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The consequence of traditional understanding of psyche and nature for the environmental and psychological problems Toshio Kawai^{*}

Abstract

From a historical perspective, psyche is seen to have changed from an open system in the premodern time to a closed one in modern time. This has brought a separation of nature and psyche; Science has the nature as object, psychology only copes with the inside of person. The process of internalization seems to be changing in the postmodern time. The inner life is shown to all over the world via internet, twitter, etc. Psyche is again becoming an open system. To have some hints on contemporary situation Japanese culture and history are compared. There still remains premodern understanding of psyche and nature in Japan. But Japanese art such as gardening and ikebana show that a unique process of internalization has happened by way of making exquisite miniatures of nature. There is a growing tendency in the postmodern age not to decide and to be involved. This can be called a "contingent" attitude (Agamben). According to the modern understanding of psyche, psyche and environment are separated. But the postmodern situation makes again a world possible where everything is connected. This may be a chance to contribute to global and environmental problems from the psychotherapy.

Key words: Internalization, premodern, postmodern, contingent, sandplay, art

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Riassunto. L'influsso della visione tradizionale della psiche e della natura sui problemi ambientali e psicologici

Da una prospettiva storica sembra che la psiche sia passata da un sistema aperto a uno chiuso nei tempi moderni. Ne è derivata una separazione tra natura e psiche: mentre la scienza ha come oggetto la natura, la psicologia sembra occuparsi solo dell'interiorità della persona. Con la post-modernità il processo di interiorizzazione è cambiato: la vita interiore viene esibita in tutto il mondo tramite internet, Twitter, ecc. La psiche sta ridiventando un sistema aperto. Per riflettere sulla situazione contemporanea, l'autore analizza la cultura e la storia del Giappone, paese nel quale la visione premoderna della psiche e della natura è ancora in voga. Ma le arti giapponesi come il giardinaggio e l'ikebana mostrano che il processo di interiorizzazione è avvenuto creando raffinate miniaturizzazioni della natura. Nell'era postmoderna sta crescendo la tendenza a non decidere e a non essere coinvolti, con un atteggiamento che potremmo definire "contingente" (Agamben). Secondo la moderna interpretazione della psiche, psiche e ambiente sono separati. Ma la situazione postmoderna rende nuovamente possibile un mondo in cui tutto sia connesso. Questa potrebbe essere l'occasione per la psicoterapia di fornire il proprio contributo ai problemi globali e ambientali.

Parole chiave: Internalizzazione, premoderno, postmoderno, contingente, sandplay, arte

The theme of this conference is psyche and environment. I would like to approach this theme from historical and cultural perspectives. Born in Japan, I have spent in total more than ten years in Switzerland and I was trained there as Jungian Analyst. When I came back to Japan and started to work there as analyst, I notice that what I learned and practiced in Zurich and Lugano was not directly applicable in Japan. So, I am quite aware of the cultural differences which have historical backgrounds. I noticed that even the cultural difference between German speaking and Italian speaking part of Switzerland is not small. My recent experiences in the IAAP with various parts of the world have made me even more and more aware of cultural differences.

As psychotherapist, we are interested in the psyche because of its sufferings and problems. Without the psychological crisis of C.G. Jung who had overwhelming visions just before the First World War and was afraid of the onset of the psychosis, and his confrontation with the unconscious, Analytical Psychology would not have come into being. In the same manner I would like to cope with our theme in reference to its problem, namely environmental and psychological problems.

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Premodern understanding of psyche

Concerning the historicity of psyche, we can say that it is mainly an occidental development in the history. In other words, many parts of the world outside of Western European and North American countries still keep the premodern understanding of psyche to some degree.

From a historical perspective, psyche is seen to have changed in Europe from an open system in the premodern age to a closed one in modern age, that is, from being connected to all – including nature and the other world – to being contained in each individual. This has brought a change in the relationship to the nature from protecting Mother Nature to the object of human beings. In order to explain the premodern understanding of psyche, I would like to refer to the Discovery of the unconscious by Henri Ellenberger (1970). In this famous and comprehensive book Ellenberger tried to show how modern dynamic psychotherapy has its long historical background and its historical ancestors in ancient and premodern healing techniques. As an example of the premodern understanding of psyche and healing technique I would like to mention the experience of a German ethnologist Adolf Bastian (Ibidem, p. 4). He had a severe headache and fever when he was making a research in Giana in South America. He decided to consult a local medicine man. When he came to the healer, around 30 indigenous people were waiting for him in order to take part in the healing ritual. The ritual lasted several hours. After the ritual the medicine man showed a caterpillar which was explained as the cause of illness and taken out of Bastian's forehead.

This healing ritual illustrates the characteristics of the premodern understanding of psyche. Firstly, there is no difference between physical and psychological disease. Although Bastian had a physical symptom, the healing technique was not physical but psychological or magical. Secondly, while modern psychotherapy focuses on the individual client in a closed space, the symptom and its healing here are shared by the group, by the community. In this sense psyche is not closed and separated from body and community, but open to them. Thirdly, psyche is not only open to the body and the community, but also to the nature. After the ritual the healer showed a caterpillar which should have intruded into Bastian's body and caused illness. A caterpillar or an animal spirit can possess a person and cause an illness. Accordingly, psyche is even open to the spiritual dimension of the other world. In these various dimensions the psyche in the premodern understanding is an open system. Based on this understanding the reason of illness was regarded either as possession by an evil spirit or as loss of one's own soul (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 40). Something evil can enter my soul or my soul can be lost to somewhere. The healing consists in either getting rid of the foreign substance

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or finding the lost soul. These two types correspond to the shamanistic possession and ecstasy.

This understanding of psyche was probably also valid in Europe before the Christianity. I will show you an example, not a case of illness and its healing, but that of a crime and the execution of the criminal. In Germany, still in medieval times, a thief or a robber was hanged on an Oak tree (Abe, 1978, p.49). Because the Oak tree symbolized Wotan who was also a trickster, the execution did not mean a punishment based on the individual responsibility, but a ritual dedicated to Wotan to recover the disturbed order of whole community and nature. As in the case of healing of illness, the focus was not the individual person, but the whole community and nature. That is why the hanged person was liberated, when he or she had not died by chance in spite of being hanged.

We can still notice a reminiscence of the reciprocal relationship between human world and the other world today in case of Halloween or All Saints Day in Europe and North America. This is based on the Celtic festival "Samhain" which announces the end of summer and the beginning of a new year. The border to the other world opens up on this day, or night, and the dead comes back from the other world to this world. The cookies children demand is secularized form of offerings to the dead. Some experiences of Jung, haunted dead reported in *Septem Sermones ad Muortos (Seven Sermons to the Dead)* (Jung, 1963, p. 215) and joyful music and dancing Jung experienced in the train right after the death of his mother and despite of his deep sorrow (ibid, p. 345), can be understood as reminiscence of the premodern relationship and habit with the dead.

Modern understanding of psyche and internalization

In modern Europe, "internalization" of psyche occurred under the influence of Christianity and Cartesian philosophy. I will not present this part following the whole history in detail but show three paradigmatic examples to illustrate the decisive change in the concept of psyche.

I quote a passage from Gospel of Matthew:

And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you (Matthew 6. 5-6).

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These words emphasize the internal mind of the individual by recommending praying alone in secret. This attitude stands in sharp contrast to the premodern religious ritual in which the whole community has to take part in.

The second example is *Libri Poenitentiales* (Penitential canons). They define penances for committing various sins. You can read there how often the belief in animated nature is negated by a monothetic God. But these books also make us understand that it has been a long historical process, a kind of working through in psychoanalytic sense, to deny the idea of animated nature and psyche as open system again and again. This process of robbing soul of nature entailed Cartesian philosophy. Descartes doubted the existence of everything. In the premodern understanding everything exists because it has its own soul. The skepticism of Descartes is denial of the soul which belongs to everything, which led to the establishment of I and separation of psyche and body.

The third example has to do with the change of meaning of mask. As Giegerich's paper *The lesson of the mask* (Giegerich, 2005) shows masks had revealed the faces of gods to the ancients. This is still true in many parts of the world. The mask does not hide but reveals the deity and truth. But the mask has become a tool for concealing what existed inside the wearers. Jung's understanding of mask as persona which hides the true personality inside corresponds very well to the concept of modern, internalized psyche.

The internalization of psyche and disenchantment of nature have brought changes in both parts. On the part of nature, this led to the development of natural science and technology which observe and manipulate nature as object. Nature is not containing and powerful mother nature anymore, but the object of human observations and actions. The idea of nature conservation which seems to be a countermovement to science and technology is in fact their conspirator because it regards nature as object to be protected and hence takes its power away.

On the part of psyche this gave birth to psychology which explores the internal world of the subject, of the human individual. Psychotherapy, which deals with individual psyche, can be understood to have resulted from these changes. In case of premodern understanding of psyche there were possession from outside and loss of soul to outer world. But what had previously been perceived as demonic possessions and spiritual phenomena from outside came to be recognized as symptoms of dissociative disorders belonging to individuals. It is worth mentioning that Jung was involved with the cases of possession, so-called occult phenomena in his dissertation (Jung, 1902/1983). This means that Jung was struggling with the transition from premodern to modern understanding of psyche. In any case modern psychotherapy tries to solve the problem as inner conflict such as conflict between ego and dissociated unconscious personality.

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In reference to the theme of the conference, it seems to be important to notice that psyche and environment are totally separated in the modern understanding of psyche. This makes an involvement with outer reality difficult for psychology because only the inner world of subject is assigned to modern psychology as its field. Analytical Psychology of Jung is a bit exceptional because it emphasizes the collective strata of psyche. But as in the case of interpretation of mask, it is also clearly based on modern understanding of psyche. It means so to say a compromise of modern psychology and premodern world view. This is probably why Analytical Psychology is generally not popular anymore in Western Europe and North America but in Eastern Europe, Latin America and East Asia where the premodern understanding of psyche is somehow still alive. I will come back to this point later.

Postmodern change to psyche?

The modern understanding of psyche as interiority belongs not only to the Occidental contexts but asserts its universality and globality all over the world, which is tightly correlated with the universality of natural science and global economic system. But as the split between psyche and environment shows, the idea of modern internalization has its conceptual problem. Furthermore, this model seems to be not valid anymore in contemporary reality.

The process of internalization seems to be changing in recent years. The modern idea of conquering, manipulating and controlling environment is questionable in face of global warming, environmental pollution and dominance of economic, political and technological system. Science and technology are not controlled by human beings anymore but have their own autonomy. If you use *Facebook* you cannot search information by your own initiative and choice, but you find it in your Newsfeed automatically. Online shopping such as Amazon recommends you which books to buy and read. In modern understanding of psyche, it should be the human subject which actively observes the nature and produces something out of it. But this paradigm seems to be obsolete, out of date. Now the technology or global system is the true subject which leads and makes the decision. Each individual does not keep his or her own inner secret but his or her information is totally open to the world.

In face of this somewhat terrifying tendency we seem to be joyfully welcoming the change. While, for example, the diary is based on the idea of modern, individual internal psyche, people now tend to show their personal lives to all over the world via internet, twitter, Instagram etc. In my school age it was a big scandal and trauma, if the diary was read by the parents. But this does not seem to be a big psychological issue anymore.

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While the internalization of psyche is a typical modern process, we may call this new changes postmodern (Kawai, 2006). While the premodern psyche was open to the community and nature and shared in the community, the modern psyche is internal and is enclosed in the individual. But psyche is again becoming an open system as it was the case in premodern times. Concerning environment, I mentioned that nature, technology and economic system have become uncontrollable agency to which human being are subjected to in the postmodern times. The transition from the modern to postmodern times has also brought changes for psychology and psychotherapy.

The internalized psyche has a strong subject in the center. That is why the subject can observe and control outer world on one hand and face inner other on the other hand. Analytical Psychology is also based on this model because it tries to confront with inner figures which appear as images in dreams and imagination. But as the examples of FB and Instagram show, modern idea of agentic ego or subject is not anymore valid. This may be reflected to the prevalence of dissociative disorder and autistic spectrum disorder in recent years.

There are many epidemiological researches which prove the increase of ASD patients all over the world (cfr. Croen *et al.*, 2002, Kim *et al.*, 2011). The autism was discovered independently by Leo Kanner (1943) and Hans Asperger (1944). It is important to notice that this symptom was recognized relatively late in the history of modern psychiatry in comparison with other psychotic symptoms. Emil Kraepelin classified the psychosis in dementia praecox (schizophrenia) and manic-depressive disease (bipolar disorder) in second half of 19th century. This late discovery indicates that the ASD has to do with the historical development and contemporary state of psyche.

I cannot go into the detail, but our therapeutic research showed that the key problem of ASD can be regarded as "lack of subject" (Kawai, 2009), weakness of agency. While a conventional psychotherapy presupposes the existence of subject, a therapy which makes the emergence of subject possible is needed. Both in psychotherapy and relationship with nature and technology we need a new paradigm, a new relationship between psyche and environment.

Cultural differences

The process of internalization of psyche is a specific Western one that, however, insists on its universality and globality. Many parts of the world still keep the premodern understanding of psyche but have to cope with the global standard of contemporary technology and economics.

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For example, in Bali island of Indonesia which is dominated by the traditional Hindu religion, people have to make a funeral ritual whenever they discard their belongings, even modern industrial products. You cannot simply scrap your car, but you need to make a funeral for it before the end of its use. This is because they live with the worldview in which everything is animated and has its own soul. I heard from Jungian analyst Carlo Melodia (2015), who has been involved with the training of Analytical Psychology in Malta, that people there interpreted their dreams in terms of saints: This figure in this dream is manifestation of St. Marco etc. This attitude is not at all monotheistic, but polytheistic, which is based on the premodern understanding of psyche. In this sense the transition from the premodern to the modern is gradual and there is a kind of spectrum of psyche.

Keeping premodern worldview can cause difficulties and conflicts with contemporary technology and economic system. But it may bring some suggestions to cope with the difficulty contemporary world is facing in postmodern time.

Premodern understanding of psyche and its internalization in Japan

To have some hints on contemporary situation of psyche and environment, I would like to focus on premodern understanding of psyche and its internalization in Japan first. In spite of highly developed science and technology there still remains premodern understanding of psyche and nature in Japan. People still live with the implicit understanding of psyche that everything has its own soul. When, for example, needles cannot be used, you have to bring them to certain temples where the funeral for unused needles are held on certain days. This kind of habit is not only valid for traditional tools, but also for industrial products. In an early work of famous Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami *Pinball, 1973* (Murakami, 1980/2016) the protagonist holds a funeral for a switch panel. The protagonist in this novel said, «Rest in peace, ye switch panel, at the bottom of this reservoir». And threw it down to the reservoir.

The soul is respected even in case of harmful insects. The picture shows a grave for termites, white ants, offered by a company which exterminates termites. So even the task of this company is to kill termites, their soul has to be respected. There is a Japanese saying: "Even a one-inch worm has a half soul". But this does not mean that the process of internalization has not happened at all in Japan but has followed a unique path of internalization, different from a Western way of internalization. Japanese traditional art such as gardening and ikebana (flower arrangement) tries to create a work of art

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by taking parts of the natural environment and making exquisite miniatures of them. This procedure can also be regarded as examples of the specific type of internalization that has unfolded in this country. Such an internalization of nature was introduced in the medieval times of Japan.

We can compare Japanese way of internalization by art with that of alchemy in Europe. In case of alchemy, the material in the flask is observed by a human subject as object. The material is transformed by the actions of alchemist. In comparison with alchemy, the nature in the Japanese garden or flower arrangement remains nature, no drastic transformation happens. The differentiation between the human subject and garden is not clear, nor the differentiation between garden and surrounding nature. While the alchemy has its goal of making gold, which led to goal-oriented science, the objective of Japanese internalization is aesthetical, not ethical. In this context it is interesting to recall Jung's struggle against the voice "It is art" when he was drafting the *Red Book* (Jung, 1963, p. 210). His psychology which derives from the alchemy should not be art. But Analytical Psychology in Japan stands much closer to art.

Analytical Psychology is very popular in Japan, especially in the form of sandplay therapy. This probably does not mean that Analytical Psychology works in Japan by way of self-relation, relationship between ego and the unconscious, but it is based on its special way of internalization. Sandplay therapy is effective and popular in Japan because of internalized nature as miniature. I would say that Analytical Psychology needs an access to the premodern strata of psyche in some way.

In short, Japan appears to have experienced internalization in a mild way that are reflective of its own unique culture, and that do not share Western civilization's tendency to control and reject nature. This has led to the attitude that accepts even the industrial products as part of nature and as animated things, which explains the scene of funeral of switch panel in Murakami's novel. People are not so much alienated from technological world as in Western world. The premodern understanding of psyche seems to have led directly to the postmodern understanding of the world.

This attitude of being connected to all including not only nature but artificial things may be helpful to live in the postmodern world. On the other hand there lurks a danger in this attitude because it is too passive and dependent on the automatic development of technology. I will go into the attitude of passiveness in the next section.

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Contingency

Our research team showed that the ASD had to do with the weakness of subject. Our analysis of postmodern situation concerning internet, especially SNS and online sales, showed that it is getting difficult to have an agentic subject. Many young people in Japan don't go to school, don't go to work, don't select partner etc. There are, for example more than 140,000 pupils who do not attend the school. The indeterminate condition of not attending school, not finding job and remaining home looks similar to the symptoms of ASD which is characterized by the lack of agency. In this sense the prevalence of ASD is partly culturally and historically conditioned.

The tendency toward an indeterminate state is not only limited to Japan but seems to be a global tendency. Even in the USA more and more young people remain in parents' home (Krieg, 2016). But what is the difference between cultural and pathological way of avoiding the agency? I would like to explain this situation referring to Herman Melville's novel *Bartleby, The Scrivener* and its interpretation by Giorgio Agamben (1999). Here I owe my discussion to the explanation of Japanese sociologist Masachi Osawa.

Bartleby is a kind of clerk, a copyist, «who obstinately refuses to go on doing the sort of writing demanded of him». Whenever he is requested to do a work, He says "I would prefer not to". This attitude of non-doing and non-commitment seems to be characteristic for the contemporary, postmodern world.

Agamben classifies 4 categories following "Elements of natural right" by Leibniz. He summarizes the figures of modality as follows:

Possible	Can	Do (or be true)
Impossible	Cannot	do
Necessary	Cannot	do
Contingent	Can	Not do (able not to do)

I will not go into the complicated theological questions here. The premodern world seemed to be dominated by the logic of necessity: You have your life and fate which cannot be avoided. For example, the profession and social class in the premodern world belonged to the category of necessity.

The modern age has been dominated by the axis of possible and impossible. One is not any more under the dominance of necessity and has freedom to choose and seek something. For example, your profession is not determined by the family and social class, but one can choose one's own profession as one wishes. In this sense one has a desire to get and realize something that is, however, very often impossible. The psychology of Jacque Lacan can be situated here. One has a desire for an object which is impossible at the end.

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The dominating logic of contemporary, postmodern world seems to be the logic of contingent, which is shown in the way of Bartleby: I would prefer not to. With the possibility of not doing and not choosing, it keeps away from being involved: I don't choose my partner, my job.

Chihiro Hatanaka (2016) compared the responses of students of 2013 with those of 2003 to Rorschach test. The group of 2013 showed significantly more "undefined response" than the group of 2003. A undefined response means, for example: "a kind of animal" instead of determinate response such as "wolf" or "dog", or changing response such as "a lion? A cat? I don't know…". Her previous paper (Hatanaka, 2013) showed that the ASD patients made statistically more undefined responses than normal group, which indicated the weak agency and tendency to remain in the indeterminate state among ASD patients. But this second paper suggested that there is growing tendency to keep the indeterminate state among normal people. The logic of contingency seems to be dominating more and more in the postmodern age.

In this context we have to distinguish between a pathological and historical-cultural contingency. In case of ASD patients they cannot decide and choose something because of lack of subject or agency. In case of normal students there seems to be a tendency to actively avoid choosing something. So, this does not simply mean a lack of agency.

This attitude can be described as actively passive. In face of scientific and technological development, this attitude can be indicative. We can sometimes use a new technological development, but sometimes not.

Psychological difference and network

I wonder if this attitude of contingency is good enough for postmodern time. This takes distance from the contemporary tendency but cannot bring any change to it. Novels of Haruki Murakami give us some hints in the connection. In his early works detachment is the key word for the atmosphere and the protagonist of his novels. For example, the protagonist of the million seller *The Norwegian Woods* (Murakami, 1987) lives in the period of student movements. While his classmates have a politically active and intensive life, he has no political ideal and is totally detached from the social activities. He encounters people accidentally, becomes involved with them and then separates from them again. In the background of his novels there is very often a political and dark power which is dominant and destructive. The protagonist is totally at the mercy of this power. This can be described as the attitude of contingency.

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The basic attitude of detachment changed with the novel *The wind-up bird* chronicle (Murakami, 1995). The protagonist who was very passive at the beginning of the story suddenly started to fight against the political, dark power. This change of attitude was called "from detachment to commitment". It is interesting to notice that there happens a sudden emergence of subject in case of successful therapy with an ASD patient. But in case of 1Q84 (Murakami, 2010) the level of the sacred and power on one hand and that of human relationship on the other hand is differentiated. So human love is accomplished while the problem of the sacred and power seems to be unsolved.

We can understand the differentiation in the novel *1Q84* as a psychological difference. Jung wrote that the relationship between King and Queen in the alchemical vase should be differentiated from that of alchemist and his assistant, *sorror mystica* (Jung, 1946). I would like to cope with the problematics of psychological difference in reference to my experience with the psychological relief work after the 2011 earthquake (Kawai, 2016). This overwhelming earthquake killed more than 15,000 people, more than 2,500 are still missing mostly because of the devastating tsunami. The danger of radiation from Fukushima power plant is still continuing. I have been involved with the psychological care, especially with the care and supervision of care takers.

Right after the earthquake most people were shocked and were thrown into quasi psychotic crisis. But as the word resilience signifies most people could recover from a confused metal condition after three or four months. It was interesting to notice that many people started to talk about their terrible experience and to have nightmares in that timing. This is the period of natural recovery and of psychological reflection and digestion of the disaster. After this period some started to have psychological problems which have very little to do with the natural disaster directly, such as those of relationship with parents and partner, conflict at their working places. But those who could focus on such concrete problems could recover from their psychological crises.

Some who were mainly troubled by the shocking results of the earthquake such as death of family members and destruction of houses had difficulty to recover. My conclusion was that psychotherapy had to do with small stories and that those who could find and cope with small stories could recover. Who tried to and was compelled to confront with the big story directly had a difficulty.

Following the modern concept of psyche there is a discrepancy between psyche and environment. Psychotherapy has only to do with the personal psyche, a direct action to the environment is either impossible or ends up with acting out.

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But in the postmodern understanding of psyche everything is again open and connected. Without jumping to the whole in an abstract way, it would be important to focus on small stories which, however, are woven to a network and could eventually bring a change to the whole. With this idea in mind I try to work in therapeutic work every day and hope to reach the other dimension which is not separate from concrete works.

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