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The "Toxic" Era

Civilization's New Affliction

Author: Clotilde Leguil

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An essay on civilization's latest affliction.

Since the last century, the meaning of the word "toxic" seems to have shifted. We have, as a society, moved from a strict sense relating to all kinds of narcotics and intoxication to a more metaphorical one. What is this new "toxicity" that has infiltrated our relationships and institutions, slipping into the cracks of the world between words and things, speaking to our fragility and anxieties? Clotilde Leguil invokes Lacan to explore this new hubris: the toxic dimension of the contemporary superego and the debauchery of pleasure when it forgets desire.

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