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Men, Women, and the Self-Presentation of Achievement[1]

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This study examined men's and women's self-presentation of academic achievement in an interactional context. First-year college students were led to expect an interaction with a peer to discuss academic achievement. However, the peer was actually a confederate who portrayed his or her achievement in a boastful, moderate, or self-deprecating manner. Prior to the anticipated interaction, subjects were induced to describe their own academic achievement and make predictions about their first-semester grade point averages (GPAs) to be shared with the peer. Men's GPA predictions were highest in the boastful condition (and higher than their actual GPAs), next highest in the moderate condition, and lowest (and lower than their actual GPAs) in the self-deprecating condition. Women's predicted GPAs, unexpectedly, did not vary by condition. Women were less comfortable in predicting their GPAs than men, and there was a tendency for men to be more comfortable than women while observing the boastful peer and women to be more comfortable than men while observing the self-deprecating peer. Results are discussed with regard to past research and self-in-relation theory.

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> A girl's way of saying that she thinks she's smart is to say "I'm so stupid," and everyone responds "No, you're not!" She already knows this, but it is a way of getting compliments. Boys, on the other hand, say what they think or would like themselves or others to think. A boy would say, "I'm smart" and his friend would answer, "I'm smarter," and thus a competition would arise.—Erika, age 8 (Snow, 1992)

The role of gender in self-presentation has been studied in a variety of ways, from early sociological studies (Goffman, 1959) to more recent laboratory experiments (Berg, Stephan, & Dodson, 1981; Gould & Sloan, 1982; Sleeper & Nigro, 1987; Daubman, Heatherington, & Ahn, 1992; Heatherington, Daubman, Bates, Ahn, Brown, & Preston, 1993). The laboratory studies on self-presentation grew out of previous observations and findings that girls and women, relative to boys and men, tend to underestimate their abilities and underevaluate their performances. Not all studies find this gender difference (some show no difference), and it seems to be moderated by a number of variables (Basow & Metcalf, 1988; Corbin, 1979; Lenney, 1977; Lenney, Browning, & Mitchell, 1980; Lenny, Gold, & Browning, 1983; Lirgg, 1991). However, of those that do find a gender difference, it is overwhelmingly in the direction of women downplaying their achievement and abilities relative to men.

Why? In general, these studies find that women either perform equally with men or outperform men, thus ruling out the explanation that their lower self-evaluations simply reflect actual lower competency. Instead, the early interpretations of these findings focused on self-confidence. Girls and women were believed to simply lack the self-confidence of men, or to be less confident than their abilities and achievements would suggest they should be. Confidence, however, does not seem to be the entire explanation, as the discussion below reveals.

Specifically, context must also be taken into account as well. In the early research, there was a lack of attention to and concern with the social-psychological contexts in which participants' self-evaluations were solicited. In the studies with college students, for example, researchers simply asked participants about their achievements (sometimes in writing and sometimes outloud).[3] These reports were then taken as veridical assessments of subjects' private beliefs about their abilities and performance. We are now aware that the very fact of interacting with an experimenter (let alone other participants who may be witnesses) creates its own cues and activates certain motivations and demands for self-presentation. Thus, for example, women's reports of their abilities and achievements are found to be lower in public than in private (Daubman et al., 1992; Gould & Sloan,

[3]In some studies, the context and conditions under which subjects' self-evaluations are solicited is not even reported.

1982; Heatherington et al., 1993). Nolen-Hoeksema and Girgus (1995) pointed out a similar issue in the research on children's explanatory styles. In attempting to account for discrepancies in the research findings, they pointed out that when voicing attributions about their own failures and successes to an adult, girls may be more modest and boys more self-aggrandizing but in private (i.e., on an anonymous) questionnaire, these "differences" seem to disappear and boys make more pessimistic attributions. Thus female modesty, or a concern with not being seen as "bragging," is another variable that helps account for gender differences in self-presentation.

Another important variable appears to be concern for the other person in the interpersonal situation in which the self-presentation occurs. Specifically, recent empirical findings reveal that when self-presentation occurs in social contexts in which concern for the other or for the relationship is aroused, women also tend to downplay their achievements relative to men. (Bell, 1989; Daubman et al., 1992; Heatherington et al., 1993). This can be generally called a "relational motivation." For example, in a pair of studies (Heatherington et al., 1993), first year college students were asked to reveal their predictions about their future (first-semester) grade point average under different conditions. When participants had to make their predictions aloud to a low-achieving other (i.e., a confederate who they thought had a low grade point average) women predicted lower GPAs than men. When participants were asked to write their GPAs anonymously on note cards (ruling out concerns about modesty) but knew that these would be given to a low-achieving other (retaining the possibility of relational concerns), there was still a tendency toward women predicting lower GPAs than men. In a second study, women's GPA predictions differed significantly from men's only in a face-to-face condition in which they believed the other person had achieved a low grade point average. Their GPA predictions in this condition also differed significantly from their predictions in the other two conditions, and from the grade point averages that they (eventually) earned that semester. That is, they underpredicted their actual grade point averages.

These findings are consistent with self-in-relation theory (Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, & Surrey, 1991), which describes the psychological development and conception of the self in women as intimately rooted in their relationships with other people. In this "feminine" self-schema, relations with others are the most rudimentary and important elements; indeed, they help define the self. In contrast, in the "masculine" self-schema, the self is defined through making distinctions between the self and others. Indeed, in an attempt to assert boundaries between the self and other, competition with others may be utilized. In laboratory studies men are found

to be more competitive than women (Kahn, Hottes, & Davis, 1971), especially when they are competing with a stranger (Carles & Carver, 1979). In a study of competitive game playing by men and women, it was found that men choose to play more often and persist longer at games of skill as compared to women. In addition, men play longer when scoring high on these games whereas women play longer while scoring low (Deaux, White, & Farris, 1975). In yet other studies (Roberts & Nolen-Hoeksema, 1989; Roberts, 1991) men were found to overevaluate their actual performance, including their academic performance (Daubman et al., 1992).

In light of these findings, it is interesting that, to date, the research on gender differences in self-presentation has focused on situations in which the cues for relational motivations and modesty were "strong" for women. Situations in which the other person is made vulnerable, or in which the evaluations are given publicly, are designed to "pull" for gender differences, specifically, outcomes in which women "sell themselves short."[4]

This study also extends past research in another way: by incorporating an examination of the "process" as well as the "outcome" of self-presentation in social interaction. In the studies just reviewed, the focus has been almost exclusively on outcome, i.e., participants' self-evaluations or predictions at the end of some task or some interaction. We do not know much about the participants' subjective experiences during the interaction or the task. This information, however, has the potential for advancing our understanding of the nature of gender differences in self-presentation, and for evaluating alternative explanations for those differences.

For example, a pilot study (Uebelacker & Heatherington, 1995) revealed evidence that even talking about one's academic performance with an equal peer (e.g., another first-year college student, not a confederate, and with no "low-achieving other" manipulation) was a somewhat different psychological situation for women than it was for men. In that situation, although overall men and women did not differ in their mean predicted grade point averages or their concerns about the others' feelings or perceptions, here was a tendency for women to report being less comfortable talking about academic issues than talking about other college life issues. Those with female partners reported (in a postinteraction questionnaire)

[4]In fact, some of these observations about men's behavior were actually made serendipitously in studies designed to focus on female modesty. As Tavris (1992) notes, studies of sex differences often implicitly or explicitly focus on why women behave in a certain way, using men's behavior as the norm. Women's "self-deprecating" behavior has been the focus of more research, for example, than has men's "self-aggrandizing" behavior. Theories are advanced and studies are designed to examine women's deviation from the [male] standard, even though the same framework could be reversed to find a male aberration from a [female] standard. The present study seeks to shift that focus by creating social contexts that are "strong" for both gender stereotypes.

more worry about their own academic performance and believed their partners worried more about academics than those with male partners. Gender also made a difference in certain indices of how they talked about their academics. Women used less positive language than men when talking about their current college performance (although not their ability or preparation for college), and female–female pairs (vs. female–male and male–male) took significantly longer to actually start stating specific GPA predictions, engaging in more small talk and talk about grades before actually stating their predicted grades.

Finally, the current research extends past work by systematically adding the gender of the partner as a variable. Partner's gender has found to be an important situational cue affecting interactive behavior. For example, levels of dominance (Klein & Willerman, 1979), aggression (Borden, 1975), influence tactics (Lamude, 1993), and self-disclosure (Hacker, 1981) vary with both the gender of the subject and the gender of the partner in the interaction. In most studies of gender and self-presentation, the confederates or experimenters have either been the same gender as the subject, or else the pairings have not been systematically manipulated or reported. Yet, as Maccoby (1990) notes, "there are certain important ways in which gender is implicated in social behavior—ways that may be obscured or missed altogther when behavior is summed across all categories of social partners" (p. 513).

Thus, in this study, male and female subjects were induced to talk about their academic performance in a situation in which they had briefly met the other person (male or female) and expected to be interacting with him/her shortly in an interpersonal context. We manipulated the behavior of the "other," using videotapes, in self-deprecating, self-promoting, or neutral (control) conditions. Subsequent to being exposed to the others' self-presentation, but before the anticipated interaction, the participant was required to "present" him/herself to the other (in writing) by answering a series of questions that included their predictions of their grade point averages for their first semester.

It was hypothesized that in the "self-promoting-other" condition, men would predict higher first semester GPAs than women and would overpredict higher their actual GPAs. In the "self-deprecating-other" condition, it was hypothesized that women would predict lower GPAs than men, and in fact would underpredict their actual GPAs. In the moderate condition, both sexes were expected to predict GPAs close to accurate, although men's predictions were expected to be slightly higher than women's.

With respect to participants' impressions of the "other," confederates who self-promoted were expected to be rated more positively by men than by women on the scales of likability, popularity, and intelligence. However,

female self-promoting confederates were expected to be rated as less popular and less likable than male self-promoting confederates by subjects of both sexes. Self-deprecating confederates were expected to be rated more positively by women than by men on the scales of likability and popularity. It was further hypothesized that there would be no difference in ratings of either a male or female "neutral" confederate by either male or female participants.

Based on previous research, women were expected to be more uncomfortable than men predicting their GPAs in the self-deprecating condition. Men were expected to be more uncomfortable than women predicting their GPAs in the self-promoting condition, in as much as competition motives were presumed to be aroused in that condition. Finally, women in general were hypothesized to report more concern for the others' feelings, and to report lower predicted GPAs the more concerned they were about the others' feelings.

METHOD

Participants

One hundred forty-two, 73 male and 69 female, first-year undergraduates participated. Sixty-seven of the participants received extra credit in an introductory psychology course in return for participation. The remaining 75 were recruited randomly from the college phone book and were offered the chance to win $50. The ethnic characteristics of the population from which the sample was drawn were 6% African-American, 11% Asian-American, 6% Latino/a, and 77% Euro-American.

Design

A 3 × 2 × 2 between-subjects design (behavior of confederate in presenting his/her achievement × gender of confederate × gender of participant) was employed. Predicted GPA was the main dependent variable and participants' actual GPA was included as a covariate. Additionally, participants' impressions of the confederate, their self-reported comfort level, and their concern for the confederate's feelings were measured as described below.

Materials

Videotapes. Twelve videotapes were used in the study. Every videotape begins with the same experimenter giving instructions to the confederate to conduct a "self-paced interview." The experimenter hands the confederate a set of question cards, and leaves the room. The confederate reads and answers the questions one by one aloud, in a seemingly spontaneous manner. Confederates, however, were actually following one of three prescribed sets of answers: self-promoting, self-deprecating, or moderate (neutral). Each of the 4 confederates made a videotape for each of the 3 conditions, with repeated "takes" to ensure accuracy to the script and believability.[5]

Indeed, during the actual data collection, ratings of the confederate's modesty on the videotapes were highly consistent with the desired manipulations. The mean difference in ratings of the confederate's modesty across conditions (on a 10-point rating scale where 1 = *very immodest*, and 10 = *very modest*) was highly significant, $F(2, 133) = 145.62$, $p < .0001$. In addition, Student Newman-Keuls tests revealed that confederates in all three conditions were rated significantly differently from each other: self-promoting confederates were seen as the most immodest ($M = 2.18$), self-deprecating confederates were rated as the most modest ($M = 7.63$), with the ratings of moderate confederates falling in between those two ($M = 6.76$).

"Impressions and Concerns" questionnaire. The questionnaire contained items concerning the participants' impressions of the confederate (likability, percieved popularity, intelligence, modesty), feelings of concern for the confederate, and comfort level at different points in the study. These were all rated on a Likert scale from 1 to 6.

Procedure

The experimenters were two Euro-American females, one of whom was blind to the hypotheses of the study. The confederates were two Euro-

[5]Pilot studies were conducted on both written scripts of the videos and on the actual videos themselves. In the latter, a different group of subjects read a script and were asked, "How modest is this person?" On scale of 1 (*very immodest*) to 7 (*very modest*), the following ratings were obtained: self-promoting script, $M = 2.8$, $SD = 1.4$, moderate script, $M = 4.5$, $SD = 0.57$, and self-deprecating script, $M = 5.6$, $SD = 0.52$. A subsequent pilot study of the videotapes ($n = 16$) revealed that the mean ratings for the self-deprecating video and the moderate (neutral) video were the same: Ms = 5.4, SDs = 1.1 and 1.3, while the self-promoting video received a rating of $M = 1.8$, $SD = 0.84$. The pilot participants' lack of motivation and attention in viewing the tapes, however, was believed to be a factor in the similarity of the self-deprecating and neutral videos since the (same) scripts were rated differently when they were read rather than viewed.

American females, one Euro-American male, and one male of mixed (Asian/Euro-American) heritage. Two confederates of each sex were used to ensure that any effects due to "gender" were not specific to the particular person of that gender.[6] Participants were greeted by the experimenter and introduced to a "partner," in reality a confederate. The two were then brought to separate private rooms. The participant was told that he or she would be having a conversation with the partner in a few minutes but prior to that would watch a five-minute video of the partner answering questions about life at college. The ostensible purpose of the study was to examine the effects of technology on interpersonal relationships, thus making the viewing of a video plausible. On the video, the confederate was either self-promoting, moderate, or self-deprecating in response to questions about his or her academic performance.

After watching the videotape, the participants completed a questionnaire dealing with college life. They were told that their partner was also filling out this questionnaire and that the two would imminently be reunited to read and discuss each others' answers. The five open-ended questions concerned adjustment to life at college, and were similar to those which the confederate answered on the videotape. The five questions were purposely designed to be increasingly specific about academic concerns. The first, for example, asked about meeting new friends, the third about which classes one enjoys, the fourth about how one is doing in classes academically. The final question asked the participant to predict his or her first-semester GPA. (Note, however, that on the videotape, the confederate talked about academic achievement but did not predict a GPA.)

Finally, the participants were asked to complete the "Impressions and Concerns" questionnaire before meeting with their partner; however, this one was not to be shared or discussed with the partner. It dealt with the participant 's impressions of the partner, comfort level, and thoughts about the partner's feelings. The supposed meeting between the partners never occurred, as the experiment concluded with the completion of the second questionnaire.

Finally, all participants were debriefed. All but one agreed to release their actual GPA, anonymously, at the end of the semester. Debriefing revealed that the cover story and rationale for the study were successful; only 5 participants had to be excluded from the study for suspicion of the cover story.

[6]Subsequent analyses showed that in fact there were no individual experimenter or confederate effects.

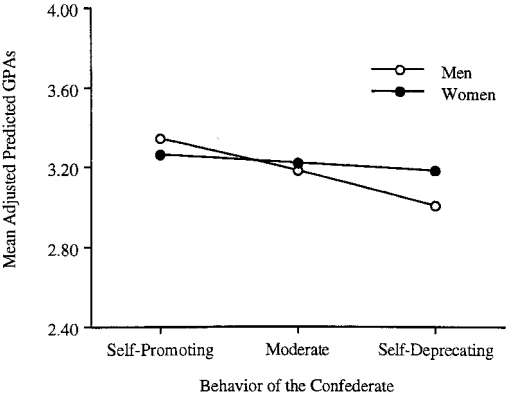

Fig. 1. Mean adjusted predicted grade point averages in the self-promoting, moderate, and self-deprecating conditions.

RESULTS

First, as expected, actual GPAs did not differ across conditions. The predicted means, however, did differ. In the self-promoting condition, the mean predicted GPAs were 3.31, SD = .32; in the moderate condition, M = 3.20, SD = .36; and in the self-deprecating condition, M = 3.08, SD = .37. Male participant's mean GPA predictions in these conditions were 3.34 (SD = .29), 3.15 (SD = .42), and 3.01 (SD = .40), respectively. Female participants' mean predicted GPAs in these three conditions were 3.28 (SD = .34), 3.25 (SD = .28), and 3.15 (SD = .33), respectively. For the analyses, the predicted GPA means were adjusted with participants' actual GPAs in order to account for any individual differences in actual achievement. Thus a 3 × 2 × 2 analysis of covariance revealed an effect of condition, $F(2, 121) = 5.55$, $p = .01$. Post hoc tests showed that, overall, participants predicted higher GPAs in the self-promoting than in the self-deprecating condition. A qualifying two-way interaction $F(2, 121) = 3.54$, $p < .03$, showed that men's adjusted predicted GPAs varied across conditions, but women's did not. That is, men's adjusted predicted GPAs were the highest in the self-promoting condition and the lowest in the self-deprecating condition but women's predictions did not differ across conditions (see Fig. 1).

Paired t tests examined predicted vs. actual GPAs. Consistent with the hypothesis, men overpredicted their actual GPAs in the self-promoting condition $t(22) = 2.08$, $p < .05$. Moreover, men underpredicted their actual GPAs in the self-deprecating condition $t(23) = -2.85$, $p < .01$. Contrary to

the hypothesis, women did not underpredict their GPAs in the self-deprecating condition.

Participants' perceptions of their partner were also examined. A main effect was found for liking of the confederate $F(2, 123) = 16.78$, $p < .001$. Self-promoting confederates were liked less than either the self-deprecating or moderate confederates (M's = 3.42, 4.33, 4.04; SDs = .88, .63, .70, respectively). Neither sex of participant nor sex of confederate had an effect on how much the confederate was liked. A similar finding was obtained with respect to how much a participant thought others would like the confederate, $F(2, 123) = 25.29$, $p < .001$. Participants believed that others would like the self-promoting confederate less ($M = 3.45$, $SD = .73$) than either the self-deprecating ($M = 4.36$, $SD = .74$) or the moderate confederate ($M = 4.43$, $SD = .65$). There was no effect of sex of confederate or participant on these ratings.

A main effect of condition was found for the rating of the confederate's intelligence, such that the self-promoting confederate was seen as the most intelligent, $F(2, 124) = 6.22$, $p < .001$. However, there was also an interaction of condition and participant sex, $F(2, 124) = 3.29$, $p < .05$. Male participants' ratings of the confederate did not differ across the conditions. Women, however, rated the self-deprecating confederates as less intelligent ($M = 4.05$, $SD = .95$) than both the moderate confederate ($M = 4.57$, $SD = .79$) and the self-promoting confederate ($M = 5.00$, $SD = .71$). This was further qualified by a trend toward an interaction of confederate sex and condition, $F(2, 124) = 2.90$, $p < .10$. That is, when female confederates were self-deprecating, female subjects rated them as less intelligent than when they discussed their achievement moderately or when they self-promoted, whereas ratings of the male confederate's intelligence was unaffected by condition.

Regarding perceptions of the confederate's attractiveness, there was a main effect of condition, $F(2, 121) = 3.51$, $p < .05$, and a trend towards a main effect of confederate sex, $F(1, 121) = 2.86$, $p < .10$. Self-promoting confederates were rated as less attractive than moderate confederates [$M = 3.67$ ($SD = 1.12$) and $M = 4.22$ ($SD = .89$), respectively] and female confederates were rated as more attractive ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 1.00$) than male confederates ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.06$). These main effects were qualified by a trend toward a three-way interaction of condition, participant sex, and confederate sex, $F(2, 121) = 2.42$, $p < .10$. Female participants rated a self-promoting confederate as less attractive than either a moderate or self-deprecating confederate, but the condition did not affect *male* participants' ratings of attractiveness. Women's ratings of male confederates seem to explain most of the effect. Specifically, the ratings of female participants with a male confederate who was self-promoting were particularly low rela-

tive to their ratings in conditions with either a moderate or a self-deprecating male confederate.

Participants' comfort level at two different points during the study, and their thoughts about their partner's feelings, were also examined. Regardless of condition, male participants reported more comfort when predicting GPA (M = 3.89, SD = 1.53) than did the women (M = 3.36, SD = 1.45), $F(1,124) = 3.20$, $p < .05$.

For ratings of comfort level while watching the video, there was a trend toward an interaction of participant sex and condition, $F(2, 124) = 2.70$, $p < .10$. Women were slightly more comfortable watching the self-deprecating confederate (M = 5.27, SD = .88) than were men (M = 4.75, SD = 1.15), $t(44) = -1.72$, $p < .10$. Conversely, men tended to be more comfortable than women watching the self-promoting confederate self-promote (Ms = 5.35 and 4.81 and SDs = .78 and 1.29, respectively), $t(42) = 1.70$, $p < .10$. Confederate sex significantly affected how much participants thought about the partner's feelings $F(1, 130) = 5.75$, $p < .05$. Those with female partners thought about her feelings more (M = 3.00, SD = 1.51) more than did those with male partners (M = 2.44, SD = 1.23). However, there was no significant difference between how much men versus women reported thinking about the partner's feelings, and this variable was not correlated with predicted GPA, r = .09, ns.

DISCUSSION

From the classroom to the boardroom, as well as in laboratory settings, much has been made about gender differences in women's and men's self-presentation. Yet, study of the way in which the interpersonal context figures into gender and self-presentation has been relatively neglected. As we and others (cf. Deaux & Major, 1987; Lenny, 1977) have argued, how men and women present themselves depends on who is listening and how they are asked to talk about themselves.

This laboratory study systematically manipulated a variable—the self-presentation of the "other"—that is salient and important in nonlaboratory situations. In work and academic settings, men and women are in positions in which they must present their abilities and achievements; sometimes the others in those situations are particularly confident or self-aggrandizing themselves and at other times those others are less confident or even self-deprecating. We attempted to elicit modesty, relational, and competitive concerns by varying the behavior of a participant's partner. We then examined both the outcome (GPA prediction) and its process (the individual's experience of the interaction). Together, these variables portray a more

complete picture of men's and women's self-presentation. Men, but not women, differed across conditions in the GPAs they predicted for their first semester at college; men predicted the highest GPAs (and in fact overpredicted their GPAs) when expecting to interact with a partner who was self-promoting and predicted the lowest GPAs when confronted with a partner who was self-deprecating. In this case, the interpersonal context played a larger role in men's self-presentation of achievement than in women's; the key was simply looking for it. (We do note, however, that across all conditions, women were more uncomfortable than men when predicting a GPA, suggesting that self-presentation is a subjectively charged situation for women.)

Certain of our findings are consistent with earlier studies of competitiveness and self-aggrandizement in men (Carles & Carver, 1979; Kahn, Hottes, & Davis, 1971) and also with self-in-relation theory's schema of the male self (Jordan et al., 1991). Levine, Reis, Sue, & Turner (1977) suggest that instead of women's "fear of success," it is actually men's "fear of failure" that is more salient in achievement situations. It seems that in a situation in which the other person presents as successful, men will respond with the more self-promoting presentation. If men are in general more likely to self-promote and more comfortable in situations in which others are doing so, the "boastful other" context may have been a particularly strong one for men. In addition to the fear of failure, competition may have been aroused in this condition. As noted in the introduction, other studies have demonstrated that men are more competitive than women. In contrast, competition may have a dampening effect on women's behavior, e.g., social comparison with a high ability partner has been shown to elicit lower self-evaluations from women (Lenney et al., 1983). Indeed, in our study, women were less comfortable than men watching the self-promoting confederate.

Unexpectedly, men's GPA predictions were lowest when they anticipated discussing grades with a self-deprecating other, and men also significantly underpredicted their actual GPAs in this condition. This finding contrasts with previous findings (Daubman, 1992; Heatherington et al., 1993) in which women's behavior proved more sensitive to the "vulnerable other" condition. A few differences between this study and prior research are worth noting. In this study, in contrast to the others, the confederate gave no objective self-evaluation (never actually stated a low GPA) but instead was self-deprecating in the way in which he/she *talked* about academic performance (e.g., "the competition is tougher [here, than in high school] and I'm still sort of trying to figure out how to keep up and do ok," "sometimes you just crash and burn [when speaking in class]"). Men may be less familiar with this style of presentation, and therefore it makes more of an impression on them than it did

on women. Perhaps women, being more familiar with such talk, are less likely to be swayed by it. Again, recall that women in this study were more comfortable than men watching the presentation of a self-deprecating confederate. If being somewhat self-deprecating, or voicing worries, is a common conversational style for women (Tannen, 1990), then when they hear others doing it, they are less likely to conclude that that person is actually vulnerable and therefore less likely than men to be affected by the condition. (In previous research, the confederate actually stated an explicit GPA, making their "modesty" more concrete and therefore perhaps more difficult to dismiss.) Note that this explanation implies some level of relational concern among men, and some motive to "downplay" their own GPAs in the presence of (what seemed to them to be) a vulnerable other.

Athough self-in-relation theory has been emphasized as an alternative vision of women's psychology, it is possible that it can also apply to men. Jordan et al. (1991), in fact, note,

> We are also just beginning to think about the use of this perspective to better understand men; we know that the shift we are suggesting from a psychology of "The Self" to one emphasizing relationships does not apply to women's psychology only. It points to the need for a rethinking of our study of all people. (p. 7)

These results raise another question for self-in-relation theory: To what extent are motives toward maximizing connectedness and minimizing difference strong, trait-like factors in women as opposed to more unstable, contextually determined motives? In essence, the results call into question the robustness of the theory. Perhaps, for example, self-in-relation motives are salient only in the presence of an explicitly vulnerable other (as in Heatherington et al., 1993), albeit a stranger. Perhaps it is only with intimate others that women's greater tendencies toward connectedness and related behaviors are significant. In this study, there was no preexisting relationship between the two people. Future research should systematically consider the nature of the relationship as that variable affects self-presentation, perhaps by varying the social contexts in which self-in-relation motives are aroused (e.g., strangers, classmates, dormmates, best friends) as well as the percieved vulnerability of the other. Moreover, there may be individual differences in the strength of relational self-definitions and motives in women, and these may predict when their behavior does or does not conform to predictions from the theory. More attention to individual differences among women is needed in the theory itself. Further, future research should examine individual differences in this variable as it predicts self-presentation and other gender differences in interpersonal behavior.

In summary, in any given interpersonal situation, there are a number of possible motives: to impress the other, to connect with the other emotionally, to compete with or outdo the other, to gain something from the

other. In different contexts, the salience of each of these motives may ebb and flow. And among men and women socialized in our culture, there seem to be gender differences in the preexisting strength of these motives. Moreover, these proximal and distal variables (Deaux & Major, 1987) may interact. For example, men's self-in-relation type motives (which may in general be weaker than women's) may be stronger in contexts in which competition is minimized. Cochran and Peplau (1985), for example, found that, contrary to stereotypes, in romantic attachments, men valued intimacy and attachment to their partner just as much as women did. Moreover, it was women rather than men who were were more concerned about autonomy and separation from their partner.

Finally, we note that participants tended to find the boastful confederate particularly unattractive relative to the moderate and self-deprecating confederates. It may be that self-deprecation is better than self-promotion for either women or men interested in maintaining connections with others. On the other hand, gender was an important factor in perceptions of intelligence. There was an indication that self-deprecating women, but not men, are perceived as less intelligent than moderate or self-promoting women. Several recent studies have suggested that modesty may have a deleterious effect on others' perceptions of women's intellectual abilities (Miller, Cooke, Tsang, & Morgan, 1992; Post, 1988; Wiley & Crittendon, 1992). Modesty may be a double-edged sword for women: while it may promote connection between the self and others, it also may decrease perceptions of competence and professionalism.

Continuing research in both naturalistic and laboratory settings is needed to further elucidate the nature of gender differences in self-presentation, and perceptions of that self-presentation by the other, with careful attention to the ways in which the interpersonal context elicts different self-presentational motives or behavior.

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