Malignant Pied Pipers of Our Time **by Peter A. Olsson, M.D., Publish America, Baltimore, 2005, 205 pages with index included. 177 pages.**

The author provides a psychological study of destructive cult leaders from Jim Jones to Osama bin Laden, including studies of Jim Jones, David Koresh, Charlie Manson, Shoko Asahara, Marshall Applewhite, Luc Jouret, Joe DiMambro. The book is well researched with many references summarized in the "Works Consulted" section. The author has also drawn on his personal experiences in treating victims of destructive cults for more than 20 years. The title is taken from the legend of the Pied Piper of Hamelin and Olsson notes that the death toll from destructive cults over the last 30 years has reached at least 1,168. This does not include other destructive aspects affecting families and victims.

The author utilizes a psychoanalytic framework encompassing the concepts of Narcissistic Personality Disorder and Malignant Narcissism. While some readers might object to his use of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-IV* he notes ". . . this is not a clinical use of DSM, but rather the applied psychiatric use to order the data about Malignant Pied Pipers that I describe in my methodology discussion."

Olsson describes the consistency of personality traits in destructive cult leaders with remarkable detail and solid scientific foundation. The book is exciting to read as one learns of the "behind the scenes" details of these cult leaders and their developmental deficits. Their psychopathology is remarkably consistent. The section on Osama bin Laden provides valuable insight into this man and his followers in a coherent way, far beyond anything we find in the media—with some fresh psychoanalytic understanding. The material presented regarding cult leaders is nonjudgmental and refreshingly direct. I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in the subject. One would hope that law enforcement and government leaders would study it.

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