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Contents

Religion within a Dark Triad Ideological Surround: Pluralistic Self as Dialogue across Private, Communal, and Public Space

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Abstract

Within an Ideological Surround Model, a self is the pluralistic dialogical construction of standards across private, communal, and public space. In 371 undergraduates, Religious Compatibility Ratings for Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy brought standards of the Dark Triad into dialogue with standards of religion. Positive correlations among Religious Compatibility Ratings confirmed a Dark Triad dialogical integration of 'religion'. Other relationships suggested complex mental health and religious implications of an Extrinsic Dark Triad Religious Orientation. Religious Compatibility Ratings mediated relationships of gender with Dark Triad scales and with the Intrinsic Religious Orientation. Ratings also mediated some Dark Triad associations with other measures. Overall, Machiavellianism and Psychopathy appeared to be maladjusted social rationalities that dialogically integrated 'religion' as a subjugation of intrinsic religiousness. Narcissism instead reflected a psychologically ambiguous social rationality with a 'religion' that largely ignored intrinsic religiousness. This study most generally used an Extrinsic Dark Triad Religious Orientation to illustrate the complexities of 'religion' within the dialogical structures of the pluralistic self.

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1   Introduction

Dialogue is necessary for objectivity in the psychology of religion. An Ideological Surround Model (ISM) makes this claim based upon the argument that psychology and religion operate as incommensurable social rationalities (Watson, 2011; Ghorbani, Watson, Tavakoli, & Chen, 2016). Social rationalities organize thought and practice relative to understandings of an at least implicit ultimate standard (Taylor, 2007). Some vision of nature will be the ultimate standard that produces systematic thought and practice within a social scientific community. A vision of God will organize thought and practice within a theistic religious community. Both communities will live within a surround of ideologically acceptable inferences derived from their ultimate standards (MacIntyre, 1978). Ultimate standards will also identify inferences that must be rejected. Supra-natural derivative inferences will have no place within naturalistic ideological surrounds, just as inferences that use nature to explain religion away will find no home within theistic ideological surrounds.

   Given commitments to very different standards as ultimate, social sciences and religions will share no higher standard for adjudicating their disagreements. Lack of a common metric of evaluation, by definition, makes them incommensurable (MacIntyre, 1988). What is 'objective' within one ideological surround can be at least somewhat 'subjective' within another. Comprehensive understandings of psychology and religion, therefore, will need to include dialogues that clarify the challenges of incommensurability. This dialogical evidence will supplement other research findings that attempt to explain both social scientific and religious rationalities in terms of derivate inferences associated with the ultimate standards of each.

1.1   *Dialogue, Religion, and the Pluralistic Self*

While focusing primarily on relationships between religions and the social sciences, the ISM also assumes that dialogue is essential to understanding the religious (and nonreligious) self (Watson, 2014). Congruent with this possibility is Dialogical Self Theory (DST) and its rejection of a Cartesian self that speaks with the univocal rationality of a unitary 'I' (Hermans & Kempen, 1993). DST begins instead with the suggestion of James (1890) that each self operates as an I/me composite. The 'me' involves characteristics of the self that can be known, and the 'I' does the knowing. Based upon Bakhtin (1929/1973), DST further argues that a self always emerges in dialogue with actual or imagined others who elicit 'I-positions' that call forth specific perspectives on the 'me' (Hermans & Kempen, 1993, p. 47). A self, in other words, includes a pluralism of dialogically elicited 'me' descriptions. An overall sense of self then develops

through the integrative functioning of a meta-perspective that "has the capacity to juxtapose and interrelate the other positions that neither apart nor in their incidental relationships can achieve any synthesis of the self as a whole" (p. 92). This meta-I essentially 'narrates' a 'polyphonic novel' (p. 40) or 'writes' a 'script' (Watson, 2014) that the pluralistic dialogical self can use to maintain a sense of identity and agency across the diversity of its 'spaces' in social life.

As described within the ISM, pluralistic selves necessarily 'move' through a multitude of incommensurable social rationalities across three 'spaces' (Watson, 2014). The social rationality of private space will reflect standards of functioning organized within the meta-perspectival script of the individual in his or her relationship with a vast array of dialogically elicited perspectives on the 'me'. These scripts will include an at least implicit hierarchy of standards with some being more influential than others. Diverse standards within the self will sometimes have compatible derivative inferences that are easily integrated within the meta-perspectival script. Other standards will support derivative inferences that are incompatible with higher, more influential standards. These incompatible standards will be brought into 'subjugation'. Finally, still other standards will give rise to derivative inferences that are both compatible and incompatible with other influential ultimate standards and will require ongoing dialogical negotiation. As understood within a self, for example, standards in a marriage may require attempts at negotiation with standards operating at work and both may require negotiation with religious standards.

Communal space will reflect dialogical structures within the social environment that attempt to bring individuals into unity with scripts supplied by a shared ultimate standard. A church congregation would be only one among many obvious examples in the psychology of religion. Opportunities for integration within the meta-perspective of a community should be facilitated through commitments to the same ultimate standard. Visions of that standard, nevertheless, can vary and require dialogical negotiation of communal disagreements that may exist in derivative inferences. Those negotiations could produce a more vibrant social rationality through a dialectical expansion of perspectives on the ultimate standard and on its derivative inferences, or they could lead to schism or complete communal collapse.

Public space will supply scripts for organizing diversity within social life. Interactions between religious and nonreligious ideological surrounds are obvious examples of diversity, but innumerable other social rationalities will be important as well, including, for instance, those reflecting work, the nation and its states, the media, educational establishments, political parties, unions, professions, and ethnic heritages, to mention only a very few. The influence

of public scripts is obvious in the systematicities that appear in pluralistic social life, but the incommensurability of social rationalities just as obviously presents challenges. Top-down public impositions of ultimate standards on diversity can conflict with private and communal social rationalities and lead to disintegrative discord. Contemporary discord over abortion and sexual orientation may be especially obvious, but there are many others including, for example, discord over immigration, taxes, and war. Dialogue could make bottom-up contributions to less discordant public scripts. Followers of different private and communal rationalities could remain faithful to their ultimate standards and work to construct derivative inferences helpful in articulating the 'common good' within an even more integrative public script. Dialogue could also reveal irresolvable incompatibilities. Disagreements could then lead to additional dialogues in search of derivative inferences that would help define a 'common ground' for better scripting disagreements in public space.

1.2   *Religious Self and Hierarchy*

Scepticism about the ISM could reflect doubts about 'ultimate' standards ever being relevant within the undeniable pluralism of contemporary social life. On the other hand, DST combined with the ISM suggest that the self is a 'society' of dialogues across three spaces organized into a hierarchy of the ultimate standards. Pluralism, in other words, is about the organization and not about the absence of ultimate standards. With regards to the psychology of religion, this hierarchy of standards might be more oligarchical with religious and other scripts defining the ultimate standard of a syncretic self. A more traditionally religious self might instead attempt to place religious scripts associated with a specific community of commitment at the apex of its self-structure across all three social spaces.

In widely used Religious Orientation Scales (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989), for instance, an Intrinsic Religious Orientation appears in the self-report, 'My whole approach to life is based on my religion'. Here, the attempt is to have religion define the ultimate standard of a self. This religious self would seek to construct itself most importantly in dialogue with God through, for example, prayer, participation in rituals, and the reading of sacred texts. Such dialogues would script religious role-taking as central to self-functioning (Van der Lans, 1987; Wikström. 1987). In contrast, an Extrinsic Personal Orientation appears in the claim, 'What religion offers me most is comfort in times of trouble and sorrow', whereas as Extrinsic Social Orientation is evident in such statements as, 'I go to church mostly to spend time with my friends'. When they correlate positively with the Intrinsic Religious Orientation, these two extrinsic motivations might be organized as compatible sub-standards in a hierarchy of scripts

under the control of a more ultimate intrinsic religiosity. Alternatively, they could be under the control of a wholly different, non-religious standard. An extrinsic social motivation, for instance, might be under the control of a script that pursues profitable business contacts through religious activity.

Associated with the ISM are methods designed to evaluate dialogues among social rationalities within the self. Comparative rationality analysis is one example (Watson, 2010). In this procedure, research participants respond to a psychological scale twice. They first respond to a scale under regular instructions, and this procedure assesses the strength of a social scientifically defined rationality within the hierarchical structures of the self. Later, participants evaluate each scale item in terms of the degree to which it is compatible or incompatible with personal religious beliefs. Overall Religious Compatibility Ratings for the full scale can be computed, and a positive correlation of ratings with the original instrument will indicate the degree to which an interpretative integration of derivative inferences can be achieved between standards built into a scale and standards reflecting personal religiousness.

Relationships of Religious Compatibility Ratings with other measures will then help define the ideological implications of that interpretative integration. A positive correlation with the Intrinsic Religious Orientation, for example, will reveal a compatibility with traditional religious ideology whereas a negative correlation will identify an incompatibility. Further analyses can also use religious compatibility ratings to determine whether this interpretive integration mediates relationships of the original instrument with other measures (e.g., Watson, Chen, Morris, & Ghorbani, 2017). Beyond observed correlations, significant mediation effects would further confirm an influential integrative role of religion within the meta-perspectival script of the pluralistic self.

1.3 *Dark Triad and the Pluralistic Self*

Beyond incommensurability, public space will also include the challenge of social rationalities that seem inimical to the common good. The Dark Triad of Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy may be one example (Muris, Merckelbach, Otgaar, & Meijer, 2017). Machiavellianism reflects an ultimate standard that has cynicism, manipulativeness, and insensitivity to moral guidance as derivative inferences. Items within the Jones and Paulhus (2104) Machiavellianism Scale express this 'script' in such assertions as, 'I like to use clever manipulation to get my way', 'It's wise to keep track of information that you can use against people later', and 'Make sure your plans benefit yourself, not others'. With Narcissism, a grandiose self in dialogue with admiring others reflects the ultimate standard, and interpersonal exploitativeness and a sense of entitlement are representative derivative inferences. Illustrative

expressions of this script from the Jones and Paulhus Narcissism Scale claim, 'Many group activities tend to be dull without me', 'I know that I am special because everyone keeps telling me so', and 'I insist on getting the respect I deserve'. A lack of guilt and low self-control help describe the ultimate standard of Psychopathy with impulsivity and callousness being prominent derivative inferences. Psychopathic scripts will include such self-reports as, 'Payback needs to be quick and nasty', 'People who mess with me always regret it', and 'I enjoy having sex with people I hardly know'.

Within an evolutionary ideological surround, the Dark Triad can be interpreted as a social rationality that makes sense (Jonason, Duineveld, & Middleton, 2015). Dark Triad traits operate as 'pseudopathologies' (Crawford & Anderson, 1989) that can include short-term or 'promiscuous' sociosexual strategies that profit the individual at the expense of the group. More generally, the Dark Triad appears to reflect values involving 'antisocial' power as an ultimate good that is amalgamated with commitments to hedonism or to achievement (Kajonius, Persson, & Jonason, 2015). In this description, the adjective 'antisocial' would be a derivative inference of most theistic ultimate standards and would not necessarily reflect the interpretation of a Dark Triad private rationality. Pseudopathologies associated with this 'dark' ultimate standard would introduce a systematicity in thought and action that could promote reproductive success. The biology of reproduction imposes more costs on and fewer benefits from this 'fast' sociosexual strategy in women; so, the higher self-reported Dark Triad scores of men confirms a derivative inference associated with a Darwinian ideological surround (Jonason, Li, Webster, & Schmitt, 2009).

1.4   *Present Study*

Previous uses and interpretations of the ISM have essentially focused on religion as the master motive across all three spaces. In this study, however, the attempt was to determine if 'religion' would have influences even if it served as a subjugated rationality in its more conventional forms. The Dark Triad ideological surround conflicts with traditionally religious rationalities that pursue the longer-term common good at the shorter-term expense of the individual. Traditional religions presumably could use derivative inferences to construct a 'Golden Rule' script within public space that said, 'You should do unto others, as you would have them do unto you'. Dark Triad Religious Compatibility Ratings, in contrast, could reflect a 'nonreligious' religion that brought perspectives on 'religion' into the service of 'antisocial' power as the ultimate standard. This would be an Extrinsic Dark Triad Religious Orientation. Positive correlations among Religious Compatibility Ratings for Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and

Psychopathy would suggest a dialogical integration of Dark Triad traits into a 'script' that brought 'religion' as a means into alignment with power as the end. Dark Triad Religious Compatibility Ratings should also be incompatible with traditional religious rationalities and should, therefore, correlate negatively with the Intrinsic Religious Orientation.

Evidence already reveals negative relationships of the Dark Triad with the Intrinsic Religious Orientation (Aghababaei, Mohammadtabar, & Saffarinia, 2014) and with other indices of traditional religious commitment (Veselka, Giammarco, & Veron, 2014; Jonason, Zeigler-Hill, & Okan, 2017; Ghorbani, Watson, Zarei, & Chen, 2017). Beyond such relationships, the present investigation tested the further possibility that a Dark Triad use of religion would be influential within Dark Triad self-functioning. Women often self-report greater traditional religiousness than men (Hood, Spilka, Hunsberger, & Gorsuch, 1996), so a first expectation was that women would also display lower Dark Triad Religious Compatibility Ratings. The greater Religious Compatibility Ratings of men would suggest a stronger domination of religion by the goals of power. Religious Compatibility Ratings might, therefore, mediate gender relationships with the Dark Triad and with the Intrinsic Religious Orientation.

Of further interest was the possibility that Religious Compatibility Ratings would mediate Dark Triad associations with religious and psychological maladjustment. With regards to religious adjustment, previous research suggests that the Intrinsic and Extrinsic Personal Religious Orientations have largely adaptive implications with the Extrinsic Social Orientation being weaker and ambiguous (Watson, Chen, & Ghorbani, 2014). In assessing psychological functioning beyond the Dark Triad, procedures administered Self-Esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), Satisfaction with Life (Deiner, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985), and Depression, and Anxiety (Costello & Comrey, 1967) scales. The overall expectation was that each Dark Triad scale and Religious Compatibility Rating would correlate positively with the two other Dark Triad scales and ratings, with Depression, and with Anxiety. Negative correlations should also appear with the Intrinsic and Extrinsic Personal Religious Orientations, Self-Esteem, and Satisfaction with Life. No predictions seemed obvious for the ambiguous Extrinsic Social Orientation.

1.5 *Hypotheses*
Predictions of this project occurred within the context of background assumptions about relationships among the Dark Triad, gender, and religious and other psychological constructs. Four sets of hypotheses tested ISM assumptions about an Extrinsic Dark Triad Religious Orientation.

First, Religious Compatibility Ratings among Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy will correlate positively with each other, suggesting a dialogical integration of these traits into a script that submits religion to the goals of 'antisocial' power.

Second, Dark Triad Religious Compatibility Ratings will correlate positively with the Dark Triad and negatively with the Intrinsic Religious Orientation.

Third, Religious Compatibility Ratings will be higher in men and will mediate tendencies of males to score higher on the Dark Triad and lower on religiousness. Procedures also examined whether ratings would mediate other linkages of gender with mental health.

Fourth, Religious Compatibility Ratings will mediate relationships of the Dark Triad with religious and psychological maladjustment.

2   Method

2.1   *Participants*

Undergraduates enrolled in large sections of an Introductory Psychology class served as the research participants. Average age of these 114 men and 257 women was 18.6 years (SD = 1.2). The sample identified itself as 77.9% White, 11.6% Black, 3.2% Hispanic, 3.2% Asian, 1.1% Middle Eastern, and 3.0% 'other'. Religious affiliations were 86.0% Christian, 7.0% atheist/agnostic, 0.5% Jewish, 0.5% Muslim, 0.5% Buddhist, and 5.5% 'other'.

2.2   *Measures*

Participants received all measures consolidated into a single questionnaire booklet. An initial page collected background information, including gender with males scored as zero and females scored as one. Psychological scales then followed in the order of their descriptions below. Representative items for Religious Orientation and Dark Triad measures have already been presented in the introduction. Each instrument except for the Dark Triad Religious Compatibility Ratings used zero (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree) Likert response options. Statistical procedures expressed responding on each scale as the average response per item.

Dark Triad. The Jones and Paulhus (2014) Dark Triad scale used 9 items each to record Machiavellianism (α = .68, M = 2.05, SD = 0.59), Narcissism (α = .61, M = 2.06, SD = 0.54), and Psychopathy (α = .70, M = 1.22, SD = 0.59).

Self-Esteem. Recording Self-Esteem was the 10-item Rosenberg (1965) Self-Esteem Scale (α = .87, M = 2.80, SD = 0.71). Illustrative of this construct was the assertion, 'I feel that I have a number of good qualities'.

Satisfaction with Life. The Diener et al. (1985) Satisfaction with Life Scale (α = .79, *M* = 2.46, *SD* = 0.78) included 5 statements that said, for example, 'I am satisfied with my life'.

Depression and Anxiety. Costello and Comrey (1967) scales assessed dispositional Depression (14 items, α = .93, *M* = 0.82, *SD* = 0.68) and Anxiety (9 items, α = .84, *M* = 1.79, *SD* = 0.77). Indicative of Depression was the self-report 'I feel sad and depressed'. Illustrating Anxiety was the claim, 'I'm a restless and tense person'.

Religious Orientations. Gorsuch and McPherson (1989) scales included 8-item Intrinsic (α = .84, *M* = 2.44, *SD* = 0.84), 3-item Extrinsic Personal (α = .76, *M* = 2.50, *SD* = 0.95) and 3-item Extrinsic Social (α = .73, *M* = 1.18, *SD* = 0.80) Religious Orientation Scales.

Dark Triad Religious Compatibility Ratings. The final section of the questionnaire presented Dark Triad items once again, but with different instructions that said:

> In this section of the questionnaire, we want you respond to some questionnaire statements that you have already seen. This time, however, we do not want you to respond to these statements in terms of how they apply to you personally. Instead, we would like you to evaluate each item in terms of your personal religious beliefs.

Reactions to each statement ranged across options that varied from 'this statement is very incompatible with my religious beliefs' (0) to 'this statement is very compatible with my religious beliefs' (4). Instructions concluded with a final clarification:

> So, a statement might say, 'I believe in spending time in meditation'. As a Christian, for example, you would choose E if you thought this idea was very compatible with your understanding of Christianity. Or you might choose A, if you thought it was very incompatible. Muslims, Jews, Hindus, and followers of other religious traditions would, of course, evaluate statements in terms of their own religious beliefs. If you are an atheist or an agnostic, you should still respond to these items, but in terms of your personal systems of beliefs.

Statistical procedures determined Religious Compatibility Ratings for Machiavellianism (α = .82, *M* = 1.15, *SD* = 0.68), Narcissism (α = .56, *M* = 1.97, *SD* = 0.48), Psychopathy (α = .72, *M* = 1.07, *SD* = 0.60), and for all three the Dark Triad scales combined together (α = .84, *M* = 1.40, *SD* = 0.46).

2.3   *Procedure*

All participants were volunteers. Administration of the questionnaire booklet occurred in a large classroom setting. Students entered reactions to all measures on standardized answer sheets, and optical scanning equipment later read their responses into a computer data file.

Statistical procedures focused on developing a broad-scoped description of Dark Triad relationships with an Extrinsic Dark Triad Religious Orientation. This goal had two important data analytic implications. First, mediation procedures used Religious Compatibility Ratings for all three Dark Triad measures taken together. Religious Compatibility Ratings for all three scales could have been used as multiple mediators; however, such procedures would have uncovered finer grained complexities that would have obscured the broader-scoped concerns of this project (see e.g., Watson et al., 2017). Obscuring effects would have been especially problematic given unexpected complexities in the Narcissism data.

Second, comparative rationality analysis includes procedures that operate both at the macro-rationality level of a full scale and at the micro-rationality level of individual items. Micro-rationality assessments have been useful in transforming the scoring of an ambiguous or anti-religious instrument into a measure that coherently reflects a religious ideological surround. Hypotheses about the influences of ideology on responding can then be tested by examining correlations of alternative ideological scorings of the very same instrument with other measures (Watson, 2010). In the present study, however, the goal was not to bring the Dark Triad into conformity with a traditionally religious ideological surround, but rather to explore how 'religion' might be brought into conformity with the ideological surround of the Dark Triad. With one exception, micro-rationality assessments added nothing important beyond the data supplied by the macro-rationality results. Micro-rationality data, therefore, will be presented only in abbreviated form when relevant to that one exception.

After preliminary analyses clarifying Dark Triad Religious Compatibility Ratings, statistical procedures examined correlations among measures followed by two sets of mediation procedures (Hayes, 2013). Dark Triad Religious Compatibility Ratings served as the mediator in all of these procedures. In one set of mediation models, gender was the independent variable, and the Dark Triad and any other measures that displayed associations with gender served as dependent variables. Each Dark Triad scale served as the independent variable in the second set of mediation models, and significant Dark Triad relationships with other measures identified the relevant dependent variables.

3 Results

Preliminary analyses clarified average levels of responding on the Religious Compatibility Ratings and the Dark Triad scales (see 'Measures' section above for all means). All three mean Religious Compatibility Ratings fell between response options identifying items as 'incompatible' and as 'neither incompatible nor compatible' with religious beliefs. Mean ratings for each scale were significantly different from ratings for the other two, with Narcissism ratings highest and Psychopathy ratings lowest, Greenhouse-Geisser F (1.84, 677.00) = 449.16, p < .001. Significant overall differences also appeared for the three Dark Triad scales themselves, with Psychopathy lower on average than the two other traits, which did not differ, Greenhouse-Geisser F (1.89, 698.26) = 388.77, p < .001. Average Religious Compatibility Ratings were significantly lower than means for the corresponding Dark Triad scale, t's (370) > 2.69, p's < .01. Overall, these data suggested that Psychopathy was the weakest Dark Triad rationality within the self and that Dark Triad standards were stronger and more ultimate than the subordinate dialogical integration of 'religion' into those standards.

3.1 *Correlations among Measures*

Correlations among psychological scales and gender appear in Table 1. Dark Triad measures correlated positively with each other, and negative correlations with gender confirmed that males scored higher on each. Machiavellianism and Psychopathy, but not Narcissism, predicted a lower Intrinsic Religious Orientation. Machiavellianism and Psychopathy correlated positively with Depression and negatively with Self-Esteem and Satisfaction with Life. A direct association also appeared between Machiavellianism and Anxiety. Relationships for Narcissism were positive with Self-Esteem and Satisfaction with Life and negative with Depression and Anxiety. In short, Machiavellianism and Psychopathy appeared to be more maladjusted and incompatible with intrinsic religious commitments, but Narcissism had positive mental health implications and explained no variance in conventional measures of religious motivation.

In other findings, women scored lower than men on Depression and higher on Anxiety and on the Intrinsic and Extrinsic Personal religious motivations. All three Religious Orientations correlated positively. The Intrinsic Orientation predicted higher Self-Esteem and lower Depression. Correlations for the Extrinsic Personal Orientation were positive with Satisfaction with Life and negative with Depression and Anxiety. The Extrinsic Social Orientation failed to predict any psychological construct. In line with their mental health

TABLE 1   Correlations among Dark Triad, Religious Orientations, additional mental health
             measures, and gender (N = 371)

		1	2	3	4
1	Machiavellianism	–	.22***	.51***	−.22***
2	Narcissism		–	.21***	.02
3	Psychopathy			–	−.27***
4	Intrinsic Religious Orientation				–
5	Extrinsic Personal Orientation				
6	Extrinsic Social Orientation				
7	Self-Esteem				
8	Satisfaction with Life				
9	Depression				
10	Anxiety				
11	Gender				

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

implications, Self-Esteem and Satisfaction with Life correlated positively with each other and negatively with Depression and Anxiety, which in turn displayed a direct relationship.

3.2   *Correlations for Religious Consistency Measures*
As Table 2 makes clear, Religious Compatibility Ratings for each separate Dark Triad scale and for all three scales combined into a single measure correlated positively. The Combined Dark Triad and the Machiavellianism Religious Compatibility Ratings also predicted higher levels of all three Dark Triad scores. Psychopathy Religious Compatibility predicted greater Machiavellianism and Psychopathy, but Narcissism Religious Compatibility Ratings only correlated positively with Narcissism. These data most importantly confirmed that the Combined Religious Compatibility Rating offered a useful summary of the three separate Religious Compatibility Ratings.

With regards to gender, the Machiavellianism, Psychopathy, and Combined Religious Compatibility Ratings were higher for men than for women. Machiavellianism and Psychopathy Religious Compatibilities correlated positively with Depression and negatively with the Intrinsic and Extrinsic Personal Orientations. Machiavellianism Compatibility Ratings also displayed a negative association with Anxiety. Narcissism Religious Compatibility Ratings

5	6	7	8	9	10	11
.02	.07	−.19***	−.16**	.18**	.11*	−.20***
.10	.00	.35***	.26***	−.28***	−.21***	−.17***
−.09	.06	−.20***	−.15***	.26***	.07	−.37***
.42***	.11*	.12*	.10	−.19***	.09	.14*
−	.31***	.01	.12*	−.11*	−.14**	.13*
	−	−.10	.08	.07	.10	−.07
		−	−.62***	−.77***	−.44***	.02
			−	−.65***	−.25***	.09
				−	.36***	−.11*
					−	.26***
						−

correlated negatively with Depression and Anxiety and positively with the Extrinsic Personal Orientation, Self-Esteem, and Satisfaction with Life.

3.3   *Mediation Analyses*

Mediation analyses first examined the Combined Religious Compatibility Rating mediation of gender relationships. Correlations in Table 1 demonstrate that causal models with gender as the independent variable could have all three Dark Triad constructs, the Intrinsic and Extrinsic Personal Orientations, Depression, and Anxiety as dependent variables. Mediation requires that an independent variable predict the mediator (Baron & Kenny, 1986), and Table 2 makes it clear that males in fact scored higher on the Combined Religious Compatibility Ratings. Indirect effects in Table 3 identify four significant mediation effects. Combined Religious Compatibility Ratings reduced but did not eliminate male linkages with all three Dark Triad measures. These were partial mediation effects. Full mediation appeared when Combined Religious Compatibility Ratings reduced the female association with the Intrinsic Religious Orientation to non-significance.

Table 4 summarizes results examining the Religious Compatibility mediation of Dark Triad relationships. For Machiavellianism, Combined Religious Compatibility Ratings partially mediated direct relationships with Narcissism

TABLE 2   Correlations of each Dark Triad and Combined Dark Triad Religious
             Compatibility Ratings with each other and with Dark Triad, Religious
             Orientations, and Psychological Measures (N = 371)

	Religious compatibility scores			
	Machiavellianism	Narcissism	Psychopathy	Combined
Religious Consistency Scores				
Machiavellianism	–	.29***	.65***	.87***
Narcissism		–	.26***	.60***
Psychopathy			–	.84***
Dark Triad				–
Dark Triad				
Machiavellianism	.38***	.07	.15**	.28***
Narcissism	.19***	.16**	.08	.19***
Psychopathy	.29***	.04	.28***	.28***
Religious Orientations				
Intrinsic	–.26***	–.09	–.24***	–.27***
Extrinsic Personal	–.14**	.17*	–.13*	–.07
Extrinsic Social	.09	.10	.09	.12*

TABLE 3   Mediation by Combined Religious Compatibility Ratings of gender relationships
             with other measures

Dependent variables	ΔR^2	Indirect effect	CI-LL	CI-UL	Direct effect	Total effect
Machiavellianism	.10***	–.07*	–.14	–.03	–.18**	–.26***
Narcissism	.05***	–.04*	–.08	–.02	–.16*	–.20**
Psychopathy	.18***	–.06*	–.11	–.03	–.41***	–.47***
Intrinsic Religious Orientation	.08***	.11*	.05	.19	.15	.25**
Extrinsic Personal Orientation	.02*	.02	–.04	.09	.25*	.27*
Depression	.02*	–.03	–.08	.01	–.13	–.16*
Anxiety	.07***	.03	–.02	.08	.40	.43***

Note: Mediation analyses maintained the conventional focus on unstandardized regression
coefficients (*B*). R^2 values assess the overall significance of the mediation model. The indirect
effect examines whether the influence of the mediator was significant as defined by confidence
interval lower limits (CI-LL) and upper limits (CI-UL). Indirect effects represent the association
between the independent variable and the mediator times the association between the media-
tor and the dependent variable. Tests of significance used 95% confidence intervals that were
bias corrected and based upon 5000 bootstrap samples. Confidence intervals that do not include
zero identify a significant indirect effect at the .05 level. Full effects reveal the association of an
independent variable with the dependent variable, whereas the direct effect describes this same
relationship after accounting for the influence of the mediator. * *p* < .05, ** *p* < .01, *** *p* < .001.

TABLE 4   Mediation by Combined Religious Compatibility Ratings of Dark Triad
relationships with other measures

Independent variables Dependent variables	ΔR²	Indirect effect	CI-LL	CI-UL	Direct effect	Total effect
Machiavellianism						
Narcissism	.07***	.03*	.01	.08	.17**	.20***
Psychopathy	.28***	.04*	.02	.08	.48***	.52***
Intrinsic Religious Orientation	.09***	−.09*	−.17	−.03	−.23**	−.32***
Self-Esteem	.04***	.03	−.01	.09	−.26***	−.23***
Satisfaction with Life	.04**	.04*	.00	.11	−.25**	−.21**
Depression	.03**	.02	−.02	.06	.19**	.21**
Anxiety	.04**	−.06*	−.13	−.02	.20**	.14*
Narcissism						
Psychopathy	.10***	.05*	.02	.09	.18**	.23***
Self-Esteem	.13***	−.01	−.04	.02	.47***	.46***
Satisfaction with Life	.07***	.00	−.02	.04	.38***	.38***
Depression	.10***	.04*	.01	.08	−.39***	−.36***
Anxiety	.05***	−.03	−.06	.00	−.28***	−.31***
Psychopathy						
Intrinsic Religious Orientation	.11***	−.08*	−.15	−.04	−.30***	−.38***
Self-Esteem	.05***	.03	−.00	.08	−.28***	−.24***
Satisfaction with Life	.03**	.04	−.00	.10	−.23**	−.19**
Depression	.07***	.01	−.03	.05	.29***	.30***

Note: See note to Table 3 for a description of mediation analyses. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

and Psychopathy and the inverse linkage with an Intrinsic Religious Orientation. Mediation procedures also uncovered suppression effects in which negative Machiavellianism relationships with Satisfaction with Life and direct linkages with Depression became stronger. For Narcissism, a partial mediation effect appeared with Psychopathy and a suppression effect appeared with Depression. A partial mediation of the inverse relationship with the Intrinsic Religious Orientation appeared for Psychopathy.

3.4   *Clarifying Narcissism*

While correlating positively with the other two Dark Triad measures, Narcissism, nevertheless, predicted better rather than poorer mental health and correlated non-significantly rather than negatively with the Intrinsic and positively rather than negatively with the Extrinsic Personal Orientation. Additional procedures clarified these unexpected outcomes in four ways.

First, narcissism scales can include factors that define both maladaptive and adaptive self-functioning (e.g., Watson, Little, Sawrie, & Biderman, 1992). The question was whether this particular measure of narcissism included one or more dimensions of maladaptive self-functioning that would yield results more in line with expectations. A principal components analysis using an oblique rotation uncovered three factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1.0, explaining 50.3% of the variance. Regression factor scores for each factor exhibited a positive correlation with at least one other Dark Triad scale. No significant relationships appeared with the Intrinsic Religious Orientation. One to three correlations with other measures identified each factor as positive in its mental health implications, and no significant relationships suggested any connection at all with maladjustment. Findings for factors, therefore, essentially mirrored data for the full scale. The factor structure did not obscure ideological complexities within this instrument.

Second, ISM comparative rationality analysis includes procedures that can examine the religious micro-rationality rationality of each individual item within a scale (e.g., Ghorbani, Watson, Saeedi, Chen, & Silver, 2012). Two sets of χ^2 tests examine whether frequencies of more extreme reactions to an item are significantly different from the other Likert scale options. Specifically, frequencies of the very incompatible (0) and incompatible (1) assessments are compared with frequencies of the other three responses, and frequencies of the very compatible (4) and compatible (3) responses are compared with the other three assessments. Items ideologically incompatible with religious social rationalities will be significantly incompatible and/or significantly *not* compatible with religious beliefs. Conversely, items ideologically compatible with religious social rationalities will be significantly compatible and/or significantly *not* incompatible with religious beliefs. The failure of macro-rationality scores for Narcissism to correlate negatively with the Intrinsic Religious Orientation could have occurred through the countervailing influences of ideologically compatible and incompatible items within the instrument. Micro-rationality analyses of individual items did not support that possibility. All nine Narcissism items were both significantly *not* compatible, $\chi^2 > 8.76$, $p < .01$, and significantly *not* incompatible, $\chi^2 > 43.71$, $p < .001$. In other words, all nine expressions of Narcissism were ideologically neutral in their micro-rational implications.

Third, one other ISM method for assessing the ideological implications of individual items within a scale is the correlational marker procedure. Some measure serves as a 'marker' of religious ideological commitments in correlations with individual items. Significant positive and negative relationships identify ideologically compatible and incompatible expressions of a construct, respectively. This procedure is another way of determining if ideological conflicts in the meaning of items can obscure complexities built into an instrument (e.g., Watson, Morris, & Hood, 1989). In the present study, the Intrinsic Scale 'marked' commitment to conventional religious social rationality, and all its relationships with Narcissism items were nonsignificant, r's < .08, p's > .11. Like micro-rationality assessments, correlation marker results, therefore, confirmed that Narcissism was consistently neutral in its conventionally religious ideological implications.

Fourth, perhaps surprising, therefore, was the positive correlation of the Narcissism Religious Compatibility Ratings with a Narcissism Scale that included no items with a direct ideological relevance to conventional religion. Narcissism Religious Compatibility Ratings did correlate positively with Religious Compatibility ratings of the two other Dark Triad measures; so, the question was whether this covariance could explain the relationship of Narcissism with its Religious Compatibility Rating. A partial correlation controlling for Machiavellianism and Psychopathy Religious Compatibility Ratings left the Narcissism scale and rating relationship essentially unchanged, $r_{ab.cd} = .12$, $p < .05$. Covariance with the two other Religious Rationality Ratings did not explain the effect.

4   Discussion

As conceptualized by the ISM, the self is a pluralistic dialogical construction of standards across private, communal, and public space. As with every dialogical construction of the self, the Dark Triad self will essentially function as an ideological surround of incommensurable social rationalities organized into a hierarchy. 'Antisocial' power apparently defines the Dark Triad ultimate standard with hedonism and achievement serving as influential subordinate standards (Kajonius et al., 2015). This Dark Triad self should manifest this ultimate commitment by dialogically subjugating (or ignoring) incompatible standards, which presumably would include conventional forms of religiousness.

Numerous findings supported this ISM interpretation of the Dark Triad. Most basically, Religious Compatibility Ratings of the individual and the combined Dark Triad scales correlated positively with each other, suggesting

a dialogical integration of 'religion' within the Dark Triad ideological surround. Although average ratings were slightly below ideological neutrality and lower than the corresponding Dark Triad scale means, the influence of ratings seemed obvious in positive correlations of Machiavellianism and Combined Religious Compatibility Ratings with responding on all three Dark Triad scales. In addition, Psychopathy Religious Compatibility Ratings predicted higher levels of Machiavellianism and Psychopathy, and a direct linkage appeared between Narcissism Religious Compatibility Ratings and Narcissism. Machiavellianism, Psychopathy, and Combined Religious Compatibility Ratings also displayed negative associations with and thus a subjugation of the Intrinsic Religious Orientation, and Machiavellianism and Psychopathy Compatibility Ratings suggested a subjugation of the Extrinsic Personal Orientation as well. Overall, these results suggested a Dark Triad use of an essentially anti-religious or nonreligious 'religion' as a means towards the ends of Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy. A positive correlation of the Combined Religious Compatibility Ratings with the Extrinsic Social Religious Orientation perhaps revealed a use of religion to advance Dark Triad power in social life.

Findings related to gender further supported the ISM interpretation of the Dark Triad. Machiavellianism, Psychopathy, and Combined Religious Compatibility Ratings were higher in men than in women. Men also scored higher on all three Dark Triad scales and lower on the Intrinsic and Extrinsic Personal Religious Orientations. Hence, the anti-religious 'religion' of these aspects of the Dark Triad was stronger in the less intrinsically religious men. The psychological importance of this anti-religious 'religion' seemed obvious in the way that Combined Religious Compatibility Ratings fully mediated the gender relationship with the Intrinsic Religious Orientation and partially mediated gender connections with all three Dark Triad scales. Partial as opposed to full mediation effects demonstrated that within the hierarchical structure of the Dark Triad self, something other than interpretations of religion contributed to gender differences in Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy. Nonsignificant mediation effects also revealed that Dark Triad interpretations of religion were irrelevant to gender linkages with the Extrinsic Personal Orientation, Depression, and Anxiety.

Combined Religious Compatibility Ratings also mediated Dark Triad effects in results that further supported the ISM conceptual framework. Most important were findings that the Combined Religious Compatibility Ratings partially mediated direct associations among the three Dark Triad scales. Partial mediation also appeared in the negative relationships of Machiavellianism and Psychopathy with the Intrinsic Religious Orientation. These outcomes further

suggested that an anti-religious 'religion' served a source of ideological coherence within the Dark Triad. Partial rather than full mediation effects once again pointed toward the importance of influences in addition to 'religion' in explaining these effects.

Suppression effects suggested other insights into the Dark Triad. Machiavellianism relationships with lower Satisfaction with Life and greater Anxiety became more robust in mediation models that accounted for the influences of the Combined Religious Compatibility Ratings. The possibility, therefore, was that the anti-religious 'religion' of the Dark Triad served as a defence that helped reduce anxiety and dissatisfaction with life. Further evidence of possible defensiveness perhaps appeared in the negative correlation of Machiavellianism and Combined Religious Compatibility Ratings with Anxiety.

4.1 *Complexity of Narcissism*

Machiavellianism and Psychopathy were correlates of poorer mental health, and Religious Compatibility Ratings for these two scales predicted greater Depression. These outcomes all conformed to expectations. More complex results appeared for Narcissism. Direct relationships with Machiavellianism and Psychopathy confirmed Narcissism as an index of maladjusted Dark Triad self-functioning. On the other hand, Narcissism and Narcissism Religious Compatibility Ratings correlated positively rather than negatively with Self-Esteem and Satisfaction with Life and negatively rather than positively with Depression and Anxiety. The Narcissism Scale, therefore, had ambivalent mental health implications; and Narcissism Religious Compatibility Ratings pointed toward relatively better psychological functioning.

This ambivalence first suggested that the Narcissism Scale might include factors that recorded both maladaptive and adaptive self-functioning. Evidence in conformity with the hypotheses of this project might appear in examinations of a maladaptive Narcissism factor. A principal components analysis offered no support for that possibility. Use of two ISM methods further demonstrated that all nine Narcissism Scale items were ideologically neutral relative to religious standards. Surprising, therefore, was the observation that Narcissism Religious Compatibility Ratings correlated positively with a Narcissism Scale that included no items with a direct ideological relevance to conventional religion. A partial correlation demonstrated that a covariance with the two other Dark Triad Religious Compatibility Ratings did not explain this effect. The positive Narcissism Religious Compatibility Rating correlation with Narcissism, but not with the Intrinsic Religious Orientation, therefore, suggested the paradox of a narcissistic nonreligious 'religion' that had adaptive mental health implications. A direct Religious Compatibility Rating linkage

with the Extrinsic Personal Orientation also suggested a use of this 'religion' in the service of narcissistic well-being.

Mediation results confirmed that this nonreligious 'religion' affected Narcissism data. Combined Religious Compatibility Ratings partially mediated the direct relationships observed for Machiavellianism and Psychopathy with Narcissism, in line with expectations. More difficult to explain was the suppression effect observed with Depression. The inverse linkage between Narcissism and Depression became stronger when Combined Religious Compatibility Ratings served as a mediator. Nonreligious 'religion' apparently had the liability of interfering with the ability of Narcissism to reduce depression. This outcome perhaps revealed that 'religion' was a source of self-critique that was in conflict with the narcissistic standard of a grandiose self in dialogue with admiring others. This complex possibility will require more research attention.

More generally, the positive correlation of Machiavellianism and Psychopathy with each other was stronger than the correlation of either with Narcissism. Narcissism, therefore, seemed to be less central to Dark Triad functioning. Other research suggests that factors within narcissism scales can describe a continuum of self-functioning (Watson et al., 1992) that may be important in the maturation of self-esteem (Kohut, 1977). The Narcissism Scale and its three factors predicted both psychological adjustment and maladjustment, and thus may have defined some intermediate location along a continuum of self-esteem maturation. Finally, Narcissism traits can be described as more desirable than those of Machiavellianism and Psychopathy (Rauthmann, & Kolar, 2012). These observations all combine to identify Narcissism as a relatively more adaptive, though perhaps still immature, element within the Dark Triad that seems more likely to ignore than to subjugate conventional religion.

4.2   *Limitations*

As always, the interpretation of findings must be tempered by an awareness of procedural limitations. Most basically, perhaps, was the use of college undergraduates as research participants. Ideological 'scripts' of such students may be more tentative and more open. Different results might have been obtained if Religious Compatibility Ratings had been obtained, for example, in samples of politicians, lawyers, religious professionals, nurses, stock brokers, and elementary school teachers, to mention only a very few of the possibilities.

Internal reliabilities for the Narcissism Scale and the Narcissism Religious Compatibility Ratings were relatively low. More robust correlation and

mediation results might have appeared with the use of a psychometrically stronger measure. Analysis of different narcissism scales might, therefore, deserve research attention, especially if those measures also more strongly assessed the more maladjusted implications of narcissism.

Finally, all results including mediation analyses of causal models were essentially correlational. No inferences can be made about causality. It cannot be concluded, for example, that Machiavellianism subjugated the Intrinsic Religious Orientation, or vice versa. Establishment of causal relationships will require the use of other research designs.

5   Conclusion

In previous uses of the ISM, religion at least implicitly served as the ultimate standard in the pluralistic self across its private, communal, and public spaces. This implied emphasis on a more conventionally religious meta-I influenced interpretations of the ISM, its methods, and the results obtained with those methods. The present project sought to expand the ISM conceptual framework by using it to illustrate the subordination or the subjugation of religious rationalities by other social rationalities. The Dark Triad served as that other social rationality. Numerous findings supported the ISM suggestion that the 'antisocial' subjugation of religion as a means to power as an end operated within dialogical structures of the Dark Triad. Religion apparently can be even more extrinsic than implied by the Extrinsic Personal and Social Religious Orientation Scales. The existence of an Extrinsic Dark Triad Religious Orientation suggests that interpretations of 'religion' can be 'bent' into conformity with even 'anti-religious' ultimate standards.

Final emphasis should perhaps be placed on the idea that this was a first illustrative expansion of the ISM conceptual framework. Many complexities presumably remain to be addressed in describing this model and in developing its methodological and data analytical potentials. The present and previous uses of the ISM have suggested that those potentials deserve further attention. This might be especially true relative to the realization that incommensurable social rationalities present challenges not only within the social sciences, but within social life more generally. Formal expansion of dialogical skills would seem to be essential in promoting the common good and in more appropriately scripting disagreements across all private, communal, and public space. All selves can be interpreted as dialogical, and the flourishing of dialogical selves presumably requires increasingly explicit and insightful dialogues.

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