible for producing events that contradict desired images, as by committing a transgression, or (b) appears to be nonresponsible for events that

validate desired images, as by performing a good deed and being denied credit (Schlenker, 1980, 1982, 1986). Self-presentations that are highly discrepant from important self-beliefs are likely to engage such a motivated process (Jones et al., 1981; Rhodewalt & Agustsdottir, 1986; Schlenker & Trudeau, 1990). Schlenker and Trudeau (1990) examined the role of negative arousal in influencing rationalization after strategic self-presentations. They found that negative arousal moderated reactions after self-presentations that were highly discrepant from initial self-beliefs but not after ones that were only somewhat discrepant. The pattern is consistent with the idea, first suggested by Fazio, Zanna, and Cooper (1977), that behaviors that are clearly incongruent with prior beliefs initiate a motivated process of rationalization that involves negative arousal, whereas behaviors that are generally congruent with prior beliefs produce change through a more passive process that does not involve negative arousal, such as self-perception.

Most of the time in everyday life, people's self-presentations do not involve gross misrepresentation. Instead, they involve strategic exaggerations or understatements that, with a nuance here and a shading there, can be defended as accurate yet accomplish the interpersonal goals of the actor. Conditions in which strategic self-presentations are generally congruent with prior self-beliefs do not involve threats to self, evoke arousal, or require rationalization, yet self-appraisals can still shift in the direction of the behavior. At least three possible mechanisms can explain these changes: self-perception, biased scanning, and commitment. Our experiments focused on these more passive processes.

Self-perception theory (Bem, 1972) suggests that people infer their attitudes from their behaviors whenever prior attitudes are weak or ambiguous and the behavior cannot be attributed to salient external contingencies. Accordingly, self-presentations that do not appear to be under the control of social pressures and are not incompatible with prior self-knowledge will produce corresponding shifts in self-beliefs. A biased scanning version of self-perception theory was proposed by Jones, Rhodewalt, and their colleagues (Jones et al., 1981; Rhodewalt & Agustsdottir, 1986). They suggested that strategic self-presentations can cause a biased search through memory for compatible information about the self. These compatible features of the self-concept become salient and form the basis for subsequent self-evaluations. Jones et al. (1981) suggested that biased scanning is most likely to occur when the contents of the self-presentation are perceived to be freely chosen rather than dictated by a script and when the contents are roughly congruent with preexisting self-knowledge rather than highly discrepant from it. Jones et al. (1981) also proposed that, for most

people, positive self-presentations induce a biased scanning process because such self-flattering behavior is regarded as congruent with prior self-beliefs. A key difference between self-perception and the biased scanning variant is that self-perception involves the creation of new beliefs whereas biased scanning involves the differential salience of existing beliefs.

Commitment is a third possible process that has somewhat different implications than self-perception and biased scanning. Commitment is a force that ties the individual to some psychological entity. More precisely, it is a pledging or binding of self (a) to an action or set of actions, (b) to a person, group, or organization, or (c) to an idea, often a set of moral principles for conduct. It represents the establishment and recognition of a unit relationship between self and something else. Commitment to an action serves to crystallize and strengthen the corresponding attitude, making it more resistant to change and more likely to guide behavior (Kiesler, 1971; Scholl, 1981). Self-presentation theorists have emphasized the power of public behavior in committing actors to a consistent future course of action (Goffman, 1959; Schlenker, 1980; Tedeschi, Schlenker, & Bonoma, 1971). Once people claim to "be" a particular type of person, they have obligated themselves to behave consistently with that identity. The socialization process continually emphasizes that people must be what they claim to be or risk serious interpersonal repercussions.

In this view, commitment engages the self and links it to a particular identity image that has implications for behavior. Identity images can be seen as providing scripts for how people should behave if they are to claim the image legitimately (Schlenker, 1980). Commitment to a particular self-presentation (a) makes salient the relevant identity image and its associated script for behavior and also (b) locks the self into a participatory role in the script. In other words, it is not enough for the identity image to be salient in memory; it is also necessary for it to be engaged (linked to self) through the process of commitment. This is analogous to finding a particular videotape in a tape library (the tape becomes salient) and then placing the tape into the tape player so that it can be played now (the tape is engaged). In contrast to the biased scanning position, it is not that prior self-beliefs simply become phenomenologically salient. Rather, identity images, whether newly created or preexisting, become salient *and* the actor takes a participatory role in the script, locking himself or herself into the script suggested by the images. According to the commitment approach, an important determinant of commitment is whether the actor has publicly and irrevocably claimed a particular identity, not merely whether the actor has contemplated self-relevant thoughts. Variables that appear to affect the magnitude of commitment to an act,

besides its publicness and irrevocability, include the explicitness of the act, its importance to the actor, the degree of volition that accompanies the act, and the number of similar acts performed (Kiesler, 1971).

We conducted three experiments to examine the implications of the processes of self-perception, biased scanning, and commitment. Experiment 1 focused on biased scanning. Despite the intuitive appeal of the idea of biased scanning, there is no *direct* evidence to indicate whether self-presentations actually induce a biased scanning of information about the self. The two studies that have been cited as support for biased scanning (Jones et al., 1981, Experiment 3; Rhodewalt & Agustsdottir, 1986) did not attempt to measure or to control self-relevant cognitions independently of a final self-evaluation. Both studies found that a variable that had been proposed to influence biased scanning—the self-referencing character of the self-presentation (i.e., whether the self-presentational behavior was self-generated or dictated by a script supplied by the experimenter)—seems to be related to changes in self-evaluations. Of course, self-referencing could also influence other processes that may produce changes in self-evaluations, including self-perception and commitment, and so biased scanning is not exclusively implicated or supported.

We tested, in two ways, the idea that biased scanning mediates changes in self-appraisals. First, if biased scanning occurs, strategic self-presentations will increase the salience of compatible information about the self and make such information easier to recall. In Experiment 1, subjects who either did or did not present themselves positively to another person were asked to recall past experiences that were relevant to the dimension that had been the focus of the self-presentation. It was hypothesized that, in the absence of explicit instructions otherwise, subjects who presented themselves positively would recall prior experiences that were more positive.

Second, it should be possible to strengthen or weaken the impact of self-presentations by directing subjects to think about prior personal experiences that are consistent or inconsistent with their self-presentation. If subjects focus their attention on experiences indicating they do *not* have a high standing on the trait, it could counteract any biased scanning produced by a positive self-presentation and attenuate changes in self-appraisals. Conversely, asking subjects to focus on personal experiences indicating they have a high standing on the trait should provide additional congruent information and strengthen or solidify changes in self-appraisals produced by a positive self-presentation. Experiments 1 and 2 attempted to facilitate or interfere with biased scanning by means of a directed-thought task.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL AND BEHAVIORAL CARRY-OVER

Strategic self-presentations have been shown to produce a phenomenological carry-over by influencing the actors' self-appraisals. Presumably, though, self-presentations can also produce a behavioral carry-over; that is, self-presentations may affect the actors' later behavior in a different situation with a different audience. Behavioral carry-over follows from the idea that strategic self-presentation sets in motion a cycle in which the actor's behavior affects his or her self-beliefs, and these revised self-beliefs, in turn, guide later behaviors. The revised self-beliefs may remain as salient guides for conduct until contrary events or behaviors intervene and shift attention to alternative self-beliefs. While they are salient, however, the revised self-beliefs function as templates for future conduct and could guide behavior even in a different situation with a different audience.

Until recently (as will be discussed shortly), research has not addressed the possibility of a behavioral carry-over of strategic self-presentations. Research does suggest that attitudes are especially potent when they have been made salient by one's prior behavior. Attitudes that are inferred from behavior seem to be highly accessible in memory and increase response speed when subjects are later queried about their opinions (Fazio, Herr, & Olney, 1984). In addition, leading questions have been shown to elicit self-descriptions that affect subjects' later self-ratings and behaviors in a different situation (Fazio, Effrein, & Falender, 1981). Although elicited self-descriptions can be regarded as self-presentations, they lack the strategic quality associated with more obviously goal-directed self-characterizations that are designed to have a specific predetermined impact on an audience. Therefore, caution is necessary in generalizing to the topic of strategic self-presentation.

Experiment 1 tested the hypothesis that strategic self-presentations will produce both a phenomenological and a behavioral carry-over. Subjects were given the opportunity to interact with another person (actually a confederate) in a waiting room while the experimenter was supposedly occupied with a phone call. Behavioral carry-over was assessed by measures of the subjects' actual behavior with the confederate.

EXPERIMENT 1

Method

OVERVIEW

In the context of a study on personality assessment, some subjects were induced to present themselves as highly sociable to an interviewer. Other subjects did not complete the interview. Both groups were then asked to

list personal experiences related to their sociability that were (a) positive, (b) nonpositive, or (c) undirected by us. Afterward, measures of sociability were taken through questionnaire responses and during interaction with a confederate in a waiting-room setting.

SUBJECTS

One hundred introductory psychology students (50 males and 50 females) participated in partial fulfillment of a course requirement.

PROCEDURE

Subjects participated individually and, in a cover story adapted from one used by Jones et al. (1981, Experiment 3), were told that the study was examining the interviewing techniques of psychology graduate students. It was explained that, as part of their training, these students were learning personality assessment techniques and needed first-hand experience. The cover story indicated that, to provide experience in a realistic setting, the graduate students had been led to believe that they would be interviewing applicants for a position as an undergraduate research assistant and that their evaluation would influence who was hired. The graduate students supposedly had constructed their own questions to tap job-related personality traits such as sociability and would structure the interview using the materials they had developed. To increase the perceived impact of the self-presentation and eliminate the chance that responses could be "taken back" immediately after the interview, subjects were told that the interviewer would have to discuss and justify his or her evaluation in class and therefore could not be told until then that the interviews were not genuine. It was also explained that some participants would help out by actually going through an interview whereas other participants were needed to prepare materials that would be vital in assessing the graduate students' interviewing techniques. Subjects were randomly assigned either to be interviewed (self-presentation condition) or to provide these supplementary materials (no-presentation condition).

Subjects in both conditions were then given further information about the interviews. The instructions stated that, in the real world, interviewers confront a wide variety of personality types, dispositions, and motives. Training would be more useful to the graduate students if they encountered a variety of experiences that could later be discussed and compared in class. For these reasons, different subjects were being asked to try to create different types of impressions on the interviewers. At this point in the study, interviewees were supposedly being asked to provide very favorable self-descriptions, particularly of their sociability (i.e., being a "friendly, outgoing person"), that would create a positive impres-

sion on the interviewer. This information was given to subjects in the no-presentation condition, who had already been told they would not be interviewed, to provide them with the same basic background information that was given to subjects in the self-presentation condition (i.e., interviewees should try to create a favorable impression of their sociability). Thus, any possible priming or demand related to a positive standing on sociability should have been equivalent across conditions.

Subjects in the self-presentation condition were asked whether they would agree to play the role during the interview. To reinforce high choice, the experimenter added that he realized some people might be uncomfortable misrepresenting themselves and repeated that the subject could decline to participate; all subjects agreed to play the role. Subjects were told that, to create the positive impression, it would help if they thought of times when they were in a "really good mood" and felt "really good" about themselves and then conveyed these positive feelings in their actions (Jones et al., 1981). The instructions thereby maximized decision freedom and the self-referencing nature of subjects' interview responses, conditions that have been shown to maximize the impact of self-presentations on self-evaluations (Jones et al., 1981; Rhodewalt & Agustsdottir, 1986).

Subjects in the self-presentation condition were escorted to another room for the interview. The interviewer (a confederate who was blind to the subjects' subsequent cognitive activity condition) began with a few general questions (e.g., about hobbies, favorite movies) to provide an introduction and act as filler. The key items asked subjects to rate the degree to which various sociability-relevant statements described them (e.g., "I like to be with people," "I am a friendly person," "I can get along with just about anyone"). When finished, the interviewer thanked the subject and returned him or her to the experimenter.

Subjects in the no-presentation condition were told they would not actually go through an interview but were needed to provide information that would be important in assessing the interviewers' skills. They were asked whether they would agree to help out by completing some materials, thereby inducing high decision freedom about continuing; all agreed to do so.

Personal experiences recall task (PERT). The PERT was designed to focus subjects' attention on more or less positive personal experiences that pertained to their sociability. The cover story introduced the task as a crucial step in constructing materials that would tap the interviewer's discernment. Subjects were told that an important interviewing skill is to be able to predict the sorts of behaviors that characterize the interviewee. As part of their training, interviewers were supposedly

being asked to identify which of a series of specific behaviors had been performed by the individuals they had interviewed and which had not. Subjects were asked to help develop a pool of these incidents by listing examples of their sociability-relevant behavior. The resulting materials would supposedly permit measures of the interviewers' accuracy and "genuine insight" into the characteristics of the people they interviewed, compared with "lucky guesses" about behaviors that most people who might have been interviewed would have performed.

It was explained that, to develop a heterogeneous pool of items in the limited time available, some participants were being asked to list any type of incident and others were being asked to list specific types of incidents. Subjects were randomly assigned to one of four self-focusing conditions. They were asked to generate actual behavioral examples in which (a) they were very sociable—that is, "when your actions showed you to be a very friendly, outgoing person who was unshy and enjoyed being with people" (*positive experiences condition*); (b) they were "average or unexceptional" in their sociability (*nonpositive experiences condition*); or (c) their behavior was relevant to sociability and could indicate any level depending simply on what incidents came to mind (*undirected experiences condition*). They were told to list five specific behavioral examples and to rate each example on a 9-point scale to indicate whether they thought it typified high (9) or low (1) sociability. They were told that the examples needed to be only a couple of sentences long, and sample incidents were provided to get them thinking. Subjects in a fourth, *control experience condition* did not complete the PERT or receive the surrounding cover story. Instead, they completed an "Advertising Evaluation Task," designed to engage their interest and divert attention from self, in which they rated magazine advertisements on a variety of bipolar scales. Inclusion of the task was justified as a favor to a visiting colleague of the experimenter; it was noted that the task was short and there was extra time in the session.

Dependent measures. The dependent measures were collected next: (a) self-evaluations of sociability and other self-reports tapped by a questionnaire and (b) behavioral measures of sociability gathered during a 5-min interaction with a confederate. The order of presentation of these measures was manipulated.

In the *behavioral measures first condition*, subjects were told by a "research assistant" that the experimenter had received an important phone call, and they were escorted to a waiting area, where they had initially reported for the session, for him or her to return. Another person, actually a confederate, was sitting in the room. The assistant mentioned as an aside that the other person was waiting to participate in an unrelated study and asked

the subject to be seated. Confederates were blind to subjects' treatment condition and were trained to respond in a neutral manner to whatever the subjects said. Confederates were not to initiate a conversation unless 2 min elapsed without a verbalization from the subject; in the latter case, they were to say "Hello," introduce themselves, and ask the subject's name. The subject and confederate remained together for 5 min, and the session was audiotaped. The experimenter then returned, apologized for the delay, and escorted the subject to another room for completion of some questionnaires.

In the *questionnaire measures first condition*, subjects were asked to complete a questionnaire booklet (see below). When they had finished, the "research assistant" entered the room, picked up their booklet, explained that the experimenter had received an important telephone call, and escorted them to the waiting room under the same conditions as above. After the 5-min session with the confederate, the experimenter returned, apologized for the delay, and asked subjects to complete a short questionnaire containing manipulation checks. Subjects were then debriefed and thanked for their participation.

In both conditions, the questionnaire was introduced by explaining that subjects' genuine responses and self-ratings, irrespective of the content of the interview or the PERT, would be useful in evaluating the interview situation. Subjects were encouraged to be as accurate about themselves as possible and were told their ratings would be anonymous and would not be seen by either the experimenter or the interviewer. The questionnaire contained (a) the Sociability Scale (Cheek & Buss, 1981), (b) seventeen 7-point bipolar adjective scales that tapped affect (e.g., *happy-sad, cheerful-depressed*), anxiety (e.g., *worried—at ease, nervous-relaxed*), and truthfulness (e.g., *honest-dishonest, sincere-insincere*), (c) a self-esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965), and (d) 19 self-ratings that tapped four identity dimensions unrelated to sociability: intelligence, leadership, creativity, and reliability (all 5-point scales). Immediately before the debriefing, subjects were asked to complete a page that contained manipulation checks. To generate behavioral data, the audiotaped interactions were coded by two judges along the following dimensions: (a) the length of time that elapsed before the subject's first verbalization, (b) the number of verbalizations the subject made during the interaction, and (c) the subject's total time spent verbalizing during the interaction. In addition, waiting-room confederates rated the subject's sociability on a 9-point scale directly after the interaction.

Results

Initial analyses included the order of presentation of the dependent measures (behavioral measures or ques-

tionnaire first) as a factor. We had no reason to expect order effects, especially given that Fazio et al. (1981) found no effect of measurement order when they analyzed self-ratings and behaviors after subjects answered leading questions about themselves. Indeed, analyses revealed no effects of order on any of the dependent measures. Consequently, order was deleted from the analysis reported below.

Manipulation checks. Subjects in the three recall conditions focused on the appropriate behavioral experiences during the PERT. Their ratings of the positivity of their experiences revealed a main effect of the instructions, $F(2, 69) = 25.19$, $p < .0001$ ($Ms = 7.6, 6.3,$ and 5.4 on a scale from 1 to 9 for the positive, undirected, and nonpositive conditions, all $ps < .01$ by Duncan's range test). These results are paralleled by the positivity ratings of a pair of independent judges who were blind to subjects' treatment conditions, $F(2, 69) = 37.31, p < .0001$ ($Ms = 8.4, 6.9,$ and 5.5 on a 1-to-9 scale; again all means differ at $p < .01$). Interjudge reliability for these ratings was high ($r = .90$). Finally, subjects were asked at the end of the session to rate how sociable the behavioral experiences they had thought about indicated they were; a main effect of the instructions was obtained, $F(2, 69) = 6.61$, $p < .03$ ($Ms = 15.4, 13.6,$ and 11.6 for the positive, undirected, and nonpositive conditions; the positive and nonpositive conditions differed, $p < .05$, with the undirected condition falling intermediate; scale range = 1 to 19). Thus, the appropriate cognitive self-focus seemed to be induced.

The instructions to create a positive impression on the interviewer closely followed those used successfully in other studies to induce self-flattering behavior (Jones et al., 1981; Rhodewalt & Agustsdottir, 1986), and questionnaire responses supported the contention that subjects presented themselves positively. Subjects said that the interviewer would form a "very positive" impression of their personality ($M = 15.0$; scale range = 1 to 19). In addition, when asked to indicate what types of answers they provided during the interview (by distributing 10 points among four possible goals), subjects said they focused on responses that were both positive ($M = 5.0$) and honest ($M = 5.1$) while avoiding those that were neutral ($M = 0.2$) or negative ($M = 0.2$) (as indicated by the means, some subjects assigned numbers that totaled more than 10). These patterns are consistent with instructions to present themselves positively but truthfully and support the idea that subjects see their positive self-presentations as largely representative of self even when they have the goal of creating a good impression.

Sociability self-ratings. Self-ratings of sociability on the Sociability Scale (Cheek & Buss, 1981) were entered into a 2 (Condition: self-presentation or no-presentation) by

TABLE 1: Mean Self-Ratings of Sociability as a Function of Self-Presentation and Experience Focus, Experiment 1

	Experience Focus			
Condition	Positive	Undirected	Nonpositive	Control
Positive self-presentation	21.2	21.6	21.2	20.9
No self-presentation	20.4	20.6	19.7	19.2

NOTE: Ratings could range from 5 to 25; higher numbers indicate greater sociability.

4 (Personal Experiences Recall) by 2 (Subject Sex) analysis of variance.[1] The analysis revealed a significant main effect of self-presentation, $F(1, 83) = 3.86$, $p = .05$. As expected, subjects who presented themselves as highly sociable later rated themselves as more sociable than subjects who did not present themselves ($Ms = 21.2$ and 19.9, respectively, within a possible range of 5 to 25). Contrary to predictions, there were no effects of the personal experiences recall task, either alone or in interaction (all $ps > .30$). Means are presented in Table 1.

Sociable behavior. The self-presentation not only affected subjects' self-beliefs, it carried over to have a pronounced impact on subjects' behaviors during their interaction with the confederate. Compared with those in the no-presentation condition, subjects in the self-presentation condition (a) showed a shorter latency to their first verbalization, $F(1, 83) = 3.68$, $p = .058$ ($Ms = 31.3$ and 56.1 s), (b) spoke for a longer time during the interaction, $F(1, 83) = 7.11$, $p < .01$ ($Ms = 84.4$ and 58.9 s), and (c) spoke on a somewhat greater number of discrete occasions during the interaction, $F(1, 83) = 3.08$, $p < .08$ ($Ms = 20.5$ and 16.6).

In addition, the prior self-presentation had an impact on the type of impression subjects created in the unrelated waiting-room setting. First, the waiting-room confederate rated subjects as more sociable in the self-presentation than the no-presentation condition, $F(1, 83) = 5.48$, $p < .03$ ($Ms = 6.9$ and 5.8, respectively; scale range = 1 to 9). Second, two independent judges (interrater reliability: $r[91] = .91$, $p < .0001$) who listened to audiotapes of the interactions rated presenting subjects as somewhat more sociable than no-presentation subjects, $F(1, 83) = 3.01$, $p < .09$ ($Ms = 6.0$ and 5.2, respectively; scale range = 1 to 9). The marginal nature of the latter finding may reflect the fact that the judges had access only to subjects' verbalizations during the interaction and were unable to use nonverbal cues. There were no effects of the PERT on any of the behavioral or impression measures, $ps > .30$.

Effects of the self-presentation on recall. Responses on the PERT provided the opportunity to see whether the self-presentation would affect subjects' recollections of their

TABLE 2: Mean Positivity of Recalled Behavioral Experiences as a Function of Self-Presentation and Experience Focus, Experiment 1

Condition	Experience Focus		
	Positive	Undirected	Nonpositive
Positive self-presentation	7.6	7.0	5.8
No self-presentation	7.7	5.8	5.0

NOTE: Ratings could range from 1 to 9; higher numbers indicate greater positivity.

past behavior. Subjects generated behaviors that were more positive in the self-presentation condition than the no-presentation condition, $F(1, 69) = 6.76$, $p < .01$ ($Ms = 6.8$ and 6.1; scale range = 1 to 9). (As shown in Table 2, this effect was especially pronounced in the undirected recall condition, where subjects had free rein in their recollections. The interaction between self-presentation and experiences condition was not significant, however, $p > .20$.) The effect provides support for a key tenet of biased scanning: Prior experiences that are compatible with a positive self-presentation become more salient and accessible in memory.

Self-ratings on unrelated dimensions. To examine the possible generalization of the self-presentation to other, unrelated identity dimensions, self-ratings on the creativity, intelligence, leadership, and reliability measures were entered into separate ANOVAs. These analyses revealed no significant main effects or interactions of the independent variables (all $ps > .40$). In addition, analysis of subjects' posttest self-esteem revealed no significant effects of the independent variables. Finally, the manipulations had no effect on subjects' affective state following the self-presentation on the measures of mood, anxiety, or sincerity. We can conclude that the effects of the self-presentation were at once specific to the sociability dimension and independent of changes in global self-esteem and affect.[2]

Discussion

The results demonstrate the power of strategic self-presentations to shape actors' self-appraisals. Subjects shifted their self-appraisals in the direction of their self-enhancing public behaviors, thereby displaying a phenomenological carry-over (Gergen, 1965; Jones et al., 1981; Rhodewalt & Agustsdottir, 1986; Schlenker & Trudeau, 1990). More dramatically, the results demonstrated a behavioral carry-over of the self-presentation to a new situation with a new audience. Subjects who had presented themselves as highly sociable during the interview later acted more sociable, speaking sooner, longer, and more often, and were regarded as more sociable by a confederate and judges who listened to an audiotape of the interaction. A recent study by Tice (1992), which

was conducted contemporaneously to our studies, similarly found a behavioral carry-over of public self-presentations. Subjects behaved more sociably to a waiting confederate if they had previously publicly presented themselves to an interviewer as extraverted rather than introverted. The data from our study and Tice's study clearly show that strategic self-presentations have consequences that go beyond the interaction in which they initially occur. Further, our study shows that the carry-over occurred irrespective of whether subjects explicitly completed self-ratings before interacting with the new audience (in Tice's study, subjects always completed self-ratings before interacting with the confederate, raising the possibility that explicit self-assessments may have influenced the later behavior).

Public and private convergence. The findings are consistent with the idea that a strategic self-presentation can set in motion a series of changes that construct and consensually validate across audiences an identity that is compatible with the original self-presentation. The original self-presentation influences the actor's self-images and behavior in new situations with different audiences. The actor's "new" behavior, in turn, causes the new audience to form an impression of the actor that is congruent with the content of the original self-presentation. It is reasonable to suggest that the new audience will then provide feedback that validates the actor's revised identity, thereby strengthening the new self-images even further. The end result is that strategic self-presentations can have an impact beyond what might otherwise seem to be their momentary, local, and sometimes self-serving function. Their influence extends across audiences and situations to shape the actor's public identity and private self-conception. Through self-presentation, the private and public facets of self converge to shape a coherent, unified identity for the actor.

Although the self-presentation had an impact that went beyond its original objective of influencing an interviewer, the content of the impact was precise. Changes in self-beliefs were specific to the trait on which subjects had presented themselves during the interview. There were no differences between the self-presentation and no-presentation conditions on self-esteem, mood, or traits unrelated to sociability (intelligence, leadership, creativity, and reliability). One should not conclude from the pattern that self-presentations never generalize to other traits or affect self-esteem or mood. There are probably occasions, as yet theoretically unspecified and empirically unexplored, when generalizations occur. However, the pattern is important for our purposes because it helps to eliminate some alternative interpretations of the results. First, it suggests that the changes we found reflected shifts in the contents of self-beliefs and cannot be attributed merely to changes in mood, perceived

self-efficacy, or global self-evaluations (Schlenker, 1986; Schlenker & Trudeau, 1990). Most prior studies, which had subjects present themselves positively across diverse traits and then report their general self-evaluations, are open to such alternative interpretations.

Second, a self-presentation represents more than simply a public self-characterization. Subjects in the self-presentation condition dealt with an interviewer face to face, they had to listen to the interviewer's questions and respond, they had to monitor and control their verbal and nonverbal conduct to create the desired impression, and so forth. Subjects in the no-presentation condition did not have to do these things. Could these differences between the conditions have produced the results? In other words, might subjects have changed their self-beliefs and behaviors because they interacted with an interviewer, which the no-presentation subjects did not do, and not because of the specifics of their self-presentation? Experiment 3 was designed to deal directly with these questions by comparing face-to-face and written self-presentations. For the moment, though, it is worth noting that because differences between conditions were found only on the dimension contained in the self-presentation, and not on any other self-rating or self-evaluation, it seems improbable that the changes in self-beliefs were produced by something about the interview other than the self-presentation.

Biased scanning. Our findings support a key derivation of the biased scanning explanation: Self-presentations cause compatible information about the self to become salient. When subjects were asked to report prior personal experiences that were relevant to sociability, those who had presented themselves positively reported more positive behavioral examples than those who did not present themselves. The self-presentation therefore seemed to make congruent information about the self more accessible in memory. To our knowledge, this is the first evidence that self-presentations will cause a biased scanning of compatible historical information about self.

The findings did not support another derivation from biased scanning: The effects of the self-presentation will be facilitated or impeded by asking subjects to think about congruent or incongruent prior behavioral experiences. Directing subjects to focus on positive or nonpositive prior personal experiences had no effect on their self-appraisals or behavior. The failure to find effects of the personal experiences manipulation was surprising to us given that the instructions were very effective in eliciting the appropriate reports of prior personal experiences. When we designed the study, we had thought this manipulation would account for at least as large a portion of the variance as the manipulation of the self-presentation (in fact, we were concerned that it might overwhelm the self-presentation manipulation).

This expectation was based in part on the fact that the personal experiences manipulation could benefit from a recency effect of the primed information about the self; it came closer in time to the measurement of subjects' attitudes and behavior than the self-presentation manipulation. Schemata that have recently been used have been shown to be more accessible in memory and more likely to guide future behavior (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Markus & Zajonc, 1985). Further, our expectation was affected by prior research indicating that (a) asking subjects to remember and imagine prior personal experiences can reintegrate relevant emotional states and feelings such as anxiety, embarrassment, and self-esteem increases or decreases (Laird, Wagener, Halal, & Szegda, 1982; Lang, 1985; Parrott, Sabini, & Silver, 1988) and (b) asking subjects to list their own attitude-relevant rather than attitude-irrelevant behaviors after a persuasive communication generates more persistent attitude change, as measured by resistance to counterattack, intentions to act on the attitude, and persistence of the attitude over time (Lydon, Zanna, & Ross, 1988; Ross, McFarland, Conway, & Zanna, 1983).

A possible explanation for the impotency of the directed-thought manipulation is that we may not have created a condition in which recalled personal experiences were unambiguously incongruent with the prior self-presentation. In the directed-thought conditions, we asked subjects to focus on positive or nonpositive past experiences. Although the experiences were significantly more positive in the former than the latter case, perhaps the nonpositive experiences were not regarded as clearly incompatible with a positive self-appraisal. If we had included a condition in which subjects were asked to focus on negative prior experiences, we might have attenuated the impact of the positive self-presentation. To examine this possibility, we conducted a second experiment that included a condition in which subjects were told to focus on instances where their behavior clearly indicated they were unsociable.

EXPERIMENT 2: RECALLING NEGATIVE PRIOR EXPERIENCES

Method

Forty-six introductory psychology students (23 males and 23 females) participated in partial fulfillment of a course requirement. The procedure was identical to that in Experiment 1 except that, because of personnel and time limitations, we did not obtain behavioral measures of sociability. The dependent measures derived from the questionnaire only. In addition, the instructions for the personal experiences recall task were changed (a) to substitute a negative experiences condition for the nonpositive experiences condition and (b) to delete the undirected experiences condition. In the negative expe-

riences condition, subjects were asked to recall prior occasions when they behaved in an unsociable fashion.

The design contained four conditions. Subjects presented themselves as highly sociable to the interviewer and then (a) reported positive personal experiences, (b) reported negative personal experiences that clearly suggested they were unsociable, or (c) engaged in a self-irrelevant task (i.e., judging advertisements). Subjects in a fourth, control condition (d) did not present themselves or perform the personal experiences recall task; these subjects merely completed the self-appraisals contained in the questionnaire.

Results

The manipulation was effective in focusing subjects on the appropriate past experiences. Subjects in the positive experiences condition listed behavioral experiences that were more positive than subjects in the negative experiences condition, $F(1, 42) = 91.20, p < .0001$ ($Ms = 7.6$ and 3.5). These ratings again were paralleled by the evaluations of a pair of judges, blind to the treatment conditions, who rated subjects' behavioral experiences, $F(1, 42) = 336.30, p < .0001$ ($Ms = 7.6$ and 2.1 for the positive and negative groups; interjudge reliability was again high: $r[42] = .96, p < .0001$). As in Experiment 1, subjects who presented themselves to the interviewer thought the interviewer would form a highly positive impression of their sociability ($M = 14.0$).

Self-ratings of sociability on the Cheek and Buss scale (1981) revealed a significant effect of the manipulations, $F(3, 42) = 3.16, p < .03$. The three self-presentation conditions did not differ among themselves ($Ms = 20.6$, 21.0, and 21.4 for the positive experience, negative experience, and irrelevant experience conditions, respectively). However, each of the three self-presentation conditions differed from the no-presentation control condition ($M = 17.7$), $ps < .03$. A contrast between the three combined self-presentation conditions and the no-presentation control condition was also significant, $F(1,42) = 9.04, p < .01$ ($Ms = 21.0$ and 17.7). Thus, as in Experiment 1, a positive self-presentation produced more favorable self-appraisals, whereas the personal experiences task had no impact.

As in Experiment 1, the manipulation had no effect on subjects' self-esteem, mood, or self-ratings on the unrelated dimensions of intelligence, leadership, creativity, and reliability ($ps > .20$). Once again, the effects of the self-presentation were specific to the corresponding dimension.

Discussion

In both studies, the positive self-presentation "took," in that once it occurred, its effects were not modified simply by focusing on prior personal experiences, even when these were clearly inconsistent with the positive self-characterization. These findings raise the possibility that self-appraisals are less influenced by the salience of private information than by the actor's commitment to the identity-relevant implications of that information. Public commitment may crystallize and anchor a particular self-identification, such that presenting oneself to others serves to create and lock in an identity that can be difficult to change later.

We are not suggesting that private reflection plays no role in influencing self-assessments (although we may initially have overestimated its potency). Given research on priming (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Markus & Zajonc, 1985) and the induction of mood states by focusing subjects on their past behaviors (Laird et al., 1982; Lang, 1985; Parrott et al., 1988), the recall of past experiences often seems to shift people's moods and cognitions.[3] Our results raise the possibility, though, that private reflection often takes a back seat to public self-presentation as a determinant of self-appraisals. Social reality is created in part through the recognition and validation of our presented identities by others (Schlenker, 1980; Tice, 1992; Wicklund & Gollwitzer, 1982), and the commitment that derives from public self-presentations may be a key ingredient in causing self-beliefs to track behavior.

EXPERIMENT 3:
SELF-PRESENTATION AS A PUBLIC COMMITMENT

Experiment 3 examined the role of public commitment more closely and also addressed whether the face-to-face nature of the interview may have influenced our earlier findings. All subjects were asked to describe themselves positively in response to a set of interview questions, but the context of the self-description was varied across four conditions. One group of subjects answered the questions during a face-to-face interview, as in Experiments 1 and 2. Subjects in the three other conditions answered the same questions but on a written questionnaire. Two of these groups completed the questionnaire in preparation for an upcoming interview; one of these learned that the interview was canceled, whereas the second still expected the interview at the time their private self-appraisals were assessed. The fourth group responded anonymously and never expected a public interview.

The self-descriptions of subjects in the face-to-face and expected interview conditions carry a public commitment; they represent how subjects have described or expect to describe themselves to another person. In contrast, the self-descriptions of subjects in the canceled interview and anonymous conditions do not. If commitment is a key determinant of shifts in self-appraisals, subjects should be more likely to bring their self-appraisals

in line with their self-descriptions in the face-to-face and expected interview conditions than in the canceled interview or anonymous conditions. The self-perception and biased scanning approaches suggest a different possibility: that the cancellation of the interview should make little or no difference. There is nothing about self-perception or biased scanning that suggests that once either process has occurred, it can be undone merely by revoking the opportunity for a public display.

Method

Subjects. Sixty-three males and females participated in partial fulfillment of a course requirement. Subjects completed a self-rating of their "independence," along with a self-esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965), during a testing session several weeks before the experiment.

Procedure. The project once again was described as part of a personality assessment exercise for a graduate course. Subjects were asked to help out either by being interviewed or by providing important baseline data used to evaluate the quality of the interviews. In contrast to Experiments 1 and 2, which focused on the trait of sociability, subjects in Experiment 3 were told that the interviews would focus on the trait of independence. Switching to independence was done to increase the generalizability of results. The instructions emphasized the importance of independence to success in occupational and personal settings. All subjects were instructed to create a positive impression of their independence during the interview, under the same justification and high-choice instructions used in the previous studies. Once it was clear that subjects understood the goal they should adopt, the interview context was manipulated.

Subjects in the *face-to-face interview condition* were then led to the interview room, which contained a camera and videotape recorder. Subjects had been told earlier that the experimenter would conduct the interview and that the interview would be taped and later shown to students from the personality assessment class. It was emphasized that the graduate students were the targets of their self-descriptions and those students supposedly would be unaware that subjects had been assigned to a self-presentational goal. The subject responded orally to the interview questions, and the experimenter recorded those responses in writing. After the interview, subjects completed a questionnaire packet that contained the dependent measures.

Subjects in the expected and canceled interview conditions were given a copy of the interview questions in written form. They were told that, to get them thinking about the dimension of "independence" and as a warm-up or rehearsal for the actual interview, they should complete the interview questions as they would during

the real interview. Subjects were then left alone to write their answers. Afterward, subjects in an *expected interview condition* were told that the interview room was currently occupied by another participant and that there would be a short delay before the videotaping. The experimenter then mentioned that participants normally complete some questionnaires after the interview but that the subject could save some time by doing them during the delay. All subjects agreed to complete the questionnaire packet, which contained the dependent measures.

Subjects in a *canceled interview condition* were told, after answering the interview questions, that the video equipment was discovered to be broken and could not be repaired until later. The experimenter informed subjects that the interview therefore would have to be canceled. Subjects were then asked to complete the dependent measure packet "to be sure we have information from all of our participants."

Subjects assigned to an *anonymous interview condition* also completed the interview questions in written form. These subjects believed that their responses would remain anonymous and would be seen only by an assistant who would code them at a later date for group analysis; at no point did they expect to undergo a face-to-face interview. This condition was justified to subjects as a means of collecting baseline data against which participants who completed the interviews could be compared. After responding to the interview questions, subjects in this condition also completed the dependent measures. All subjects were fully debriefed at the end of the session.

Interview questions. The interview questions consisted of three types designed to create a varied, involving experience for subjects. One section presented a series of decision dilemmas involving independence, which subjects had to resolve by selecting one of several courses of action and justifying it. A second section asked subjects to indicate how much they agreed with various statements about independence (e.g., "When a person I dislike takes a strong stand, I usually try to express my own feelings even if it means agreeing with him or her") and to describe briefly a personal experience illustrating their position. A third section contained more numerical measures of independence, including ranking the subject's independence relative to other university students and dividing 100 points between pairs of trait adjectives to indicate how well each described self; the traits in each pair were similar in social desirability but differed on independence (e.g., individualistic vs. cooperative). Subjects typically took about 12 min to complete the items, and these times did not vary by condition.

Results

Analyses. The design was a 4 (Context) by 2 (Self-Esteem: low or high) by 2 (Sex of Subject) factorial. A

TABLE 3:   Self-Ratings of Independence as a Function of Interview Context, Experiment 3

	Context Condition			
	Face-to-Face Interview	Expected Interview	Canceled Interview	Anonymous
Adjusted mean posttest self-rating of independence	20.0	21.7	18.9	18.2
Mean pretest to posttest change in self-rating	1.60*	2.30*	0.26	−0.08

NOTE: Adjusted posttest self-ratings could range from 1 to 24, higher numbers indicating greater independence. For change scores, positive numbers reflect increases and negative numbers reflect decreases.
*Significantly different from zero at $p < .05$.

mean split was conducted on pretest self-esteem scores to divide subjects into high-self-esteem ($M = 47.3$, range = 45 to 50) and low-self-esteem ($M = 39.4$, range = 28 to 44) groups. Self-esteem was included primarily for exploratory purposes. Self-esteem has been associated with differences in self-presentational style (Baumeister, Tice, & Hutton, 1989; Schlenker, Weigold, & Hallam, 1990), but it was unclear how these might relate to self-presentation-induced changes in appraisals on specific dimensions of self.

Self-presentations. The desired experiences were created. Subjects said that their responses to the interview questions would make them appear to be high on independence to the students in the personality assessment class ($M = 9.1$ on a 13-point scale, anchored with 1, *not at all*, and 13, *extremely independent*), and these ratings did not vary across context conditions ($F < 1$ for the context main effect). In addition, subjects' actual responses to the quantitative measures of independence taken during the interview were standardized, and a mean interview behavior score was computed; these scores also did not vary with interview context ($F < 1$). Finally, subjects felt responsible for their behavior ($M = 10.0$) and viewed their responses as representative of their personalities ($M = 9.5$) in all conditions ($Fs < 1$ for the context effect on both measures, scales ranging from 1 to 13). Thus, subjects presented themselves in the desired fashion, and the interview context did not influence the extremity or perceived authenticity of subjects' responses.

Subjects were asked how anonymous they felt at the time they completed the interview questionnaire (or went through the interview). As desired, subjects in the anonymous condition believed their responses would be less public at the time they completed them ($M = 5.2$) than subjects in the other three conditions ($Ms = 8.1, 7.6$, and 8.8 for the face-to-face, expected, and canceled groups), $F(3, 60) = 5.61$, $p < .002$. These three groups did not differ from one another ($ps > .15$ for each comparison by t tests). Moreover, during debriefing, subjects in the written interview conditions correctly identified whether they would (expected interview condition) or

would not (canceled interview condition) have an upcoming face-to-face interview.

Self-ratings. The dependent measure packet contained a posttest self-rating of independence like the one subjects completed during mass pretesting. There were no pretest differences in independence as a function of context, self-esteem, or sex ($Fs < 1$). To assess changes in self-beliefs, a pretest-posttest difference score was computed for each subject (see Table 3). As in Experiments 1 and 2, subjects who completed the face-to-face interview showed significant increases in self-appraisals from their pretest levels, $F(1, 14) = 5.50$, $p < .04$.[4] Subjects who expected to complete the interview also showed significant increases, $F(1, 16) = 6.36$, $p < .03$. In contrast, subjects who learned their interview was canceled and those who completed the questionnaire anonymously showed no change in self-ratings whatsoever, $Fs < 1$. Thus the two conditions that involved public commitment demonstrated significant changes in self-ratings, whereas the two conditions that did not evidenced no change.

To examine overall differences between conditions, a 4 (Context) by 2 (Self-Esteem) by 2 (Sex) analysis of covariance was conducted on posttest self-ratings of independence, using pretest ratings of independence as the covariate. A main effect of context was obtained, $F(3, 47) = 2.77$, $p < .051$. A planned contrast showed that the two conditions that involved a public commitment to the behavior (face-to-face and expected interview) differed from the two conditions that did not involve a commitment (canceled interview and anonymous), $F(1, 47) = 7.89$, $p < .01$. In addition, the expected interview condition, by itself, differed from both the anonymous and canceled conditions, $Fs(1, 47) = 5.64$ and 4.64, $ps < .04$. The face-to-face condition differed marginally from the anonymous and canceled conditions, $Fs(1, 47) = 3.42$, $p < .07$, and 2.31, $p < .14$, but was equivalent to the expected interview condition, $F < 1$. Given the pattern across analyses, the crucial ingredient for producing changes in self-appraisals seems to be whether subjects were behaviorally committed to a particular public characterization of self. If the self-description was anonymous

or lost its committing force by virtue of the cancellation of the interview, it had no impact on later self-appraisals.

A marginal main effect of self-esteem, $F(1, 47) = 3.52$, $p < .07$, indicated that greater change was exhibited by subjects with high than low self-esteem ($Ms = 20.5$ and 18.9). Caution is urged in interpreting this "effect" given its marginal and nonpredicted nature. To the extent that the difference proves to be reliable in future studies, it may reflect a greater willingness among subjects with high than low self-esteem to internalize positive informa-tion about themselves (Baumeister et al., 1989). No other effects involving pretest self-esteem were obtained.

As in Experiments 1 and 2, there were no effects of the manipulation on posttest self-esteem, mood, or anx-iety (all $ps > .35$).

Discussion

Public commitment moderated the impact of subjects' self-characterizations. All subjects tried to create a posi-tive impression on an audience and answered identical interview questions. Further, they described themselves in ways that were equally positive and perceived as equally genuine across conditions. When they believed these re-sponses had no public implications, their self-descriptions had no influence on their self-appraisals. When the same self-characterizations carried public implications by vir-tue of an upcoming or prior interview, subjects shifted their self-appraisals in line with their self-flattering behaviors.

Recent studies by Tice (1992) also illustrate the power of public behavior. She found that self-characterizations produced greater change in self-conceptions if they were performed publicly than privately. Further, public behav-ior was found to produce more change if it was freely selected, drew on episodes from one's own past, and involved expected future interactions with the audience. Each of these factors should affect feelings of commitment.

These findings suggest that public self-presentation is often more potent than private self-reflection in its ca-pacity to change and crystallize self-beliefs. Subjects in all conditions were asked to draw from their prior expe-riences and self-beliefs when responding to the interview questions. Yet this directed self-reflection was insuffi-cient, just as it was in Experiments 1 and 2, to produce changes in self-appraisals. Only when the self-description had implications for a public identity did the informa-tion produce corresponding changes. Our results showed that self-presentations will cue corresponding information about the self in memory, making relevant personal experiences easier to recall (Experiment 1). However, privately salient information about the self does not inevitably lead to a corresponding change in self-appraisals. In other words, self-presentations do pro-duce biased scanning, but the simple salience of private information does not always lead to change. The fact that canceling the interview eliminated changes in self-appraisals indicates that private information alone is insufficient to shift self-beliefs; a public linkage of self to the information is required to ensure change. Commitment—the binding of self to a particular public identity—seems to be an important antecedent of changes in self-beliefs.

This is not to argue that self-reflection is trivial to the process of self-identification. People can (a) privately ruminate about the advantages and disadvantages of different identity images, thereby making it more or less likely that they will publicly commit to certain images; (b) privately consider whether they can publicly justify particular claims; (c) privately rehearse upcoming inter-actions and thereby enhance their confidence and fu-ture public effectiveness; and (d) privately contemplate significant audiences, perhaps going so far as to make a personal commitment to significant referent others who are not even present (e.g., a vow made to a deceased relative). Further, self-affirming processes, including self-enhancement and self-protection, have been docu-mented even under private conditions, suggesting that the self is often an important audience for one's own behavior (Greenwald & Breckler, 1985; Schlenker, 1980; Schlenker & Weigold, 1992). In these ways, then, private self-reflection and public commitment are not either/or alternatives but may be best viewed as synergistic. They often go hand in hand; private self-reflection affects public behavior, which in turn, influences later thoughts about the self. The bottom line is not to claim that private self-reflections are insignificant but to recognize the potency of public commitments, which exert a powerful channeling effect on thoughts and actions by linking the self to a specific identity.

Experiment 3 also bears on the plausibility of an alternative explanation raised earlier: that the increases in sociability found in Experiments 1 and 2 resulted from something about the experience of interacting with an interviewer, not from the content of subjects' self-presentation. The results of Experiment 3 eliminate this alternative. First, changes in self- appraisals were found for subjects who merely expected an interview; this would not have happened if actual interaction were crucial. Second, Experiment 3 used a different trait, *independent* instead of *sociable*, and found changes. Al-though it might be argued that the interview itself might make subjects feel more sociable (a possibility that was not found by Schlenker & Trudeau, 1990), it would be hard to argue that it also then made them feel more independent. Third, we again found that the effects of the self-presentation were specific to the trait that was emphasized in the self-presentation. It appears that the

content of subjects' public self-presentations was responsible for the shifts in later self-beliefs.

Finally, our results permit some speculations about the nature of the self-presentation process and its place in interpersonal relations. Self-presentation is viewed by some as a distinct subclass of social behavior because it is characterized as pretentious, manipulative, and power oriented (Buss & Briggs, 1984; Jones & Pittman, 1982). Our findings suggest, however, that the line between authenticity and falsehood may be clear in theory but is rarely clear in practice. Authenticity is a judgment made about the relationship between private beliefs and public conduct and, as such, is often in the eye of the beholder. Our findings show that self-descriptions that are designed to create a desired impression on audiences later become regarded by the actor as sincere expressions of private self-appraisals and even guide subsequent conduct with new audiences. Further, the mere expectation of a future interaction in which one prefers to create a desired impression will influence private self-appraisals before the actual interaction even begins. Self-descriptions that might be viewed as exaggerations in the abstract, before the actor has adopted a particular goal, come to be viewed as sincere and defensible when the actor prepares to achieve the goal. In this view, self-presentation is an integral component of all social interaction (see Schlenker & Weigold, 1992). In order to interact, people must communicate information about what they are like and how they prefer to be regarded and treated. Interpersonal communications are inherently instrumental and so are shaped by the actors' goals and agendas. Most of the time, people regard their own communications as authentic and sincere, even when those communications were shaped in part by their interpersonal goals. Whether a behavior is regarded, by self and/or others, as deceptive and manipulative or as sincere and expressive is an interesting question with numerous implications. Yet it is not a dimension that distinguishes self-presentation as a unique type of behavior. The concept of self-presentation must not be limited solely to occasions involving pretense, formality, and manipulativeness, because so doing fails to recognize the instrumental, performative aspects of social behavior in general.

CONCLUSIONS

In sum, strategic self-presentations produced a phenomenological and behavioral carry-over. Although self-presentations induced a biased scanning of prior information about the self in memory, private self-characterizations were not sufficient to produce changes in self-appraisals. Indeed, directing subjects' thoughts toward congruent or incongruent prior experiences had no impact on their self-appraisals. Changes in self-appraisals were clearly produced only when subjects had a public commitment to the identity portrayed in the self-characterization. When the commitment was removed by canceling a public interaction immediately before it was expected to occur, subjects' self-appraisals reverted to their prior states. The findings illustrate the potency of public commitment in shaping our identities. Subjects in all three experiments presented themselves positively, in ways that were roughly consistent with their prior self-beliefs. Future research is needed to determine whether commitment has a comparable effect when subjects' self-presentations are clearly inconsistent with their prior self-beliefs.

NOTES

1. Sex of subject was included in analyses of the data from Experiments 1 and 2. In Experiment 1, a marginal main effect of sex was found on the measure of the total time spent talking to the confederate in the waiting room, $F(1, 83) = 2.38$, $p < .10$; females talked slightly longer than males. No other effects of sex were significant in either study.

2. The instrument designed by Cheek and Buss (1981) also includes a Shyness Scale. Shyness and sociability are conceptually distinguishable but show a significant negative correlation, $r = -.30$, $p < .01$ (Cheek & Buss, 1981); shy people tend to be less sociable, and vice versa. Because of this natural association, it was expected that subjects would show a similar pattern on the Shyness Scale to that on the Sociability Scale, but the effect would be weaker because the focus of the self- presentation was on high sociability, now low shyness. This is what was found in both studies. Subjects tended to describe themselves as less shy in the positive self-presentation than the no-presentation conditions (Experiment 1: $Ms = 20.2$ and 21.8; Experiment 2: $Ms = 19.9$ and 23.3). The effect failed to reach significance in Experiment 1, $F < 1$, but did reach significance in Experiment 2, $F(1, 42) = 4.23$, $p < .05$. The interaction of self-presentation by personal experiences recall on shyness was insignificant in both experiments, $ps > .25$.

3. Our manipulation of the recall of personal experiences is similar in many ways to manipulations that have influenced subjects' subsequent behavior. As examples, Lydon, Zanna, and Ross (1988) asked subjects to recall behavior that was relevant or irrelevant to an attitude; Wright and Mischel (1982) asked subjects to imagine a past situation in which they felt happy, sad, or neutral; Parrott, Sabini, and Silver (1988) asked subjects to imagine themselves in common situations that most people have experienced (e.g., being turned down for a date). It is therefore a matter of speculation why the personal experiences recall had no effect on subjects' self-evaluations. One possibility is that self-conceptions of sociability are more important and less malleable than some of the variables assessed in prior research (e.g., newly formed attitudes). Lesser malleability may also have resulted from our use of the highly reliable Sociability Scale (Cheek & Buss, 1981) as our dependent measure. Experiences that would influence judgments on less important or more malleable variables may have little or no impact on more important or less malleable measures. Thus, for important judgments, a relatively potent experience such as a public self-presentation may have an impact, whereas a less potent experience such as private self-reflection would have no impact. Alternatively, perhaps subjects were aware that their thought processes were being influenced by the recall manipulation and attempted to discount the recalled information when making judgments about their sociability. It has been found that when a prime is too blatant or the locus of a mood is made salient, subjects may discount that information when making inferences (Lombardi, Higgins, & Bargh, 1987; Martin, Seta, & Crelia, 1990; Schwarz et al., 1991). This possibility would not, however, explain why very similar past manipulations of recall have been successful or why subjects' responses during the interview (i.e., the self-presentation) would not also be considered blatant (if not even more blatant, given

that it was a role the experimenter explicitly defined and asked them to play). Further, the incidents recalled by subjects were samples of their own past experiences and so would seem more difficult to discount than hypothetical examples or abstract categorizations, as are often used in priming studies. Thus the relevance of this line of research to our findings is questionable. Finally, the results of Experiment 3 cannot be interpreted on the basis of "differential blatancy" yet converge with the other findings to indicate that public self-characterizations have a greater impact than private ones.

4. As recommended by Keppel (1982), analyses testing whether significant change occurred *within* each condition employed error terms using only subjects from the relevant condition.

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