

Social Withdrawal and Mental Disorders in Post-Pandemic Times

24th and 25th June, 2024

Teikyo University Kasumigaseki Campus, The University of Tokyo Komaba Campus

Abstracts

Day 1 (24th June)

10:15-11:15

Joff P. N. Bradley (Teikyo University)

"Lain(g)uattari: What has happened to radical philosophy and psychiatry?"

This paper engages in a speculative dialogue between Felix Guattari and R.D. Laing, drawing inspiration from their historical encounters and contrasting perspectives on anti-psychiatry, mental illness, psychotherapy, and schizophrenia. Despite their interactions at conferences and gatherings in the late 1960s/1970s, and meetings in Brussels and Paris, tensions persisted, notably Laing's evident dissatisfaction with Guattari's apparent pseudo-psychiatry. From Laing's perspective, Guattari's association with the La Borde clinic underscores the prevalence of a philosophically-influenced (Lacan) version of institutional psychotherapy, diverging from the individual-focused medical approach in British psychiatry. Within this dialogue, I will explore Guattari's and Laing's distinct viewpoints on family dynamics, institutional analysis, psychotherapy, and the philosophical debt of Deleuze. At the heart of this paper lies an investigation into the relationship between capitalism and schizophrenia, challenging the present-day relevance of the terms. I am asking whether it makes any sense to use the word schizophrenia anymore.

11:15-12:15

Petr Kouba (Czech Academy of Sciences, Institute of Philosophy)

"Gender and Gender Dysphoria in Post-pandemic Times"

In the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated measures of social isolation, we are witnessing a massive increase in gender dysphoria among young people and adolescents. This paper aims to explore the conditions of possibility for gender dysphoria and outline an understanding, empathetic approach to it. Methodologically, the paper draws on Heidegger's conception of human corporeality, within which it seeks to reflect on the distinction between sexual identity and gender identity as well as the problem of gender dysphoria. The perspective of developmental psychology, whose phenomenological grasp is still lacking, is also taken into account.

13:30-14:30

Akihiro Miyata (The University of Tokyo)

"Rethinking Watsuji's *Rinrigaku* (Ethics) in regard to *hikikomori*"

In this presentation, I will critically examine Watsuji Tetsuro's theory of ethics by referring to some narratives of *hikikomori* (social withdrawal). Watsuji's main work, *Rinrigaku* (Ethics), proposes the concept of "aidagara" (in-betweenness) and attempts to overcome the individualistic tendencies that he sees prevalent in Western thought. His hermeneutical methodology seeks to reveal the ground principle of human existence, not through individualistic meditation or reflection on one's consciousness, but through interpreting our everyday lives as expressions of our fundamental and collective understanding of human existence.

Watsuji's ethics has been criticized for its totalitarian tendencies and its view of our "everyday lives" as a self-evident and quasi-absolute condition of human lives. Considering "hikikomori" in this context, we can see it as a form of rejection against those "everyday lives" and the "aidagara" that are situated in the totalitarian society as Watsuji describes them. Watsuji's ethical theory thus confronts the question of what kinds of "aidagara" those experiencing "hikikomori" inhabit. By exploring this question, we are prompted to reconsider our society's inclusivity fundamentally.

Today, some individuals share their experiences of "hikikomori," providing an opportunity for us to read these narratives. How can we interpret and understand these as expressions of "aidagara"? What is the nature of the "aidagara" between us and those who do not express their experiences in such narratives? By examining several narratives, I aim to explore these questions and engage in a critical dialogue with Watsuji's ethical theory, hoping to gain a deeper understanding of our society's inclusivity and ethical dimensions.

14:30-15:30

Martin Nitsche (Czech Academy of Sciences, Institute of Philosophy)

"Topology of Solitude: Multisensory Immersion and Mental Diving"

In my talk at the "Social Withdrawal and Mental Disorders in Post-Pandemic Times" conference I will focus how the sensory domain of solitary life is constituted within social withdrawal. I will ask: 1. How can social withdrawal be interpreted methodologically by

analogy with phenomenological reduction? 2. How does social withdrawal constitute the multisensory milieu of solitary life? 3. why this domain can be sufficiently sensorily rich - to the point of creating an environment for a satisfying solitary life. 4. How can this domain also provide the paradoxical possibility of social life? 5. How can the dangerous temptation to live solitary life be explained phenomenologically? – So, please, understand the discussion of the phenomenological and acousmatic reductions as a case study for a broader methodological problem. How can phenomenological reduction help to understand what social withdrawal brings in terms of the lived sensory milieu?)

Day 2 (25th June)

14:00-15:00

Petr Prášek (Czech Academy of Sciences, Institute of Philosophy)

“Henri Maldiney’s description of the most original layer of human sociality: Kimura’s aida and Binswanger’s common presence”

Henri Maldiney’s description of the most original layer of human sociality: Kimura’s aida and Binswanger’s common presence Abstract: In my presentation, I will primarily deal with Henri Maldiney’s notion of common space or common presence, which constitutes the most original layer of human sociality. With regard to this notion, I will try to indicate in what sense social withdrawal might have a positive meaning: it seems that it might be a spontaneous act of existence that attempts to save it from what Maldiney, in the footsteps of Kimura, calls the depressive sociality of the everyday. Finally, I will ask whether such withdrawal might not also be the case for hikikomori patients.

15:00-16:00

Koichiro Kokubun (The University of Tokyo)

"Middle Voice and Time: On Bin Kimura’s concept of *Koto* and *Mono*"

The middle voice is a grammatical category that existed in the ancient Indo-European languages. Far from being special in these languages, for example in the ancient Greek or Sanskrit, linguists nevertheless haven't succeeded in defining it. It is French linguist Emile Benveniste who corrected its traditional definition and presented a refined one. If the middle voice has not been defined properly, it is because the middle voice cannot be positioned in the modern pattern of thinking (active / passive, subject / object etc.). This is why it enables us to think differently. In my presentation, starting from the notion of the middle voice, I will attempt to define the subject differently. Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben's interest in Benveniste will help me do this. Then I will present Japanese psychiatrist Bin Kimura's notion of Ko-to and Mo-no to conceptualize time with the middle voice and the redefined notion of the subject.

16:00-17:00

Toshiya Ueno (Wako University)

"Ontological withdrawal in philo-fiction and speculative-fiction of Guattari, Laruelle and Flusser"

This paper explores the reason why all three philosophers addressed fiction and fabulation in their works. In a way, all their styles are peculiar and sometimes difficult to follow. Why they have opted such a tactics of writing? Additionally they never repressed their desire of fabulation in terms of philosophical or speculative fiction. They all admitted a certain significance of fabulation within philosophical thinking and speculative theory on technology, ecology, and planetary consciousness. For this reading, the notion of withdrawal or retreat must be re-interpreted and re-elaborated. No more DSM type of classification, No more romanticization of anti-psychiatry in any sense, all which are the enemy of three intellectuals! The ontological withdrawal and existential withdrawal, human retreats and ontological retreat of (non-human)objects, both could be, or even should be superposed and overlapped. Since the beginnings of modernity, the discourse of solitude and withdrawal has permanently been operative in many regards. It is still working and demanded in myriads of field of discourses. Many modern or contemporary writers have afforded insightful resources for three writers. This presentation also provides some example of them. Based on such resources, each author would grapple with actualizing the speculative fiction or theoretical fabulation in each field: artificial intelligence (Guattari), cephalopod (Flusser), and photography (Laruelle), etc. They all assume the uncanny network of relationships and relational fields by drawing on the notions such as potentials (as field of possibilities) and pathic relations (rather than passive or pathologic relations). One of the reason why they all engaged with fictional writings or fabulation is envisioned in their understanding of withdrawal of human and non-human tactical leaking (escaping), deceleration, and conceptual exodus from the conventional discourse and way of living.