IN OUR POLY-DISCIPLINARY STUDY OF MNL & POWER, WE ASPIRE TO ABIDE BY THE GENERAL PRINCIPALS THAT GOVERN THE APA CODE OF ETHICS

- **General Principles**
- **Beneficence and Nonmaleficence** – Our study seeks to raise awareness of MNL, so that the MH professions and the public may benefit from increased consciousness of the risks associated with destructive leadership. We further seek to avoid the harm of disrespecting specific social ideas that others hold in good faith.
- **Fidelity and Responsibility** – We assembled our theories of the profile of the destructive leader faithfully building on peer-reviewed literature, authoritative sources, and observations of cynicism, credible journalism, and historical, in addition to law enforcement documents, all useful to develop inferences about character.
- **Integrity** – In our remarks, we seek to uphold accuracy and avoid misrepresentation. We note that our scholarship provides a scholarly basis to identify the MNL in power, and to predict the clinical, social, and historical impact of such a leader. We acknowledge that our findings are equivocal, because we have neither run studies, nor personally examined any historical or contemporary actor who evinces malignant traits consistent with our theory.

- **Justice** – Our research aspires to promote justice and decrease rights violations, simply because sober awareness of the traits of the MNL is consistent with decreased MH risks to individuals and society.

- **Respect for People’s Rights and Dignity** – Whereas we believe that rights violations and dignity diminishment is epidemiologically immanent when a MNL assumes leadership, we feel duty bound to offer our findings to drive more studies, while increasing conceptual power to protect the individual and society from the destructive impact of egomaniacal leadership.

ETHICS – SHOULD MH PROFESSIONALS MAKE PUBLIC PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS ABOUT A LEADER’S MENTAL HEALTH LIABILITY TO POTENTIALLY IMPACTED PARTIES OR NOT?

- **Goldwater Rule**
- **Vs**
- **Duty to Warn**

A recent controversy in the American Psychiatric Association.
Let’s ease into MN with 2 familiar stories:

Story of **Cain & Abel** illustrates certain characteristics of malignant leaders.

Story of the **Fall in the Garden of Eden** illustrates a protective stance against mad leaders. Freud’s psychodynamic myth of the primal horde is another story that informs MN.

**Otto Kernberg** characterized MNL as a narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) with antisocial features, paranoid traits, and ego-syntonic aggression of the sadistic variety.

Accompanying features include an underdeveloped or deformed conscience, power-cravings, and grandiosity.

Psychologist **George H. Pollock** wrote in 1978: "The malignant narcissist is presented as pathologically grandiose, lacking in conscience and behavioral regulation with characteristic demonstrations of joyful cruelty and sadism".

**M. Scott Peck** explored malignant narcissism as a psychological construct that explains evil.

BUT MNL IS OF CONCERN TO ALL WHO EXPLORE THE HUMAN CONDITION, NOT SIMPLY PSYCHOLOGISTS. FOR EXAMPLE

- **Photojournalist**: [to Major Willard] Why would a nice guy like you want to kill a genius? Why? Because they told you he was crazy? The Colonel is not crazy. The man is clear in his mind, but his soul is mad.
Photojournalist: [to Willard] Why would a nice guy like you want to kill a genius? Why?
Because they told you he was crazy? The Colonel is not crazy. The man is clear in his mind, but his soul is mad.

What are the assessment criteria for MNL?

The malignant narcissist leader (MNL) will reach maturity with pernicious assumptions about themselves, the world, and others.

Their assumptions will be charged with high voltage libido and may portend poorly for the people and projects the leader will touch.

Criteria

A. Destructive leader: a person of interest, who may hold himself in high regard, shall qualify for the term destructive leader if he

1. Holds a leadership position, or aspires to one, and

2. And has or may inflict injury on persons or groups, or violate relevant norms, or offend against human dignity.
B. Malignant narcissist leader: a person of interest, already qualified for the term destructive leader (DL), shall qualify for the term malignant narcissist leader (MNL) if he evinces, according to information and belief or other evidence,

1. A narcissistic personality disorder, characterized by grandiosity, and specific signs and symptoms recommended by diagnostic manuals, or relevant criteria, and

2. Antisocial behavior, delimited by such terms as psychopathy, sociopathy, criminality, or specific signs and symptoms recommended by diagnostic manuals.

C. Kernbergian Quaternity: a person of interest, who qualified for the term malignant narcissist leader (MNL), shall qualify for the term Kernbergian Quaternity Positive (KQ+) if he evinces, according to information and belief or other evidence, the additional items of

1. Ego-syntonic sadism, characterized by pleasure, gratification, or elation derived from the infliction of pain on an object(s) consonant with the subject's ideals and self-concept, and

2. A paranoid outlook, characterized by unwarranted suspicion that malevolent objects intend to harm the subject via plots, exploitation, untrustworthiness, attacks, or betrayals.

Etiology...

Relevant etiological childhood factors include a traumatic learning history, disorganized attachment, orphan psychology, neglect, abuse, paternal/maternal violence, paternal/maternal neglect, pernicious role modeling, or disruption to Eriksonian stage negotiation.

Concepts of soul murder, child abuse, and abandonment depression (rage) inform understanding MNL character formation.

Environmental violence & role modeling are etiological factors.
Non-exhaustive list of overlapping constructs relevant to assessment. Investigators might reference this list of overlapping constructs to hone their assessment of a person of interest who qualifies for criteria related to MNL.

- Grandiosity in combination with aggression
- Egomania
- Ego inflation
- Megalomania
- Loyalty to ideological supporters
- Invented worldview
- Idealization of destructive facets of the self
- Destruction or rejection of love for superiority maintenance
- Inability to negotiate or compromise for superiority maintenance
- Manipulative object relations
- Uncanniness
- Oratory giftedness
- Charisma
- Criminality in service to the ego

Vulnerability factors for individuals and groups likely to be dominated by MNL

Transitions in the life of an individual or organization provides opportunities for the MNL to gain control.

Vulnerable individuals include idealists, reactionaries, and pilgrims, as well as economically motivated, and persons in search of a savior.

Groups seeking social stability combined with a tradition (authoritarians) anxious to regress to a norm, groups frustrated from lack of social progress (revolutionaries) anxious to transcend to the next level, or groups otherwise imperiled may succumb to MNL influence.

Leaders with psychopathic traits and features of malignant narcissism, like ruthlessness, not only take advantage of chaotic political and social situations, they view them as opportunities...

A dismal aside: About 75 years ago, Hermann Göring, Adolf Hitler's lieutenant, testified at the Nuremberg Court of Appeal, being asked:

- How did you get the German people to accept all this?

He replied:

"It was very easy, it has nothing to do with Nazism, it has something to do with human nature.
You can do it in a Nazi, socialist, communist regime, in a monarchy and even in a democracy.
The only thing that needs to be done to enslave people is to scare them.
If you manage to find a way to scare people, you can make them do what you want."
Ideation of Malignant Narcissists in Leadership

Ideation supportive of narcissistic traits include unconscious, preconscious, or conscious cognition such as:

- “I am an infallible visionary with unlimited scope.”
- “I am a special case.”
- “I know everything.”
- “I alone can solve this problem.”

Elaborating on the leader’s narcissistic defenses:

An irony of the MNL character is the trait-like desire to stand above others — to lord as superior person, a Great Man, a magic entity — while requiring narcissistic supplies and applause from parties who may even witness that he advances himself at the expense of others.

Thus, the destructive leader populates his immediate circle with people who — regardless of their merits — are sycophants, ready to administer pharmaceutical grade blandishments and exculpations, like insulin to a self-esteem diabetic.

When the destructive leader’s ideal self-image is contradicted, his narcissistic injury is bad for everybody.

When failure interrupts the mad chief’s exalted self-image, narcissistic rage will overwhelm his intellect and behavior. For example,

When U.S.-led forces drove Sadam Hussein from Kuwait, the dictator’s dreams of glory collapsed, and he retaliated by burning the nation’s oil fields in an act of catastrophic eco-terrorism. A CIA profiler mused,

If he could not have Kuwait’s oil, then neither could the United States...he was compelled to take action to restore his sense of efficacy and power, defending against passive powerlessness with redemptive and powerful action. (Post, 2015, p.23)
Ideation supportive of criminal traits include:

- “The ends justify the means.”
- “Might makes right.”
- “History demands this.”
- “Nothing I do can be wrong.”
- “Getting what I want is right, because it is me.”

Statements justifying illegalities in service to a greater good emerge from the MNL’s criminal cognitive structure. “We must break the law to preserve it.” It is as if his conscience issues pardons to his ego, which wears the mantle of the ego ideal (ideal self), while issuing indictments even unto reasonable, innocent opposition.

Criminal traits, cont.

Avarice, concupiscence, and envy may comprise the criminal impulse. Remember that Cain’s fratricide was motivated by envy.

The destructive leader will transform crimes into expressions of virtue.

Criminal organizations reflective of criminal leadership include Soviet Russia, the Rajneesh cult, and Enron.

Interestingly, the successful criminality of the corporate sociopath may be attributed to a larger prefrontal cortex than those enjoyed by less neurologically endowed criminals (Gabbard, 2014).

Ideation supportive of ego-syntonic sadistic traits include:

- “This is justice.”
- “They deserve this.”
- “Diseases must be eradicated.”
- “Better them than me.”
- “Injuring them make me feel all-powerful, and I love it.”

Sadism converts the mad leader’s impotence into omnipotence. Wars of aggression & unfriendly takeovers express sadism’s inner alchemy, as does school yard bullying.
Sadism, cont. For such individuals, sadism is genuinely transportive, even therapeutic. It may feed the narcissistic drive to have no limits and ratify grandiose notions of omnipotence.

One physiological explanation is that traumatic learning may have degraded the MNL’s neurochemistry, resulting in low arousal, blue mood, and joylessness.

But a quick visit to the torture chamber, or shooting the children of dissidents in front of their mothers may be a boost to the mood—that puts spring in the boss’s step.

Such sadism can result in euphoria – along with vengeful satisfaction – and a welcome sense of godlike power conferred by homicide and acted-out hatred, feeling the boss in song: “I am superman & I know what’s happening.”

Ideation supportive of paranoid traits include:

- “That group intends to harm us.”
- “No one can be trusted.”
- “They plot against us.”
- “Agents are everywhere.”
- “They threaten to discover weakness I deny to myself.”

Paranoia is especially present in MNLs w apocalyptic world views (eg. millenarian religious leaders, political future gold-age, devastating stock market collapse).

Given that Stalin was a first-class tyrant, mass murderer and torturer of his people, and that he made some huge mistakes, his fears were not altogether unfounded. Stalin was also insecure about his height, pox-marked face, withered arm, questionable past and birth defects, so he was on edge regarding a number of things. The net result of his situation made him paranoid about many little, small, medium and big things. Stalin arrested, shot, imprisoned and tortured millions of people, many of them innocent, and many guilty of merely annoying Stalin’s hatred or suspicion by association with other groups or people. When in doubt, Stalin ousted, arrested, killed, tortured for confession, imprisoned or fired people. They say it did not help to look at him the wrong way. The incredible thing in all this was that he trusted Hitler.

STALIN: PARANOID & REALIST
This excerpt from the *Psychodynamic Diagnostic Manual* could be applied directly to Joseph Stalin:

Because pathologically paranoid individuals tend to have histories marked by felt shame and humiliation, they expect to be humiliated by others and may attack first in order to spare themselves the agony of waiting for the inevitable attack from outside. Their expectation of mistreatment creates the suspiciousness and hypervigilance for which they are noted—attitudes that tend to evoke the hostile and humiliating responses they fear. Their personality is defensively organized around the themes of danger and power (either the persecutory power of others or the megalomaniac power of the self).


The paranoid element of the MNL’s character involves projecting threatening elements of his own mind onto external others. From these protectively identified targets, the leader senses danger, and takes emergency measures to destroy the threats. The destructive leader will defend against their pathological sense of danger with preemptive strikes even against non-aggressors.

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**Thanatological features of MNL**

A person with MNL traits is at **heightened risk** for **homicide** and/or **suicide**.

A mortality **risk exists**, not only for an MNL’s **enemies**, but also for **friends** and **followers**. When Hitler prayed the 6th to the Night of the Long Knives many officer’s last words were “Heil Hitler.”

Any entity or group within the MNL purview may be subject to his death drive.

Thanatological considerations regarding MNL lethality include, but are not limited to, the following:

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**Thanatological features of MNL, cont.**

Ideological dehumanization (read demonization) of others may precede murder, persecution, or genocide.

Because individuals with “malignant narcissism consistently attempt to destroy, symbolically castrate, and dehumanize others, their sadism is often expressed in ideological terms” (Akhtar, 2009, pp.163–164).
Thanatological features of MNL, cont.

Because individuals with MN demonstrate “ego-syntonic suicidal tendencies that do not [always] reflect sadness and inner guilt, but a megalomaniac triumph over the ordinary fear of pain and death” (Akhtar, 2009, p.164), reversals of fortune, threats of accountability, & disruption to the grandiose self, represent credible risk factors for MNL suicide. For the ML, “Death before dishonor” means “I’d rather die with my grandiosity in tact.”

An MNL’s apocalyptic vision, and threats to human life, correlate positively.

A leader self-identified to play a special role in a post-apocalyptic reconstruction may order followers to hasten an apocalypse via mass murder. As was the case in Shoka Asahara’s ordering the poison gas attack on the Tokyo subway system. Prophetic activism can be lethal. See MNP, p. 114.

Equally dangerous, a depressed, defeated, or defiant leader may order the mass suicide of followers to demonstrate apocalyptic triumph over identified “evil” forces, and as fantasized denial of death, in anticipation of heavenly reward.

It is a matter of psychoanalytic wisdom that the trapped malignant narcissist will employ suicide in service to their grandiosity:

They become suicidal during crises and when, as masters of their own fate, they see suicide as something triumphant. (Kernberg in Goldner-Vukov & Moore, 2010, p. 394).

But his defiant self-murder is seldom a success for his legacy, for in the end he is defeated by the very forces, which

—he himself has unleashed. Martin Luther King once wrote that “evil contains the seed of its own destruction” (King, 1986, p. 506).
**Impulse control**

Early career success, attributed to genius, may stem from impulsivity.

Relying on defensive omnipotence rather than hard work, the MNL will “go from the gut” and rush to resolve issues more suitably lent to study and input by experts. MNL’s often discount experts, because experts offend their narcissistic omnipotence. Such a boss is a know-it-all.

Under pressure, the boss’s decision making becomes catastrophically rash, with failure blamed on underlings or conspirators. Poor impulse control regarding public statements, financial propriety, and sexual behavior will undermine MNL credibility.

Substance use, declining health, and psychiatric comorbidities will increase the boss’s impulsivity and lend a chaotic appearance to leadership behavior.

**Gender-related diagnostic issues**

Some controversy exists around MNL and gender. Some experts insist that MNL afflicts only men. For instance, Tudoroiu (2016) writes, “Masculine pronouns are used to designate totalitarian dictators, because no woman has ever occupied such a position” (p. xiii). Such statements, however, may stem from stereotypes which have now deteriorated. We find evidence of malignant narcissism in the leadership styles of Elizabeth Holmes, an egomaniacal American entrepreneur and CEO of Theranos who was indicted for a billion-dollar fraud regarding specialty blood tests that never existed, and Credonia Mwerinde, Ugandan visionary leader of the Movement for the Restoration of the God of the Ten Commandments who was implicated in a mass murder of devotees when her apocalyptic prophecies failed to materialize.

**The Caligula Complex**

Without concern for accountability, the MNL may act upon infantile whims and fantasies, heretofore unimaginable, even for him.

Perverse acts consistent with the Caligula Complex involve cruel and unusual forms of sexual rights violations, extreme torture of a bizarre nature accompanied by sadism, preservation of the frozen remains of executed enemies, forcing of legislators to kill in cold blood colleagues suspected of disloyalty, and cannibalism.

Specific examples of the Caligula Complex are to be found in the biographies of Muammar Gaddafi, Saddam Hussein, and Idi Amin. Manifestations of the Caligula Complex demonstrate that MNL pathology has escalated to an extreme dimension, and that the leader believes that he is scandal-proof, all-powerful, and beyond accountability.
What is the development and course of the ML’s career trajectory?
1. Grandiosity and the ability to employ antisocial tactics provide advantages in securing political power.
2. Political power [is] used to buttress grandiose self-image, defend against external criticism, provide company, [and] bolster splitting and paranoid defenses. Such defenses keep the boss All Good and beyond criticism.
3. But consolidation of absolute power is apt to lead to a vicious cycle:
   a) Orchestrated adulation and friendships feel false [intimating increased paranoia].
   b) Grandiose plans lead to rash behavior; this and ruthless political tactics create new enemies...Think of AH’s ego inflation at the fall of France, leading to the Russian invasion.
   c) Project overreach and [the] creation of new enemies leads to increasing vulnerability, a deepening of paranoid defenses, and volatility in behavior. (Glad, 2002, p. 6)

Other considerations--
Comorbidities—Visions, premonitions, etc. Schizotypal Trait?
The god drive—Not for theists only.
The sacrifice of the followers: power over love, control over vulnerability. The love that might touch the abandonment depression is ever locked out.

Creative illness of the destructive leader. MN&P, p. 46.
Special gifts that credential the MNL to himself and his followers
Sexual life of the MNL—Devlin and I will get to this

Ways to limit the impact of MNL leaders, read MNF, p.51
Public education regarding the signs and symptoms of malignant narcissism is vital to prevention. To increase awareness of destructive leadership and exploitive, high-pressure groups, state departments of health might design programs appropriate to specific...vulnerable populations, and point the public to online resources as well as to vetted, non-partisan consultative services. Boards of directors, management teams, and human resources departments would prophylactically benefit from obligated education related to all dimensions of their legal and ethical fiduciary responsibilities and be provisioned with strategies for identifying and removing destructive and malignant narcissist leaders. Mandated reporting requirements would further decrease the social epidemiological risks related to malignant management and reduce its prevalence.
How does the malignant leader attract devotees to himself?

Some devotees see politics as the art of the possible, and to them the ML looks likely to address their issue, even if he is otherwise repellant.

Brain scans of potential followers show that a malignant leader who is entertaining to them is likely to predict their support over a reasonable leader who is not entertaining.

If the mad leader fits to a culturally attractive image, he is likely to gain power. Vladimir Putin goes to ridiculous lengths to maintain this public image.

How does the malignant leader attract devotees to himself?, cont.

Some followers are cynically attracted to the malignant leader’s dark traits. These are the internet trolls, and those who thrive on others’ misfortunes and humiliations.

Some are attracted to the mad leader’s propaganda, believing that he represents ultimate existential safety. Our hardwiring makes us vulnerable to mad leaders, because he promises safety, and we all want safety.

ML’s fear mongering, reminds us of our mortality, so the mad leader seduces us by promising that he will remove our existential threats. **Terror Management Theory** may explain some of the mechanisms involved.

How does the malignant leader attract devotees to himself?, cont.

Big Lies draw adherents; they buy into the leader’s fabrications.

“If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it.”

—J. Goebbels

A mad leader will gain adherents, if he: 1) points out that social “inferiors” are thriving, while 2) the “superior” group is failing, and 3) presents himself as the leader to restore Thriving v Failing ratios in the favor of his adherents.

Supporters will buy into the mad leader’s agenda, especially if he can make an enemy out of entities to which his adherents lack exposure. Those vulnerable to demagogic race baiting are those who are sheltered from diversity.
Destructive leaders may rely on cult psychology to control members and keep them loyal.

People questioning their lives are vulnerable to someone who claims to possess answers.

ML often identity with an ideal, so idealists may support the ML because he embodies the ideal. Rudolf Hess: “Hitler is Germany and Germany is Hitler.”

Persons with spiritual tendencies may be seduced by the mad leader’s presentation as mysterious and messianic. Fitting a heroic or messianic archetype, the ML will pull spiritual cathexis upon himself. His followers will literally see him as a god or god’s gift.

Destructive leaders may rely on cult psychology to control members and keep them loyal, cont.

Similarly, the ML depicts challenges to him as a kind of cosmic wrong, which will result in catastrophe for the challenger, whether shunning, litigation, excommunication, imprisonment, or hell.

Cult leaders and their organizations reinforce a false sense of importance among constituents. Love bombing is part of this.

So is flattering them for behaviors consistent with the ML’s agenda. If followers, for example, illegally sack a government building on behalf their leader, he might tell them he loves them. Or he might extoll their criminal behavior as patriotic, or a courageous expression of free speech. His flattery draws their cathexis.

Destructive leaders may rely on cult psychology to control members and keep them loyal, cont.

Adherents stay loyal, because the ML convinces them that without him an ultimate value will never be actualized, whether it be family values, eternal life, endless wealth, or Workers Paradise. Such notions as American Exceptionalism or DEUCHLAND UBER ALLES are values ripe for Ideal Mongering.

Mad leaders gain control of followers through collective slogans, chanting, sleep deprivation, and food restriction.