

A director's chair with a black backrest and a grey seat. The word "DIRECTOR" is written in white capital letters on the backrest. The chair is set against a dark blue background.

DIRECTOR

**MARCISSISTIC AND PSYCHOPATHIC
LEADERS**

SAM VAKNIN

Narcissistic And Psychopathic Leaders

3rd EDITION

Sam Vaknin, Ph.D.

The Author is NOT a Mental Health Professional.

The Author is certified in Counselling Techniques.

Editing and Design:

Lidija Rangelovska

A Narcissus Publications Imprint

Prague & Skopje 2016

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*Narcissistic
And Psychopathic
Leaders*

Pathological Narcissism – An Overview

A Primer on Narcissism And the Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD)

What is Pathological [Narcissism](#)?

Pathological narcissism is a life-long pattern of traits and behaviours which signify infatuation and obsession with one's self to the exclusion of all others and the egotistic and ruthless pursuit of one's gratification, dominance and ambition.

As distinct from [healthy narcissism](#) which we all possess, pathological narcissism is maladaptive, rigid, persisting, and causes significant distress, and functional impairment.

Pathological narcissism was first described in detail by Freud in his essay "On Narcissism" [1915]. Other major contributors to the study of narcissism are: Melanie Klein, Karen Horney, Franz Kohut, Otto Kernberg, Theodore Millon, Elsa Roningstam, Gunderson, and Robert Hare.

What is Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD)?

The Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) (formerly known as megalomania or, colloquially, as egotism) is a form of pathological narcissism. It is a Cluster B (dramatic, emotional, or erratic) [Personality Disorder](#). Other Cluster B personality disorders are the Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD), the Antisocial Personality

Disorder (APD), and the Histrionic Personality Disorder (HPD). The Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) first appeared as a mental health diagnosis in the DSM-III-TR (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual) in 1980.

Diagnostic Criteria

The ICD-10, the International Classification of Diseases, published by the World Health Organisation in Geneva [1992] regards the [Narcissistic Personality Disorder \(NPD\)](#) as "*a personality disorder that fits none of the specific rubrics*". It relegates it to the category "Other Specific Personality Disorders" together with the eccentric, "haltlose", immature, passive-aggressive, and psychoneurotic personality disorders and types.

The American Psychiatric Association, based in Washington D.C., USA, publishes the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fourth edition, Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR) [2000] where it provides the diagnostic criteria for the [Narcissistic Personality Disorder](#) (301.81, p. 717).

The DSM-IV-TR defines Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) as "*an all-pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behaviour), need for admiration or adulation and lack of empathy, usually beginning by early adulthood and present in various contexts*", such as family life and work.

The DSM specifies [nine diagnostic criteria](#). Five (or more) of these criteria must be met for a diagnosis of Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) to be rendered.

[In the text below, I have proposed modifications to the language of these criteria to incorporate current

knowledge about this disorder. My modifications appear in *italics*.]

[My amendments do not constitute a part of the text of the DSM-IV-TR, nor is the American Psychiatric Association (APA) associated with them in any way.]

[Click [here](#) to download a [bibliography](#) of the studies and research regarding the Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) on which I based my proposed revisions.]

Proposed Amended Criteria for the Narcissistic Personality Disorder

- Feels grandiose and self-important (e.g., exaggerates accomplishments, talents, *skills, contacts, and personality traits to the point of lying, demands to be recognised as superior without commensurate achievements*);
- Is *obsessed* with fantasies of unlimited success, *fame, fearsome power or omnipotence, unequalled brilliance (the cerebral narcissist), bodily beauty or sexual performance (the somatic narcissist), or ideal, everlasting, all-conquering love or passion*;
- Firmly convinced that he or she is unique and, being special, can only be understood by, *should only be treated by*, or associate with, other special or unique, or high-status people (or institutions);
- Requires excessive admiration, *adulation, attention and affirmation – or, failing that, wishes to be feared and to be notorious (Narcissistic Supply)*;
- Feels entitled. *Demands automatic and full compliance* with his or her unreasonable

expectations for special and *favourable* priority treatment;

- Is "interpersonally exploitative", i.e., *uses* others to achieve his or her own ends;
- *Devoid* of empathy. Is *unable* or unwilling to identify with, *acknowledge*, or *accept* the feelings, needs, *preferences*, *priorities*, and *choices* of others;
- Constantly envious of others *and seeks to hurt or destroy the objects of his or her frustration. Suffers from persecutory (paranoid) delusions as he or she believes that they feel the same about him or her and are likely to act similarly*;
- Behaves arrogantly and haughtily. *Feels superior, omnipotent, omniscient, invincible, immune, "above the law", and omnipresent (magical thinking). Rages when frustrated, contradicted, or confronted by people he or she considers inferior to him or her and unworthy.*

Prevalence and Age and Gender Features

According to the DSM-IV-TR, between 2% and 16% of the population in clinical settings (between 0.5-1% of the general population) are diagnosed with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). Most narcissists (50-75%, according to the DSM-IV-TR) are men.

We must carefully distinguish between the narcissistic traits of [adolescents](#) – narcissism is an integral part of their healthy personal development – and the full-fledge disorder. Adolescence is about self-definition, differentiation, separation from one's parents, and individuation. These inevitably involve narcissistic

assertiveness which is not to be conflated or confused with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD).

"The lifetime prevalence rate of NPD is approximately 0.5-1 percent; however, the estimated prevalence in clinical settings is approximately 2-16 percent. Almost 75 percent of individuals diagnosed with NPD are male (APA, DSM-IV-TR 2000)."

[From the Abstract of [Psychotherapeutic Assessment and Treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorder](#) By Robert C. Schwartz, Ph.D., DAPA and Shannon D. Smith, Ph.D., DAPA (American Psychotherapy Association, Article #3004 Annals July/August 2002)]

Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is exacerbated by the onset of [aging](#) and the physical, mental, and occupational restrictions it imposes.

In certain situations, such as under [constant public scrutiny and exposure](#), a transient and reactive form of the Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) has been observed by Robert Milman and labelled "[Acquired Situational Narcissism](#)".

There is only scant research regarding the Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD), but studies have not demonstrated any ethnic, social, cultural, economic, genetic, or professional predilection to it.

Co-Morbidity and Differential Diagnoses

Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is often diagnosed with [other mental health disorders](#) ("co-morbidity"), such as [mood disorders](#), [eating disorders](#), and [substance-related disorders](#). Patients with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) are frequently

abusive and prone to [impulsive and reckless behaviours](#) ("dual diagnosis").

Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is commonly diagnosed with [other personality disorders](#), such as the Histrionic, Borderline, Paranoid, and [Antisocial](#) Personality Disorders.

The personal style of those suffering from the Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) should be distinguished from the personal styles of patients with other Cluster B personality disorders. The narcissist is grandiose, the histrionic coquettish, the antisocial (psychopath) callous, and the borderline needy.

As opposed to patients with the Borderline Personality Disorder, the self-image of the narcissist is stable, he or she are less impulsive and less self-defeating or self-destructive and less concerned with abandonment issues (not as clinging).

Contrary to the histrionic patient, the narcissist is achievements-orientated and proud of his or her possessions and accomplishments. Narcissists also rarely display their emotions as histrionics do and they hold the sensitivities and needs of others in contempt.

According to the DSM-IV-TR, both narcissists and psychopaths are "tough-minded, glib, superficial, exploitative, and un-empathic". But narcissists are less impulsive, less aggressive, and less deceitful. Psychopaths rarely seek Narcissistic Supply. As opposed to psychopaths, few narcissists are criminals.

Patients suffering from the range of obsessive-compulsive disorders are committed to perfection and believe that only they are capable of attaining it. But, as opposed to narcissists, they are self-critical and far more

aware of their own deficiencies, flaws, and shortcomings.

Clinical Features of the Narcissistic Personality Disorder

The onset of pathological narcissism is in infancy, childhood and early adolescence. It is commonly attributed to childhood abuse and trauma inflicted by parents, authority figures, or even peers. Pathological narcissism is a defence mechanism intended to deflect hurt and trauma from the victim's "True Self" into a "[False Self](#)" which is omnipotent, invulnerable, and omniscient. The narcissist uses the False Self to regulate his or her labile sense of self-worth by extracting from his environment [Narcissistic Supply](#) (any form of attention, both positive and negative).

There is a whole range of narcissistic reactions, styles, and personalities – from the mild, reactive and transient to the permanent personality disorder.

Patients with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) feel injured, humiliated and empty when criticised. They often react with disdain (devaluation), [rage](#), and defiance to any slight, real or [imagined](#). To avoid such situations, some patients with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) socially withdraw and feign [false modesty and humility](#) to mask their underlying grandiosity. Dysthymic and depressive disorders are common reactions to isolation and feelings of shame and inadequacy.

The interpersonal relationships of patients with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) are typically impaired due to their lack of empathy, disregard for

others, exploitativeness, sense of entitlement, and constant need for attention (Narcissistic Supply).

Though often ambitious and capable, inability to tolerate setbacks, disagreement, and criticism make it difficult for patients with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) to [work in a team](#) or to maintain long-term professional achievements. The narcissist's fantastic grandiosity, frequently coupled with a hypomanic mood, is typically incommensurate with his or her real accomplishments (the "Grandiosity Gap").

Patients with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) are either "cerebral" (derive their Narcissistic Supply from their intelligence or academic achievements) or "somatic" (derive their Narcissistic Supply from their physique, exercise, physical or sexual prowess and romantic or physical "conquests").

Patients with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) are either "classic" (meet five of the nine diagnostic criteria included in the DSM), or they are "compensatory" (their narcissism compensates for deep-set feelings of inferiority and lack of self-worth).

Some narcissists are covert, or [inverted narcissists](#). As co-dependents, they derive their Narcissistic Supply from their relationships with classic narcissists.

Treatment and Prognosis

The common treatment for patients with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is talk therapy (mainly psychodynamic psychotherapy or cognitive-behavioural treatment modalities). Talk therapy is used to modify the narcissist's antisocial, interpersonally exploitative, and dysfunctional behaviours, often with

some success. Medication is prescribed to control and ameliorate attendant conditions such as [mood disorders](#) or [obsessive-compulsive disorders](#).

The prognosis for an adult suffering from the Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is poor, though his adaptation to life and to others can improve with treatment.

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Vaknin, Sam, Malignant Self Love – Narcissism Revisited, seventh revised impression, 1999-2007. Narcissus Publications, Prague and Skopje.]

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The Narcissist's Entitlement of Routine

I hate routine. When I find myself doing the same things over and over again, I get depressed. I oversleep, over-eat, over-drink and, in general, engage in addictive, impulsive and compulsive behaviours. This is my way of re-introducing risk and excitement into what I (emotionally) perceive to be a barren life.

The problem is that even the most exciting and varied existence becomes routine after a while. Living in the same country or apartment, meeting the same people, doing essentially the same things (though with changing content) – all "qualify" as stultifying rote.

I feel entitled to more. I feel it is my right – due to my intellectual superiority – to lead a thrilling, rewarding, kaleidoscopic life. I feel entitled to force life itself, or, at least, people around me – to yield to my wishes and needs, supreme among them the need for stimulating variety.

This rejection of habit is part of a larger pattern of aggressive entitlement. I feel that the very existence of a sublime intellect (such as myself) warrants concessions and allowances. Standing in line is a waste of time best spent pursuing knowledge, inventing and creating. I should avail myself of the best medical treatment proffered by the most prominent medical authorities – lest the asset that is I be lost to Mankind. I should not be bothered with proofreading my articles (or even re-reading them) – these lowly jobs best be assigned to the

less gifted. The devil is in paying precious attention to details.

Entitlement is sometimes justified in a Picasso or an Einstein. But I am neither. My achievements are grotesquely incommensurate with my overwhelming sense of entitlement. I am but a mediocre and forgettable scribbler who, at the age of 39, is a colossal under-achiever, if anything.

Of course, the feeling of supremacy often serves to mask a cancerous complex of inferiority. Moreover, I infect others with my projected grandiosity and their feedback constitutes the edifice upon which I construct my self-esteem. I regulate my sense of self-worth by rigidly insisting that I am above the madding crowd while deriving my Narcissistic Supply from this very thus despised source.

But there is a second angle to this abhorrence of the predictable. As a narcissist, I employ a host of Emotional Involvement Prevention Mechanisms (EIPM). Despising routine and avoiding it is one of these mechanisms. Their function is to prevent me from getting emotionally involved and, subsequently, hurt. Their application results in an "approach-avoidance repetition complex". The narcissist, fearing and loathing intimacy, stability and security – yet craving them – approaches and then avoids significant others or important tasks in a rapid succession of apparently inconsistent and disconnected behaviours.

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Pathological Narcissism A Dysfunction or a Blessing?

Comments on recent research by Roy Baumeister.

Is pathological narcissism a blessing or a malediction?

The answer is: it depends. Healthy narcissism is a mature, balanced love of oneself coupled with a stable sense of self-worth and self-esteem. Healthy narcissism implies knowledge of one's boundaries and a proportionate and realistic appraisal of one's achievements and traits.

Pathological narcissism is wrongly described as too much healthy narcissism (or too much self-esteem). These are two absolutely unrelated phenomena which, regrettably, came to bear the same title. Confusing pathological narcissism with self-esteem betrays a fundamental ignorance of both.

Pathological narcissism involves an impaired, dysfunctional, immature (True) Self coupled with a compensatory fiction (the False Self). The sick narcissist's sense of self-worth and self-esteem derive entirely from audience feedback. The narcissist has no self-esteem or self-worth of his own (no such ego functions). In the absence of observers, the narcissist shrivels to non-existence and feels dead. Hence the narcissist's preying habits in his constant pursuit of Narcissistic Supply. Pathological narcissism is an addictive behaviour.

Still, dysfunctions are reactions to abnormal environments and situations (e.g., abuse, trauma, smothering, etc.).

Paradoxically, his dysfunction allows the narcissist to function. It compensates for lacks and deficiencies by exaggerating tendencies and traits. It is like the tactile sense of a blind person. In short: pathological narcissism is a result of over-sensitivity, the repression of overwhelming memories and experiences, and the suppression of inordinately strong negative feelings (e.g., hurt, envy, anger, or humiliation).

That the narcissist functions at all – is because of his pathology and thanks to it. The alternative is complete decompensation and integration.

In time, the narcissist learns how to leverage his pathology, how to use it to his advantage, how to deploy it in order to maximise benefits and utilities – in other words, how to transform his curse into a blessing.

Narcissists are obsessed by delusions of fantastic grandeur and superiority. As a result they are very competitive. They are strongly compelled – where others are merely motivated. They are driven, relentless, tireless, and ruthless. They often make it to the top. But even when they do not – they strive and fight and learn and climb and create and think and devise and design and conspire. Faced with a challenge – they are likely to do better than non-narcissists.

Yet, we often find that narcissists abandon their efforts in mid-stream, give up, vanish, lose interest, devalue former pursuits, or slump. Why is that?

Narcissists are prone to self-defeating and self-destructive behaviours.

The Self-Punishing, Guilt-Purging Behaviours

These are intended to inflict punishment on the narcissist and thus instantly relieve him of his overwhelming anxiety.

This is very reminiscent of a compulsive-ritualistic behaviour. The narcissist feels guilty. It could be an "ancient" guilt, a "sexual" guilt (Freud), or a "social" guilt. In early life, the narcissist internalised and introjected the voices of meaningful and authoritative others – parents, role models, peers – that consistently and convincingly judged him to be no good, blameworthy, deserving of punishment or retaliation, or corrupt.

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The Narcissist's Confabulated Life

Confabulations are an important part of life. They serve to heal emotional wounds or to prevent ones from being inflicted in the first place. They prop-up the confabulator's self-esteem, regulate his (or her) sense of self-worth, and buttress his (or her) self-image. They serve as organising principles in social interactions.

Father's wartime heroism, mother's youthful good looks, one's oft-recounted exploits, erstwhile alleged brilliance, and past purported sexual irresistibility – are typical examples of white, fuzzy, heart-warming lies wrapped around a shrivelled kernel of truth.

But the distinction between reality and fantasy is rarely completely lost. Deep inside, the healthy confabulator knows where facts end and wishful thinking takes over. Father acknowledges he was no war hero, though he did his share of fighting. Mother understands she was no ravishing beauty, though she may have been attractive. The confabulator realises that his recounted exploits are overblown, his brilliance exaggerated, and his sexual irresistibility a myth.

Such distinctions never rise to the surface because everyone – the confabulator and his audience alike – have a common interest to maintain the confabulation. To challenge the integrity of the confabulator or the veracity of his confabulations is to threaten the very

fabric of family and society. Human intercourse is built around such entertaining deviations from the truth.

This is where the narcissist differs from others (from "normal" people).

His very self is a piece of fiction concocted to fend off hurt and to nurture the narcissist's grandiosity. He fails in his "reality test" – the ability to distinguish the actual from the imagined. The narcissist fervently believes in his own infallibility, brilliance, omnipotence, heroism, and perfection. He doesn't dare confront the truth and admit it even to himself.

Moreover, he imposes his personal mythology on his nearest and dearest. Spouse, children, colleagues, friends, neighbours – sometimes even perfect strangers – must abide by the narcissist's narrative or face his wrath. The narcissist countenances no disagreement, alternative points of view, or criticism. To him, confabulation IS reality.

The coherence of the narcissist's dysfunctional and precariously-balanced personality depends on the plausibility of his stories and on their acceptance by his Sources of Narcissistic Supply. The narcissist invests an inordinate time in substantiating his tales, collecting "evidence", defending his version of events, and in re-interpreting reality to fit his scenario. As a result, most narcissists are self-delusional, obstinate, opinionated, and argumentative.

The narcissist's lies are not goal-orientated. This is what makes his constant dishonesty both disconcerting and incomprehensible. The narcissist lies at the drop of a hat, needlessly, and almost ceaselessly. He lies in order to avoid the Grandiosity Gap – when the abyss

between fact and (narcissistic) fiction becomes too gaping to ignore.

The narcissist lies in order to preserve appearances, uphold fantasies, support the tall (and impossible) tales of his False Self and extract Narcissistic Supply from unsuspecting sources, who are not yet on to him. To the narcissist, confabulation is not merely a way of life – but life itself.

We are all conditioned to let other indulge in pet delusions and get away with white, not too egregious, lies. The narcissist makes use of our socialisation. We dare not confront or expose him, despite the outlandishness of his claims, the improbability of his stories, the implausibility of his alleged accomplishments and conquests. We simply turn the other cheek, or meekly avert our eyes, often embarrassed.

Moreover, the narcissist makes clear, from the very beginning, that it is his way or the highway. His aggression – even violent streak – are close to the surface. He may be charming in a first encounter – but even then there are [telltale signs](#) of pent-up abuse. His interlocutors sense this impending threat and avoid conflict by acquiescing with the narcissist's fairy tales. Thus he imposes his private universe and virtual reality on his milieu – sometimes with disastrous consequences.

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The Cult of the Narcissist

The narcissist is the guru at the centre of a cult. Like other gurus, he demands complete obedience from his flock: his spouse, his offspring, other family members, friends, and colleagues. He feels entitled to adulation and special treatment by his followers. He punishes the wayward and the straying lambs. He enforces discipline, adherence to his teachings, and common goals. The less accomplished he is in reality – the more stringent his mastery and the more pervasive the brainwashing.

The – often involuntary – members of the narcissist's mini-cult inhabit a twilight zone of his own construction. He imposes on them a shared psychosis, replete with persecutory delusions, "enemies", mythical narratives, and apocalyptic scenarios if he is flouted.

The narcissist's control is based on ambiguity, unpredictability, fuzziness, and [ambient abuse](#). His ever-shifting whims exclusively define right versus wrong, desirable and unwanted, what is to be pursued and what to be avoided. He alone determines the rights and obligations of his disciples and alters them at will.

The narcissist is a micro-manager. He exerts control over the minutest details and behaviours. He punishes severely and abuses withholders of information and those who fail to conform to his wishes and goals.

The narcissist does not respect the boundaries and privacy of his reluctant adherents. He ignores their wishes and treats them as objects or instruments of

gratification. He seeks to control both situations and people compulsively.

He strongly disapproves of others' personal autonomy and independence. Even innocuous activities, such as meeting a friend or visiting one's family require his permission. Gradually, he isolates his nearest and dearest until they are fully dependent on him emotionally, sexually, financially, and socially.

He acts in a patronising and condescending manner and criticises often. He alternates between emphasising the minutest faults (devalues) and exaggerating the talents, traits, and skills (idealises) of the members of his cult. He is wildly unrealistic in his expectations – which legitimises his subsequent abusive conduct.

The narcissist claims to be infallible, superior, talented, skilful, omnipotent, and omniscient. He often lies and confabulates to support these unfounded claims. Within his cult, he expects awe, admiration, adulation, and constant attention commensurate with his outlandish stories and assertions. He reinterprets reality to fit his fantasies.

His thinking is dogmatic, rigid, and doctrinaire. He does not countenance free thought, pluralism, or free speech and doesn't brook criticism and disagreement. He demands – and often gets – complete trust and the relegation to his capable hands of all decision-making.

He forces the participants in his cult to be hostile to critics, the authorities, institutions, his personal enemies, or the media – if they try to uncover his actions and reveal the truth. He closely monitors and censors information from the outside, exposing his captive audience only to selective data and analyses.

The narcissist's cult is "missionary" and "imperialistic". He is always on the lookout for new recruits – his spouse's friends, his daughter's girlfriends, his neighbours, new colleagues at work. He immediately attempts to "convert" them to his "creed" – to convince them how wonderful and admirable he is. In other words, he tries to render them Sources of Narcissistic Supply.

Often, his behaviour on these "recruiting missions" is different to his conduct within the "cult". In the first phases of wooing new admirers and proselytising to potential "conscripts" – the narcissist is attentive, compassionate, empathic, flexible, self-effacing, and helpful. At home, among the "veterans" he is tyrannical, demanding, wilful, opinionated, aggressive, and exploitative.

As the leader of his congregation, the narcissist feels entitled to special amenities and benefits not accorded the "rank and file". He expects to be waited on hand and foot, to make free use of everyone's money and dispose of their assets liberally, and to be cynically exempt from the rules that he himself established (if such violation is pleasurable or gainful).

In extreme cases, the narcissist feels above the law – any kind of law. This grandiose and haughty conviction leads to criminal acts, incestuous or polygamous relationships, and recurrent friction with the authorities.

Hence the narcissist's panicky and sometimes violent reactions to "dropouts" from his cult. There's a lot going on that the narcissist wants kept under wraps. Moreover, the narcissist stabilises his fluctuating sense of self-worth by deriving Narcissistic Supply from his victims.

Abandonment threatens the narcissist's precariously balanced personality.

Add to that the narcissist's [paranoid and schizoid tendencies](#), his lack of [introspective self-awareness](#), and his [stunted sense of humour](#) (lack of self-deprecation) and the risks to the grudging members of his cult are clear.

The narcissist sees enemies and conspiracies everywhere. He often casts himself as the heroic victim (martyr) of dark and stupendous forces. In every deviation from his tenets he espies malevolent and ominous subversion. He, therefore, is bent on disempowering his devotees. By any and all means.

The narcissist is dangerous.

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*Narcissistic
And Psychopathic
Leaders*

In the Workplace

The Narcissist in the Workplace

Question:

The narcissist turns the workplace into a duplicitous hell. What to do?

Answer:

To a narcissistic employer, the members of his "staff" are [Secondary Sources of Narcissistic Supply](#). Their role is to accumulate the supply (remember events that support the grandiose self-image of the narcissist) and to regulate the Narcissistic Supply of the narcissist during dry spells - to adulate, adore, admire, agree, provide attention and approval, and, generally, serve as an audience to him.

The staff (or should we say "stuff"?) is supposed to remain passive. The narcissist is not interested in anything but the simplest function of mirroring. When the mirror acquires a personality and a life of its own, the narcissist is incensed. When independent minded, an employee might be in danger of being sacked by his narcissistic employer (an act which demonstrates the employer's omnipotence).

The employee's presumption to be the employer's equal by trying to befriend him (friendship is possible only among equals) injures the employer narcissistically. He

is willing to accept his employees as underlings, whose very position serves to support his grandiose fantasies.

But his grandiosity is so tenuous and rests on such fragile foundations, that any hint of equality, disagreement or need (any intimation that the narcissist "needs" friends, for instance) threatens the narcissist profoundly. The narcissist is exceedingly insecure. It is easy to destabilise his impromptu "personality". His reactions are merely in self-defence.

Classic narcissistic behaviour is when idealisation is followed by devaluation. The devaluing attitude develops as a result of disagreements or simply because time has eroded the employee's capacity to serve as a **FRESH** Source of Supply.

The veteran employee, now taken for granted by his narcissistic employer, becomes uninspiring as a source of adulation, admiration and attention. The narcissist always seeks new thrills and stimuli.

The narcissist is notorious for his low threshold of resistance to boredom. His behaviour is impulsive and his biography tumultuous precisely because of his need to introduce uncertainty and risk to what he regards as "stagnation" or "slow death" (i.e., routine). Most interactions in the workplace are part of the rut – and thus constitute a reminder of this routine – deflating the narcissist's grandiose fantasies.

Narcissists do many unnecessary, wrong and even dangerous things in pursuit of the stabilisation of their inflated self-image.

Narcissists feel suffocated by intimacy, or by the constant reminders of the **REAL**, nitty-gritty world out there. It reduces them, makes them realise the Grandiosity Gap between their fantasies and reality. It is a threat to the precarious balance of their personality structures ("false" and invented) and treated by them as a menace.

Narcissists forever shift the blame, pass the buck, and engage in cognitive dissonance. They "pathologize" the other, foster feelings of guilt and shame in her, demean, debase and humiliate in order to preserve their sense of superiority.

Narcissists are pathological liars. They think nothing of it because their very self is [false](#), their own [confabulation](#).

Here are a few useful guidelines:

- Never disagree with the narcissist or contradict him;
- Never offer him any intimacy;
- Look awed by whatever attribute matters to him (for instance: by his professional achievements or by his good looks, or by his success with women and so on);
- Never remind him of life out there and if you do, connect it somehow to his sense of grandiosity. You can aggrandize even your office supplies, the most mundane thing conceivable by saying: "These are the **BEST** art materials **ANY**

workplace is going to have", "We get them *EXCLUSIVELY*", etc.;

- Do not make any comment, which might directly or indirectly impinge on the narcissist's self-image, omnipotence, superior judgement, omniscience, skills, capabilities, professional record, or even omnipresence. Bad sentences start with: "I think you overlooked ... made a mistake here ... you don't know ... do you know ... you were not here yesterday so ... you cannot ... you should ... (interpreted as rude imposition, narcissists react very badly to perceived restrictions placed on their freedom) ... I (never mention the fact that you are a separate, independent entity, narcissists regard others as extensions of their selves)..." You get the gist of it.

Manage your narcissistic boss. Notice patterns in his bullying. Is he more aggressive on Monday mornings - and more open to suggestions on Friday afternoon? Is he amenable to flattery? Can you modify his conduct by appealing to his morality, superior knowledge, good manners, cosmopolitanism, or upbringing? Manipulating the narcissist is the only way to survive in such a tainted workplace.

Can the narcissist be harnessed? Can his energies be channeled [productively](#)?

This would be a deeply flawed – and even dangerous – "advice". Various management gurus purport to teach us how to harness this force of nature known as malignant or [pathological narcissism](#). Narcissists are driven,

visionary, ambitious, exciting and productive, says [Michael Maccoby](#), for instance. To ignore such a resource is a criminal waste. All we need to do is learn how to "handle" them.

Yet, this prescription is either naive or disingenuous. Narcissists cannot be "handled", or "managed", or "contained", or "channeled". They are, by definition, incapable of team work. They lack empathy, are exploitative, envious, haughty and feel entitled, even if such a feeling is commensurate only with their grandiose fantasies and when their accomplishments are meager.

Narcissists dissemble, conspire, destroy and self-destruct. Their drive is compulsive, their vision rarely grounded in reality, their human relations a calamity. In the long run, there is no enduring benefit to dancing with narcissists – only ephemeral and, often, fallacious, "achievements".

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Narcissism in the Boardroom

The perpetrators of the recent spate of financial frauds in the USA acted with callous disregard for both their employees and shareholders – not to mention other stakeholders. Psychologists have often remote-diagnosed them as "malignant, pathological narcissists".

Narcissists are driven by the need to uphold and maintain a False Self – a concocted, grandiose, and demanding psychological construct typical of the Narcissistic Personality Disorder. The False Self is projected to the world in order to garner Narcissistic Supply – adulation, admiration, or even notoriety and infamy. Any kind of attention is usually deemed by narcissists to be preferable to obscurity.

The False Self is suffused with fantasies of perfection, grandeur, brilliance, infallibility, immunity, significance, omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. To be a narcissist is to be convinced of a great, inevitable personal destiny. The narcissist is preoccupied with ideal love, the construction of brilliant, revolutionary scientific theories, the composition or authoring or painting of the greatest work of art, the founding of a new school of thought, the attainment of fabulous wealth, the reshaping of a nation or a conglomerate, and so on. The narcissist never sets realistic goals to himself. He is forever preoccupied with fantasies of uniqueness, record

breaking, or breathtaking achievements. His verbosity reflects this propensity.

Reality is, naturally, quite different and this gives rise to a Grandiosity Gap. The demands of the False Self are never satisfied by the narcissist's accomplishments, standing, wealth, clout, sexual prowess, or knowledge. The narcissist's grandiosity and sense of entitlement are equally incommensurate with his achievements.

To bridge the Grandiosity Gap, the malignant (pathological) narcissist resorts to shortcuts. These very often lead to fraud.

The narcissist cares only about appearances. What matters to him are the facade of wealth and its attendant social status and Narcissistic Supply. Witness the travestied extravagance of Tyco's Denis Kozlowski. Media attention only exacerbates the narcissist's addiction and makes it incumbent on him to go to ever-wilder extremes to secure uninterrupted supply from this source.

The narcissist lacks empathy – the ability to put himself in other people's shoes. He does not recognise boundaries – personal, corporate, or legal. Everything and everyone are to him mere instruments, extensions, objects unconditionally and uncomplainingly available in his pursuit of narcissistic gratification.

This makes the narcissist perniciously exploitative. He uses, abuses, devalues, and discards even his nearest and dearest in the most chilling manner. The narcissist is utility – driven, obsessed with his overwhelming need to reduce his anxiety and regulate his labile sense of self-worth by securing a constant supply of his drug – attention. American executives acted without

compunction when they raided their employees' pension funds – as did Robert Maxwell a generation earlier in Britain.

The narcissist is convinced of his superiority – cerebral or physical. To his mind, he is a Gulliver hamstrung by a horde of narrow-minded and envious Lilliputians. The dotcom "new economy" was infested with "visionaries" with a contemptuous attitude towards the mundane: profits, business cycles, conservative economists, doubtful journalists, and cautious analysts.

Yet, deep inside, the narcissist is painfully aware of his addiction to others – their attention, admiration, applause, and affirmation. He despises himself for being thus dependent. He hates people the same way a drug addict hates his pusher. He wishes to "put them in their place", humiliate them, demonstrate to them how inadequate and imperfect they are in comparison to his regal self and how little he craves or needs them.

The narcissist regards himself as one would an expensive present, a gift to his company, to his family, to his neighbours, to his colleagues, to his country. This firm conviction of his inflated importance makes him feel entitled to special treatment, special favours, special outcomes, concessions, subservience, immediate gratification, obsequiousness, and lenience. It also makes him feel immune to mortal laws and somehow divinely protected and insulated from the inevitable consequences of his deeds and misdeeds.

The self-destructive narcissist plays the role of the "bad guy" (or "bad girl"). But even this is within the traditional social roles cartoonishly exaggerated by the narcissist to attract attention. Men are likely to

emphasise intellect, power, aggression, money, or social status. Narcissistic women are likely to emphasise body, looks, charm, sexuality, feminine "traits", homemaking, children and childrearing.

Punishing the wayward narcissist is a veritable catch-22.

A jail term is useless as a deterrent if it only serves to focus attention on the narcissist. Being infamous is second best to being famous – and far preferable to being ignored. The only way to effectively punish a narcissist is to withhold Narcissistic Supply from him and thus to prevent him from becoming a notorious celebrity.

Given a sufficient amount of media exposure, book contracts, talk shows, lectures, and public attention – the narcissist may even consider the whole grisly affair to be emotionally rewarding. To the narcissist, freedom, wealth, social status, family, vocation – are all means to an end. And the end is attention. If he can secure attention by being the big bad wolf – the narcissist unhesitatingly transforms himself into one. Lord Archer, for instance, seems to be positively basking in the media circus provoked by his prison diaries.

The narcissist does not victimise, plunder, terrorise and abuse others in a cold, calculating manner. He does so offhandedly, as a manifestation of his genuine character. To be truly "guilty" one needs to intend, to deliberate, to contemplate one's choices and then to choose one's acts. The narcissist does none of these.

Thus, punishment breeds in him surprise, hurt and seething anger. The narcissist is stunned by society's insistence that he should be held accountable for his

deeds and penalised accordingly. He feels wronged, baffled, injured, the victim of bias, discrimination and injustice. He rebels and rages.

Depending upon the pervasiveness of his magical thinking, the narcissist may feel besieged by overwhelming powers, forces cosmic and intrinsically ominous. He may develop compulsive rites to fend off this "bad", unwarranted, persecutory influences.

The narcissist, very much the infantile outcome of stunted personal development, engages in magical thinking. He feels omnipotent, that there is nothing he couldn't do or achieve if only he sets his mind to it. He feels omniscient – he rarely admits to ignorance and regards his intuitions and intellect as founts of objective data.

Thus, narcissists are haughtily convinced that introspection is a more important and more efficient (not to mention easier to accomplish) method of obtaining knowledge than the systematic study of outside sources of information in accordance with strict and tedious curricula. Narcissists are "inspired" and they despise hamstrung technocrats.

To some extent, they feel omnipresent because they are either famous or about to become famous or because their product is selling or is being manufactured globally. Deeply immersed in their delusions of grandeur, they firmly believe that their acts have – or will have – a great influence not only on their firm, but on their country, or even on Mankind. Having mastered the manipulation of their human environment – they are convinced that they will always "get away with it". They develop hubris and a false sense of immunity.

Narcissistic immunity is the (erroneous) feeling, harboured by the narcissist, that he is impervious to the consequences of his actions, that he will never be effected by the results of his own decisions, opinions, beliefs, deeds and misdeeds, acts, inaction, or membership of certain groups, that he is above reproach and punishment, that, magically, he is protected and will miraculously be saved at the last moment. Hence the audacity, simplicity, and transparency of some of the fraud and corporate looting in the 1990's. Narcissists rarely bother to cover their traces, so great is their disdain and conviction that they are above mortal laws and wherewithal.

What are the sources of this unrealistic appraisal of situations and events?

The False Self is a childish response to abuse and trauma. Abuse is not limited to sexual molestation or beatings. Smothering, doting, pampering, over-indulgence, treating the child as an extension of the parent, not respecting the child's boundaries, and burdening the child with excessive expectations are also forms of abuse.

The child reacts by constructing False Self that is possessed of everything it needs in order to prevail: unlimited and instantaneously available Harry Potter-like powers and wisdom. The False Self, this Superman, is indifferent to abuse and punishment. This way, the child's True Self is shielded from the toddler's harsh reality.

This artificial, maladaptive separation between a vulnerable (but not punishable) True Self and a punishable (but invulnerable) False Self is an effective

mechanism. It isolates the child from the unjust, capricious, emotionally dangerous world that he occupies. But, at the same time, it fosters in him a false sense of "nothing can happen to me, because I am not here, I am not available to be punished, hence I am immune to punishment".

The comfort of false immunity is also yielded by the narcissist's sense of entitlement. In his grandiose delusions, the narcissist is *sui generis*, a gift to humanity, a precious, fragile, object. Moreover, the narcissist is convinced both that this uniqueness is immediately discernible – and that it gives him special rights. The narcissist feels that he is protected by some cosmological law pertaining to "endangered species".

He is convinced that his future contribution to others – his firm, his country, humanity – should and does exempt him from the mundane: daily chores, boring jobs, recurrent tasks, personal exertion, orderly investment of resources and efforts, laws and regulations, social conventions, and so on.

The narcissist is entitled to a "special treatment": high living standards, constant and immediate catering to his needs, the eradication of any friction with the humdrum and the routine, an all-engulfing absolution of his sins, fast track privileges (to higher education, or in his encounters with bureaucracies, for instance). Punishment, trusts the narcissist, is for ordinary people, where no great loss to humanity is involved.

Narcissists are possessed of inordinate abilities to charm, to convince, to seduce, and to persuade. Many of them are gifted orators and intellectually endowed. Many of them work in politics, the media, fashion, show

business, the arts, medicine, or business, and serve as religious leaders.

By virtue of their standing in the community, their charisma, or their ability to find the willing scapegoats, they do get exempted many times. Having recurrently "got away with it" – they develop a theory of personal immunity, founded upon some kind of societal and even cosmic "order" in which certain people are above punishment.

But there is a fourth, simpler, explanation. The narcissist lacks self-awareness. Divorced from his True Self, unable to empathise (to understand what it is like to be someone else), unwilling to constrain his actions to cater to the feelings and needs of others – the narcissist is in a constant dreamlike state.

To the narcissist, his life is unreal, like watching an autonomously unfolding movie. The narcissist is a mere spectator, mildly interested, greatly entertained at times. He does not "own" his actions. He, therefore, cannot understand why he should be punished and when he is, he feels grossly wronged.

So convinced is the narcissist that he is destined to great things – that he refuses to accept setbacks, failures and punishments. He regards them as temporary, as the outcomes of someone else's errors, as part of the future mythology of his rise to power/brilliance/wealth/ideal love, etc. Being punished is a diversion of his precious energy and resources from the all-important task of fulfilling his mission in life.

The narcissist is pathologically envious of people and believes that they are equally envious of him. He is paranoid, on guard, ready to fend off an imminent

attack. A punishment to the narcissist is a major surprise and a nuisance but it also validates his suspicion that he is being persecuted. It proves to him that strong forces are arrayed against him.

He tells himself that people, envious of his achievements and humiliated by them, are out to get him. He constitutes a threat to the accepted order. When required to pay for his misdeeds, the narcissist is always disdainful and bitter and feels misunderstood by his inferiors.

Cooked books, corporate fraud, bending the (GAAP or other) rules, sweeping problems under the carpet, over-promising, making grandiose claims (the "vision thing") – are hallmarks of a narcissist in action. When social cues and norms encourage such behaviour rather than inhibit it – in other words, when such behaviour elicits abundant Narcissistic Supply – the pattern is reinforced and become entrenched and rigid. Even when circumstances change, the narcissist finds it difficult to adapt, shed his routines, and replace them with new ones. He is trapped in his past success. He becomes a swindler.

But pathological narcissism is not an isolated phenomenon. It is embedded in our contemporary culture. The West's is a narcissistic civilization. It upholds narcissistic values and penalises alternative value-systems. From an early age, children are taught to avoid self-criticism, to deceive themselves regarding their capacities and attainments, to feel entitled, and to exploit others.

As Lilian Katz observed in her important paper, "Distinctions between Self-Esteem and Narcissism:

Implications for Practice", published by the Educational Resources Information Centre, the line between enhancing self-esteem and fostering narcissism is often blurred by educators and parents.

Both Christopher Lasch in "The Culture of Narcissism" and Theodore Millon in his books about personality disorders, singled out American society as narcissistic. Litigiousness may be the flip side of an inane sense of entitlement. Consumerism is built on this common and communal lie of "I can do anything I want and possess everything I desire if I only apply myself to it" and on the pathological envy it fosters.

Not surprisingly, narcissistic disorders are more common among men than among women. This may be because narcissism conforms to masculine social mores and to the prevailing ethos of capitalism. Ambition, achievements, hierarchy, ruthlessness, drive – are both social values and narcissistic male traits. Social thinkers like the aforementioned Lasch speculated that modern American culture – a self-centred one – increases the rate of incidence of the Narcissistic Personality Disorder.

Otto Kernberg, a notable scholar of personality disorders, confirmed Lasch's intuition: "*Society can make serious psychological abnormalities, which already exist in some percentage of the population, seem to be at least superficially appropriate.*"

In their book "Personality Disorders in Modern Life", Theodore Millon and Roger Davis state, as a matter of fact, that pathological narcissism was once the preserve of "the royal and the wealthy" and that it "seems to have gained prominence only in the late twentieth century".

Narcissism, according to them, may be associated with *"higher levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs ... Individuals in less advantaged nations ... are too busy trying (to survive) ... to be arrogant and grandiose"*.

They – like Lasch before them – attribute pathological narcissism to *"a society that stresses individualism and self-gratification at the expense of community, namely the United States"*. They assert that the disorder is more prevalent among certain professions with "star power" or respect. *"In an individualistic culture, the narcissist is 'God's gift to the world'. In a collectivist society, the narcissist is 'God's gift to the collective'."*

Millon quotes Warren and Caponi's "The Role of Culture in the Development of Narcissistic Personality Disorders in America, Japan and Denmark":

"Individualistic narcissistic structures of self-regard (in individualistic societies) ... are rather self-contained and independent ... (In collectivist cultures) narcissistic configurations of the we-self ... denote self-esteem derived from strong identification with the reputation and honour of the family, groups, and others in hierarchical relationships."

Still, there are malignant narcissists among subsistence farmers in Africa, nomads in the Sinai desert, day labourers in East Europe, and intellectuals and socialites in Manhattan. Malignant narcissism is all-pervasive and independent of culture and society. It is true, though, that the way pathological narcissism manifests and is experienced is dependent on the particulars of societies and cultures.

In some cultures, it is encouraged, in others suppressed. In some societies it is channelled against

minorities – in others it is tainted with paranoia. In collectivist societies, it may be projected onto the collective, in individualistic societies, it is an individual's trait.

Yet, can families, organisations, ethnic groups, churches, and even whole nations be safely described as "narcissistic" or "pathologically self-absorbed"? Can we talk about a "corporate culture of narcissism"?

Human collectives – states, firms, households, institutions, political parties, cliques, bands – acquire a life and a character all their own. The longer the association or affiliation of the members, the more cohesive and conformist the inner dynamics of the group, the more persecutory or numerous its enemies, competitors, or adversaries, the more intensive the physical and emotional experiences of the individuals it is comprised of, the stronger the bonds of locale, language, and history – the more rigorous might an assertion of a common pathology be.

Such an all-pervasive and extensive pathology manifests itself in the behaviour of each and every member. It is a defining – though often implicit or underlying – mental structure. It has explanatory and predictive powers. It is recurrent and invariable – a pattern of conduct melding distorted cognition and stunted emotions. And it is often vehemently denied.

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The Professions of the Narcissist

The narcissist naturally gravitates towards those professions which guarantee the abundant and uninterrupted provision of Narcissistic Supply. He seeks to interact with people from a position of authority, advantage, or superiority. He thus elicits their automatic admiration, adulation, and affirmation – or, failing that, their fear and obedience.

Several vocations meet these requirements: teaching, the clergy, show business, corporate management, the medical professions, the military, law enforcement agencies, politics, and sports. It is safe to predict that narcissists would be over-represented in these occupations.

The cerebral narcissist is likely to emphasize his intellectual prowess and accomplishments (real and imaginary) in an attempt to solicit supply from awe-struck students, devoted parishioners, admiring voters, obsequious subordinates, or dependent patients. His somatic counterpart derives his sense of self-worth from body building, athletic achievements, tests of resilience or endurance, and sexual conquests.

The narcissistic medical doctor or mental health professional and his patients, the narcissistic guide, teacher, or mentor and his students, the narcissistic leader, guru, pundit, or psychic and his followers or admirers, and the narcissistic business tycoon, boss, or

employer and his underlings – all are instances of [Pathological Narcissistic Spaces](#).

This is a worrisome state of affairs. Narcissists are liars. They misrepresent their credentials, knowledge, talents, skills, and achievements. A narcissist medical doctor would rather let patients die than expose his ignorance. A narcissistic therapist often traumatizes his clients with his acting out, rage, exploitativeness, and lack of empathy. [Narcissistic businessmen](#) bring ruin on their firms and employees.

Moreover, even when all is "well", the narcissist's relationship with his sycophants is abusive. He perceives others as objects, mere instruments of gratification, dispensable and interchangeable. An addict, the narcissist tends to pursue an ever-larger dose of adoration, and an ever-bigger fix of attention, while gradually losing what's left of his moral constraints.

When his sources become weary, rebellious, tired, bored, disgusted, repelled, or plainly amused by the narcissist's incessant dependence, his childish craving for attention, his exaggerated or even paranoid fears which lead to obsessive-compulsive behaviours, and his "drama queen" temper tantrums - he resorts to emotional extortion, straight blackmail, abuse, or misuse of his authority, and criminal or antisocial conduct. If these fail, the narcissist devalues and discards the very people he so idealized and cherished only a short while before.

As opposed to their "normal" colleagues or peers, narcissists in authority lack empathy and ethical standards. Thus, they are prone to immorally, cynically,

callously and consistently abuse their position. Their socialisation process – usually the product of problematic early relationships with Primary Objects (parents, or caregivers) – is often perturbed and results in social dysfunctioning.

Nor is the narcissist deterred by possible punishment or regards himself subject to Man-made laws. His sense of entitlement coupled with the conviction of his own superiority lead him to believe in his invincibility, invulnerability, immunity, and divinity. The narcissist holds human edicts, rules, and regulations in disdain and human penalties in disdain. He regards human needs and emotions as weaknesses to be predatorily exploited.

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*Narcissistic
And Psychopathic
Leaders*

Narcissists in Positions of Authority

Narcissistic Leaders

"(The leader's) intellectual acts are strong and independent even in isolation and his will need no reinforcement from others ... (He) loves no one but himself, or other people only insofar as they serve his needs."

Freud, Sigmund, "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego"

"It was precisely that evening in Lodi that I came to believe in myself as an unusual person and became consumed with the ambition to do the great things that until then had been but a fantasy."

(Napoleon Bonaparte, "Thoughts")

"They may all be called Heroes, in as much as they have derived their purposes and their vocation not from the calm regular course of things, sanctioned by the existing order, but from a concealed fount, from that inner Spirit, still hidden beneath the surface, which impinges on the outer world as a shell and bursts it into pieces - such were Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon ... World-historical men - the Heroes of an epoch - must therefore be recognized as its clear-sighted ones: their deeds, their words are the best of their time ... Moral claims which are irrelevant must not be brought into collision with World-historical deeds ... So mighty a form must trample down many an innocent flower - crush to pieces many an object in its path."

(G.W.F. Hegel, "Lectures on the Philosophy of History")

"Such beings are incalculable, they come like fate without cause or reason, inconsiderately and without pretext. Suddenly they are here like lightning too terrible, too sudden, too compelling and too 'different' even to be hated ... What moves them is the terrible

egotism of the artist of the brazen glance, who knows himself to be justified for all eternity in his 'work' as the mother is justified in her child ...

In all great deceivers a remarkable process is at work to which they owe their power. In the very act of deception with all its preparations, the dreadful voice, expression, and gestures, they are overcome by their belief in themselves; it is this belief which then speaks, so persuasively, so miracle-like, to the audience."

(Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Genealogy of Morals")

"He knows not how to rule a kingdom, that cannot manage a province; nor can he wield a province, that cannot order a city; nor he order a city, that knows not how to regulate a village; nor he a village, that cannot guide a family; nor can that man govern well a family that knows not how to govern himself; neither can any govern himself unless his reason be lord, will and appetite her vassals; nor can reason rule unless herself be ruled by God, and be obedient to Him."

(Hugo Grotius)

The [narcissistic](#) or [psychopathic](#) leader is the culmination and reification of his period, culture, and civilization. He is likely to rise to prominence in narcissistic societies.

The malignant narcissist invents and then projects a [false, fictitious, self](#) for the world to fear, or to admire. He maintains a tenuous grasp on reality to start with and this is further exacerbated by the trappings of power. The narcissist's [grandiose self-delusions and fantasies](#) of omnipotence and omniscience are supported by real life authority and the narcissist's predilection to surround himself with obsequious sycophants.

The narcissist's personality is so precariously balanced that he cannot tolerate even a hint of [criticism and disagreement](#). Most narcissists are paranoid and suffer from [ideas of reference](#) (the delusion that they are being mocked or discussed when they are not). Thus, narcissists often regard themselves as "victims of persecution".

The narcissistic leader fosters and encourages a personality cult with all the hallmarks of an institutional religion: priesthood, rites, rituals, temples, worship, catechism, mythology. The leader is this religion's ascetic saint. He monastically denies himself earthly pleasures (or so he claims) in order to be able to dedicate himself fully to his calling.

The narcissistic leader is a monstrously inverted Jesus, sacrificing his life and denying himself so that his people - or humanity at large - should benefit. By surpassing and suppressing his humanity, the narcissistic leader became a distorted version of Nietzsche's "[superman](#)".

Many narcissistic and psychopathic leaders are the hostages of self-imposed rigid ideologies. They fancy themselves Platonic "philosopher-kings". Lacking [empathy](#), they regard their subjects as a manufacturer does his raw materials, or as the abstracted collateral damage in vast historical processes (to prepare an omelet, one must break eggs, as their favorite saying goes).

But being a-human or super-human also means being a-sexual and a-moral.

In this restricted sense, narcissistic leaders are post-modernist and moral relativists. They project to the masses an androgynous figure and enhance it by engendering the adoration of nudity and all things "natural" - or by strongly repressing these feelings. But what they refer to as "nature" is not natural at all.

The narcissistic leader invariably proffers an aesthetic of decadence and evil carefully orchestrated and artificial - though it is not perceived this way by him or by his followers. Narcissistic leadership is about reproduced copies, not about originals. It is about the manipulation of symbols - not about veritable atavism or true conservatism.

In short: narcissistic leadership is about theatre, not about life. To enjoy the spectacle (and be subsumed by it), the [cultish leader](#) demands the suspension of judgment, and the attainment of depersonalization and de-realization. Catharsis is tantamount, in this narcissistic dramaturgy, to self-annulment.

Narcissism is nihilistic not only operationally, or ideologically. Its very language and narratives are nihilistic. Narcissism is conspicuous nihilism - and the cult's leader serves as a role model, annihilating the Man, only to re-appear as a pre-ordained and irresistible force of nature.

Narcissistic leadership often poses as a rebellion against the "old ways": against the hegemonic culture, the upper classes, the established religions, the superpowers, the corrupt order. Narcissistic movements are [puerile](#), a reaction to [narcissistic injuries](#) inflicted upon a

narcissistic (and rather psychopathic) toddler nation-state, or group, or upon the leader.

Minorities or "others" - often arbitrarily selected - constitute a perfect, easily identifiable, embodiment of all that is "wrong". They are accused of being old, of being eerily disembodied, cosmopolitan, a part of the establishment, of being "decadent". They are hated on religious and socio-economic grounds, or because of their race, sexual orientation, or origin.

They are [different](#), they are narcissistic (they feel and act as morally superior), they are everywhere, they are defenceless, they are credulous, they are adaptable (and thus can be co-opted to collaborate in their own destruction). They are the perfect hate figure, a foil. Narcissists thrive on hatred and pathological envy.

This is precisely the source of the fascination with Hitler, diagnosed by Erich Fromm - together with Stalin - as a malignant narcissist. He was an inverted human. His unconscious was his conscious. He acted out our most repressed drives, fantasies, and wishes.

Hitler provided us with a glimpse of the horrors that lie beneath the veneer, the barbarians at our personal gates, and what it was like before we invented civilization. Hitler forced us all through a time warp and many did not emerge. He was not the devil. He was one of us. He was what Arendt aptly called the banality of evil. Just an ordinary, mentally disturbed, failure, a member of a mentally disturbed and failing nation, who lived through disturbed and failing times. He was the perfect mirror, a channel, a voice, and the very depth of our souls.

The narcissistic leader prefers the sparkle and glamour of well-orchestrated illusions to the tedium and method of real accomplishments. His reign is all smoke and mirrors, devoid of substance, consisting of mere appearances and mass delusions.

In the aftermath of his regime - the narcissistic leader having died, been deposed, or voted out of office - it all unravels. The tireless and constant prestidigitation ceases and the entire edifice crumbles. What looked like an economic miracle turns out to have been a fraud-laced bubble. Loosely-held empires disintegrate. Laboriously assembled business conglomerates go to pieces. "Earth shattering" and "revolutionary" scientific discoveries and theories are discredited. Social experiments end in mayhem.

As their end draws near, narcissistic-psychopathic leaders act out, lash out, erupt. They attack with equal virulence and ferocity compatriots, erstwhile allies, neighbors, and foreigners.

It is important to understand that the [use of violence](#) must be ego-syntonic. It must accord with the self-image of the narcissist. It must abet and sustain his grandiose fantasies and feed his sense of entitlement. It must conform with the narcissistic narrative.

All populist, charismatic leaders believe that they have a "special connection" with the "people": a relationship that is direct, almost mystical, and transcends the normal channels of communication (such as the legislature or the media). Thus, a narcissist who regards himself as the benefactor of the poor, a member of the common folk, the representative of the disenfranchised,

the champion of the dispossessed against the corrupt elite, is highly unlikely to use violence at first.

The pacific mask crumbles when the narcissist has become convinced that the very people he purported to speak for, his constituency, his grassroots fans, the prime sources of his narcissistic supply, have turned against him. At first, in a desperate effort to maintain the fiction underlying his chaotic personality, the narcissist strives to explain away the sudden reversal of sentiment. "The people are being duped by (the media, big industry, the military, the elite, etc.)", "they don't really know what they are doing", "following a rude awakening, they will revert to form", etc.

When these flimsy attempts to patch a tattered personal mythology fail, the narcissist is injured. Narcissistic injury inevitably leads to narcissistic rage and to a terrifying display of unbridled aggression. The pent-up frustration and hurt translate into devaluation. That which was previously idealized is now discarded with contempt and hatred.

This primitive defense mechanism is called "splitting". To the narcissist, things and people are either entirely bad (evil) or entirely good. He projects onto others his own shortcomings and negative emotions, thus becoming a totally good object. A narcissistic leader is likely to justify the butchering of his own people by claiming that they intended to assassinate him, undo the revolution, devastate the economy, harm the nation or the country, etc.

The "small people", the "rank and file", the "loyal soldiers" of the narcissist - his flock, his nation, his

employees - they pay the price. The disillusionment and disenchantment are agonizing. The process of reconstruction, of rising from the ashes, of overcoming the trauma of having been deceived, exploited and manipulated - is drawn-out. It is difficult to trust again, to have faith, to love, to be led, to collaborate. Feelings of shame and guilt engulf the erstwhile followers of the narcissist. This is his sole legacy: a massive [post-traumatic stress disorder \(PTSD\)](#).

APPENDIX: Strong Men and Political Theatres - The "Being There" Syndrome

"I came here to see a country, but what I find is a theater ... In appearances, everything happens as it does everywhere else. There is no difference except in the very foundation of things."

(de Custine, writing about Russia in the mid-19th century)

Four decades ago, the Polish-American-Jewish author, Jerzy Kosinski, wrote the book "Being There". It describes the election to the presidency of the United States of a simpleton, a gardener, whose vapid and trite pronouncements are taken to be sagacious and penetrating insights into human affairs. The "Being There Syndrome" is now manifest throughout the world: from Russia (Putin) to the United States (Obama).

Given a high enough level of frustration, triggered by recurrent, endemic, and systemic failures in all spheres of policy, even the most resilient democracy develops a predilection to "strong men", leaders whose self-confidence, sangfroid, and apparent omniscience all but "guarantee" a change of course for the better.

These are usually people with a thin resume, having accomplished little prior to their ascendance. They appear to have erupted on the scene from nowhere. They are received as providential messiahs precisely because they are unencumbered with a discernible past and, thus, are ostensibly unburdened by prior affiliations and commitments. Their only duty is to the future. They are a-historical: they have no history and they are above history.

Indeed, it is precisely this apparent lack of a biography that qualifies these leaders to represent and bring about a fantastic and grandiose future. They act as a blank screen upon which the multitudes project their own traits, wishes, personal biographies, needs, and yearnings.

The more these leaders deviate from their initial promises and the more they fail, the dearer they are to the hearts of their constituents: like them, their new-chosen leader is struggling, coping, trying, and failing and, like them, he has his shortcomings and vices. This affinity is endearing and captivating. It helps to form a shared psychosis (follies-a-plusieurs) between ruler and people and fosters the emergence of an hagiography.

The propensity to elevate narcissistic or even psychopathic personalities to power is most pronounced in countries that lack a democratic tradition (such as China, Russia, or the nations that inhabit the territories that once belonged to Byzantium or the Ottoman Empire).

Cultures and civilizations which frown upon individualism and have a collectivist tradition, prefer to

install "strong collective leaderships" rather than "strong men". Yet, all these polities maintain a theatre of democracy, or a theatre of "democratically-reached consensus" (Putin calls it: "sovereign democracy"). Such charades are devoid of essence and proper function and are replete and concurrent with a personality cult or the adoration of the party in power.

In most developing countries and nations in transition, "democracy" is an empty word. Granted, the hallmarks of democracy are there: candidate lists, parties, election propaganda, a plurality of media, and voting. But its quiddity is absent. The democratic principles and institutions are being consistently hollowed out and rendered mock by election fraud, exclusionary policies, cronyism, corruption, intimidation, and collusion with Western interests, both commercial and political.

The new "democracies" are thinly-disguised and criminalized plutocracies (recall the Russian oligarchs), authoritarian regimes (Central Asia and the Caucasus), or puppeteered heterarchies (Macedonia, Bosnia, and Iraq, to mention three recent examples).

The new "democracies" suffer from many of the same ills that afflict their veteran role models: murky campaign finances; venal revolving doors between state administration and private enterprise; endemic corruption, nepotism, and cronyism; self-censoring media; socially, economically, and politically excluded minorities; and so on. But while this malaise does not threaten the foundations of the United States and France - it does imperil the stability and future of the likes of Ukraine, Serbia, and Moldova, Indonesia, Mexico, and Bolivia.

Many nations have chosen prosperity over democracy. Yes, the denizens of these realms can't speak their mind or protest or criticize or even joke lest they be arrested or worse - but, in exchange for giving up these trivial freedoms, they have food on the table, they are fully employed, they receive ample health care and proper education, they save and spend to their hearts' content.

In return for all these worldly and intangible goods (popularity of the leadership which yields political stability; prosperity; security; prestige abroad; authority at home; a renewed sense of nationalism, collective and community), the citizens of these countries forgo the right to be able to criticize the regime or change it once every four years. Many insist that they have struck a good bargain - not a Faustian one.

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Narcissists in Positions of Authority

"He knows not how to rule a kingdom, that cannot manage a province; nor can he wield a province, that cannot order a city; nor he order a city, that knows not how to regulate a village; nor he a village, that cannot guide a family; nor can that man govern well a family that knows not how to govern himself; neither can any govern himself unless his reason be lord, will and appetite her vassals; nor can reason rule unless herself be ruled by God, and be obedient to Him."

Hugo Grotius

Being in a position of authority secures the uninterrupted flow of Narcissistic Supply. Fed by the awe, fear, subordination, admiration, adoration and obedience of his underlings, parish, students, or patients – the narcissist thrives in such circumstances. The narcissist aspires to acquire authority by any means available to him. He may achieve this by making use of some outstanding traits or skills such as his intelligence, or through an asymmetry built into a relationship. The narcissistic medical doctor or mental health professional and his patients, the narcissistic guide, teacher, or mentor and his students, the narcissistic leader, guru, pundit, or psychic and his followers or admirers, or the narcissistic business tycoon, boss, or employer and his subordinates – all are instances of such asymmetries. The rich, powerful, more knowledgeable narcissist occupy a [Pathological Narcissistic Space](#).

These types of relationships – based on the unidirectional and unilateral flow of Narcissistic Supply – border on abuse. The narcissist, in pursuit of an ever-increasing supply, of an ever-larger dose of adoration, and an ever-bigger fix of attention – gradually loses his moral constraints. With time, it gets harder to obtain Narcissistic Supply. The sources of such supply are human and they become weary, rebellious, tired, bored, disgusted, repelled, or plainly amused by the narcissist's incessant dependence, his childish craving for attention, his exaggerated or even paranoid fears which lead to obsessive-compulsive behaviours. To secure their continued collaboration in the procurement of his much-needed supply – the narcissist might resort to emotional extortion, straight blackmail, abuse, or misuse of his authority.

The temptation to do so, though, is universal. No doctor is immune to the charms of certain female patients, nor are university professors asexual. What prevent them from immorally, cynically, callously and consistently abusing their position are ethical imperatives embedded in them through socialisation and empathy. They learned the difference between right and wrong and, having internalised it, they choose right when they face a moral dilemma. They empathise with other human beings, "putting themselves in their shoes", and refrain from doing unto others what they do not wish to be done to them.

It is in these two crucial points that narcissists differ from other humans.

Their socialisation process – usually the product of problematic early relationships with Primary Objects

(parents, or caregivers) – is often perturbed and results in social dysfunctioning. And they are incapable of empathising: humans are there only to supply them with Narcissistic Supply. Those unfortunate humans who do not comply with this overriding dictum must be made to alter their ways and if even this fails, the narcissist loses interest in them and they are classified as "sub-human, animals, service-providers, functions, symbols" and worse. Hence the abrupt shifts from over-valuation to devaluation of others. While bearing the gifts of Narcissistic Supply – the "other" is idealised by the narcissist. The narcissist shifts to the opposite pole (devaluation) when Narcissistic Supply dries up or when he estimates that it is about to.

As far as the narcissist is concerned, there is no moral dimension to abusing others – only a pragmatic one: will he be punished for doing so? The narcissist is atavistically responsive to fear and lacks any in-depth understanding of what it is to be a human being. Trapped in his pathology, the narcissist resembles an alien on drugs, a junkie of Narcissistic Supply devoid of the kind of language, which renders human emotions intelligible.

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The Making of a Leader

“(The leader's) intellectual acts are strong and independent even in isolation and his will need no reinforcement from others ... (He) loves no one but himself, or other people only insofar as they serve his needs.”

Freud, Sigmund, "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego"

How does a leader become a leader?

In this article, we are not interested in the historical process but in the answer to the twin questions: what qualifies one to be a leader and why do people elect someone specific to be a leader.

The immediately evident response would be that the leader addresses or is judged by his voters to be capable of addressing their needs. These could be economic needs, psychological needs, or moral needs. In all these cases, if left unfulfilled, these unrequited needs are judged to be capable of jeopardizing "acceptable (modes of) existence". Except in rare cases (famine, war, plague), survival is rarely at risk. On the contrary, people are mostly willing to sacrifice their genetic and biological survival on the altar of said "acceptable existence".

To be acceptable, life must be honorable. To be honorable, certain conditions (commonly known as "rights") must be fulfilled and upheld. No life is deemed honorable in the absence of food and shelter (property rights), personal autonomy (safeguarded by codified freedoms), personal safety, respect (human rights), and

a modicum of influence upon one's future (civil rights). In the absence of even one of these elements, people tend to gradually become convinced that their lives are not worth living. They become mutinous and try to restore the "honorable equilibrium". They seek food and shelter by inventing new technologies and by implementing them in a bid to control nature and other, human, factors. They rebel against any massive breach of their freedoms. People seek safety: they legislate and create law enforcement agencies and form armies.

Above all, people are concerned with maintaining their dignity and an influence over their terms of existence, present and future. The two may be linked : the more a person influences his environment and moulds – the more respected he is by others. Leaders are perceived to be possessed of qualities conducive to the success of such efforts. The leader seems to be emitting a signal that tells his followers: I can increase your chances to win the constant war that you are waging to find food and shelter, to be respected, to enhance your personal autonomy and security, and o have a say about your future.

But WHAT is this signal? What information does it carry? How is it received and deciphered by the led? And how, exactly, does it influence their decision making processes?

The signal is, probably, a resonance. The information emanating from the leader, the air exuded by him, his personal data must resonate with the situation of the people he leads. The leader must not only resonate with the world around him – but also with the world that he promises to usher. Modes, fashions, buzzwords, fads,

beliefs, hopes, fears, hates and loves, plans, other information, a vision – all must be neatly incorporated in this resonance table. A leader is a shorthand version of the world in which he operates, a map of his times, the harmony (if not the melody) upon which those led by him can improvise. They must see in him all the principle elements of their mental life: grievances, agreements, disagreements, anger, deceit, conceit, myths and facts, interpretation, compatibility, guilt, paranoia, illusions and delusions – all wrapped (or warped) into one neat parcel. It should not be taken to mean that the leader must be an average person – but he must discernibly contain the average person or faithfully reflect him. His voice must echo the multitude of sounds that formed the popular wave which swept him to power. This ability of his, to be and not to be, to vacate himself, to become the conduit of other people's experiences and existence, in short: to be a gifted actor – is the first element in the leadership signal. It is oriented to the past and to the present.

The second element is what makes the leader distinct. Again, it is resonance. The leader must be perceived to resonate in perfect harmony with a vision of the future, agreeable to the people who elected him. "Agreeable" – read: compatible with the fulfillment of the aforementioned needs in a manner, which renders life acceptable. Each group of people has its own requirements, explicit and implicit, openly expressed and latent.

The members of a nation might feel that they have lost the ability to shape their future and that their security is compromised. They will then select a leader who will – so they believe, judged by what they know about him –

restore both. The means of restoration are less important. To become a leader, one must convince the multitude, the masses, the public that one can deliver, not that one knows the best, most optimal and most efficient path to a set goal. The HOW is of no consequences. It pales compared to the WILL HE ? This is because people value the results more than the way. Even in the most individualistic societies, people prefer the welfare of the group to which they belong to their own. The leader promises to optimize utility for the group as a whole. It is clear that not all the members will equally benefit, or even benefit at all. The one who convinces his fellow beings that he can secure the attainment of their goals (and, thus, provide for their needs satisfactorily) – becomes a leader. What matters to the public varies from time to time and from place to place. To one group of people, the personality of the leader is of crucial importance, to others his ancestral roots. At one time, the religious affiliation, and at another, the right education, or a vision of the future. Whatever determines the outcome, it must be strongly correlated with what the group perceives to be its needs and firmly founded upon its definition of an acceptable life. This is the information content of the signal.

Selecting a leader is no trivial pursuit. People take it very seriously. They often believe that the results of this decision also determine whether their needs are fulfilled or not. In other words : the choice of leader determines if they lead an acceptable life. These seriousness and contemplative attitude prevail even when the leader is chosen by a select few (the nobility, the party).

Thus, information about the leader is gathered from open sources, formal and informal, by deduction,

induction and inference, through contextual surmises, historical puzzle-work and indirect associations. To which ethnic group does the candidate belong? What is his history and his family's / tribe's / nation's? Where is he coming from , geographically and culturally? What is he aiming at and where is he going to, what is his vision? Who are his friends, associates, partners, collaborators, enemies and rivals? What are the rumors about him, the gossip? These are the cognitive, epistemological and hermeneutic dimensions of the information gathered. It is all subject to a process very similar to scientific theorizing. Hypotheses are constructed to fit the known facts. Predictions are made. Experiments conducted and data gathered. A theory is then developed and applied to the known facts. As more data is added – the theory undergoes revisions or even a paradigmatic shift. As with scientific conservatism, the reigning theory tends to color the interpretation of new data. A cult of "priests" (commentators and pundits) emerges to defend common wisdom and "well known" "facts" against intellectual revisionism and non-conformism. But finally the theory settles down and a consensus emerges: a leader is born.

The emotional aspect is predominant, though. Emotions play the role of gatekeepers and circuit breakers in the decision-making processes involved in the selection of a leader. They are the filters, the membranes through which information seeps into the minds of the members of the group. They determine the inter-relations between the various data. Finally, they assign values and moral and affective weights within a coherent emotional framework to the various bits information . Emotions are rules of procedure. The information is the input processed by these rules within a fuzzy decision

theorem. The leader is the outcome (almost the by-product) of this process.

This is a static depiction, which does not provide us with the dynamics of the selection process. How does the information gathered affect it? Which elements interact? How is the outcome determined?

It would seem that people come naturally equipped with a mechanism for the selection of leaders. This mechanism is influenced by experience (a-posteriori). It is in the form of procedural rules, an algorithm which guides the members of the group in the intricacies of the group interaction known as "leadership selection".

This leader-selection mechanism comprises two modules: a module for the evaluation and taxonomy of information and an interactive module. The former is built to deal with constantly added data, to evaluate them and to alter the emerging picture (Weltanschauung) accordingly (to reconstruct or to adjust the theory, even to replace it with another).

The second module responds to signals from the other members of the group and treats these signals as data, which, in turn, affects the performance of the first module. The synthesis of the output produced by these two modules determines the ultimate selection.

Leader selection is an interaction between a "nucleus of individuality", which is comprised of our Self, the way we perceive our Self (introspective element) and the way that we perceive our Selves as reflected by others. Then there is the "group nucleus", which incorporates the group's consciousness and goals. A leader is a

person who succeeds in giving expression to both these nuclei amply and successfully. When choosing a leader, we, thus, really are choosing ourselves.

APPENDIX: A Comment on Campaign Finance Reform

The Athenian model of representative participatory democracy was both exclusive and direct. It excluded women and slaves but it allowed the rest to actively, constantly, and consistently contribute to decision making processes on all levels and of all kinds (including juridical). This was (barely) manageable in a town 20,000 strong.

The application of this model to bigger polities is rather more problematic and leads to serious and ominous failures.

The problem of the gathering and processing of information - a logistical constraint - is likely to be completely, satisfactorily, and comprehensively resolved by the application of computer networks to voting. Even with existing technologies, election results (regardless of the size of the electorate), can be announced with great accuracy within hours.

Yet, computer networks are unlikely to overcome the second obstacle - the problem of the large constituency.

Political candidates in a direct participatory democracy need to keep each and every member of their constituency (potential voter) informed about their platform, (if incumbent) their achievements, their person, and what distinguishes them from their rivals.

This is a huge amount of information. Its dissemination to large constituencies requires outlandish amounts of money (tens of millions of dollars per campaign).

Politicians end up spending a lot of their time in office (and out of it) raising funds through "contributions" which place them in hock to "contributing" individuals and corporations. This anomaly cannot be solved by tinkering with campaign finance laws. It reflects the real costs of packaging and disseminating information. To restrict these activities would be a disservice to democracy and to voters.

Campaign finance reform in its current (myriad) forms, is, thus, largely anti-democratic: it limits access to information (by reducing the money available to the candidates to spread their message). By doing so, it restricts choice and it tilts the electoral machinery in favor of the haves. Voters with money and education are able to obtain the information they need by themselves and at their own expense. The haves-not, who rely exclusively on information dished out by the candidates, are likely to be severely disadvantaged by any form of campaign finance reform.

The solution is to reduce the size of the constituencies. This can be done only by adopting an indirect, non-participatory form of democracy, perhaps by abolishing the direct election (and campaigning) of most currently elected office holders. Direct elections in manageable constituencies will be confined to multi-tiered, self-dissolving ("sunset") "electoral colleges" composed exclusively of volunteers.

NOTE - The Role of Politicians

It is a common error to assume that the politician's role is to create jobs, encourage economic activity, enhance the welfare and well-being of his subjects, preserve the territorial integrity of his country, and fulfill a host of other functions.

In truth, the politician has a single and exclusive role: to get re-elected. His primary responsibility is to his party and its members. He owes them patronage: jobs, sinecures, guaranteed income or cash flow, access to the public purse, and the intoxicating wielding of power. His relationship is with his real constituency - the party's rank and file - and he is accountable to them the same way a CEO (Chief Executive Officer) answers to the corporation's major shareholders.

To make sure that they get re-elected, politicians are sometimes required to implement reforms and policy measures that contribute to the general welfare of the populace and promote it. At other times, they have to refrain from action to preserve their electoral assets and extend their political life expectancy.

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*Narcissistic
And Psychopathic
Leaders*

In History

Barack Obama – Narcissist, Or Merely Narcissistic?

Barack Obama appears to be a narcissist. Scroll down for a detailed treatment.

Granted, only a qualified mental health diagnostician can determine whether someone suffers from [Narcissistic Personality Disorder \(NPD\)](#) and this, following lengthy tests and personal interviews. But, in the absence of access to Barack Obama, one has to rely on his overt performance and on testimonies by his closest, nearest and dearest.

Narcissistic leaders are nefarious and their effects pernicious. They are subtle, refined, socially-adept, manipulative, possessed of thespian skills, and convincing. Both types equally lack empathy and are ruthless and relentless or driven.

Perhaps it is time to require each candidate to high office in the USA to submit to a rigorous physical and mental checkup with the results made public.

I. Upbringing and Childhood

Obama's early life was decidedly chaotic and replete with traumatic and mentally bruising dislocations. Mixed-race marriages were even less common then. His parents went through a divorce when he was an infant (two years old). Obama saw his father only once again, before he died in a car accident. Then, his mother re-

married and Obama had to relocate to Indonesia: a foreign land with a radically foreign culture, to be raised by a step-father. At the age of ten, he was whisked off to live with his maternal (white) grandparents. He saw his mother only intermittently in the following few years and then she vanished from his life in 1979. She died of cancer in 1995.

Pathological narcissism is a reaction to prolonged abuse and trauma in early childhood or early adolescence. The source of the abuse or trauma is immaterial: the perpetrators could be dysfunctional or absent parents, teachers, other adults, or peers.

II. Behavior Patterns

The narcissist:

- Feels grandiose and self-important (e.g., exaggerates accomplishments, talents, *skills, contacts, and personality traits to the point of lying, demands* to be recognised as superior without commensurate achievements);
- Is *obsessed* with fantasies of unlimited success, *fame, fearsome* power or *omnipotence, unequalled* brilliance (*the cerebral narcissist*), *bodily* beauty or *sexual performance* (*the somatic narcissist*), or ideal, *everlasting, all-conquering* love or *passion*;
- Firmly convinced that he or she is unique and, being special, can only be understood by, *should only be treated by*, or associate with, other

special or unique, or high-status people (or institutions);

- Requires excessive admiration, *adulation, attention and affirmation – or, failing that, wishes to be feared and to be notorious (Narcissistic Supply)*;
- Feels entitled. *Demands automatic and full compliance* with his or her unreasonable expectations for special and *favourable priority* treatment;
- Is "interpersonally exploitative", i.e., *uses* others to achieve his or her own ends;
- *Devoid* of empathy. Is *unable* or unwilling to identify with, *acknowledge, or accept* the feelings, needs, *preferences, priorities, and choices* of others;
- Constantly envious of others *and seeks to hurt or destroy the objects of his or her frustration. Suffers from persecutory (paranoid) delusions as he or she* believes that they feel the same about him or her *and are likely to act similarly*;
- Behaves arrogantly and haughtily. *Feels superior, omnipotent, omniscient, invincible, immune, "above the law", and omnipresent (magical thinking). Rages when frustrated, contradicted, or confronted* by people he or she considers inferior to him or her and unworthy.

Narcissism is a defense mechanism whose role is to deflect hurt and trauma from the victim's "True Self" into a "False Self" which is omnipotent, invulnerable, and omniscient. This False Self is then used by the narcissist to garner narcissistic supply from his human environment. Narcissistic supply is any form of attention, both positive and negative and it is instrumental in the regulation of the narcissist's labile sense of self-worth.

Perhaps the most immediately evident trait of patients with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is their vulnerability to criticism and disagreement. Subject to negative input, real or imagined, even to a mild rebuke, a constructive suggestion, or an offer to help, they feel injured, humiliated and empty and they react with disdain (devaluation), rage, and defiance.

From my book ["Malignant Self Love - Narcissism Revisited"](#):

"To avoid such intolerable pain, some patients with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) socially withdraw and feign false modesty and humility to mask their underlying grandiosity. Dysthymic and depressive disorders are common reactions to isolation and feelings of shame and inadequacy."

Due to their lack of empathy, disregard for others, exploitativeness, sense of entitlement, and constant need for attention (narcissistic supply), narcissists are rarely able to maintain functional and healthy interpersonal relationships.

Many narcissists are over-achievers and ambitious. Some of them are even talented and skilled. But they are incapable of team work because they cannot tolerate setbacks. They are easily frustrated and demoralized and are unable to cope with disagreement and criticism. Though some narcissists have meteoric and inspiring careers, in the long-run, all of them find it difficult to maintain long-term professional achievements and the respect and appreciation of their peers. The narcissist's fantastic grandiosity, frequently coupled with a hypomanic mood, is typically incommensurate with his or her real accomplishments (the "grandiosity gap").

An important distinction is between cerebral and somatic narcissists. The cerebrals derive their Narcissistic Supply from their intelligence or academic achievements and the somatics derive their Narcissistic Supply from their physique, exercise, physical or sexual prowess and romantic or physical "conquests".

Another crucial division within the ranks of patients with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is between the classic variety (those who meet five of the nine diagnostic criteria included in the DSM), and the compensatory kind (their narcissism compensates for deep-set feelings of inferiority and lack of self-worth).

Obama displays the following behaviors, which are among the hallmarks of pathological narcissism:

- Subtly misrepresents facts and expediently and opportunistically shifts positions, views, opinions, and "ideals" (e.g., about campaign finance, re-districting). These flip-flops do not cause him overt distress and are ego-syntonic

(he feels justified in acting this way). Alternatively, refuses to commit to a standpoint and, in the process, evidences a lack of empathy.

Ignores data that conflict with his fantasy world, or with his inflated and grandiose self-image. This has to do with magical thinking. Obama already sees himself as president because he is firmly convinced that his dreams, thoughts, and wishes affect reality. Additionally, he denies the gap between his fantasies and his modest or limited real-life achievements (for instance, in 12 years of academic career, he hasn't published a single scholarly paper or book).

Feels that he is above the law, incl. and especially his own laws.

Talks about himself in the 3rd person singular or uses the regal "we" and craves to be the exclusive center of attention, even adulation

Have a messianic-cosmic vision of himself and his life and his "mission".

Sets ever more complex rules in a convoluted world of grandiose fantasies with its own language (jargon)

Displays false modesty and unctuous "folksiness" but unable to sustain these behaviors (the persona, or mask) for long. It slips and the true Obama is revealed: haughty, aloof, distant, and disdainful of simple folk

and their lives.

Sublimates aggression and holds grudges.

Behaves as an eternal adolescent (e.g., his choice of language, youthful image he projects, demands indulgence and feels entitled to special treatment, even though his objective accomplishments do not justify it).

III. Body Language

Many complain of the incredible deceptive powers of the narcissist. They find themselves involved with narcissists (emotionally, in business, or otherwise) before they have a chance to discover their true character. Shocked by the later revelation, they mourn their inability to separate from the narcissist and their gullibility.

Narcissists are an elusive breed, hard to spot, harder to pinpoint, impossible to capture. Even an experienced mental health diagnostician with unmitigated access to the record and to the person examined would find it fiendishly difficult to determine with any degree of certainty whether someone suffers from a full fledged [Narcissistic Personality Disorder](#) – or merely possesses narcissistic traits, a narcissistic style, a personality structure ("character"), or a narcissistic "overlay" superimposed on [another mental health problem](#).

Moreover, it is important to distinguish between traits and behavior patterns that are independent of the patient's cultural-social context (i.e., which are inherent,

or idiosyncratic) – and reactive patterns, or conformity to cultural and social morals and norms. Reactions to severe life crises or [circumstances](#) are also often characterized by transient pathological narcissism, for instance (Ronningstam and Gunderson, 1996). But such reactions do not a narcissist make.

When a person belongs to a society or culture that has often been described as [narcissistic](#) by scholars (such as Theodore Millon) and social thinkers (e.g., [Christopher Lasch](#)) – how much of his behavior can be attributed to his milieu and which of his traits are really his?

The Narcissistic Personality Disorder is rigorously defined in the DSM IV-TR with a set of strict criteria and differential diagnoses.

Narcissism is regarded by many scholars to be an adaptative strategy ("[healthy narcissism](#)"). It is considered pathological in the clinical sense only when it becomes a rigid personality structure replete with a series of primitive defence mechanisms (such as splitting, projection, projective identification, or intellectualization) – and when it leads to dysfunctions in one or more areas of the patient's life.

Pathological narcissism is the art of deception. The narcissist projects a [False Self](#) and manages all his social interactions through this concocted fictional construct.

When the narcissist reveals his true colors, it is usually far too late. His victims are unable to separate from him. They are frustrated by this acquired helplessness and

angry at themselves for having they failed to see through the narcissist earlier on.

But the narcissist does emit subtle, almost subliminal, signals ("presenting symptoms") even in a first or casual encounter. Compare the following list to Barack Obama's body language during his public appearances.

These are:

"Haughty" body language – The narcissist adopts a physical posture which implies and exudes an air of superiority, seniority, hidden powers, mysteriousness, amused indifference, etc. Though the narcissist usually maintains sustained and piercing eye contact, he often refrains from physical proximity (he is "territorial").

The narcissist takes part in social interactions – even mere banter – condescendingly, from a position of supremacy and faux "magnanimity and largesse". But he rarely mingles socially and prefers to remain the "observer", or the "lone wolf".

Entitlement markers – The narcissist immediately asks for "special treatment" of some kind. Not to wait his turn, to have a longer or a shorter therapeutic session, to talk directly to authority figures (and not to their assistants or secretaries), to be granted special payment terms, to enjoy custom tailored arrangements - or to get served first.

The narcissist is the one who – vocally and demonstratively – demands the undivided attention of the head waiter in a restaurant, or monopolizes the hostess, or latches on to celebrities in a party. The

narcissist reacts with rage and indignantly when denied his wishes and if treated equally with others whom he deems inferior.

Idealization or devaluation – The narcissist instantly idealizes or devalues his interlocutor. This depends on how the narcissist appraises the potential his converser has as a Narcissistic Supply Source. The narcissist flatters, adores, admires and applauds the "target" in an embarrassingly exaggerated and profuse manner – or sulks, abuses, and humiliates her.

Narcissists are polite only in the presence of a potential Supply Source. But they are unable to sustain even perfunctory civility and fast deteriorate to barbs and thinly-veiled hostility, to verbal or other violent displays of abuse, rage attacks, or cold detachment.

The "membership" posture – The narcissist always tries to "belong". Yet, at the very same time, he maintains his stance as an outsider. The narcissist seeks to be admired for his ability to integrate and ingratiate himself without investing the efforts commensurate with such an undertaking.

For instance: if the narcissist talks to a psychologist, the narcissist first states emphatically that he never studied psychology. He then proceeds to make seemingly effortless use of obscure professional terms, thus demonstrating that he mastered the discipline all the same, as an autodidact – which proves that he is exceptionally intelligent or introspective.

In general, the narcissist always prefers show-off to substance. One of the most effective methods of

exposing a narcissist is by trying to delve deeper. The narcissist is shallow, a pond pretending to be an ocean. He likes to think of himself as a Renaissance man, a Jack of all trades. The narcissist never admits to ignorance in any field – yet, typically, he is ignorant of them all. It is surprisingly easy to penetrate the gloss and the veneer of the narcissist's self-proclaimed omniscience.

Bragging and false autobiography – The narcissist brags incessantly. His speech is peppered with "I", "my", "myself", and "mine". He describes himself as intelligent, or rich, or modest, or intuitive, or creative – but always excessively, implausibly, and extraordinarily so.

The narcissist's biography sounds unusually rich and complex. His achievements – incommensurate with his age, education, or renown. Yet, his actual condition is evidently and demonstrably incompatible with his claims. Very often, the narcissist lies or his fantasies are easily discernible. He always name-drops and appropriates other people's experiences and accomplishments.

Emotion-free language – The narcissist likes to talk about himself and only about himself. He is not interested in others or what they have to say, unless they constitute potential Sources of Supply and in order to obtain said supply. He acts bored, disdainful, even angry, if he feels that they are intruding on his precious time and, thus, abusing him.

In general, the narcissist is very impatient, easily bored, with strong attention deficits – unless and until he is the

topic of discussion. One can publicly dissect all aspects of the intimate life of a narcissist without repercussions, providing the discourse is not "emotionally tinted".

If asked to relate directly to his emotions, the narcissist intellectualizes, rationalizes, speaks about himself in the third person and in a detached "scientific" tone or composes a narrative with a fictitious character in it, suspiciously autobiographical. Narcissists like to refer to themselves in mechanical terms, as efficient automata or [machines](#).

Seriousness and sense of intrusion and coercion – The narcissist is [dead serious](#) about himself. He may possess a subtle, wry, and riotous sense of humor, scathing and cynical, but rarely is he [self-deprecating](#). The narcissist regards himself as being on a constant mission, whose importance is cosmic and whose consequences are global. If a scientist – he is always in the throes of revolutionizing science. If a journalist – he is in the middle of the greatest story ever. If a novelist - he is on his way to a Booker or Nobel prize.

This self-misperception is not amenable to light-headedness or self-effacement. The narcissist is [easily hurt](#) and insulted (narcissistic injury). Even the most innocuous remarks or acts are interpreted by him as belittling, intruding, or coercive. His time is more valuable than others' – therefore, it cannot be wasted on unimportant matters such as mere banter or going out for a walk.

Any suggested help, advice, or concerned inquiry are immediately cast by the narcissist as intentional humiliation, implying that the narcissist is in need of

help and counsel and, thus, imperfect and less than omnipotent. Any attempt to set an agenda is, to the narcissist, an intimidating act of enslavement. In this sense, the narcissist is both [schizoid](#) and [paranoid](#) and often entertains [ideas of reference](#).

These – the lack of empathy, the aloofness, the disdain, the sense of entitlement, the constricted sense of humor, the unequal treatment and the paranoia – render the narcissist a social misfit. The narcissist is able to provoke in his milieu, in his casual acquaintances, even in his psychotherapist, the strongest, most avid and furious hatred and revulsion. To his shock, indignation and consternation, he invariably induces in others unbridled aggression.

He is perceived to be asocial at best and, often, antisocial. This, perhaps, is the strongest presenting symptom. One feels ill at ease in the presence of a narcissist for no apparent reason. No matter how charming, intelligent, thought provoking, outgoing, easy going and social the narcissist is – he fails to secure the sympathy of others, a sympathy he is never ready, willing, or able to reciprocate.

IV. Narcissistic and psychopathic Leaders

The [narcissistic](#) or [psychopathic](#) leader is the culmination and reification of his period, culture, and civilization. He is likely to rise to prominence in narcissistic societies.

The malignant narcissist invents and then projects a false, fictitious, self for the world to fear, or to admire.

He maintains a tenuous grasp on reality to start with and this is further exacerbated by the trappings of power. The narcissist's grandiose self-delusions and fantasies of omnipotence and omniscience are supported by real life authority and the narcissist's predilection to surround himself with obsequious sycophants.

The narcissist's personality is so precariously balanced that he cannot tolerate even a hint of criticism and disagreement. Most narcissists are paranoid and suffer from ideas of reference (the delusion that they are being mocked or discussed when they are not). Thus, narcissists often regard themselves as "victims of persecution".

The narcissistic leader fosters and encourages a personality cult with all the hallmarks of an institutional religion: priesthood, rites, rituals, temples, worship, catechism, mythology. The leader is this religion's ascetic saint. He monastically denies himself earthly pleasures (or so he claims) in order to be able to dedicate himself fully to his calling.

The narcissistic leader is a monstrously inverted Jesus, sacrificing his life and denying himself so that his people - or humanity at large - should benefit. By surpassing and suppressing his humanity, the narcissistic leader became a distorted version of Nietzsche's "superman".

But being a-human or super-human also means being a-sexual and a-moral.

In this restricted sense, narcissistic leaders are post-modernist and moral relativists. They project to the

masses an androgynous figure and enhance it by engendering the adoration of nudity and all things "natural" - or by strongly repressing these feelings. But what they refer to as "nature" is not natural at all.

The narcissistic leader invariably proffers an aesthetic of decadence and evil carefully orchestrated and artificial - though it is not perceived this way by him or by his followers. Narcissistic leadership is about reproduced copies, not about originals. It is about the manipulation of symbols - not about veritable atavism or true conservatism.

In short: narcissistic leadership is about theatre, not about life. To enjoy the spectacle (and be subsumed by it), the leader demands the suspension of judgment, depersonalization, and de-realization. Catharsis is tantamount, in this narcissistic dramaturgy, to self-annulment.

Narcissism is nihilistic not only operationally, or ideologically. Its very language and narratives are nihilistic. Narcissism is conspicuous nihilism - and the cult's leader serves as a role model, annihilating the Man, only to re-appear as a pre-ordained and irresistible force of nature.

Narcissistic leadership often poses as a rebellion against the "old ways" - against the hegemonic culture, the upper classes, the established religions, the superpowers, the corrupt order. Narcissistic movements are puerile, a reaction to narcissistic injuries inflicted upon a narcissistic (and rather psychopathic) toddler nation-state, or group, or upon the leader.

Minorities or "others" - often arbitrarily selected - constitute a perfect, easily identifiable, embodiment of all that is "wrong". They are accused of being old, they are eerily disembodied, they are cosmopolitan, they are part of the establishment, they are "decadent", they are hated on religious and socio-economic grounds, or because of their race, sexual orientation, origin ... They are different, they are narcissistic (feel and act as morally superior), they are everywhere, they are defenceless, they are credulous, they are adaptable (and thus can be co-opted to collaborate in their own destruction). They are the perfect hate figure. Narcissists thrive on hatred and pathological envy.

This is precisely the source of the fascination with Hitler, diagnosed by Erich Fromm - together with Stalin - as a malignant narcissist. He was an inverted human. His unconscious was his conscious. He acted out our most repressed drives, fantasies, and wishes. He provides us with a glimpse of the horrors that lie beneath the veneer, the barbarians at our personal gates, and what it was like before we invented civilization. Hitler forced us all through a time warp and many did not emerge. He was not the devil. He was one of us. He was what Arendt aptly called the banality of evil. Just an ordinary, mentally disturbed, failure, a member of a mentally disturbed and failing nation, who lived through disturbed and failing times. He was the perfect mirror, a channel, a voice, and the very depth of our souls.

The narcissistic leader prefers the sparkle and glamour of well-orchestrated illusions to the tedium and method of real accomplishments. His reign is all smoke and mirrors, devoid of substances, consisting of mere appearances and mass delusions. In the aftermath of his

regime - the narcissistic leader having died, been deposed, or voted out of office - it all unravels. The tireless and constant prestidigitation ceases and the entire edifice crumbles. What looked like an economic miracle turns out to have been a fraud-laced bubble. Loosely-held empires disintegrate. Laboriously assembled business conglomerates go to pieces. "Earth shattering" and "revolutionary" scientific discoveries and theories are discredited. Social experiments end in mayhem.

It is important to understand that the use of violence must be ego-syntonic. It must accord with the self-image of the narcissist. It must abet and sustain his grandiose fantasies and feed his sense of entitlement. It must conform with the narcissistic narrative.

Thus, a narcissist who regards himself as the benefactor of the poor, a member of the common folk, the representative of the disenfranchised, the champion of the dispossessed against the corrupt elite - is highly unlikely to use violence at first.

The pacific mask crumbles when the narcissist has become convinced that the very people he purported to speak for, his constituency, his grassroots fans, the prime sources of his narcissistic supply - have turned against him. At first, in a desperate effort to maintain the fiction underlying his chaotic personality, the narcissist strives to explain away the sudden reversal of sentiment. "The people are being duped by (the media, big industry, the military, the elite, etc.)", "they don't really know what they are doing", "following a rude awakening, they will revert to form", etc.

When these flimsy attempts to patch a tattered personal mythology fail - the narcissist is injured. Narcissistic injury inevitably leads to narcissistic rage and to a terrifying display of unbridled aggression. The pent-up frustration and hurt translate into devaluation. That which was previously idealized - is now discarded with contempt and hatred.

This primitive defense mechanism is called "splitting". To the narcissist, things and people are either entirely bad (evil) or entirely good. He projects onto others his own shortcomings and negative emotions, thus becoming a totally good object. A narcissistic leader is likely to justify the butchering of his own people by claiming that they intended to kill him, undo the revolution, devastate the economy, or the country, etc.

The "small people", the "rank and file", the "loyal soldiers" of the narcissist - his flock, his nation, his employees - they pay the price. The disillusionment and disenchantment are agonizing. The process of reconstruction, of rising from the ashes, of overcoming the trauma of having been deceived, exploited and manipulated - is drawn-out. It is difficult to trust again, to have faith, to love, to be led, to collaborate. Feelings of shame and guilt engulf the erstwhile followers of the narcissist. This is his sole legacy: a massive post-traumatic stress disorder.

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The Donald Trump Revolution

Donald Trump: A Narcissist?

Q: Psychiatrists are generally precluded from publicly discussing their opinions or findings concerning individuals' mental illness. But Dr. Vaknin, your expertise comes by over twenty years of focused study of Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) free of such inhibition. You have related grave concerns about one of our Republican presidential candidates, Donald Trump. I think anyone might relate narcissism with Trump as a fairly obvious and perhaps innocuous trait. But you mean something else.

A: I do. I was the first to introduce pathological narcissism into the terms of the political debate with my July 2008 essay where I suggested that [Obama may be a narcissist](#). But Obama is intelligent and prosocial. Trump is neither. I regard him as much more of a menace than Obama ever was to the future of the USA and, by extension, the world. I am shocked that - despite an increasing awareness of the dangers of narcissism in the media and in the public - Trump is still making any headway in this election cycle.

Q. What is Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) as a mental illness and how "malignant," as your book's title states, is it?

A. The latest, fifth, edition (2013) of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) - the classificatory bible of psychology in North America - has done an excellent job of revamping the definition of NPD by introducing a dimensional description of the disorder. But, the diagnostic criteria from the previous, fourth, edition of the DSM are more accessible to laymen. So, here they are, updated with the latest knowledge we have about this pernicious disorder. You can easily see Trump writ large in each and every one of the [nine criteria](#).

The narcissist ...

- Feels grandiose and self-important (e.g., exaggerates accomplishments, talents, *skills, contacts, and personality traits to the point of lying, demands* to be recognised as superior without commensurate achievements);
- Is *obsessed* with fantasies of unlimited success, *fame, fearsome* power or *omnipotence, unequalled* brilliance (*the cerebral narcissist*), *bodily* beauty or *sexual performance* (*the somatic narcissist*), or ideal, *everlasting, all-conquering* love or *passion*;
- Firmly convinced that he or she is unique and, being special, can only be understood by, *should*

only be treated by, or associate with, other special or unique, or high-status people (or institutions);

- Requires excessive admiration, *adulation, attention and affirmation – or, failing that, wishes to be feared and to be notorious (Narcissistic Supply)*;
- Feels entitled. *Demands automatic and full compliance* with his or her unreasonable expectations for special and *favourable priority* treatment;
- Is "interpersonally exploitative", i.e., *uses* others to achieve his or her own ends;
- *Devoid* of empathy. Is *unable* or unwilling to identify with, *acknowledge, or accept* the feelings, needs, *preferences, priorities, and choices* of others;
- Constantly envious of others *and seeks to hurt or destroy the objects of his or her frustration. Suffers from persecutory (paranoid) delusions as he or she* believes that they feel the same about him or her *and are likely to act similarly*;
- Behaves arrogantly and haughtily. *Feels superior, omnipotent, omniscient, invincible, immune, "above the law", and omnipresent (magical thinking). Rages when frustrated, contradicted, or confronted* by people he or she considers inferior to him or her and unworthy.

Q. How likely do you believe it is that Donald Trump has NPD? Why do you think so? Can you surmise how far up or down the NPD scale he may be?

A. I have watched 600 hours of video of Trump. Here are my preliminary clinical observations:

Trump [confabulates](#) a lot and has grandiose fantasies, which he has come to believe in, thus partially and intermittently losing touch with reality (delusionally "failing the reality test");

Trump is hypervigilant to the point of paranoia, besieged by conjured enemies and imaginary slights to his person, appearance, or accomplishments. He reacts aggressively and vindictively to such perceived narcissistic injuries and humiliations. His is a siege mentality;

Trump is a compulsive attention-seeker and will go to any extreme to obtain it;

Trump is counterdependent: he abhors authority, rules, traditions, and "The Establishment" and rebels against them vociferously and ostentatiously. He is manifestly defiant, contumacious, and abrasive. He is an avowed and ostentatious iconoclast;

Trump talks about himself in the third person ("Trump will do this") and often uses the royal "we" to refer to himself. His first person pronoun density (the number of

times he uses "I", "me" and "myself" in a conversation or in interviews) is the highest I have ever heard from any politician, Obama included;

Trump places a premium on appearances rather than on substance. He judges people by their looks and attire, especially women who he tends to patronize and even disdain (although he is not a misogynist, merely a chauvinist);

Trump is highly somatic and hypochondriac as he emphasizes the way he dresses and refrains from damaging his shrine-like body by consuming substances like alcohol or nicotine. He is self-worshipping and painfully self-conscious;

Trump is disproportionately aggressive, hypersensitive, and defensive, faking superiority which, in all probability is compensatory: it masks a deep and unsettling sense of inferiority and extreme awareness of and an agonizing dependence upon what other people think of him ("thin skin");

Trump lacks empathy and clearly enjoys embarrassing and hurting other people gratuitously. Such antisocial bullying misconduct makes him feel (and, in his mind, actually renders him) all-powerful and God-like ("omnipotent"). He seems to regard himself as an intellectual and entrepreneurial Gulliver, trapped among contemptuous, pusillanimous, and retarded Lilliputians who he despises;

Trump has an inordinately developed "cold empathy": the kind of an "x-ray vision" that allows him to immediately spot the vulnerabilities, weaknesses, and chinks in the armor of his interlocutors, adversaries, partners, and enemies and to leverage this knowledge to his benefit by penetrating their defenses, taunting, and tormenting them, often with aggressive and cruel "humor". This capacity for instant penetration allows him to resonate powerfully and intimately with the hidden hopes, dreams, fantasies, delusions, and negative emotions (rage, hatred, fear) of his "constituencies". He is a consummate predator.

To my mind, Trump is the most perfect example I have ever come across of a malignant and, probably, psychopathic narcissist. Of course, he cannot be fully and assuredly diagnosed this way. Only a qualified mental health diagnostician can determine whether someone suffers from Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) and this, following lengthy tests and personal interviews. But the overwhelming preponderance of presenting signs and symptoms and visual and textual evidence for tentative profiling is definitely there.

Q. Mr. Trump has recently threatened two other wealthy men with reprisals for behavior that he relates as being against him: Tom Ricketts (also, Ricketts' family) allegedly for "secretly" spending money against him and possibly his political ambitions, also Jeff Bezos, whose Washington Post has editorialized against his presidential candidacy. He has also threatened to sue Ted Cruz for his ad

about Trump's varying positions on abortion. Is such behavior likely to be a trait of NPD? Also, one doesn't usually associate narcissism with violence, but Trump has apparently come out for ordering our military or intelligence personnel to murder the families of terrorist combatants, also to torture terrorists (or suspected terrorists or collaborators) in ways "much worse than waterboarding." These are war crimes. Does this suggest problems in his make-up beyond NPD?

A. All narcissists [lack emotional empathy](#) and are, to some extent, anti-social. [Many narcissists are somewhat psychopathic](#) and, therefore, [sadistically](#) prone to [violence](#). They get a high and derive an almost sexual gratification from wielding power and inflicting pain and humiliation on others. It sustains their grandiose fantasy of omnipotence (that they are Godlike, all-powerful). That's why many narcissists are litigious, threaten "their enemies" incessantly, seek to embarrass and humiliate them in public, stalk them, and harass them recurrently. Narcissists have a black and white view of the world: if you are not 100% with me, you are 110% the enemy (this is known as "splitting" in the psychological jargon). Trump strikes me as this type of narcissist.

Q. Is it your considered opinion that Donald Trump would represent a significant danger were he to become president of the United States of America and if so, how?

A. You just have to look at Trump's business history to extrapolate America's future under a President Trump. Narcissists are [unstable](#) and go through repeated cycles of [self-destruction](#) (with other people usually paying the heft of the price). Narcissists tend to be divisive, vindictive, confrontational, aggressive, hate-filled, raging, incoherent, judgement-impaired, and irrational. Narcissists are junkies: they are addicted to attention ("[Narcissistic Supply](#)") and will go to any extreme to secure it. Narcissists are liars, confabulators, and miserable failures (although some of them, like Trump, are geniuses at disguising the fact that they are, in fact, losers). Is this the kind of person you want in the White House?

The Trump Revolution

Trump's supporters and fans are frustrated. In 1939, a team of psychologists, led by John Dollard, hypothesized that frustration always leads to aggression. Legitimate grievances against a dysfunctional, corrupt, and compromised polity, a deceptive ethos, an American Dream turned nightmare, a broken system that no longer works for the overwhelming majority and appears to be unfixable lead Trump's base to feel that they had been betrayed, abandoned, duped, exploited, abused, ignored, disenfranchised, and trampled upon. They are in the throes of dislocation, disorientation, and trauma. Their declining fortunes and obsolete skills render them insignificant and irrelevant, and their lives

meaningless. It is hopelessness coupled with impotent helplessness.

Trump's adulators seek to bypass the system and even to dismantle it altogether – not to reform it. This is the stuff revolutions are made of and the pronouncements of Trump's cohorts are inadvertently copy-pasted from the texts of the French Revolution, The October Revolution (which led to Bolshevism), and even the Nazi Revolution.

Such conditions often give rise to [cults, centered around a narcissistic or psychopathic leader-figurehead](#). In Trump's case, the abyss between his life's circumstances and his followers's is unbridgeable and yet, they hope that by associating with him, however remotely, some of his glamour and magical, fairytale success will rub off on them. Voting for Trump is like winning the lottery, becoming a part of a juggernaut and of history. It is an intoxicating sensation of empowerment that Trump encourages by telling his voters that they are no longer “average”, they are now, by virtue of following him, “great” and “special”, even if only by proxy.

Trump idealizes his voters and they return the favor. In their eyes, he is the Cleanser of the Beltway's Augean Stables. He, singlehandedly, “in 10 minutes”, will destroy the ancient regime, the old order (of which he had been a part since age 21), settle scores, “Dirty Harry” style, and, thus, make their day. It is a nihilistic mindset. Some of his followers gleefully contemplate

the suspension of the Constitution and its elaborate check and balances. Others compare him to the first Roman Emperors. They wish to unburden themselves by transferring their decision-making and responsibilities onto The Chosen One.

To his acolytes – and contrary to much evidence – Trump is a “doer”, with a long list of (mostly illusory) accomplishments. He is best equipped to get things done and to prioritize. In Washington, where appearances matter far more than substance, no one is better credentialed than The Donald, they smirk. These champions of small government and Conservatism look to Trump-when-President (in other words: to the State!) to generate jobs, to insulate them from the outside world, to protect them from illegal aliens and terrorists (surely one and the same), and, in general, to nanny and cosset them all the way to the bank. The world is a hostile, psychopathic place and who best to deal with it than an even more hostile, narcissistic leader like Trump? We need a bad, big wolf to navigate through the jungle out there. This is a form of collective regression to toddlerhood with Trump in the role of the omnipotent, omniscient Father.

In abnormal psychology this is called “shared psychosis”. The members of the cult deploy a host of primitive (infantile) psychological defense mechanisms as they gradually dwindle into mere extensions and reflections of their skipper. Theirs is a [malignant optimism](#), grounded not in reality, but in idealization: the tendency to interact not with Trump himself, but

with an imaginary “Trump” that each fan tailors to suit his or her fears, hopes, wishes, and fervent fantasies.

Then there is denial: a pathological response, the repression of inconvenient truths about Trump and their relegation to the unconscious were they fester into something called “dissonance”. Dissonance breeds rage and violence and these oft accompany nihilistic and destructive political cults. Denial goes well with splitting: the demonization and denigration of opponents and adversaries, critics, and bystanders. “If you are not 100% with us, you are 1000% against us and if you are against us, you are the enemy to be sucker-punched and carried out on a stretcher.”

But by far the strongest psychological defense mechanism is fantasy. When reality becomes unbearable, fantasy, however improbable and implausible, is a welcome refuge. This is Trump’s forte: the promulgation and dissemination of fantasies customized to resonate irresistibly with the weaknesses, fears, disenchantments, and disillusionment of his hapless hoplites.

One such fantasy Trump actively encourages is that he is just acting to the crowds now. His below-the-belt obnoxiousness is just for show. In a feat of rationalization worthy of Houdini, Trump’s legions attribute his crass boorishness to “market research” and reasoned electoral calculus. Once elected, he will miraculously be transformed into a “presidential” and dignified politician who plays by the rules and is by no

means buffoonish, vulgar, and offensive, they insist with a knowing wink, as though they have ever truly been in-the-know, pals with the Great Man Himself. Such intimations of arcane knowledge cater to their growing sense of self-importance. Indeed, Trump's may well be the first post-modern narcissistic mass movement.

Such admirable thespian skills attributed to Trump (and proudly owned by him) require the inbred personality of a consummate and thoroughly [psychopathic con-artist](#). Narcissists effect these transitions effortlessly precisely because they only have a [False Self](#) (a confabulated grandiose image that they project) whose sole aim is to garner [narcissistic supply](#): attention and, if possible, unmitigated adulation and admiration. Faking it is second nature to the narcissist: exaggerating, lying, pretending, shapeshifting, Zelig-like. Whatever it takes.

Another fantasy is that the narcissist will never turn against his own people. Trump will mercilessly crush the coterie of corrupt power brokers in Washington – but will never ever direct the full might of his gratuitous sadism against his followers, fans, ardent supporters, and fawning admirers. History, of course, teaches otherwise. Sooner or later, the [narcissist cannibalizes his own power base and treats as enemies his most rabid lackeys and toadies](#).

Peopled shrug and say: “but ain’t all politicians narcissists?” The answer is a resounding: no. Granted, it would be safe to assume that most politicians have

narcissistic traits. But, as the great psychologist Theodore Millon observed, there is a world of difference between being possessed of a narcissistic style and being a full-fledged, malignant narcissist. The famous author Scott Peck suggested that “narcissism” may just be a modern fancy byword for “evil”. He may have had a point. But, evil should be contained, not elevated to the position of Leader of the Free World.

Will Trump Quit the Race?

Even his most ardent foes agree that Trump is not stupid and that he is a relentless fighter. Based on what flimsy evidence? His own repeated and vociferous reassurances, of course. Yet, when we apply the cold instruments of psychology to both boasts, they appear to be decidedly shaky.

I will dispense with his claim that he is intelligent by referring the reader to the incredible transcripts of his recent interviews with the New York Times and the Washington Post. As he emerges from these painful exchanges, he makes Sarah Palin look like a towering intellect by comparison. Scoring well in all manner of IQ tests requires an endowed vocabulary, an awareness and knowledge of current affairs (which indicates curiosity, a pillar and hallmark of intelligence), and analytic skills. Trump demonstrates not a hint of these three.

His second attempt at self-portrayal as a dauntless warrior merits much deeper study.

Start with the facts: Trump is a quintessential quitter. He had quitted marriages, business deals, enterprises, and campaigns. When things get rough, he reflexively abandons ship. He is labile, desultorily hopping from one harebrained scheme to another, one romantic union to its successor, one burst of self-promotion to a spectacular, implosive feat of self-destruction. Indeed, this is his brand: a feckless, reckless, daring, unpredictable, vicissitudinal Trump with a capital T.

Trump is taking a lot of flak, heat, criticism, and mockery from his reference group: the people whose opinions he values, whose club he wants to join, to whom he wishes fervently to belong, and by whom he dreams to be finally and unconditionally accepted and respected. I am not talking about his mindless supporters and fans whose dreary lives he probably abhors and whose unthinking loyalty inspires in him only profound contempt. No, he aspires to be counted among the very people that he constantly denigrates, belittles, and humiliates: eggheads, pundits, accredited public intellectuals, analysts, the elites, his father. Indeed, their rejection of him is the trigger for his unbridled wrath. Hell hath no fury like a narcissist scorned.

Trump feels entitled to be admired, adulated, specially and exceptionally treated, and revered (he compulsively seeks “[narcissistic supply](#)”). Instead, he is mocked and insulted (he garners “negative supply”). These massive and recurrent narcissistic injuries may well be enough to put him off and, thus, derail his quest for the

nomination. Faced with [deficient narcissistic supply](#) in their chosen Pathological Narcissistic Space (their stomping grounds, their “kingdom”), narcissists disengage and move on as swiftly and as decisively as circumstances permit. Trump is no exception. But he is so invested in his grandiosely fantastic self-image, that he is likely to go through decompensation and acting out.

What are these?

In extremis, when all the narcissist’s default behaviors, charm, stratagems, and solutions fail, or when only negative, fake, low-grade, and static narcissistic supply is to be had, the narcissist “falls apart” in a process of disintegration known as decompensation (the inability to maintain [psychological defenses](#) in the face of mounting stress.) This is accompanied by “[acting out](#)”: when an inner conflict (most often, frustration) translates into aggression. It involves acting with little or no insight or reflection and in order to attract attention and disrupt other people's cosy lives.

The dynamic forces which render the narcissist paralysed and fake – his vulnerabilities, weaknesses, and fears – are starkly exposed as his defences crumble and become dysfunctional. The narcissist's extreme dependence on his social milieu for the regulation of his sense of self-worth is painfully and pitifully evident as he is reduced to begging, threatening, and cajoling.

At such times, the narcissist acts out [self-destructively](#) and anti-socially. His mask of superior equanimity is pierced by displays of impotent rage, self-loathing, self-pity, passive-aggressiveness, and crass attempts at manipulation of his friends, family, and colleagues – or the public comprised of his disaffected and outraged acolytes. His ostensible benevolence and caring evaporate. He feels caged and threatened and he reacts as any animal would do: by striking back at his perceived tormentors as well as at his hitherto "nearest" and "dearest".

But, if Trump is, as I suggested, a malignant narcissist, how could he possibly justify withdrawing from the race at this late stage, having promised so much to so many? Isn't he emotionally invested in winning?

Narcissists rationalize their actions. Rationalization is a psychological defense mechanism. It is intended to cast one's behavior after the fact in a favorable light. To justify and explain one's conduct or, more often, misconduct by resorting to "rational, logical, socially-acceptable" explications and excuses. Rationalization is also used to re-establish ego-syntony (inner peace and self-acceptance).

Cognitive dissonance – the state of having simultaneous and equipotent but inconsistent thoughts, beliefs, or attitudes - usually provokes rationalization. It involves speech acts which amount to the devaluation of things and people very much desired or perceived positively but frustratingly out of one's reach and control or

socially deemed unacceptable. In a famous fable, a fox, unable to snag the luscious grapes he covets, says: "these grapes are probably sour anyhow!" This is an example of cognitive dissonance in action.

Trump is likely to use three lines of defensive reasoning:

- (1) They don't deserve me. I am much ahead of my time, perspicacious, and sage. People are just not ready for me. History will vindicate me; and/or
- (2) I am quitting the race in order to protect my family and heal the wounds of the nation; and/or
- (3) I have proved what I wanted to prove (whatever that may be). No need for me to continue to waste my time and resources. I have better things to do.

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Jesus Christ, narcissist

Note:

Though most of the quotes in this essay are from the Gospel of Saint Matthew, I was careful to compare them with the texts of the other three canonical gospels. Where the gospels disagree, I avoided using the quote altogether.

Illegitimate and adopted children, especially of humble origins, often develop narcissistic defenses to fend off persistent feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. Admittedly, it is highly unlikely that Jesus was an illegitimate child. Adulteresses in ancient Judea were stoned to death. But, equally, there is little doubt that the circumstances of Jesus's birth were shrouded in mystery. His mother, Mary, got herself pregnant but not by having sexual intercourse with her lawfully-wedded husband, Joseph.

Early on, Jesus developed magical thinking, compensatory grandiose delusions, and fantasies of [omnipotence](#) and omniscience. A firstborn, he was [much pampered](#) by his [doting mother](#). He was a [prodigy](#), a Wunderkind: highly intelligent and inquisitive and more comfortable in the company of adults than with his peers.

When he was a mere 12 years old:

"(T)hey found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions." (Luke 2:46)

Even at this tender age, he showed a marked lack of empathy and a full-fledged case of [pathological grandiosity](#):

"His mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" ("My Father" being God - SV). (Luke 2:48-49)

[Gurus](#) at the center of emergent [cults](#) are inevitably narcissistic, if not [outright narcissists](#). The self-imputation of superiority, epiphanic knowledge, and infallibility and the assumption that others need and crave the guru's message are at the heart of an elaborate construct which often borders on the [psychotic](#):

"... (T)he people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." (Matthew 7:28-29)

Referring to his 12 disciples, Jesus made clear that:
"The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord." (Matthew 10:24)

"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (Matthew 10:37-39)

Here is how Jesus, the lowly, unmarried, and itinerant son of a carpenter - an abysmal failure by the standards of his society - viewed himself:

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats ... And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
(Matthew 25:31-32 and 25:46)

"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" ***(Matthew 26:53)***

Contrary to his much-cultivated image, Jesus, like the vast majority of cult leaders, lacked [empathy](#) and was a heartless and irresponsible manipulator whose magical thinking ruined the lives of many. He instructed his followers to commit acts that must have had harshly adverse impacts on their hitherto nearest and dearest. Jesus monopolized the lives of his disciples to the exclusion of all else and all others:

"For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."
(Matthew 10:35-36)

"Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who

is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!" (Matthew 12:47-48)

"And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him." (Matthew 4:18-22)

Consider the disastrous effects their actions had had on their fathers and their families, now left to starve. To Jesus, evidently, these were irrelevant considerations.

Jesus healed only those who visibly, volubly, clearly, publicly and repeatedly worshipped him. In other words, he extended his gift only to his [sources of narcissistic supply](#). There are numerous instances in the four canonical gospels where Jesus actually bargains with the afflicted and demands - sometimes in anger - their unconditional adoration. He is happiest when acknowledged and affirmed as Christ, the Son of Man (son of God). Those who do not recognize his splendid grandeur, unbounded might, and implied divinity are "dogs" and "swine" (***Matthew 7:6***)

His much-touted love of the poor was not a match for his malignant self-love. When his disciples upbraided a woman for anointing Jesus with expensive ointment because the money could have been better used to help the poor, the great humanist, Jesus, had this to say:

"Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always." (Matthew 26:10-11)

The principles espoused by Jesus were malleable and easily bent. He professed to minister only to the Hebrews (Sons of Israel) and steadfastly refused to heal the Gentiles whom he called "dogs". When a woman of Canaan beseeched him to cast the devil out of her daughter ("Have mercy on me!"), he retorted, shockingly:

"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel ... It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." (Matthew 15:24-26)

But he soon forgot and retracted this lofty "principle" when she adulated him:

"Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." (Matthew 15:28)

Similarly, he cured the servant of a Roman centurion after his master catered to Jesus's by-now rampant megalomania:

"When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour." (Matthew 8:10 and 8:13)

Jesus's initial [false modesty](#) soon gave way to bragging and outlandish, often [confabulatory](#) claims.

Whenever he affected a miracle - such as restoring eyesight to the blind, cleansing lepers, reviving the crippled, and raising the ostensibly dead - Jesus beseeched them to keep mum about the events. One of many examples:

"And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it." (Matthew 9:30)

But Jesus was not averse to blatant self-promotion when his false modesty failed to elicit [narcissistic supply](#):

"Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." (Matthew 11:2)

"I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple ... For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day ... behold, a greater than (the prophet) Jonas is here ... behold, a greater than (King) Solomon is here." (Matthew 12)

As a true narcissist, Jesus reprimanded others for his own brand of behavior. This [psychological defense mechanism](#) is called "[projection](#)".

This is how he described the Pharisees, the scribes, and the Sadducees (and, inadvertently, himself and his own conduct):

"(T)hey say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi." (Matthew 23:1-6)

Narcissists are disruptive, [counter-dependent](#), combative, and [resent authority](#) (rebellious and contumacious). They feel that they are [above the law](#), or, rather, that they are a law unto themselves. They hold themselves to be [immune](#) to the consequences of their actions:

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." (Matthew 10:34)

"And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer;

but ye have made it a den of thieves." (Matthew 21:12-13)

Narcissists are ill-disposed towards [disagreement and criticism](#). They react to the slightest hint of either with [narcissistic rage](#) and fury that knows no bounds and no mercy:

"And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee." (Matthew 11:23-24)

"He that is not with me is against me" (Matthew 12:30)

"For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matthew 23:39)

Narcissists react particularly badly when their concocted personal myth, their [False Self](#), is directly and effectively challenged and they are consequently discredited and [humiliated](#) in public:

"And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?"

Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." (Matthew 13:54-58)

Ultimately, the narcissist pays the price for [years of ill-treating others](#) and [sucking their energies dry](#) with constant demands for attention, adulation, and affirmation. People get tired of the overbearing and overweening presence of the narcissist in their lives, of his disruptive and destabilizing influence, and of the pernicious effects he has on their nearest, dearest, and communities. Invariably, they seek to banish him and extricate themselves from his cult. The authorities usually are forced to intervene and lock the narcissist up or, worse, crucify him.

Even his closest followers, supporters, and disciples give up on the narcissist:

"Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled." (Matthew 26:56)

"Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?" (Matthew 26:67-68)

"Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." (Peter, indeed, denying knowing Jesus thrice - SV) (Matthew 26:75)

And the fickle "multitude" (the common folk), who were supposed to be the mainstay of Jesus's power and [popularity](#), betrayed him gleefully and with a clear sense of relief and good riddance:

"Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas ... They all say unto him, Let him be crucified ... they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified ... Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children ... And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth." (Matthew 27)

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Hitler - The Inverted Saint

"My feeling as a Christian points me to my Lord and Savior as a fighter. It points me to the man who once in loneliness, surrounded only by a few followers, recognized these Jews for what they were and summoned men to fight against them and who, God's truth! was greatest not as a sufferer but as a fighter.

In boundless love as a Christian and as a man I read through the passage which tells us how the Lord at last rose in His might and seized the scourge to drive out of the Temple the brood of vipers and adders. How terrific was his fight against the Jewish poison.

Today, after two thousand years, with deepest emotion I recognize more profoundly than ever before the fact that it was for this that He had to shed his blood upon the Cross.

As a Christian I have no duty to allow myself to be cheated, but I have the duty to be a fighter for truth and justice . . .

And if there is anything which could demonstrate that we are acting rightly, it is the distress that daily grows. For as a Christian I have also a duty to my own people. And when I look on my people I see them work and work and toil and labor, and at the end of the week they have only for their wages wretchedness and misery.

When I go out in the morning and see these men standing in their queues and look into their pinched faces, then I believe I would be no Christian, but a very devil, if I felt no pity for them, if I did not, as did our Lord two thousand years ago, turn against those by whom today this poor people are plundered and exploited."

(Source: The Straight Dope - Speech by Adolf Hitler, delivered April 12, 1922, published in "My New Order," and quoted in Freethought Today (April 1990)

Hitler and Nazism are often portrayed as an apocalyptic and seismic break with European history. Yet the truth is that they were the culmination and reification of European (and American) history in the 19th century. Europe's (and the United States') annals of colonialism have prepared it for the range of phenomena associated with the Nazi regime - from industrial murder to racial theories, from slave labour to the forcible annexation of territory.

Germany was a colonial power no different to murderous Belgium or Britain or the United States. What set it apart is that it directed its colonial attentions at the heartland of Europe - rather than at Africa or Asia or Latin and Central America. Both World Wars were colonial wars fought on European soil.

Moreover, Nazi Germany innovated by applying prevailing racial theories (usually reserved to non-whites) to the white race itself. It started with the Jews - a non-controversial proposition - but then expanded them to include "east European" whites, such as the Poles and the Russians.

Germany was not alone in its malignant nationalism. The far right in France was as pernicious. Nazism - and Fascism - were world ideologies, adopted enthusiastically in places as diverse as Iraq, Egypt, Norway, Latin America, and Britain. At the end of the 1930's, liberal capitalism, communism, and fascism (and its mutations) were locked in mortal battle of ideologies. Hitler's mistake was to delusionally believe in the affinity between capitalism and Nazism - an affinity enhanced, to his mind, by Germany's

corporatism and by the existence of a common enemy: global communism.

Colonialism always had discernible religious overtones and often collaborated with missionary religion. "The White Man's burden" of civilizing the "savages" was widely perceived as ordained by God. The church was the extension of the colonial power's army and trading companies.

It is no wonder that Hitler's Lebensraum colonial movement - Nazism - possessed all the hallmarks of an institutional religion: priesthood, rites, rituals, temples, worship, catechism, mythology. Hitler was this religion's ascetic saint. He monastically denied himself earthly pleasures (or so he claimed) in order to be able to dedicate himself fully to his calling. Hitler was a monstrously inverted Jesus, sacrificing his life and denying himself so that (Aryan) humanity should benefit. By surpassing and suppressing his humanity, Hitler became a distorted version of [Nietzsche's "superman"](#).

But being a-human or super-human also means being a-sexual and a-moral. In this restricted sense, Hitler was a post-modernist and a moral relativist. He projected to the masses an androgynous figure and enhanced it by fostering the adoration of nudity and all things "natural". But what Nazism referred to as "nature" was not natural at all.

It was an aesthetic of decadence and evil (though it was not perceived this way by the Nazis), carefully orchestrated, and artificial. Nazism was about

reproduced copies, not about originals. It was about the manipulation of symbols - not about veritable atavism.

In short: Nazism was about theatre, not about life. To enjoy the spectacle (and be subsumed by it), Nazism demanded the suspension of judgment, depersonalization, and de-realization. Catharsis was tantamount, in Nazi dramaturgy, to self-annulment. Nazism was nihilistic not only operationally, or ideologically. Its very language and narratives were nihilistic. Nazism was conspicuous nihilism - and Hitler served as a role model, annihilating Hitler the Man, only to re-appear as Hitler the stychia.

What was the role of the Jews in all this?

Nazism posed as a rebellion against the "old ways" - against the hegemonic culture, the upper classes, the established religions, the superpowers, the European order. The Nazis borrowed the Leninist vocabulary and assimilated it effectively. Hitler and the Nazis were an adolescent movement, a reaction to narcissistic injuries inflicted upon a narcissistic (and rather psychopathic) toddler nation-state. Hitler himself was a [malignant narcissist](#), as Fromm correctly noted.

The Jews constituted a perfect, easily identifiable, embodiment of all that was "wrong" with Europe. They were an old nation, they were eerily disembodied (without a territory), they were cosmopolitan, they were part of the establishment, they were "decadent", they were hated on religious and socio-economic grounds (see Goldhagen's "Hitler's Willing Executioners"), they were different, they were narcissistic (felt and acted as morally superior), they were everywhere, they were

defenseless, they were credulous, they were adaptable (and thus could be co-opted to collaborate in their own destruction). They were the perfect hated father figure and parricide was in fashion.

This is precisely the source of the fascination with Hitler. He was an inverted human. His unconscious was his conscious. He acted out our most repressed drives, fantasies, and wishes. He provides us with a glimpse of the horrors that lie beneath the veneer, the barbarians at our personal gates, and what it was like before we invented civilization. Hitler forced us all through a time warp and many did not emerge. He was not the devil. He was one of us. He was what Arendt aptly called the banality of evil. Just an ordinary, mentally disturbed, failure, a member of a mentally disturbed and failing nation, who lived through disturbed and failing times. He was the perfect mirror, a channel, a voice, and the very depth of our souls.

Note - Exclusionary Ideas of Progress

[Communism](#), [Fascism](#), Nazism, and [Religious Fundamentalism](#) are as utopian as the classical [Idea of Progress](#), which is most strongly reified by Western science and liberal democracy. All four illiberal ideologies firmly espouse a linear view of history: Man progresses by accumulating knowledge and wealth and by constructing ever-improving polities. Similarly, the classical, all-encompassing, idea of progress is perceived to be a "Law of Nature" with human jurisprudence and institutions as both its manifestations and descriptions. Thus, all ideas of progress are pseudo-scientific.

Still, there are some important distinctions between Communism, Fascism, Nazism, and Religious Fundamentalism, on the one hand, and Western liberalism, on the other hand:

All four totalitarian ideologies regard individual tragedies and sacrifices as the inevitable lubricant of the inexorable March Forward of the species. Yet, they redefine "humanity" (who is human) to exclude large groups of people. Communism embraces the Working Class (Proletariat) but not the Bourgeoisie, Nazism promotes one Volk but denigrates and annihilates others, Fascism bows to the Collective but viciously persecutes dissidents, Religious Fundamentalism posits a chasm between believers and infidels.

In these four intolerant ideologies, the exclusion of certain reviled groups of people is both a prerequisite for the operation of the "Natural Law of Progress" and an integral part of its motion forward. The moral and spiritual obligation of "real" Man to future generations is to "unburden" the Law, to make it possible for it to operate smoothly and in optimal conditions, with all hindrances (read: undesirables) removed (read: murdered).

All four ideologies subvert modernity (in other words, Progress itself) by using its products (technology) to exclude and kill "outsiders", all in the name of servicing "real" humanity and bettering its lot.

But liberal democracy has been intermittently guilty of the same sin. The same deranged logic extends to the construction and maintenance of nuclear weapons by countries like the USA, the UK, France, and Israel: they

are intended to protect "good" humanity against "bad" people (e.g., Communists during the Cold war, Arabs, or failed states such as Iran). Even global warming is a symptom of such exclusionary thinking: the rich feel that they have the right to tax the "lesser" poor by polluting our common planet and by disproportionately exhausting its resources.

The fact is that, at least since the 1920s, the very existence of Mankind is being recurrently threatened by exclusionary ideas of progress. Even Colonialism, which predated modern ideologies, was inclusive and sought to "improve" the Natives" and "bring them to the White Man's level" by assimilating or incorporating them in the culture and society of the colonial power. This was the celebrated (and then decried) "White Man's Burden". That we no longer accept our common fate and the need to collaborate to improve our lot is nothing short of suicidal.

Also Read:

[*Latent Nazis - Conversation with Young German Intellectuals*](#)

[*Renaissance and Nazism as Ideas of Progress*](#)

[*Fascism - The Tensile Permanence*](#)

[*Narcissistic Leaders*](#)

[*Islam and Liberalism*](#)

[*Democracy and New Colonialism*](#)

[*A Dialog about Anti-Semitism*](#)

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Putin and Russia's Second Empire

History teaches us little except how little we can learn from it. Still, there is nothing new under the sun. Thus, drawing too many parallels between the environmentalist movements of the late 19th century and their counterparts in the second half of the twentieth century - would probably prove misleading. Similarly, every fin de siècle has its Fukuyama, proclaiming the end of history and the victory of liberalism and capitalism.

Liberal parliamentarianism (coupled with unbridled individualistic capitalism) seemed to irreversibly dominate the political landscape by 1890 - when it was suddenly and surprisingly toppled by the confluence of revolutionary authoritarian nationalism and revolutionary authoritarian socialism.

Yet, every ostensibly modern (or post-modern) phenomenon has roots and mirrors in history. The spreading of the occult, materialism, rationalism, positivism, ethnic cleansing, regionalism, municipal autonomy, environmentalism, alienation ("ennui"), information networking, globalization, anti-globalization, mass migration, capital and labour mobility, free trade - are all new mantras but very old phenomena.

Sometimes the parallels are both overwhelming and instructive.

Overview

Karl Marx regarded Louis-Napoleon's Second Empire as the first modern dictatorship - supported by the middle and upper classes but independent of their patronage and, thus, self-perpetuating. Others went as far as calling it proto-fascistic.

Yet, the Second Empire was insufficiently authoritarian or revolutionary to warrant this title. It did foster and encourage a personality cult, akin to the "Führerprinzip" -but it derived its legitimacy, conservatively, from the Church and from the electorate. It was an odd mixture of Bonapartism, militarism, clericalism, conservatism and liberalism.

In a way, the Second Republic did amount to a secular religion, replete with martyrs and apostles. It made use of the nascent mass media to manipulate public opinion. It pursued industrialization and administrative modernization. But these features characterized all the political movements of the late 19th century, including socialism, and other empires, such as the Habsburg Austro-Hungary.

The Second Empire was, above all, inertial. It sought to preserve the bureaucratic, regulatory, and economic frameworks of the First Empire. It was a rationalist, positivist, and materialist movement - despite the deliberate irrationalism of the young Louis-Napoleon. It was not affiliated to a revolutionary party, nor to popular militias. It was not collectivist. And its demise was the outcome of military defeat.

The Second Empire is very reminiscent of Vladimir Putin's reign in post-Yeltsin Russia.

Like the French Second Empire, it follows a period of revolutions and counter-revolutions. It is not identified with any one class but does rely on the support of the middle class, the intelligentsia, the managers and industrialists, the security services, and the military.

Putin is authoritarian, but not revolutionary. His regime derives its legitimacy from parliamentary and presidential elections based on a neo-liberal model of government. It is socially conservative but seeks to modernize Russia's administration and economy. Yet, it manipulates the mass media and encourages a personality cult.

Disparate Youths

Like Napoleon III, Putin started off as president (he was shortly as prime minister under Yeltsin). Like him, he may be undone by a military defeat, probably in the Caucasus or Central Asia.

The formative years of Putin and Louis-Napoleon have little in common, though.

The former was a cosseted member of the establishment and witnessed, first hand, the disintegration of his country. Putin was a KGB apparatchik. The KGB may have inspired, conspired in, or even instigated the transformation in Russian domestic affairs since the early 1980's - but to call it "revolutionary" would be to stretch the term.

Louis-Napoleon, on the other hand, was a true revolutionary. He narrowly escaped death at the hands of Austrian troops in a rebellion in Italy in 1831. His brother was not as lucky. Louis-Napoleon's claim to the throne of France (1832) was based on a half-baked ideology of imperial glory, concocted, disseminated and promoted by him. In 1836 and 1840 he even initiated (failed) coups d'etat. He was expelled even from neutral Switzerland and exiled to the USA. He spent six years in prison.

An Eerie Verisimilitude

Still, like Putin, Napoleon III was elected president. Like him, he was regarded by his political sponsors as merely a useful and disposable instrument. Like Putin, he had no parliamentary or political experience. Both of them won elections by promising "order" and "prosperity" coupled with "social compassion". And, like Putin, Louis-Napoleon, to the great chagrin of his backers, proved to be his own man - independent-minded, determined, and tough.

Putin, like Louis-Napoleon before him, proceeded to expand his powers and installed loyalists in every corner of the administration and the army. Like Louis-Napoleon, Putin is a populist, travelling throughout the country, posing for photo opportunities, responding to citizens' queries in Q-and-A radio shows, siding with the "average bloke" on every occasion, taking advantage of Russia's previous economic and social disintegration to project an image of a "strong man".

Putin is as little dependent on the Duma as Napoleon III was on his parliament. But Putin reaped what Boris

Yeltsin, his predecessor, has sown when he established an imperial presidency after what amounted to a coup d'etat in 1993 (the bombing of the Duma). Napoleon had to organize his own coup d'etat all by himself in 1852.

The Balancing Act

Napoleon III - as does Putin now - faced a delicate balancing act between the legitimacy conferred by parliamentary liberalism and the need to maintain a police state. When he sought to strengthen the enfeebled legislature he reaped only growing opposition within it to his domestic and foreign policies alike.

He liberalized the media and enshrined in France's legal code various civil freedoms. But he also set in motion and sanctioned a penumbral, all-pervasive and clandestine security apparatus which regularly gathered information on millions of Frenchmen and foreigners.

Modernization and Reform

Putin is considerably less of an economic modernizer than was Napoleon III. Putin also seems to be less interested in the social implications of his policies, in poverty alleviation and in growing economic inequalities and social tensions. Napoleon III was a man for all seasons - a buffer against socialism as well as a utopian social and administrative reformer.

Business flourished under Napoleon III - as it does under Putin. The 1850's witnessed rapid technological change - even more rapid than today's. France became a popular destination for foreign investors. Napoleon III was the natural ally of domestic businessmen until he

embarked on an unprecedented trade liberalization campaign in 1860. Similarly, Putin is nudging Russia towards WTO membership and enhanced foreign competition - alienating in the process the tycoon-oligarchs, the industrial complex, and the energy behemoths.

Foreign Policy

Napoleon III was a free trader - as is Putin. He believed in the beneficial economic effects of free markets and in the free exchange of goods, capital, and labour. So does Putin. But economic liberalism does not always translate to a pacific foreign policy.

Napoleon III sought to annul the decisions of the Congress of Vienna (1815) and reverse the trend of post-Napoleonic French humiliation. He wanted to resurrect "Great France" pretty much as Putin wants to restore Russia to its "rightful" place as a superpower.

But both pragmatic leaders realized that this rehabilitation cannot be achieved by force of arms and with a dilapidated economy. Napoleon III tried to co-opt the tidal wave of modern, revolutionary, nationalism to achieve the revitalization of France and the concomitant restoration of its glory. Putin strives to exploit the West's aversion to conflict and addiction to wealth. Napoleon III struggled to establish a new, inclusive European order - as does Putin with NATO and, to a lesser degree, with the European Union today.

Putin artfully manipulated Europe in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the USA, his new found ally. He may yet find himself in the enviable

position of Europe's arbitrator, NATO's most weighty member, a bridge between Central Asia, the Caucasus, North Korea and China - and the USA. The longer his tenure, the more likely he is to become Europe's elder statesman. This is a maneuver reminiscent of Louis-Napoleon's following the Crimean War, when he teamed up with Great Britain against Russia.

Like Putin, Napoleon III modernized and professionalized his army. But, unlike Putin hitherto, he actually went to war (against Austria), moved by his (oft-thwarted) colonial and mercantilist aspirations. Putin is likely to follow the same path (probably in Central Asia, but, possibly, in the Baltic and east Europe as well). Reinvigorated armies (and industrialists) often force expansionary wars upon their reluctant ostensible political masters.

Should Putin fail in his military adventures as Napoleon III did in his and be deposed as he was - these eerie similarities will have come to their natural conclusion.

Also Read:

[*Communism and Feudalism*](#)

[*Russia: Russian Roulette*](#)

[*Lucky Russia*](#)

[*Foreigners and the New Russian Economy*](#)

[*The Janus Look*](#)

[*The False Maps of Maskirovka*](#)

The Tragedy of Errors (Book Review)

The Betrayal of History (Book Review)

Russia's Second Empire

Russian Roulette - The Security Apparatus

Russian Roulette - The Energy Sector

Russian Roulette - The Financial Sector

Russian Roulette - The Russian Devolution

Russian Roulette - Russian Agriculture

Russia as a Creditor

Pinks in Space - The Space Industry

Russia's Vodka Wars

Lukoil's Changing Fortunes

Russia's British Turning Point

Let My People Go - The Jackson-Vanik Controversy

Fimaco Wouldn't Die - Russia's Missing Billions

The Chechen Theatre Ticket

Russia's Israeli Oil Bond

Russia's Idled Spies

Russia's Last Oligarch

Dimitry Goes to Washington

Russia's Middle Class

Russia in 2003

Russia Straddles the Euro-Atlantic Divide

Russia's Stealth Diplomacy

The Axis of Oil

Russian Synergies - YukosSibneft

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Gruevski's Macedonia, Greece, and Alexander the Great

History's Forgotten Madman

The government of Macedonia has recently changed the name of its puny airport to "Alexander the Great". This was only the latest symptom of a growing cult of personality. Modern-day Macedonians, desperately looking for their ancient roots in a region hostile to their nationhood, have latched onto their putative predecessor with a zeal that defies both historical research and the howls of protest from their neighbor, Greece.

In a typical Balkan tit-for-tat, Greece blocked Macedonia's long-sought entry into NATO, citing, among a litany of reasons, the "irredentist provocation" that was the renaming of the airport. Macedonia has designs on a part of Greece, Greek politicians claim with a straight face, and the denizens of this tiny polity have no right to the heritage of Greece of which Alexander the Great is an integral part.

Not to be outdone, Macedonian television is now awash with a lengthy ad depicting the precocious leader berating his pusillanimous and craven commanders ahead of a crucial battle. He speaks fluent Macedonian (the current day, Slav language) and ignores their wise counsel. This pathetic abuse of screen time is supposed to indoctrinate latter-day Macedonians to dare, be decisive, and to face challenges. Alexander the Great would have greatly disliked contemporary Macedonians: they are peace-loving, overly-cautious,

consensual, and compromise-seeking. It seems that their own government finds these laudable qualities equally offensive.

It is beyond me why both Macedonia and Greece wish to make a deranged mass murderer their emblem and progenitor. There is little that is commendable in both Alexander's personality or his exploits. Having shed the blood of countless thousands to fulfill his grandiose fantasies of global conquest, he declared himself a god, suppressed other religions bloodily, massacred the bulk of his loyal staff, and betrayed his countrymen by hiring the former enemy, the Persians, to supplant his Macedonian infantry.

Alexander the Great was clearly insane, even by the cultural standards of his time. According to Diodorus, a month before he mercifully died (or, more likely, was assassinated) his own generals invited Babylonian priests to exorcise the demons that may have possessed him. Plutarch calls him "disturbed". He describes extreme mood swings that today would require medication to quell and control. The authoritative Encyclopedia Britannica attributes to him "megalomania and emotional instability". It says:

"He was swift in anger, and under the strain of his long campaigns this side of his character grew more pronounced. Ruthless and self-willed, he had increasing recourse to terror, showing no hesitation in eliminating men whom he had ceased to trust, either with or without the pretense of a fair trial. Years after his death, Cassander, son of Antipater, a regent of the Macedonian Empire under Alexander, could not pass his statue at Delphi without shuddering."

Alexander was paranoid and brooked no criticism, or disagreement. When Cleitus, his deputy, had a petty argument with him in 328 BC, Alexander simply ran a lance through his trusted general and had the army declare him a traitor and, thus, justify the slaying. The same fate befell Cleitus's unfortunate successors as second in command.

From his early youth, Alexander has been reckless (though fortunate) and unusually bloodthirsty. He used the fortuitous occasion of his father's murder to liquidate anyone who opposed him, even implicitly. He then went on a rampage that alienated and united all the Greeks against him. Even his famed campaign against the Persians owed its success to the latter's precipitous decline rather than merely to Alexander's military genius. Long before he came on the scene, other Greeks (the Ten Thousand, Agesilaus of Sparta) have defeated the Persians decisively. His bloodlust never abated: when his army mutinied in India and forced him to return to Babylon, once there, he executed scores of his satraps, military commanders, and other functionaries.

Alexander was known for his hubris and unmitigated [narcissism](#). Using humiliating language, he twice rejected offers of peace from Darius the Great King of Persia, whose family he held captive. When Parmenio advised him to accept the second offer by saying: "I would accept, if I were Alexander", he retorted: "So would I, were I Parmenio". Parmenio paid for his independence of mind with his life: Alexander later ordered him assassinated and his son executed. He also murdered anyone who had anything to do with the two.

When he tried to impose on his free-spirited troupes the obligation to prostrate themselves in his presence, he was subjected to such ridicule that he reversed his decision. But, he kept on wearing the Persian royal garb and he did execute Calisthenes, an hitherto obsequious historian (and nephew of Aristotle) who wouldn't bow to him. The Spartans held Alexander in derision. They published a decree that read: "Since he (Alexander) wishes to be a god, let him be a god".

Wherever he went, Alexander was escorted by scribes whose job it was to embellish history and manufacture legends about their employer. Consequently, most of what is commonly "known" about Alexander is false. But, even so, numerous accounts of his drunken and violent reveries remain, in which he habitually murdered people and tore down cultural treasures (such as the palace of Xerxes). That Alexander was a prodigious imbiber of wine cannot be denied. Virtually all the eyewitnesses concur: Ptolemy, Alexander's bodyguard; Nearchus, his admiral; Eumenes the scribe, his secretary; Chares, his chamberlain; Aristobulus, his military engineer. So do historians who relied on such accounts: Diodorus, Plutarch, Arrian, and the anonymous author of "Historia Alexandri Magni" (History of Alexander the Great).

One could only fervently hope that the government of Macedonia fails in its campaign to transform its citizens into mini-versions of this monster.

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*Narcissistic
And Psychopathic
Leaders*

Celebrity Narcissists

The Narcissist's Addiction to Fame and Celebrity

Narcissists are addicted to being famous. This, by far, is their predominant drive. Being famous encompasses a few important functions: it endows the narcissist with power, provides him with a constant Source of Narcissistic Supply (admiration, adoration, approval, awe), and fulfils important ego functions.

The image that the narcissist projects is hurled back at him, reflected by those exposed to his celebrity or fame. This way he feels alive, his very existence is affirmed and he acquires a sensation of clear boundaries (where the narcissist ends and the world begins).

There is a set of narcissistic behaviours typical to the pursuit of celebrity. There is almost nothing that the narcissist refrains from doing, almost no borders that he hesitates to cross to achieve renown. To him, there is no such thing as "bad publicity" – what matters is to be in the public eye.

Because the narcissist equally enjoys all types of attention and likes as much to be feared as to be loved, for instance – he doesn't mind if what is published about him is wrong ("As long as they spell my name correctly"). The narcissist's only bad emotional stretches are during periods of lack of attention, publicity, or exposure.

The narcissist then feels empty, hollowed out, negligible, humiliated, wrathful, discriminated against, deprived, neglected, treated unjustly and so on. At first, he tries to obtain attention from ever narrowing groups of reference ("supply scale down"). But the feeling that he is compromising gnaws at his anyhow fragile self-esteem.

Sooner or later, the spring bursts. The narcissist plots, contrives, plans, conspires, thinks, analyses, synthesises and does whatever else is necessary to regain the lost exposure in the public eye. The more he fails to secure the attention of the target group (always the largest) – the more daring, eccentric and outlandish he becomes. Firm decision to become known is transformed into resolute action and then to a panicky pattern of attention seeking behaviours.

The narcissist is not really interested in publicity per se. Narcissists are misleading. The narcissist appears to love himself – and, really, he abhors himself. Similarly, he appears to be interested in becoming a celebrity – and, in reality, he is concerned with the REACTIONS to his fame: people watch him, notice him, talk about him, debate his actions – therefore he exists.

The narcissist goes around "hunting and collecting" the way the expressions on people's faces change when they notice him. He places himself at the centre of attention, or even as a figure of controversy. He constantly and recurrently pesters those nearest and dearest to him in a bid to reassure himself that he is not losing his fame, his magic touch, the attention of his social milieu.

Truly, the narcissist is not choosy. If he can become famous as a writer – he writes, if as a businessman – he conducts business. He switches from one field to the other with ease and without remorse because in all of them he is present without conviction, bar the conviction that he must (and deserves to) get famous.

He grades activities, hobbies and people not according to the pleasure that they give him – but according to their utility: can they or can't they make him known and, if so, to what extent. The narcissist is one-track minded (not to say obsessive). His is a world of black (being unknown and deprived of attention) and white (being famous and celebrated).

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Mistreating Celebrities

An Interview Granted to Superinteressante Magazine in Brazil

Question: Fame and TV shows about celebrities usually have a huge audience. This is understandable: people like to see other successful people. But why people like to see celebrities being humiliated?

Answer: As far as their fans are concerned, celebrities fulfil two emotional functions: they provide a mythical narrative (a story that the fan can follow and identify with) and they function as blank screens onto which the fans project their dreams, hopes, fears, plans, values, and desires (wish fulfilment). The slightest deviation from these prescribed roles provokes enormous rage and makes us want to punish (humiliate) the "deviant" celebrities.

But why?

When the human foibles, vulnerabilities, and frailties of a celebrity are revealed, the fan feels humiliated, "cheated", hopeless, and "empty". To reassert his self-worth, the fan must establish his or her moral superiority over the erring and "sinful" celebrity. The fan must "teach the celebrity a lesson" and show the celebrity "who's boss". It is a primitive defence mechanism – narcissistic grandiosity. It puts the fan on equal footing with the exposed and "naked" celebrity.

Question: This taste for watching a person being humiliated has something to do with the attraction to catastrophes and tragedies?

Answer: There is always a sadistic pleasure and a morbid fascination in vicarious suffering. Being spared the pains and tribulations others go through makes the observer feel "chosen", secure, and virtuous. The higher celebrities rise, the harder they fall. There is something gratifying in hubris defied and punished.

Question: Do you believe the audience put themselves in the place of the reporter (when he asks something embarrassing to a celebrity) and become in some way revenged?

Answer: The reporter "represents" the "bloodthirsty" public. Belittling celebrities or watching their comeuppance is the modern equivalent of the gladiator rink. Gossip used to fulfil the same function and now the mass media broadcast live the slaughtering of fallen gods. There is no question of revenge here – just Schadenfreude, the guilty joy of witnessing your superiors penalised and "cut down to size".

Question: In your country, who are the celebrities people love to hate?

Answer: Israelis like to watch politicians and wealthy businessmen reduced, demeaned, and slighted. In Macedonia, where I live, all famous people, regardless of their vocation, are subject to intense, proactive, and destructive envy. This love-hate relationship with their idols, this ambivalence, is attributed by psychodynamic theories of personal development to the child's emotions towards his parents. Indeed, we transfer and displace many negative emotions we harbour onto celebrities.

Question: I would never dare asking some questions the reporters from Panico ask the celebrities. What are the characteristics of people like these reporters?

Answer: Sadistic, ambitious, narcissistic, lacking empathy, self-righteous, pathologically and destructively envious, with a fluctuating sense of self-worth (possibly an inferiority complex).

Question: Do you believe the actors and reporters want themselves to be as famous as the celebrities they tease? Because I think this is almost happening...

Answer: The line is very thin. Newsmakers and newsmen and women are celebrities merely because they are public figures and regardless of their true accomplishments. A celebrity is famous for being famous. Of course, such journalists will likely to fall prey to up and coming colleagues in an endless and self-perpetuating food chain...

Question: I think that the fan-celebrity relationship gratifies both sides. What are the advantages the fans get and what are the advantages the celebrities get?

Answer: There is an implicit contract between a celebrity and his fans. The celebrity is obliged to "act the part", to fulfil the expectations of his admirers, not to deviate from the roles that they impose and he or she accepts. In return the fans shower the celebrity with adulation. They idolise him or her and make him or her feel omnipotent, immortal, "larger than life", omniscient, superior, and sui generis (unique).

What are the fans getting for their trouble?

Above all, the ability to vicariously share the celebrity's fabulous (and, usually, partly confabulated) existence. The celebrity becomes their "representative"

in fantasyland, their extension and proxy, the reification and embodiment of their deepest desires and most secret and guilty dreams. Many celebrities are also role models or father/mother figures. Celebrities are proof that there is more to life than drab and routine. That beautiful – nay, perfect – people do exist and that they do lead charmed lives. There's hope yet – this is the celebrity's message to his fans.

The celebrity's inevitable downfall and corruption is the modern-day equivalent of the medieval morality play. This trajectory – from rags to riches and fame and back to rags or worse – proves that order and justice do prevail, that hubris invariably gets punished, and that the celebrity is no better, neither is he superior, to his fans.

Question: Why are celebrities narcissists? How is this disorder born?

Answer: No one knows if pathological narcissism is the outcome of inherited traits, the sad result of abusive and traumatising upbringing, or the confluence of both. Often, in the same family, with the same set of parents and an identical emotional environment – some siblings grow to be malignant narcissists, while others are perfectly "normal". Surely, this indicates a genetic predisposition of some people to develop narcissism.

It would seem reasonable to assume – though, at this stage, there is not a shred of proof – that the narcissist is born with a propensity to develop narcissistic defences. These are triggered by abuse or trauma during the formative years in infancy or during early adolescence. By "abuse" I am referring to a spectrum of behaviours which objectify the child and treat it as an extension of

the caregiver (parent) or as a mere instrument of gratification. Dotting and smothering are as abusive as beating and starving. And abuse can be dished out by peers as well as by parents, or by adult role models.

Not all celebrities are narcissists. Still, some of them surely are.

We all search for positive cues from people around us. These cues reinforce in us certain behaviour patterns. There is nothing special in the fact that the narcissist-celebrity does the same. However there are two major differences between the narcissistic and the normal personality.

The first is quantitative. The normal person is likely to welcome a moderate amount of attention – verbal and non-verbal – in the form of affirmation, approval, or admiration. Too much attention, though, is perceived as onerous and is avoided. Destructive and negative criticism is avoided altogether.

The narcissist, in contrast, is the mental equivalent of an alcoholic. He is insatiable. He directs his whole behaviour, in fact his life, to obtain these pleasurable titbits of attention. He embeds them in a coherent, completely biased, picture of himself. He uses them to regulate his labile (fluctuating) sense of self-worth and self-esteem.

To elicit constant interest, the narcissist projects on to others a [confabulated](#), fictitious version of himself, known as the [False Self](#). The False Self is everything the narcissist is not: omniscient, omnipotent, charming, intelligent, rich, or well-connected.

The narcissist then proceeds to harvest reactions to this projected image from family members, friends, co-

workers, neighbours, business partners and from colleagues. If these – the adulation, admiration, attention, fear, respect, applause, affirmation – are not forthcoming, the narcissist demands them, or extorts them. Money, compliments, a favourable critique, an appearance in the media, a sexual conquest are all converted into the same currency in the narcissist's mind, into Narcissistic Supply.

So, the narcissist is not really interested in publicity per se or in being famous. Truly he is concerned with the REACTIONS to his fame: how people watch him, notice him, talk about him, debate his actions. It "proves" to him that he exists.

The narcissist goes around "hunting and collecting" the way the expressions on people's faces change when they notice him. He places himself at the centre of attention, or even as a figure of controversy. He constantly and recurrently pesters those nearest and dearest to him in a bid to reassure himself that he is not losing his fame, his magic touch, the attention of his social milieu.

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Acquired Situational Narcissism

The Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is a systemic, all-pervasive condition, very much like pregnancy: either you have it or you don't. Once you have it, you have it day and night, it is an inseparable part of the personality, a recurrent set of behaviour patterns.

Recent research (1996) by Roningstam and others, however, shows that there is a condition which might be called "Transient or Temporary or Short-Term Narcissism" as opposed to the full-fledged version. Even prior to their discovery, "Reactive Narcissistic Regression" was well known: people regress to a transient narcissistic phase in response to a major life crisis which threatens their mental composure.

Reactive or transient narcissism may also be triggered by medical or organic conditions. Brain injuries, for instance, have been known to induce narcissistic and antisocial traits and behaviours.

But can narcissism be acquired or learned? Can it be provoked by certain, well-defined, situations?

Robert B. Millman, professor of psychiatry at New York Hospital – Cornell Medical School thinks it can. He proposes to reverse the accepted chronology. According to him, pathological narcissism can be induced in adulthood by celebrity, wealth, and fame.

The "victims" – billionaire tycoons, movie stars, renowned authors, politicians, and other authority figures – develop grandiose fantasies, lose their erstwhile ability to empathise, react with rage to slights, both real and imagined and, in general, act like textbook narcissists.

But is the occurrence of Acquired Situational Narcissism (ASN) inevitable and universal – or are only certain people prone to it?

It is likely that ASN is merely an amplification of earlier narcissistic conduct, traits, style, and tendencies. Celebrities with ASN already had a narcissistic personality and have acquired it long before it "erupted". Being famous, powerful, or rich only "legitimised" and conferred immunity from social sanction on the unbridled manifestation of a pre-existing disorder. Indeed, narcissists tend to gravitate to professions and settings which guarantee fame, celebrity, power, and wealth.

As Millman correctly notes, the celebrity's life is abnormal. The adulation is often justified and plentiful, the feedback biased and filtered, the criticism muted and belated, social control either lacking or excessive and vitriolic. Such vicissitudinal existence is not conducive to mental health even in the most balanced person.

The confluence of a person's narcissistic predisposition and his pathological life circumstances gives rise to ASN. Acquired Situational Narcissism borrows elements from both the classic Narcissistic Personality Disorder – ingrained and all-pervasive – and from Transient or Reactive Narcissism.

Celebrities are, therefore, unlikely to "heal" once their fame or wealth or might are gone. Instead, their basic narcissism merely changes form. It continues unabated, as insidious as ever – but modified by life's ups and downs.

In a way, all narcissistic disturbances are acquired. Patients acquire their pathological narcissism from abusive or overbearing parents, from peers, and from role models. Narcissism is a defence mechanism designed to fend off hurt and danger brought on by circumstances – such as celebrity – beyond the person's control.

Social expectations play a role as well. Celebrities try to conform to the stereotype of a creative but spoiled, self-centred, monomaniacal, and emotive individual. A tacit trade takes place. We offer the famous and the powerful all the Narcissistic Supply they crave – and they, in turn, act the consummate, fascinating albeit repulsive, narcissists.

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**Narcissists and God
The Religious Narcissist**

For the Love of God

"1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! 6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8 Now as Jan'nes and Jam'bres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; 9 but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was."

The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy 3:1-9

God is everything the narcissist ever wants to be: omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, admired, much discussed, and awe inspiring. God is the narcissist's wet dream, his ultimate grandiose fantasy. But God comes handy in other ways as well.

The narcissist alternately idealises and devalues figures of authority.

In the idealisation phase, he strives to emulate them, he admires them, imitate them (often ludicrously), and defends them. They cannot go wrong, or be wrong. The narcissist regards them as bigger than life, infallible, perfect, whole, and brilliant. But as the narcissist's

unrealistic and inflated expectations are inevitably frustrated, he begins to devalue his former idols.

Now they are "human" (to the narcissist, a derogatory term). They are small, fragile, error-prone, pusillanimous, mean, dumb, and mediocre. The narcissist goes through the same cycle in his relationship with God, the quintessential authority figure.

But often, even when disillusionment and iconoclastic despair have set in – the narcissist continues to pretend to love God and follow Him. The narcissist maintains this deception because his continued proximity to God confers on him authority. Priests, leaders of the congregation, preachers, evangelists, cultists, politicians, intellectuals – all derive authority from their allegedly privileged relationship with God.

Religious authority allows the narcissist to indulge his sadistic urges and to exercise his misogyny freely and openly. Such a narcissist is likely to taunt and torment his followers, hector and chastise them, humiliate and berate them, abuse them spiritually, or even sexually.

The narcissist whose source of authority is religious is looking for obedient and unquestioning slaves upon whom to exercise his capricious and wicked mastery. The narcissist transforms even the most innocuous and pure religious sentiments into a cultish ritual and a virulent hierarchy. He preys on the gullible. His flock become his hostages.

Religious authority also secures the narcissist's Narcissistic Supply. His coreligionists, members of his congregation, his parish, his constituency, his audience – are transformed into loyal and stable Sources of

Narcissistic Supply. They obey his commands, heed his admonitions, follow his creed, admire his personality, applaud his personal traits, satisfy his needs (sometimes even his carnal desires), revere and idolise him.

Moreover, being a part of a "bigger thing" is very gratifying narcissistically. Being a particle of God, being immersed in His grandeur, experiencing His power and blessings first hand, communing with him – are all Sources of unending Narcissistic Supply. The narcissist becomes God by observing His commandments, following His instructions, loving Him, obeying Him, succumbing to Him, merging with Him, communicating with Him – or even by defying him (the bigger the narcissist's enemy – the more grandiosely important the narcissist feels).

Like everything else in the narcissist's life, he mutates God into a kind of inverted narcissist. God becomes his dominant Source of Supply. He forms a personal relationship with this overwhelming and overpowering entity – in order to overwhelm and overpower others. He becomes God vicariously, by the proxy of his relationship with Him. He idealises God, then devalues Him, then abuses Him. This is the classic narcissistic pattern and even God himself cannot escape it.

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The Narcissist and Social Institutions

The narcissist is prone to magical thinking. He regards himself in terms of "being chosen" or of "being destined for greatness". He believes that he has a "direct line" to God, even, perversely, that God "serves" him in certain junctions and conjunctures of his life, through divine intervention. He believes that his life is of such momentous importance, that it is micro-managed by God. The narcissist likes to play God to his human environment. In short, narcissism and religion go well together, because religion allows the narcissist to feel unique.

This is a private case of a more general phenomenon. The narcissist likes to belong to groups or to frameworks of allegiance. He derives easy and constantly available [Narcissistic Supply](#) from them. Within them and from their members he is certain to garner attention, to gain adulation, to be castigated or praised. His False Self is bound to be reflected by his colleagues, co-members, or fellows.

This is no mean feat and it cannot be guaranteed in other circumstances. Hence the narcissist's fanatic and proud emphasis of his membership. If a military man, he shows off his impressive array of medals, his impeccably pressed uniform, the status symbols of his rank. If a clergyman, he is overly devout and orthodox

and places great emphasis on the proper conduct of rites, rituals and ceremonies.

The narcissist develops a reverse (benign) form of paranoia: he feels constantly watched over by senior members of his group or frame of reference, the subject of permanent (avuncular) criticism, the centre of attention. If a religious man, he calls it divine providence. This self-centred perception also caters to the narcissist's streak of grandiosity, proving that he is, indeed, worthy of such incessant and detailed attention, supervision and intervention.

From this mental junction, the way is short to entertaining the delusion that God (or the equivalent institutional authority) is an active participant in the narcissist's life in which constant intervention by Him is a key feature. God is subsumed in a larger picture, that of the narcissist's destiny and mission. God serves this cosmic plan by making it possible.

Indirectly, therefore, God is perceived by the narcissist to be at his service. Moreover, in a process of holographic appropriation, the narcissist views himself as a microcosm of his affiliation, of his group, or his frame of reference. The narcissist is likely to say that he IS the army, the nation, the people, the struggle, history, or (a part of) God.

As opposed to healthier people, the narcissist believes that he both represents and embodies his class, his people, his race, history, his God, his art – or anything else he feels a part of. This is why individual narcissists feel completely comfortable to assume roles usually reserved to groups of people or to some transcendental, divine (or other), authority.

This kind of "enlargement" or "inflation" also sits well with the narcissist's all-pervasive feelings of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. In playing God, for instance, the narcissist is completely convinced that he is merely being himself. The narcissist does not hesitate to put people's lives or fortunes at risk. He preserves his sense of infallibility in the face of mistakes and misjudgements by distorting the facts, by evoking mitigating or attenuating circumstances, by repressing memories, or by simply lying.

In the overall design of things, small setbacks and defeats matter little, says the narcissist. The narcissist is haunted by the feeling that he is possessed of a mission, of a destiny, that he is part of fate, of history. He is convinced that his uniqueness is purposeful, that he is meant to lead, to chart new ways, to innovate, to modernise, to reform, to set precedents, or to create from scratch.

Every act of the narcissist is perceived by him to be significant, every utterance of momentous consequence, every thought of revolutionary calibre. He feels part of a grand design, a world plan and the frame of affiliation, the group, of which he is a member, must be commensurately grand. Its proportions and properties must resonate with his. Its characteristics must justify his and its ideology must conform to his pre-conceived opinions and prejudices.

In short: the group must magnify the narcissist, echo and amplify his life, his views, his knowledge, and his personal history. This intertwining, this enmeshing of

individual and collective, is what makes the narcissist the most devout and loyal of all its members.

The narcissist is always the most fanatical, the most extreme, the most dangerous adherent. At stake is never merely the preservation of his group – but his very own survival. As with other Narcissistic Supply Sources, once the group is no longer instrumental – the narcissist loses all interest in it, devalues it and ignores it.

In extreme cases, he might even wish to destroy it (as a punishment or revenge for its incompetence in securing his emotional needs). Narcissists switch groups and ideologies with ease (as they do partners, spouses and value systems). In this respect, narcissists are narcissists first and members of their groups only in the second place.

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Guide to Coping with Narcissists and Psychopaths

Save for later reference! Forward to interested parties and relevant discussion and mailing groups!

Click with your mouse on the links (the [blue text](#)).

Coping with Narcissistic and Psychopathic Abusers

<http://samvak.tripod.com/faq4.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abusefamily19.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abusefamily20.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/npd tips.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/5.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/faq80.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/4.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/faq75.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/journal56.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/journal68.html>

Strategies for Coping with Abusers (General)

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abuse.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abuse3.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abuse17.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abuse19.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abuse20.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abuse21.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abuse21a.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abuse21b.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abuse12.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abuse13.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abuse5.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abuse6.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abusefamily13.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abusefamily5.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abusefamily6.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abusefamily8.html>

Working with the System and with Professionals

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abusefamily10.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abusefamily11.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abusefamily12.html>

How to Cope with Stalkers and Paranoids

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abuse21a.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abuse21b.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abuse18.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abuse15.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abuse16.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abusefamily14.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abusefamily16.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abusefamily17.html>

<http://samvak.tripod.com/abusefamily18.html>

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Narcissistic abuse in the workplace and Narcissism of authority figures

Click on the links:

<http://malignantselflove.tripod.com/faq81.html>

<http://malignantselflove.tripod.com/journal79.html>

<http://malignantselflove.tripod.com/faq11.html>

<http://malignantselflove.tripod.com/15.html>

<http://malignantselflove.tripod.com/faq19.html>

<http://malignantselflove.tripod.com/journal73.html>

<http://malignantselflove.tripod.com/faq47.html>

<http://malignantselflove.tripod.com/journal70.html>

<http://malignantselflove.tripod.com/journal52.html>

<http://malignantselflove.tripod.com/journal48.html>

<http://malignantselflove.tripod.com/corporatenarcissism.html>

<http://www.healthyplace.com/personality-disorders/transcripts/narcissism-in-the-workplace/menu-id-62/>

<http://malignantselflove.tripod.com/pp114.html>

<http://www.tipsofallsorts.com/bully.html>

[http://open-site.org/Society/Issues/Violence and Abuse/Workplace/](http://open-site.org/Society/Issues/Violence_and_Abuse/Workplace/)

<http://www.nypress.com/16/7/news&columns/feature.cfm>

<http://www.bullyonline.org/workbully/npd.htm>

<http://www.freepint.com/issues/240703.htm>

<http://malignantselflove.tripod.com/journal45.html>

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/bbing/stories/s1158704.htm>

<http://www.freepint.com/issues/260505.htm>

<http://alaskaclubs.fitdv.com/new/articles/article.html?artid=640>

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THE AUTHOR

Shmuel (Sam) Vaknin

Curriculum Vitae

Born in 1961 in Qiryat-Yam, Israel.

Served in the Israeli Defence Force (1979-1982) in training and education units.

Education

Completed a few semesters in the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa.

Ph.D. in Philosophy (major: Philosophy of Physics) – Pacific Western University, **California**, USA.

Graduate of numerous courses in Finance Theory and International Trading.

Certified [E-Commerce Concepts Analyst](#) by [Brainbench](#).

Certified in [Psychological Counselling Techniques](#) by [Brainbench](#).

Certified [Financial Analyst](#) by [Brainbench](#).

Full proficiency in Hebrew and in English.

Business Experience

1980 to 1983

Founder and co-owner of a chain of computerised information kiosks in Tel-Aviv, Israel.

1982 to 1985

Senior positions with the Nessim D. Gaon Group of Companies in Geneva, Paris and New-York (NOGA and APROFIM SA):

- Chief Analyst of Edible Commodities in the Group's Headquarters in Switzerland
- Manager of the Research and Analysis Division
- Manager of the Data Processing Division
- Project Manager of the Nigerian Computerised Census
- Vice President in charge of RND and Advanced Technologies
- Vice President in charge of Sovereign Debt Financing

1985 to 1986

Represented Canadian Venture Capital Funds in Israel.

1986 to 1987

General Manager of IPE Ltd. in London. The firm financed international multi-lateral countertrade and leasing transactions.

1988 to 1990

Co-founder and Director of "Mikbats-Tesuah", a portfolio management firm based in Tel-Aviv. Activities included large-scale portfolio management, underwriting, forex trading and general financial advisory services.

1990 to Present

Freelance consultant to many of Israel's Blue-Chip firms, mainly on issues related to the capital markets in Israel, Canada, the UK and the USA.

Consultant to foreign RND ventures and to Governments on macro-economic matters.

Freelance journalist in various media in the United States.

1990 to 1995

President of the Israel chapter of the Professors World Peace Academy (PWPA) and (briefly) Israel representative of the "Washington Times".

1993 to 1994

Co-owner and Director of many business enterprises:

- The Omega and Energy Air-Conditioning Concern
- AVP Financial Consultants
- Handiman Legal Services

Total annual turnover of the group: 10 million USD.

Co-owner, Director and Finance Manager of COSTI Ltd. – Israel's largest computerised information vendor and developer. Raised funds through a series of private placements locally in the USA, Canada and London.

1993 to 1996

Publisher and Editor of a Capital Markets Newsletter distributed by subscription only to dozens of subscribers countrywide.

In a legal precedent in 1995 – studied in business schools and law faculties across Israel – was tried for his role in an attempted takeover of Israel's Agriculture Bank.

Was interned in the State School of Prison Wardens.

Managed the Central School Library, wrote, published and lectured on various occasions.

Managed the Internet and International News Department of an Israeli mass media group, "Ha-Tikshoret and Namer".

Assistant in the Law Faculty in Tel-Aviv University (to Prof. S.G. Shoham).

1996 to 1999

Financial consultant to leading businesses in Macedonia, Russia and the Czech Republic.

Economic commentator in "[Nova Makedonija](#)", "[Dnevnik](#)", "Makedonija Denes", "Izvestia",

"Argumenti i Fakti", "The Middle East Times", "[The New Presence](#)", "[Central Europe Review](#)", and other periodicals, and in the economic programs on various channels of Macedonian Television.

Chief Lecturer in courses in Macedonia organised by the Agency of Privatization, by the Stock Exchange, and by the Ministry of Trade.

1999 to 2002

Economic Advisor to the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and to the Ministry of Finance.

2001 to 2003

Senior Business Correspondent for [United Press International \(UPI\)](#).

2007 -

Associate Editor, [Global Politician](#)

Founding Analyst, [The Analyst Network](#)

Contributing Writer, [The American Chronicle Media Group](#)

Expert, [Self-growth.com](#)

2008

Columnist and analyst in "[Nova Makedonija](#)", "Fokus", and "[Kapital](#)" (Macedonian papers and newsweeklies).

Seminars and lectures on economic issues in various forums in Macedonia.

2008-

Advisor to the Minister of Health of Macedonia on healthcare reforms

Web and Journalistic Activities

Author of extensive Web sites in:

- Psychology ("[Malignant Self Love](#)") - An [Open Directory Cool Site](#) for 8 years.
- Philosophy ("[Philosophical Musings](#)"),
- Economics and Geopolitics ("[World in Conflict and Transition](#)").

Owner of the [Narcissistic Abuse Study Lists](#) and the [Abusive Relationships Newsletter](#) (more than 6,000 members).

Owner of the [Economies in Conflict and Transition Study List](#), the [Toxic Relationships Study List](#), and the [Links and Factoid Study List](#).

Editor of mental health disorders and Central and Eastern Europe categories in various Web directories ([Open Directory](#), [Search Europe](#), [Mentalhelp.net](#)).

Editor of the [Personality Disorders](#), Narcissistic Personality Disorder, the [Verbal and Emotional Abuse](#), and the [Spousal \(Domestic\) Abuse and Violence](#) topics on Suite 101 and [Bellaonline](#).

Columnist and commentator in "The New Presence", [United Press International \(UPI\)](#), InternetContent, eBookWeb, [PopMatters](#), [Global Politician](#), The [Analyst Network](#), Conservative Voice, The [American Chronicle Media Group](#), [eBookNet.org](#), and "[Central Europe Review](#)".

Publications and Awards

"Managing Investment Portfolios in States of Uncertainty", Limon Publishers, Tel-Aviv, 1988

"The Gambling Industry", Limon Publishers, Tel-Aviv, 1990

"[Requesting My Loved One – Short Stories](#)", Yedioth Aharonot, Tel-Aviv, 1997

"[The Suffering of Being Kafka](#)" (electronic book of Hebrew and English Short Fiction), Prague, 1998-2004

"The Macedonian Economy at a Crossroads – On the Way to a Healthier Economy" (dialogues with [Nikola Gruevski](#)), Skopje, 1998

"[The Exporters' Pocketbook](#)", Ministry of Trade, Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, 1999

["Malignant Self Love – Narcissism Revisited"](#), Narcissus Publications, Prague, 1999-2007 (Read excerpts - click [here](#))

[The Narcissism Series](#) (e-books regarding relationships with abusive narcissists), Prague, 1999-2007

[Personality Disorders Revisited](#) (e-book about personality disorders), Prague, 2007

["After the Rain – How the West Lost the East"](#), Narcissus Publications in association with [Central Europe Review/CEENMI](#), Prague and Skopje, 2000

Winner of numerous awards, among them [Israel's Council of Culture and Art Prize for Maiden Prose](#) (1997), The Rotary Club Award for Social Studies (1976), and the Bilateral Relations Studies Award of the American Embassy in Israel (1978).

[Hundreds of professional articles](#) in all fields of finance and economics, and numerous articles dealing with geopolitical and political economic issues published in both print and Web periodicals in many countries.

[Many appearances in the electronic media](#) on subjects in philosophy and the sciences, and concerning economic matters.

Write to Me:

palma@unet.com.mk

narcissisticabuse-owner@yahooogroups.com

My Web Sites:

Economy/Politics:

<http://ceeandbalkan.tripod.com/>

Psychology:

<http://www.narcissistic-abuse.com/>

Philosophy:

<http://philosophos.tripod.com/>

Poetry:

<http://samvak.tripod.com/contents.html>

Fiction:

<http://samvak.tripod.com/sipurim.html>

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***Abused? Stalked? Harassed? Bullied? Victimized?
Afraid? Confused? Need HELP? DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!***

Had a Narcissistic Parent?
Married to a Narcissist - or Divorcing One?
Afraid your children will turn out the same?
Want to cope with this pernicious, baffling condition?

OR

Are You a Narcissist - or suspect that You are one...
This book will teach you how to...
Cope, Survive, and Protect Your Loved Ones!
You should read...

"Malignant Self Love - Narcissism Revisited"

The EIGHTH, REVISED PRINTING (January 2007) is now available!

Seven additional e-books, All NEW Editions, JUST RELEASED!!!

Malignant Self Love, Toxic Relationships,
Pathological Narcissism, Coping with Divorce,
The Narcissist and Psychopath in the Workplace - and MORE!!!

**Click on this link to purchase the PRINT BOOK and/or
the EIGHT E-BOOKS**

<http://www.narcissistic-abuse.com/thebook.html>

Sam Vaknin published the EIGHTH, REVISED IMPRESSION of his book about relationships with abusive narcissists, "**Malignant Self Love - Narcissism Revisited**".

The book deals with the Narcissistic Personality Disorder and its effects on the narcissist and his nearest and dearest - in 102 frequently asked questions and two essays - a total of 600 pages!

Print Edition from BARNES AND NOBLE and AMAZON

Barnes and Noble - "Malignant Self Love - Narcissism Revisited" EIGHTH, Revised, Impression (January 2007)

ON SALE starting at \$40.45 !!!

INSTEAD OF the publisher's list price of \$54.95 (including shipping and handling)!!!

That's more than \$14 off the publisher's list price!!!!

Click on this link to purchase the paper edition:

<http://search.barnesandnoble.com/bookSearch/isbnInquiry.asp?r=1&ISBN=9788023833843>

"Malignant Self Love - Narcissism Revisited" is now available from **Amazon Canada** - Click on this link:

<http://www.amazon.ca/exec/obidos/tg/detail/offer-listing/-/8023833847/new/>

And from **Amazon.com** - Click on this link:

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/8023833847/>

Print Edition from the PUBLISHER

The previous revised impression of Sam Vaknin's "Malignant Self - Love - Narcissism Revisited".

Comes with an exclusive BONUS PACK (not available through Barnes and Noble or Amazon).

Contains the entire text: essays, frequently asked questions and appendices regarding pathological narcissism and the Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD).

The publisher charges the full list price - but throws into the bargain a bonus pack with hundreds of additional pages.

Click on this link:

http://www.ccnw.com/cgi-local/cart.cgi?vaksam_MSL

Free excerpts from the EIGHTH, Revised Impression of "**Malignant Self Love - Narcissism Revisited**" are available as well as a free NEW EDITION of the Narcissism Book of Quotes

Click on this link to download the files:

<http://www.narcissistic-abuse.com/freebooks.html>

"After the Rain - How the West Lost the East"

The history, cultures, societies, and economies of countries in transition in the Balkans.

Click on this link to purchase this print book:

http://www.ccnw.com/cgi-local/cart.cgi?vaksam_ATR

Electronic Books (e-books) from the Publisher

An *electronic book* is a computer file, sent to you as an attachment to an e-mail message. Just save it to your hard disk and click on the file to open, read, and learn!

1. "Malignant Self Love - Narcissism Revisited"

Eighth, Revised Edition (January 2007)

The e-book version of Sam Vaknin's "Malignant Self - Love - Narcissism Revisited". Contains the entire text: essays, frequently asked questions (FAQs) and appendices regarding pathological narcissism and the Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD).

Click on this link to purchase the e-book:

http://www.ccnw.com/cgi-local/cart.cgi?vaksam_MSL-EBOOK

2. "The Narcissism Series"

Eighth, Revised Edition (January 2007)

EIGHT e-books (more than 2500 pages), including the full text of "Malignant Self Love - Narcissism Revisited", regarding Pathological Narcissism, relationships with abusive narcissists and psychopaths, and the Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD).

Click on this link to purchase the EIGHT e-books:

http://www.ccnw.com/cgi-local/cart.cgi?vaksam_SERIES

3. **"Toxic Relationships - Abuse and its Aftermath"**

Fourth Edition (February 2006)

How to identify abuse, cope with it, survive it, and deal with your abuser and with the system in divorce and custody issues.

Click on this link to purchase the e-book:

http://www.ccnw.com/cgi-local/cart.cgi?vaksam_ABUSE

4. **"The Narcissist and Psychopath in the Workplace"**

(September 2006)

Identify abusers, bullies, and stalkers in the workplace (bosses, colleagues, suppliers, and authority figures) and learn how to cope with them effectively.

Click on this link to purchase the e-book:

http://www.ccnw.com/cgi-local/cart.cgi?vaksam_WORKPLACE

5. **"Abusive Relationships Workbook"** (February 2006)

Self-assessment questionnaires, tips, and tests for victims of abusers, batterers, and stalkers in various types of relationships.

Click on this link to purchase the e-book:

http://www.ccnw.com/cgi-local/cart.cgi?vaksam_WORKBOOK

6. **"Pathological Narcissism FAQs"**

Eighth, Revised Edition (January 2007)

Dozens of Frequently Asked Questions regarding Pathological Narcissism, relationships with abusive narcissists, and the Narcissistic Personality Disorder.

Click on this link to purchase the e-book:

http://www.ccnw.com/cgi-local/cart.cgi?vaksam_FAQS

7. **"The World of the Narcissist"**

Eighth, Revised Edition (January 2007)

A book-length psychodynamic study of pathological narcissism, relationships with abusive narcissists, and the Narcissistic Personality Disorder, using a new vocabulary.

Click on this link to purchase the e-book:

http://www.ccnw.com/cgi-local/cart.cgi?vaksam_ESSAY

8. "Excerpts from the Archives of the Narcissism List"

Hundreds of excerpts from the archives of the Narcissistic Abuse Study List regarding Pathological Narcissism, relationships with abusive narcissists, and the Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD).

Click on this link to purchase the e-book:

http://www.ccnw.com/cgi-local/cart.cgi?vaksam_EXCERPTS

9. "Diary of a Narcissist" (November 2005)

The anatomy of one man's mental illness - its origins, its unfolding, its outcomes.

Click on this link to purchase the e-book:

http://www.ccnw.com/cgi-local/cart.cgi?vaksam_JOURNAL

10. "After the Rain - How the West Lost the East"

The history, cultures, societies, and economies of countries in transition in the Balkans.

Click on this link to purchase the e-book:

http://www.ccnw.com/cgi-local/cart.cgi?vaksam_ATR-EBOOK

Download Free Electronic Books

Click on this link:

<http://www.narcissistic-abuse.com/freebooks.html>

More about the Books and Additional Resources

The Eighth, Revised Impression (January 2007) of the Print Edition of "Malignant Self Love - Narcissism Revisited" includes:

- The full text of "Malignant Self Love - Narcissism Revisited"
- The full text of 102 Frequently Asked Questions and Answers
- Covering all the dimensions of Pathological Narcissism and Abuse in Relationships
- An Essay - The Narcissist's point of view
- Bibliography
- 600 printed pages in a quality paper book
- Digital Bonus Pack! (available only when you purchase the previous edition from the Publisher) - Bibliography, three e-

books, additional FAQs, appendices and more - hundreds of additional pages!

Testimonials and Additional Resources

You can read Readers' Reviews at the Barnes and Noble Web page dedicated to "Malignant Self Love" - HERE:

<http://barnesandnoble.bfast.com/booklink/click?ISBN=8023833847>

Dozens of Links and Resources

Click on these links:

The Narcissistic Abuse Study List

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/narcissisticabuse>

The Toxic Relationships Study List

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/toxicrelationships>

Abusive Relationships Newsletter

<http://groups.google.com/group/narcissisticabuse>

Participate in Discussions about Abusive Relationships

<http://personalitydisorders.suite101.com/discussions.cfm>

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Narcissistic_Personality_Disorder

<http://groups.msn.com/NARCISSISTICPERSONALITYDISORDER>

Links to Therapist Directories, Psychological Tests, NPD Resources, Support Groups for Narcissists and Their Victims, and Tutorials

<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/narcissisticabuse/message/5458>

Support Groups for Victims of Narcissists and Narcissists

http://dmoz.org/Health/Mental_Health/Disorders/Personality/Narcissistic

<http://www.narcissistic-abuse.com/freebooks.html>

BE WELL, SAFE AND WARM WHEREVER YOU ARE!

Sam Vaknin

Malignant Self Love

Narcissism Revisited

The Book

"Narcissists live in a state of constant rage, repressed aggression, envy and hatred. They firmly believe that everyone is like them. As a result, they are paranoid, aggressive, haughty and erratic. Narcissists are forever in pursuit of Narcissistic Supply.

They know no past or future, are not constrained by any behavioural consistency, 'rules' of conduct or moral considerations. You signal to a narcissist that you are a willing source - and he is bound to extract his supply from you.

This is a reflex.

He would have reacted absolutely the same to any other source. If what is needed to obtain supply from you is intimations of intimacy - he will supply them liberally."

This book is comprised of two parts.

The first part contains 102 Frequently Asked Questions related to the various aspects of pathological narcissism, relationships with abusive narcissists, and the Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD).

The second part is an exposition of the various psychodynamic theories regarding pathological narcissism and a proposed new vocabulary.

The Author

Sam Vaknin was born in Israel in 1961. A financial consultant and columnist, he lived (and published) in 12 countries.

He is a published and awarded author of short fiction and reference and an editor of mental health categories in various Web directories. This is his twelfth book.