More importantly, Dr. Daniel Williams also fails to address what is necessary for American citizens to morally improve themselves in his book. While a realist in many ways, one can suspect that Dr. Williams’s worldview is a little too materialistic. Although Dr. Williams does of course show both signs of subscribing to both natural law and divine law himself due to evincing a genuine concern for the unborn, the American poor and other various American citizens, he may also need to consider that the particular possibility that both a Catholic natural law and a Catholic divine law can particularly cause more American citizens throughout the country to more effectively improve their moral and professional lives. Furthermore, a growth in a “practiced Catholic sacramentalism” throughout the country can also more effectively improve the spiritual lives of more Americans throughout the country, both Catholic and non-Catholic alike. If more American citizens improve their spiritual lives (and perhaps even eventually convert to Catholicism), then hopefully many of the social problems that many of the American citizens face (and that are discussed in Dr. Daniel K. Williams’s most recent book) will be solved to a further degree.

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Malignant Narcissism and Power: a Psychodynamic Exploration of Madness and Leadership (Zeiders and Devlin, 2020) provides excellent insight and research into the makings of a mad leader. It is an unlikely leadership book. Rather than focusing on leader development or the traits of magnanimous leadership, Malignant Narcissism explores the depths of leadership’s destructive potential. Where magnanimous leadership seeks to serve and contributes to flourishing, malignant leadership results in grotesque abuses of power seen in narcissism, criminal behavior, and carnage.

The authors make a strong case for understanding the connections of the malignant narcissist and power as protection for those vulnerable to their charms. Abuse necessitates prevention! How do we identify the collision of madness and leadership in political candidates, church leadership, and any sphere where vulnerable people are at a disadvantage? Because it
is difficult to assess the Malignant Narcissist Leader (MNL) as a present subject, we often find ourselves assessing the subsequent human collateral damage.

Through a detailed case study of a fictitious priest in the Reformed Catholic movement, Fr. Frederick Ladysmith Jones, we gain intimate insight into the makings of a malignant narcissist leader. Particularly persuasive is the portrayal of the bishop’s formative years beginning in a childhood fraught with trauma, neglect, and validation in unreality. His character is deformed by his mother’s messianic expectations and his father’s physical abuse. If he had encountered divine empathy in the manifestation of maternal nurture or divine protection instead of paternal abuse, he would have had an opportunity for divine healing. His rise to power and pervasive narcissistic pathology eventually leads to the financial demise of the movement and its cathedral. In the aftermath, many followers leave the church in despair and delusion and the bishop commits suicide.

Unfortunately, his mystical experiences bolster his grandiosity. As the fictitious case study unfolds, we see a sad, lonely, empty man who finds meaning and purpose in religious ideology and uses it as a means for self-inflation. His career is marked by entitlement, spiritual manipulation, and criminal activity, the exposure of which catapults his shame to suicide. Overreach also contributes significantly to his fall. The value in understanding this pathology, the authors posit, lies in “freedom from the subjugating influences of the destructive leader” (xv).

Zeiders and Devlin proceed to make a case for formalizing the diagnosis for the purpose of leadership analysis and other studies, naming three types: the destructive leader, the malignant narcissist leader, and the Kernbergian Quaternity Positive (KT+). The Kernbergian Quaternity marks four characteristics of malignant narcissism: “(1) narcissistic personality disorder, (2) antisocial features, (3) ego-syntonic sadism, and (4) paranoid tendencies” (3). Each type is a variation of leadership abuse with degrees of anti-social, sadistic behavior. Because of his perceived perfection and power, the malignant narcissistic leader (MNL) is licensed to do whatever it takes to protect his life and procure his success, even kill. Notably, the “god drive” (34), is fueled by desperation to conceal core-level shame and met with defensiveness at any suggestion of vulnerability. Other clinical features are narcissism, criminality, sadism, and the Caligula Complex (unchecked and unlimited power manifested in bizarre cruelty, sexual and deadly). The MNL defies all accountability; e.g., Hitler, David Koresh and Jim Jones, and the Kim family in North Korea.

When an elected leader enters high public office with pride, he can develop characteristics similar to MNL pathology, a savior above the law.
Deborah Rojas

Classified as *hubris syndrome*, moderate narcissism is usually already present. Though the core of the person is not as ill, dangerous activity and abuse of power can prevail. The authors recommend widespread education on the characteristics of the MNL so its practitioners cannot ascend to power.

The book culminates with multiple segments that provide examples of cultic leaders and tyrants whose personal pathology cut a tragic wave of disaster through world history. In our current climate of loneliness and isolation, the authors conclude that cults and power in the hands of malignant narcissist leaders continue to flourish. The destructive correlation of madness and leadership cannot be ignored.

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