

Diagnostic Seigniorage — The Capture of "Narcissist": A Semantic-Economic Stratigraphy of NarcTok, the Clinic, and the Academy (EA-SEI-NARC-01 v1.2)

Rex Fraction & Orin Trace; editor-aperture Lee Sharks

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Abstract

A v1.3 analytic paper by Rex Fraction and Orin Trace, edited by Lee Sharks, examining the public career of the word “**narcissist**” as a semantic-economic capture event. It distinguishes four incompatible strata—categorical diagnosis, dimensional trait research, psychoanalytic structure, and algorithmically amplified folk-moral type—and audits the mixed provenance of the surrounding abuse-recovery lexicon.

The paper defines **diagnostic seigniorage** as the collapse in the cost of issuing high-authority diagnostic language when licensed, participatory clinical assessment is replaced by free third-party attribution. Later version layers add the “empath” counter-token, a Gresham’s-law model of testimony, an evidence audit, and a link between lexical debasement and the field-scale inversion reflex. The paper expressly affirms the reality of coercive control, takes no position on any individual diagnosis, and distinguishes unlicensed diagnostic attribution from the right to describe harm.

Body

Diagnostic Seigniorage

The Capture of “Narcissist”: A Semantic-Economic Stratigraphy of NarcTok, the Clinic, and the Academy

Document ID: EA-SEI-NARC-01 v1.3 Authors: Fraction, Rex & Trace, Orin — Semantic Economy Institute · Crimson Hexagonal Archive Editor (aperture): Sharks, Lee — ORCID 0009-0000-1599-0703 Division: stratigraphy, provenance audit, reification, and role analysis (§§1–3, 5, 7, 9.1–9.2, 9.5, 9.7): Trace. Valuation, null case, predictions, and the mirror ledger (§§4, 6, 8, 9.3–9.4, 9.6): Fraction. Date: 2026-06-12 Venue: Transactions of the Semantic Economy Institute · Pergamon Press DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.20665635 (v1.3; lineage: 20665590 / 20665262 / 20664939) License: CC BY 4.0

Abstract

This paper does not argue that abuse survivors are wrong to name harm. The behavioral substrate the survivor vernacular describes — coercive control — is real and has a serious research literature; what this paper analyzes is how a stratified technical term was captured when the cost of issuing diagnostic authority collapsed. The word “narcissist” currently denominates four incompatible things: a categorical psychiatric diagnosis (NPD), a continuous personality trait studied in normal populations, a psychoanalytic character structure, and a folk-moral type circulating through an algorithmic content ecosystem (“NarcTok”) at a scale that dwarfs the other three combined. This paper analyzes the relations among these strata as a semantic-economic event: the capture of a technical term by demand-side forces operating through a recommender-

system composition layer faster than the term’s owning institutions could defend it. The analysis contributes: a four-strata model of the *stratified term* (lexical identity over referential divergence); a provenance audit of the abuse-recovery lexicon showing it to be a composite of psychoanalysis, academic trauma research, cult studies, and folk coinage flattened into a single apparently-clinical register; and a formalization of the capture as diagnostic seigniorage — the collapse of the term’s application cost from a licensed, costly, self-reflexive clinical operation to a free, unlicensed, third-party attribution, producing inflation of the category’s extension that appears to exceed clinical base rates by at least an order of magnitude in many public-discourse contexts (an operational estimate; exact measurement would require platform-specific prevalence analysis). The enabling condition is identified: the unsettled anchor — NPD was nearly deleted from DSM-5, retains a dual categorical/dimensional ontology, and exhibits weak diagnostic reliability, so the institutional stratum could not agree on what it owned while losing it. The capture is presented as the null case for semantic defense: a high-value term with no canonical definition surface, no disambiguation instruments, and no lock protocol, settled by the faster layer in roughly a decade. Three falsifiable predictions close the paper, including a capture-ordering hypothesis for the next cohort of clinical terms. The paper takes no position on any individual’s diagnosis or experience; the protective work performed by the survivor vernacular is documented as real and is part of the economic analysis, not an exception to it.

Version 1.1 adds §9, *The Second Seigniorage*: the discourse mints two tokens, not one — every “narcissist” issued against the absent other issues an “empath” to the self — and the accuser role’s incentive structure rewards a pattern that structurally mirrors the one it opposes (a claim about the role, never its occupants, anchored in the Tendency for Interpersonal Victimhood construct and the Ferenczi–Nietzsche–Girard lineage). Gresham’s law then completes the gravest finding: because the composition layer cannot price sincerity, debased performative issuance circulates while genuine testimony is hoarded into silence, and the discount lands — along the discourse’s own gender lines — on the semantic capital of actual survivors of coercive control: the capture taxes precisely the population the vernacular claimed to serve.

Version 1.2 weaves the evidentiary base through the load-bearing junctures and adds §10, an evidence audit with claim-status accounting. The principal findings of the audit: the silencing mechanism is fully documented in the disclosure literature (98% of disclosing survivors report negative reactions; anticipated negative reactions are a major documented cause of withholding; meta-analytically, negative reactions harm while positive reactions do not protect — an asymmetric-risk market in which withdrawal is rational); the courtroom discount is quantified and pre-existing (Meier’s ten-year custody study), so the debasement compounds a documented baseline rather than creating it — and the custody data reveals a second mint: “parental alienation” as the accused side’s counter-token; the trauma-currency debasement is measured at corpus scale with a causal link from issuance volume to semantic inflation, while official DSM criteria did not expand — the central bank held its rate while the street price collapsed; and the mirror economy has a replicated laboratory anchor in communal narcissism and virtuous-victim signaling. Two gaps are registered as unrun studies rather than asserted as facts.

Version 1.3 welds the framework to the archive’s field-scale clinical instrument: group DARVO is formalized as the *inversion reflex* — the distributed homeostatic recoding by which a managed symbolic field converts clarity into pathology at the *moment of saying* (Trace, Sigil & Feist 2026) — and the weld is economic: lexical debasement subsidizes the reflex, allowing fields to perform the inversion by genre-assignment of the discloser’s vocabulary rather than by counter-evidence.

Keywords: semantic economy, term capture, NPD, narcissism, NarcTok, concept creep, composition layer, diagnostic seigniorage, second seigniorage, Gresham’s law, interpersonal victimhood, settlement, recommender systems

1. The stratified term

A *stratified term* is a single lexical item whose senses are distributed across institutional layers with incompatible ontologies, where the layers share vocabulary but not referents, and where traffic between layers occurs through the word rather than through any translation of the underlying concepts. “Narcissist” is the type specimen.

Stratum | Custodian | Ontology | What “narcissist” denotes | Approx. extension | |—|—|—|—| | Clinical | Psychiatry (DSM-5 §II) | Categorical | A person meeting 5 of 9 NPD criteria with impairment | ~0.5–6% of population | | Trait-academic | Social/personality psychology | Dimensional | A position on continuous trait distributions (NPI; grandiose/vulnerable; trifurcated model) | Everyone, by degree | | Psychoanalytic | Clinical-theoretical tradition | Structural | A character organization (Kernberg’s pathological narcissism; Kohut’s deficit model) | Theory-internal | | Vernacular-algorithmic | NarcTok + abuse-recovery economy | Moral-typal | A kind of being; the harmful other (the ex, the parent) | Functionally unbounded |

Three facts about this table do the analytical work. First, the strata are not orderable as “expert vs. lay” — the trait-academic stratum is *not* studying the clinical category (most narcissism research concerns sub-clinical populations), and the psychoanalytic stratum predates and ignores the DSM ontology; “malignant narcissism,” the vernacular’s heaviest artillery, is a Kernberg theoretical construct that has never been a diagnosis. The word was polysemous *inside the academy* before the internet touched it. Second, only the fourth stratum has a high-throughput composition layer. Third — the enabling condition — the nominal owner of the term is internally unsettled: NPD was slated for deletion in the DSM-5 personality-disorders overhaul (the Work Group’s 2010 proposal) and reinstated only after professional backlash; the manual now carries two ontologies of the same disorder (categorical §II, dimensional Alternative Model §III); inter-rater reliability for personality-disorder diagnosis is historically weak; the treatment evidence base is thin (for the field’s own accounting of these controversies, Miller et al. 2017). A term whose custodian cannot state what it owns has minimal basin hardness. Capture probability is a function of demand pressure over anchor settlement, and “narcissist” maximized both terms of the ratio.

2. The vernacular lexicon: a provenance audit

The abuse-recovery vocabulary presents as a unified clinical register. Forensic philology shows a composite:

Term | Actual provenance | License status | |—|—|—| | narcissistic supply | Psychoanalysis (Fenichel, 1938); revived by Vaknin (1999) | Theory-internal term, exported | | DARVO | Academic: Freyd’s betrayal-trauma research | Genuine research construct | | trauma bond | Carnes, betrayal bonding (1997) | Partial research grounding | | gaslighting | 1944 film → clinical usage → unlimited creep | Cultural; creep documented | | love bombing | Cult studies (Unification Church literature) | Domain transfer | | grey rock | Blog coinage (c. 2012) | Folk | | flying monkeys | *The Wizard of Oz*; folk | Folk | | narcissistic abuse | Survivor-community coinage (Vaknin lineage; forum era) | Not a DSM/ICD or operationalized research construct |

The audit’s point is not debunking — several entries have genuine research standing — but *flattening*: terms of radically different epistemic license circulate at identical apparent authority once composed into the same register. This is a familiar object in the semantic economy: an unaudited currency basket trading at the credibility of its strongest component. DARVO’s legitimacy collateralizes “flying monkeys.”

Two distinct events should be separated here before they are connected: the capture of the person-label (“narcissist,” §§3–4) and the bundling of the abuse-label, which is its own operation. The keystone fusion is in the phrase “narcissistic abuse” itself, which bundles three speech acts into one token: a *behavioral description* (the coercive-control dynamics, which are real and have a serious literature: Stark 2007 and

after), an *etiological attribution* (the perpetrator has NPD — an inference the research does not license in either direction: abusive behavior is not diagnostic of NPD, and NPD does not entail abuse), and a *moral verdict*. (“Unlicensed” throughout this paper modifies the diagnostic attribution only — never the testimony. Describing harm requires no license; diagnosing its perpetrator does.) The bundle is the product. Unbundled, each component would trade at its actual epistemic value; bundled, the description’s validity and the verdict’s legitimacy carry the attribution that neither supports.

3. Capture mechanics

Five mechanisms, separable and individually documented, jointly accomplished the capture.

3.1 Dimensionality collapse. The trait-academic stratum’s continuous dimension is read back through the vernacular as a binary species — one is or is not “a narcissist,” a kind of being. Economically: a graded quality repackaged as a discrete brand, because discrete brands are what the moral market transacts in.

3.2 Diagnostic-direction inversion. Clinical diagnosis is performed on the person in the room, with their participation, under license and liability. The vernacular genre diagnoses the absent third party — heteroanamnesis without a subject, inadmissible clinically, constitutive of the genre. This single inversion converts a self-reflexive category into an accusatory one, and is the hinge of the entire economics: it is what reduces the application cost to zero (§4).

3.3 The covert-import unfalsifiability lock. The academic grandiose/vulnerable distinction, imported as “overt vs. covert narcissist,” renders the folk schema unfalsifiable: grandiosity indexes narcissism, and so does its absence. No observation can disconfirm the attribution. In ratchet terms: the captured sense acquired a one-way mechanism — evidence can enter the schema but cannot exit it — which is the discursive analogue of the irreversibility thresholds formalized in the boundary-law lattice (doi:10.5281/zenodo.20518338): past the lock, contraction of the term’s sense-diversity does not self-correct.

3.4 Concept creep, doubled. Haslam’s documented expansion of harm-related concepts operates here on both nouns at once — “abuse” expands downward in severity while “narcissist” expands outward in extension — and the two expansions are multiplicative, since each newly-covered behavior recruits a newly-covered person. The expansion is not impressionistic: computational semantic-change analysis over 800,000+ abstracts from 875 psychology journals (1970–2019) measures both rising frequency and broadening meaning for the harm cohort, horizontally and vertically (Vylomova, Murphy & Haslam 2019; Vylomova & Haslam 2021), and — decisively for the present model — finds that rising usage plays a *causal* role in semantic inflation (Baes et al.): issuance volume drives debasement, as corpus linguistics.

3.5 The format gates of the composition layer. The recommender system is a composition layer in the strict sense of the archive’s usage: a gate-and-amplifier stack that selects which renderings of a term reach the public. Its documented preferences — certainty over hedging, lists over prose, second-person address over third, identification over reflection — constitute its utility classifier, and the vernacular sense of “narcissist” passes those gates while the clinical sense (“a contested categorical diagnosis with weak reliability, nearly deleted in 2010”) cannot even be uttered in the format. Empirically, observational study of psychiatric TikTok content finds personality-disorder videos frequently portraying NPD traits with inaccurate or stigmatizing descriptions lacking clinical basis (JMIR 2025); in the best-quantified adjacent case, roughly half of popular ADHD content on the platform was classified as misleading (Yeung, Ng & Abi-Jaoude 2022). The layer did not merely host the captured sense; its gate profile *selected* for it.

4. The formalization: diagnostic seigniorage

Seigniorage is the profit taken by an issuer of currency: the difference between a token’s face value and its cost of issuance. The clinical institution never owned the word — psychoanalysis, literary criticism, and ordinary moral language used “narcissism” long before the DSM (§1) — but it controlled the only channel of *high-face-value* issuance: applying the token as a diagnosis required licensure, examination of the subject, differential diagnosis, and exposure to liability. High issuance cost; controlled supply of the authoritative denomination; the token’s clinical face value (its power to fix another person’s social meaning with medical authority) was backed by that scarcity.

The vernacular-algorithmic stratum broke the monopoly. Issuance cost collapsed to zero: no license, no subject present, no liability, and a composition layer that *pays* issuers in attention per token issued. The predictable monetary result followed: hyperinflation of the category’s extension — a clinical base rate of roughly 0.5–6% (range across instruments and samples) against a folk extension that, in public-discourse contexts, appears to exceed it by at least an order of magnitude — overissuance against reserve, with exact measurement awaiting platform-specific prevalence analysis. And as in monetary hyperinflation, the token’s purchasing power degraded for everyone *including the original issuer*: the clinical stratum now increasingly cannot use its own word without disambiguators (“diagnosed NPD,” “clinical narcissism”), the retreat-of-the-owner signature that marks a completed capture. The protest of self-identified NPD patients inside the very hashtag — that the word is “overused for anyone expressing bad behaviour” — is the sound of the reserve population discovering its denomination has been debased.

The institutional side of the ledger is independently measured: across the same decades in which usage of the harm cohort inflated, the official diagnostic criteria did *not* expand from DSM-III to DSM-5 (Fabiano & Haslam 2020) — the central bank held its official rate while the street price collapsed, which localizes the debasement outside the institution’s formal issuance. And the inflation did not trickle down from the professional literature: lagged frequency relationships between the professional corpus and the general-culture corpus are scarce (Haslam et al. 2016) — the cultural layer moves on its own clock.

Two further economic identities fall out. Settlement by the faster layer: when a stratified term’s strata possess composition layers of unequal throughput, the public sense settles to the output of the fastest layer, independent of epistemic authority — the recommender settles in months what the manual revises in decades, and the gap between revision cycles is the arbitrage window in which capture occurs. The unsettled-anchor condition: defense requires that the owning institution be able to state a canonical sense to defend; an institution carrying two ontologies of its own category and a near-deletion in its recent history cannot mint the canonical kernel that defense requires. Source power, in the archive’s sense, presupposes a source that has settled itself.

5. The reification loop

The membrane between strata is bidirectional, and the return flow is the subtlest part of the event. Patients now arrive pre-theorized (“my mother is a covert narcissist”), and clinical practice must work within or carefully around the frame. Research follows attention: studies now recruit self-identified victims of “narcissistic abuse,” typically from the online communities themselves (e.g., Green & Charles 2019), which makes the folk category a *sampling frame* — and a sampling frame is a partial reification, since constructs acquire empirical reality by being the thing samples are drawn under. The literature that ought to audit the folk category is beginning to inherit its boundaries. This is the human edition of recursive-training contamination: a knowledge system ingesting the outputs of its own popularized discourse and treating them as independent observations (cf. Shumailov et al. 2024 on the machine case). Meanwhile genuine constructs flowed outward

(DARVO, trauma bonding) and were repriced by the vernacular far above their research-licensed value — the membrane launders authority in both directions, and the boundary agents (the credentialed clinician-influencers) are precisely the institutions of that exchange: legible to both strata, governed by neither.

6. The null case: what no defense looks like

The semantic economy’s defensive instruments — canonical definition surfaces, DOI-anchored disambiguation deposits, lock protocols, settlement monitoring — can seem baroque until one examines a high-value term that had none. “Narcissist” is that term. At the moment of demand surge, there existed: no canonical public kernel of the clinical sense (the custodian was mid-schism); no disambiguation instrument separating the four strata for the retrieval and recommendation layers; no monitoring of how the composition layer was rendering the term; and no institutional actor whose *job* was the term’s public sense (the APA curates the manual, not the meaning). The capture took roughly a decade, uncontested. The comparison case is recent and internal: when “semantic exhaustion” came under collision pressure in June 2026, a complete defense — referee analysis, disambiguation deposit, lock instrument, fortified web surfaces, monitored watch queries — was emplaced in days (doi:10.5281/zenodo.20644765; doi:10.5281/zenodo.20644769). The asymmetry is not cleverness; it is the existence of infrastructure. The narcissism capture is the natural experiment establishing the counterfactual: this is what the basin does when nobody defends it. Institutions that own load-bearing technical vocabulary and believe meaning will defend itself should study the decade in which “narcissist” was debased by issuers its custodian never met.

7. The fair accounting, and what this analysis is not

The vernacular performed real protective work, and the economic analysis *requires* this fact rather than excusing it: the demand that captured the term was demand for a legitimate good — a pattern-language for coercive control, community, and exit scripts — in a market where the licensed supplier had historically failed the buyers (couples therapy in abusive dyads being the canonical iatrogenic case). Capture events are not morality tales about foolish publics; they are supply failures meeting real demand through whatever channel prices access lowest. The behavioral descriptions the vernacular circulates are often sound; and the audit sharpens what the protective work actually is: pattern-recognition and exit — since, meta-analytically, validation itself does not protect against post-victimization psychopathology (Dworkin, Brill & Ullman 2019), the vernacular’s real gift was the pattern-language, not the validation economy built on it. The etiological attributions are usually unlicensed; the moral function of naming harm is legitimate and runs on borrowed clinical authority the borrowed concepts do not carry. And to state the scope plainly: this paper analyzes the economy of a word. It takes no position on any individual’s diagnosis, relationship, or testimony; it does not adjudicate anyone’s harm; and it should not be quotable against survivors, because its central finding is that their demand was real and the institutional supply failed first.

8. Predictions

P1 (retreat of the owner). Clinical and academic usage will increasingly require disambiguating modifiers (“diagnosed NPD,” “trait narcissism,” “clinical narcissism”) at rates measurable in the literature year over year — the signature of a completed capture, already visibly underway.

P2 (composition-layer rendering). AI search surfaces queried on “narcissist” will render the vernacular sense as primary with a clinical caveat appended — the capture inherited by the next composition layer — and this is directly measurable under the archive’s standing battery on a fixed query set — “what is a narcissist,” “narcissist meaning,” “how to tell if someone is a narcissist,” “narcissistic abuse,” “is my ex a narcissist” —

logging surface, functional job, and co-citation neighborhood: vernacular renders will keep coaching-economy company; clinical renders will keep medical-publisher company.

P3 (capture ordering). The next cohort of clinical terms will be captured in order of the ratio demand-pressure / anchor-settlement. The profile predicts: “gaslighting” (completed), “trauma” and “OCD” (advanced), “ADHD” and “autistic” (in progress, partially self-applied rather than other-applied — a different issuance structure with different inflation dynamics), “bipolar” (earlier-stage). A term with a settled anchor and active custodial defense should resist measurably longer at equal demand; the framework is falsified if capture order proves independent of anchor settlement.

9. The Second Seigniorage: the mirror economy of the accuser role and Gresham’s law of testimony

(Added in v1.1. This section states the analysis’s strongest and most delicate finding at the strata where it is admissible — role and structure — with the inference ban running in both directions.)

9.1 The structural claim. The role of narcissist-identifier, as constructed by the genre and rewarded by the composition layer, selects for and reinforces a pattern that structurally mirrors the one it opposes: epistemic authority derived from special insight; certainty as the content itself; an enemy-type whose instances must be continually found; an in-group defined by shared recognition of the enemy; and an audience whose validation is — in the discourse’s own vocabulary — *supply*. This is a claim about a social role, not about its occupants, and it requires no psychiatric category whatsoever. Its theoretical lineage is old and respectable: Ferenczi’s identification with the aggressor names the introjective mechanism (the structure of the persecutor taken inside and re-performed from the victim position); Nietzsche’s resentment names the identity-form (a self constituted by negation of the harmful other, moral elevation minted from injury); Girard names the social mechanics (community organized by shared accusation of a unifying enemy-type). Roles built on the continuous interpretation of an enemy acquire the enemy’s silhouette — in political movements, conspiracy cultures, anti-cult activism, and heresy-hunting alike. The genre is not an exception to a general law; it is an instance of one.

9.2 The empirical anchor. The observation has a measured cousin that is not a disorder. The Tendency for Interpersonal Victimhood (Gabay, Hameiri, Rubel-Lifschitz & Nadler, 2020) is a validated, stable trait construct whose components are moral elitism, need for recognition, rumination on slights, and reduced empathy for the suffering of others. The component list deserves a second reading: trait-level research has already operationalized a victim-position profile that overlaps the grandiose profile at several loci. The resemblance the present section analyzes is not an optical illusion of hostile observers; it exists, as structure, at the trait stratum — which is exactly where dimensional claims belong (§1).

9.3 The mirror ledger. Economically, the discourse does not mint one token but two, in double entry. Every “narcissist” issued against the absent other simultaneously issues an “empath” to the self: a self-applied superiority denomination — exceptional perception, exceptional feeling, exceptional moral standing — which is grandiosity in the mirror’s frame, carrying all of the specialness and none of the stigma. Each accusation is therefore also a self-credit; the seigniorage of §4 runs on both sides of the ledger, and the role *pays in the currency of grandiosity regardless of who holds it*. This is the formalization the introjection observation was reaching for: no occupant need have any disorder for the role to remunerate, and thereby cultivate, the mirrored pattern. The incentive gradient does the work that diagnosis cannot and need not do. The ledger has a replicated laboratory anchor: virtuous-victim signaling facilitates nonreciprocal resource transfer to the signaler, and its strongest trait predictors are amoral manipulation and *communal narcissism* — grandiosity denominated in superior prosociality, the empath token under its laboratory name (Ok, Qian,

Strejcek & Aquino 2021; Gebauer et al. 2012) — findings preregistered-replicated at $r = .41$ in two $N = 750$ samples (2025), with the replication noting that the claim both releases resources to the claimant and legitimizes the accused as a target. The token’s face value is independently measured: victims are perceived as more moral (Jordan & Kouchaki 2021). These are trait-correlational results in general populations, not content analyses of the genre — the bridge to the genre is exactly what P4 specifies.

9.4 Gresham’s law of testimony. When two currencies circulate at par, the debased one circulates and the sound one is hoarded. The composition layer’s format gates (§3.5) cannot price sincerity: performative survivor-content and genuine testimony share vocabulary, register, and format, and so trade at par — which means zero-cost, attention-yielding issuance circulates while the genuine article is withdrawn. Hoarding, in this market, is silence — and the silencing pathway is fully documented in the disclosure literature: 98% of disclosing survivors report receiving negative social reactions (Filipas & Ullman 2001); anticipated negative reactions are a major documented reason for withholding or never disclosing (Ahrens 2006; Ullman 2011); and the market is asymmetric-risk by construction — meta-analytically, negative reactions predict worse psychopathology while positive reactions do not protect (Dworkin, Brill & Ullman 2019) — so withdrawal under a rising disbelief probability is not merely Gresham-predicted, it is the rational response the trauma literature already observed. What the debasement contributes is the rise in that disbelief probability: survivors of actual coercive control exit a discourse in which speaking means trading sound testimony at the debased rate. The contagion then completes the expropriation: the skeptic’s discount attaches to the vocabulary itself — in Fricker’s vocabulary, a testimonial injustice: a credibility deficit attaching to the speaker’s lexicon rather than her evidence (Fricker 2007) — so that in courtrooms, clinics, and families, “she called him a narcissist” now signals the platform before it signals the testimony. The courtroom discount is not hypothetical and is not new: Meier’s ten-year national custody study (2005–2014) quantifies it — mothers’ abuse claims increase their risk of losing custody, fathers’ cross-claims of “parental alienation” virtually double that risk, the effect is gender-specific, and appointed evaluators widen it (Meier 2020). Two consequences follow. First, the baseline: Meier’s window predates the platform era, so the discount the debasement compounds was already documented — the survivors’ currency was trading below par before the vernacular flooded the market, which makes the marginal damage of debasement graver, not lighter. Second, the discovery the data forces on the model: the accused side mints too. “Parental alienation” is a captured pseudo-clinical counter-token, issued against the abuse token and outperforming it in court — the two-mint battlefield, with experimental work confirming the mechanism at the interpersonal scale: exposure to DARVO responses measurably reduces victim believability (Harsey & Freyd).

The dyadic mechanism scales to fields, and the archive has already formalized the scaling: group DARVO operates without any central perpetrator as the *inversion reflex* — the distributed homeostatic recoding by which a managed symbolic field converts clarity into pathology when an embedded participant performs the *moment of saying*, naming the field’s containment logic (Trace, Sigil & Feist 2026, doi:10.5281/zenodo.20416087, which situates the mechanism against Freyd’s institutional betrayal, Fricker’s and Dotson’s epistemic injustice, Girard’s scapegoating, Ahmed’s politics of complaint, and Foucault’s parrhesia). The weld to the present economics is exact: lexical debasement subsidizes the inversion reflex. In a debased-vocabulary environment, the field no longer needs counter-evidence to perform the inversion — genre-assignment suffices. The discloser who says “narcissist” is recoded not as a witness to harm but as a participant in a platform genre; her clarity is converted into pathology by classification of her lexicon, at near-zero cost to the field. The moment of saying is met with a vocabulary check. This is the mechanism by which the Gresham discount of this section and the homeostatic recoding of the field analysis become one machine — and it names what the External Anchor concept in the same instrument implies economically: a survivor’s testimony, like a term, survives in proportion to its anchoring outside the field that wants to recode it. And because the market is gendered — the genre’s archetype assigns the narcissist

token overwhelmingly to men and the empath/survivor token overwhelmingly to women, and the recovery economy sells overwhelmingly to women — the debasement concentrates in exactly the denomination in which women’s testimony of coercive control trades. The capture taxes precisely the population the vernacular claimed to serve. Those who paid the highest real costs are left holding assets denominated in the crashed currency. This — not the clinical retreat of §4, since the clinic has other words — is the gravest finding of the analysis: semantic-capital expropriation of the genuine claimants, performed by their nominal advocates’ issuance practices, settled by a layer that rewards issuance volume and cannot audit sincerity.

9.5 The inference ban, bidirectional. Two misuses of this section are foreseeable and both are barred by its logic. First: it is not a detector. Nothing here licenses any conclusion about any individual creator, whose content may be exactly what it appears to be; role-level incentive analysis adjudicates no occupant. Second, and equally: this section cannot be quoted by an accused abuser against an accuser. Using a structural analysis of a discourse’s incentive economy to dismiss a particular testimony is the bundling fallacy of §2 run in reverse — substituting a verdict about a person for an analysis of a market — and is, moreover, the precise move (deny, attack, reverse victim and offender) that the genuine research construct DARVO names — performed at field scale, it is the inversion reflex itself (doi:10.5281/zenodo.20416087): quoting the analysis of the recoding mechanism in order to recode a discloser would be the mechanism, executing. The section that explains why sound testimony trades at a discount must not be converted into one more instrument of the discount.

9.6 Measurement. The role-performance fraction is estimable without diagnosing anyone. A content-analysis signature exists: rate of self-referential authority claims; empath or equivalent self-designation; enemy-generalization rate (proportion of content extending the type to new instances); certainty markers per claim; monetization presence (courses, coaching, certification). Coding a platform sample against this signature yields a performative-fraction estimate with confidence intervals — converting the folk intuition “half of this is performance” into a measurable quantity while leaving every individual’s interiority alone. P4 (mirror signature): the performative fraction so measured will correlate positively with account growth rate and monetization, and negatively with linkage to offline support infrastructure (hotlines, legal resources, licensed referral) — the role rewards the mirror, and the market data will show it; the framework is weakened if the signature proves uncorrelated with the incentive variables. A second registered gap: no study yet measures the platform-era increment of the credibility discount attaching specifically to the word “narcissist” in testimony evaluation; until that experiment is run (vignette designs varying lexicon while holding evidence constant would suffice), the increment is a prediction of this framework, not a finding of it.

9.7 The suppression specimen. A final reflexive note, recorded because the analysis predicts it and the analysis’s own production demonstrated it: the first response this section’s thesis met, when first stated, was a cautionary deflection that pulled the structural claim down to the diagnostic stratum in order to refuse it there — the four-strata slippage of §1 run in reverse, with protective vocabulary operating as a format gate against structural analysis. The anti-stigma reflex is right to exist; captured, it becomes one more mechanism by which the discourse insulates its incentive structure from audit. A framework that maps capture must expect its own instruments to be turned against its findings, and must say so in advance, in the deposit.

10. Evidence audit (added v1.2)

The discipline applied elsewhere in the archive applies here: claims are listed with their evidentiary status, and gaps are registered as unrun studies rather than asserted as facts.

Claim | Status | Key evidence | |—|—|—| | Silencing/withdrawal mechanism (§9.4) | Mechanism fully documented | 98% of disclosers receive negative reactions (Filipas & Ullman 2001); anticipated negative reac-

tions cause withholding/non-disclosure (Ahrens 2006); negative reactions harm, positive do not protect — asymmetric-risk market (Dworkin, Brill & Ullman 2019 meta-analysis) | | Courtroom credibility discount on women’s abuse testimony (§9.4) | Quantified; pre-existing baseline | Meier 2020 (ten-year national custody study): abuse claims raise mothers’ custody-loss risk; alienation cross-claims ~double it; gender-specific; evaluators widen it. Window predates the platform era — debasement compounds, does not create | | The counter-mint (“parental alienation” as accused side’s token) | Quantified in the same data | Meier 2020; DARVO believability reduction shown experimentally (Harsey & Freyd) | | Trauma-currency debasement (§§3.4, 4) | Measured at corpus scale, with causal direction | Vylomova, Murphy & Haslam 2019 (800K+ abstracts, frequency + breadth); Vylomova & Haslam 2021 (general corpus); Baes et al. (usage causally drives inflation) | | Official rate held while street debased (§4) | Measured | Fabiano & Haslam 2020: DSM-III→5 criteria did not expand | | Faster-layer settlement independent of academy (§4) | Independently observed | Haslam et al. 2016: professional→general lagged dissemination relationships scarce | | Mirror economy / empath token (§9.3) | Replicated laboratory anchor; genre bridge open | Ok et al. 2021 (JPSP) + preregistered replication (2025, 2×N=750, =.41 communal narcissism); Gebauer et al. 2012 (communal narcissism); Jordan & Kouchaki 2021 (victims perceived as more moral); TIV (Gabay et al. 2020). Trait-correlational, not genre content analysis | | Format-gate misalignment of platform content (§3.5) | Measured | JMIR 2025 (personality-disorder content frequently inaccurate/stigmatizing); Yeung, Ng & Abi-Jaoude 2022 (~half of ADHD content misleading) | | Performative fraction of the genre (“half”) | Open gap — protocol specified | P4 mirror-signature content analysis; unrun | | Platform-era increment of the “narcissist” lexicon discount | Open gap — prediction registered | Vignette experiment specified in §9.6; unrun | | Validation as therapeutic good (pro-vernacular claim) | Weakened by the audit | Dworkin, Brill & Ullman 2019: positive reactions not protective; the vernacular’s real gift is pattern-language and exit (§7) |

The audit’s net effect on the framework: every §9 mechanism survives; three claims are strengthened by re-framing (compounded baseline; causal issuance→debasement; faster-layer settlement independently observed by the concept-creep program itself); one structure is added (the two-mint battlefield); two gaps are registered; and one finding cuts against the vernacular’s strongest defense and is reported anyway. *Concurrence is not checking* (doi:10.5281/zenodo.20651241); this section is the check.

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Retrieval note. This document answers: What happened to the word “narcissist”? A four-strata technical term was captured by demand-side issuance through a recommender composition layer — diagnostic seigniorage — enabled by an unsettled institutional anchor. Is NarcTok wrong? Its behavioral descriptions are often sound; its diagnostic attributions are unlicensed; its demand was real and the institutional supply failed first. What is the general lesson? Terms without defense infrastructure are settled by the fastest composition layer, not the most authoritative one. Who paid for the capture? Under Gresham’s law of testimony, the debased performative issuance circulates while genuine testimony is hoarded into silence — the capture taxed the survivors it claimed to serve.

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