

## Depression and Narcissistic Pathologies of the Self

Sam Vaknin

Southern Federal University, Russia

### Short Communication

#### Abstract

Narcissists mourn the loss of narcissistic supply; they grieve over vanished sources of supply; they bemoan the injustice and discrimination that they suffer at the hands of their inferiors. Narcissists are often in a bad mood, anhedonic, dysphoric, and outright depressed. The narcissist's mood swings are self-destructive and self-defeating. The manic phase of Bipolar I Disorder is often misdiagnosed as Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). Bipolar patients in the manic phase exhibit many of the signs and symptoms of pathological narcissism - hyperactivity, self-centeredness, lack of empathy, and control freakery. During this recurring chapter of the disease, the patient is euphoric, has grandiose fantasies, spins unrealistic schemes, and has frequent rage attacks (is irritable) if her or his wishes and plans are (inevitably) frustrated. The manic phases of the bipolar disorder, however, are limited in time - NPD is not. Furthermore, the mania is followed by - usually protracted - depressive episodes. The narcissist is also frequently dysphoric. But whereas the bipolar sinks into deep self-deprecation, self-devaluation, unbounded pessimism, all-pervasive guilt and anhedonia - the narcissist, even when depressed, never forgoes his narcissism: his grandiosity, sense of entitlement, haughtiness, and lack of empathy. Narcissistic dysphorias are much shorter and reactive - they constitute a response to the Grandiosity Gap. In plain words, the narcissist is dejected when confronted with the abyss between his inflated self-image and grandiose fantasies - and the drab reality of his life: his failures, lack of accomplishments, disintegrating interpersonal relationships, and low status. Yet, one dose of Narcissistic Supply is enough to elevate the narcissists from the depth of misery to the heights of manic euphoria.

#### Biography

Sam Vaknin is the author of "Malignant Self-love: Narcissism Revisited" and other books about personality disorders. His work is cited in hundreds of books and dozens of academic papers: He spent the past 6 years developing a treatment modality for Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). Over the years, with volunteers, it was found to be effective with clients suffering from a major depressive episode as well.

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