Figure 4.2  Self Identity Plot patterns identified by Norris and Makhlouf-Norris
Spotlight: In the Clinic

Leedy, Jackson, & Callahan (2007) published a case study in which they treated a depressed 41-year-old male, Mr. M, who had been diagnosed with chronic Lyme disease, a mood disorder from the disease, and narcissistic personality disorder. He was given the standard battery of inventories to assess depression, anxiety, etc., as well as the MMPI-2, the Rotter Incomplete Sentences Test Blank, and the Rorschach Inkblot Test. Once treatment began the therapists learned that the previous diagnosis of narcissistic personality disorder was personally upsetting to Mr. M as well as a sensitive point of contention. Based on various comments and behavioral clues the therapists subsequently hypothesized that his narcissistic personality disorder may be compensatory in nature, as described by Millon (1996). In order to examine this hypothesis, they administered the Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale with unique instructions. Specifically, they asked Mr. M to respond to each item from several perspectives (viz., his self at the start of therapy, his current self, his ideal self, his self when chronically ill) and to rate several people on each item as well (viz., someone he admires, someone he dislikes, and his therapist). Figure X.4 shows the self-identity plot that was created from his responses.

![Figure x.3 Self-Identity plot for Mr. M.](image)

Significantly, his current self was not construed as similar to his ideal self; in other words, his self-identity plot did not demonstrate the self-convergent pattern (see Figure X.2) that would be expected from a typical narcissistic person. Leedy et al. therefore interpreted the results as confirming their understanding of Mr. M’s narcissistic constructions as compensatory in nature,
“If Mr. M’s current self had been located closely to his ideal self, the conceptualization that his narcissism was compensatory in nature would not have been supported and may have suggested a more typical presentation of narcissism. However, results...supported the hypotheses that Mr. M’s narcissism was not based on a genuine sense of grandiosity and that his illness likely contributed to his need to use a maladaptive strategy to increase his self-esteem.” (p. 434).

Leedy et al.’s creative use of the Self Identity Plot exemplifies the versatility of the repertory grid technique in a number of ways. First, by using items from the Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale they demonstrated that the technique can incorporate traditional forms of measurement. Second, they showed how repertory grids can be used in concert with contemporary views of psychopathology, such as those expressed by Theodore Millon. Lastly, Leedy et al.’s approach exemplified the virtue of understanding, using the tools and techniques at their disposal to obtain the most accurate picture of their client’s outlook as possible.

References


References


“The chapters in this edited book all deal with the Body Grid, which is an extension of the Self Identity Plot. Explain.