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I Know Best: How Moral Narcissism Is Destroying Our Republic, If It Hasn't Already



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ROGER L. SIMON



Synopsis

In 1979, Christopher Lasch published the epochal *The Culture of Narcissism* warning of the normalizing of narcissism in our society. Lasch may have understated it. 35 years later, in the Obama era—with its parade of endless, often inexplicable, scandals—we have a full blown epidemic of what has recently been called Moral Narcissism. Forget Narcissus and his reflection, Moral Narcissism—the almost schizophrenic divide between intentions and results now pervading our culture—is the new method for feeling good about yourself. It no longer matters how anything turns out as long as your intentions were good, that you were “moral.” And, just as importantly, the only determinant of those intentions, the only one who defines that morality, is you. *I Know Best* goes beyond Lasch to lay bare how this moral narcissism is behind all those scandals from Obamacare to the Veteran’s Administration to the IRS, Benghazi, Bergdahl, Syria and beyond. Everything the Obama administration did and does was about making them feel good about themselves—the results be damned. And they have as their allies those supreme moral narcissists in the academy, media and Hollywood, ever willing to ratify those good intentions and ignore those same results. But *I Know Best* is not just about the Left. Moral Narcissism affects the right as well, even when they don’t realize it. It is a true epidemic that must be cured in order to save our democratic republic and our futures.

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Customer Reviews

As all recent readers of Christopher Lasch's *The Culture of Narcissism* (1979) are aware, Lasch's arguments (and even many of his examples) are as compelling today as they were nearly four decades ago. One of his key points was the abdication of responsibility for our own lives and our turning to "professionals" to do things (parenting, e.g.) for us. Richard Hofstadter drew an important distinction between individuals with curiosity and wisdom and those with specific "knowledge". Thus, our society is ruled by technocrats rather than individuals imbued with the principles of the renaissance and the enlightenment, in short, individuals like our founding fathers. Since technocrats and bureaucrats proliferate, our abdication of personal responsibility leads to an expanded state. That state may not be particularly efficient but it is extremely skilled at managing behavior by inculcating ideological principles that can be used to label, to shame and to ostracize. We call them the norms of "political correctness". Enter Roger Simon, whose central point is that our self-perceived betters control us and shape our behavior by advocating ego-building "moral" postures to which all good people must adhere, lest they be termed racist, sexist, ageist, ableist, homophobic or whatever. While these postures may lead us to believe that we are morally superior they do not necessarily lead to effective public policy. They may not, crucially, enhance our lives and the lives of our fellow citizens. In fact, there is little consideration given to whether or not these postures actually "work"; their purpose is simply to make our betters feel morally superior and create in us a desperate fear that if we do not kowtow to our betters our lives will be ruined.

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