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Apocalypse Now? Barbarism and Psychoanalysis: Introducing the Apocalypse

The genesis of this set of three articles is to be found three years in the past, in a Parisian café amidst an enormous gathering of children protesting proposed cuts by the government of François Hollande. Néstor Braunstein had suggested that I meet with Daniel Koren, a close colleague of his, while I was visiting the French capital. Our meeting marked the beginning of a fruitful exchange that has resulted in the following conversation, undertaken in three parts.

At the time, I had been reading a fair amount of work by Charles Melman and his close collaborator J.P. Lebrun. Their ideas regarding new psychical economies, new subjects and the ominous implications for the clinic and the social sphere, *seemed* to accord with some of my experiences as a psychoanalyst in California. As I spoke to Koren about this, he noted that he had engaged in several valuable public discussions with J.P. Lebrun on these very issues, and while he shared many of Lebrun and Melman's concerns, he had reached rather different conclusions than they had.

I thought it would prove useful to have an exchange regarding these issues within the pages of the *European Journal of Psychoanalysis*, in the hopes that it might provoke further reflection and commentary by others interested in this interplay between the subjective and the social. The three articles that follow constitute the beginning of a conversation that we hope will continue in EJP and elsewhere.

We begin with J.P. Lebrun's epigrammatic *The 21st Century Will be Lacanian or It Will be Barbarian!* [1] Originally published in www.lacaninireland.com in Summer/Autumn of 2000, it brings forth in a dynamic manner, some of the main concerns that have animated the work of both Melman and Lebrun. While both authors have gone on to further develop their arguments, this early work by Lebrun nicely captures the portentous thread that runs throughout their collective work.

We continue the conversation with Daniel Koren's lengthy and accomplished response to Lebrun's article, *On an Apocalyptic Tone Adopted Today in Psychoanalysis*. [2] Addressing not only Lebrun's article, but the larger implications of Melman and Lebrun's collective oeuvre, Koren endeavors to deepen the inquiry and arrives at significant conclusions that have direct relevance for the clinic and the place of psychoanalysis in a world riven by unremitting social and technological transformations.

In the final article, *Apocalypse Now?: Preliminary Notes on Barbarism, Psychoanalysis and the Subject under the Sign of Trump* [3], I respond to both Lebrun and Koren by grounding the discussion in my clinical experience in California, particularly as it relates to the discourse of the Capitalist. In response to my musings in Paris three years ago and in contradistinction to what Lebrun and Melman have posited in their many works, I assert that we are *not* witnessing the birth of "new" pathologies or new/neo-subjects. Instead, I argue that the discourse(s) the subject is implicated in have undergone exchange, and the relationships between discourses have likewise been transformed.

Again, we reiterate our hope that the following discussion brings others to the table. The juncture/disjuncture of the subjective and the social has animated and baffled many a psychoanalyst. This set of three articles is only the latest intervention in a long line of considerations that began with Freud and continue into a nebulous and always fraught future.

Notes:

[1] <https://www.journal-psychoanalysis.eu/the-21st-century-will-be-lacanian-or-it-will-be-barbarian-1/>

[2] <https://www.journal-psychoanalysis.eu/on-an-apocalyptic-tone-adopted-today-in-psychoanalysis/>

[3] <https://www.journal-psychoanalysis.eu/apocalypse-now?-preliminary-notes-on-barbarism-psychoanalysis-and-the-subject-under-the-sign-of-trump/>

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