Title	現代青年の社会不安と危機意識
Author(s)	丸山, 久美子
Citation	聖学院大学論叢, 5(3): 29-38
URL	http://serve.seigakuin-univ.ac.jp/reps/modules/xoonips/detail.php?item_id=716
Rights	

聖学院学術情報発信システム : SERVE

SEigakuin Repository for academic archiVE

Social Anxiety and Consciousness of Global Crisis in Modern Japanese Youth

Kumiko MARUYAMA

現代青年の社会不安と危機意識

丸　山　久美子

20世紀末今日，地球は病み，人類はもとより，多くの生態系に歪みが生じ，この時代に青春をむかえる青年の心は，さながら，「アザゼルの山羊」の如くに，荒野を彷徨する孤独な山羊を思わせる。5年前の調査と今回の調査において根本的に異なるのは「死に方の選択」に男女差がみとめられることである。半数は前回と異ならず，男女ともに「自然死，老衰」を選ぶが，第2番目に選択された項目は男子が「自殺・自死」，女子は「殉職（職務執行中の死)」である。ここに，従来までにない時代の影響を見ることが出来る。

先の見通しもなく，希望もないのに，非現実的な楽感主義（ネアカ志向）をみずからの内にとりこみながら生きつづけなければならないこの時代の青年達の嘆きと潜在的危機感（リスク認知）が濃厚である。

I.　Introduction

As we have approached the end of the 20th Century, there have been many serious social problems on a large scale affecting our worlds; There is a vague anxiety everywhere in modern life, especially among the youth. There are four characteristics of the final years of the 20th Century.

1.　The Occult － Numerous new religions with elements of the occult and magic; numerous movies dealing with the occult, a strong interest in fortune-telling such as palmistry, numerology, astrology, etc. reflected in newspapers, magazines and novels.

2.　Violence － Increasing suicide among the young; increasing number of brutal murders, child abuse, family violence, battered wives; rape; trouble between races and nations;

increasing tendency of unrealistic optimism; nihilistic mood among young people, etc.

3. Feminism — Women's liberation movement; increasing incidence of divorce, reversal of roles between husbands and wives; the coming of the so-called genderless society; entry of women into the work force; spreading alcoholism among women, etc.

4. Dandyism — Increasing male interest in fashion; increasing narcissism; increasing homosexuality; apathy among young people; the tendency of young people to avoid permanent full-time employment, preferring part-time jobs; avoidance of physical dirty hard work, etc.

There are some very interesting comparisons between the expectations regarding social conditions in the world at the end of the 19th Century and now at the end of the 20th Century. The people at the end of the 19th Century, even though they were much poorer economically, were realistically optimistic. However, at the end of the 20th Century, people tend to be unrealistically optimistic about the future. This is a pretended happiness in light of the fact that their basic feelings are negative. As an example, they believe that positive events are more likely to happen to them than to others (Weinstein, 1989).

From another viewpoint, people may be unrealistically pessimistic, especially in those with a high anxiety personality, females, theological students, some kinds of deep thinkers. They experience a variety of everyday disorders such as headaches, nausea, itching. The evidence for this phenomenon is considerable (Weinstein, 1982, 1989; Dewberry, Ing, James, Nixon & Richardson, 1990). However, recent research indicates that under certain conditions they may be unrealistically pessimistic.

The relationship between optimism, pessimism and anxiety was investigated in female students in England (Dewberry, et. al. 1990). It was concluded that the subjects felt more anxiety about certain negative events, and that these events were those about which they were unrealistically optimistic. It was concluded that the degree of anxiety experienced toward a negative event may affect the level of unrealistic optimism or pessimism toward such an event.

For example, people may have been anxious about the danger of radiation exposure from a radioactive clouds passing over them. Dewberry, et. al. (1990) pointed out that it is plausible that people are less unrealistically optimistic about negative events associated with strong anxiety than they are about negative events that are not associated with such high levels of anxiety. If someone is waiting for the results of a cancer screening test, he may develop a serious concern that he has a tumor, whereas if the test is for something trivial, his usual optimism might not be eroded in this way.

Such a hypothesis is consistent with the know effects of mood on optimism (Drake, 1984; Johnson & Tversky, 1983). They found that people induced to be in a positive mood were more optimistic than those induced to be in a negative mood. If there is an inverse relationship between the anxiety experienced about an event and optimism toward it, the extremely high levels of anxiety associated with certain life events such as radioactive pollution might eliminate the phenomenon of unrealistic optimism altogether and produce unrealistic pessimism.

In fact, an inverse correlation was found between how anxious people felt about certain negative events and how unrealistically optimistic they were about the occurrence of those events. If asked to estimate the probability that they would be a victim in a railway accident, they were likely to indicate that it was less than the probability that their peers would be such a victim.

Such egocentrism as a source of unrealistic optimism is can be seen in unrealistic optimism about the susceptibility to health problems such as developing cervical cancer, contracting the AIDS virus or venereal disease, suffering from severe depression, getting lung cancer, etc.

In the civilized world, the focal point of medical research has been concentrated on overcoming death by depending solely upon scientific technology. In order to find a cure for a hitherto incurable disease, and in the process extend life expectancy, Western medicine saw the advent of surgery, the discovery of penicillin, and the unlocking of the secrets of DNA and genetic engineering as a life-prolonging science. Success in lengthening life has been the dream of human beings through the ages. But it now seems that we are becoming the victims of longevity.

Through all these major medical breakthroughs, students of medicine have been increasingly mystified by such a distorted notion that death implies that the doctor has been negligent, and that death discredits the doctor. It has become a professional obsession to prolong lives of patients, dehumanizing medicine. For example, there are efforts to prolong the lives of "vegetable" patients, ignoring physical as well as emotional pain that both patients and families are unwilling to share.

From a purely ethical point of view, these doctors are even considered to abuse or misinterpret their professional principles and codes of ethics, if indeed such principles exist, in order to justify their conduct which seems brutal when considering the agony of terminally ill patients.

As the 20th Century comes to a close, we are interested in college students and their social anxiety problems such as those mentioned above.

II. Method

A. Purpose

As we near the end of the 20th Century, world conditions have changed drastically, social conditions are in a state of flux, and it is difficult to predict tomorrow's world. Under such conditions, it is important to investigate the change in attitudes toward life, especially among young people who bear on their shoulders the future of the world.

The purpose of this study is to survey the social anxiety problems such as the increasing population of the old, the drop in the birth rate, the weakening of the welfare state, the spread of AIDS, the evil effects of drug abuse, troubles arising out of Ethnocentrism and the rise of Neo-Nazism, increasing domestic violence among the young, the abuse of children, rape and other violent acts.

Furthermore, there has been an increase of multiple pollution sources as seen in the Gulf War of 1991, the destruction of the ecosphere resulting from deforestation in South-East Asia and Africa. There are many bio-ethical problems such as euthanasia, abortion, genetic engineering, artificial insemination, organ transplants, etc.

In this study we will investigate the attitudes and way of life of modern college students by setting hypothetical conditions and asking what students would do if the world should become the scene of turmoil and confusion and people should lose all hope and direction for the future. Five choices are postulated:

1. Hedonism — Seeking personal pleasure including suicide (the dying game) and worrying about reality.
2. Revolution—Attempting to reform and improve the world.
3. Religious Behavior — Praying to God or Buddha and asking for deliverance from the chaos in the world
4. Going with the flow of events—Doing nothing but simply going with the flow of events.
5. Indifference — Maintaining individual life and continuing to do what has always been done.

B. Procedures

The survey was conducted at the end of June in 1992. The subjects were asked 95 questions on a questionnaire. The questionnaires consisted of five sections.

1. Attitudes and opinions regarding family relationships

2. Attitude toward life and death

3. Attitudes toward religion

4. Social anxiety phenomena

5. Attitudes toward bio-ethical social questions

C. Subjects

The subjects were 300 male and 244 female college students at Seigakuin University and Aoyama Gakuin University who were taking an introductory psychology class. Subjects ranged in age from 18 to 20 years with a mean age of 19 years.

III. Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows attitudes regarding the way of life. There were almost no significant sex differences. They both chose indifference — not being swayed by external circumstances but conti-

Table 1

If the world should become the scene of turmoil and confusion, and many people lost all hope or direction for the future, what would you do?

Way of life	M	F	P
1. I would live for the moment and any pleasure that was at hand, forgetting the reality around me.	17.1	19.5	
2. I would participate in a revolution to improve the world.	22.4	14.5	*
3. I would seek salvation from the confusion of the world by praying to God or Buddha.	1.3	8.3	**
4. I wouldn't do anything, but simply go with the flow of events.	19.4	19.1	
5. I would not be swayed by the external circumstances, but continue doing what I always do.	36.8	37.3	
6. Other.	3.0	1.2	

Note : M : Male F : Female P : Significance levels refer to a chi-square test of the hypothesis that frequencies of male and female responses are equal. ** P<.01 * P<.05

nuing to do what they always had done even if the world fell into chaos causing a majority of people to lose hope and ambition for the future. However, there was a slight tendency for more males to chose Revolution and more females to chose Religious Behavior.

In the previous survey males tended to chose Revolution and females Religious Behavior. There were almost no female students who chose Hedonism. There seems to have been a change

in the attitude of female students.

Table 2 shows the images of death. When thinking of their own death, they expressed the desire to take a strong stand toward their life and to live according to their principles. There were

Table 2

How do you feel when you think of your own death, or when some external circumstances make you aware of your fate that includes your own death?

Items	M	F	P
1. I am frightened. I want to escape.	19.3	25.9	＊＊
2. I feel down, tragic, depressed.	16.2	15.6	
3. I feel meaningless	13.9	8.2	＊＊
4. I feel the desire to take a strong stand toward my life and to live according to my principles.	28.4	22.6	＊＊
5. I feel the joy of life; a sense of fullness of life.	18.9	21.0	＊
6. Other.	3.4	6.6	＊

no sex differences. However, female students displayed more fear of and desire to escape from death than male students.

Table 3 shows attitudes regarding the kind of death considered most desirable. About half of the students chose a dignified, peaceful death from natural causes such as old age, but there was

Table 3

If you were able to choose your death, what kind of death would you desire?

Items	M	F	P
1. A tragic or violent death. (Death in an accident or in war, etc.)	1.7	0.4	
2. A sudden non-violent death (Heart attack, etc.)	4.3	2.5	
3. A death on the job.	10.0	16.9	＊＊
4. A death after some great accomplishment	0.7	0.4	
5. Suicide	22.4	7.4	＊＊
6. Death as a murder victim	0.0	0.4	
7. A dignified, peaceful, humane death (Death of natural causes or old age)	45.8	58.4	＊＊
8. I don't believe that there is any particular appropriate death.	10.7	9.1	
9. Other.	4.3	4.5	

some anxiety in response to the question of suicide (Males 22.4%; Females 7.4%). There were significant differences between the sexes in these results. Does this reflect an attraction to suicide on the part of male students?

Table 4 shows attitudes and opinions regarding social bio-ethical phenomena. The results show positive responses on the part of both female and males students especially in the pheno-

Table 4

With respect to the social phenomena listed below, express your position according to the following 5 point scale: 5. Heartily approve, 4. Approve, 3. Neither approve nor disapprove, 2. Disapprove, 1. Strongly disapprove.

Social Problems	Approve		Neither		Disapprove	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
1. Development of nuclear electric generation plants	40.8	24.1	22.5	31.1	36.8	44.7
2. Increase military strength	18.9	18.8	30.8	35.7	50.3	45.5
3. Revision of the current constitution	34.4	23.4	34.8	43.4	30.8	33.2
4. Compulsory military service	3.6	2.4	9.3	11.5	87.1	86.1
5. Mass production of industrial robots	47.7	40.5	38.7	38.9	13.6	20.5
6. Entry of women into the work forced	64.5	89.3	24.8	9.0	10.6	1.6
7. Abortion	32.8	32.3	38.7	34.4	28.4	33.2
8. Euthanasia, death with dignity	68.6	74.6	22.8	18.4	8.6	7.0
9. Genetic engineering	15.9	17.2	24.8	26.2	59.3	56.6
10. Extra-uterine pregnancy (Test tube babies)	38.4	42.6	34.8	30.3	26.8	27.1
11. Heart transplants (brain death)	68.2	72.8	24.2	18.9	7.6	8.2
12. Surrogate mother (bearing another woman's child)	22.5	22.6	32.5	30.5	45.1	47.0
13. Informing a patient when cancer is discovered	69.9	67.7	27.2	29.5	3.0	2.9
14. Construction of hospices (for the terminally ill)	48.2	56.5	41.9	33.6	10.0	9.8
15. Establishment of an institute for space development	73.1	61.9	22.3	32.4	4.7	5.7
16. Making sexual harrassment on the job a crime	46.1	70.5	35.2	21.3	18.6	8.2
17. Artificial efforts to control the sex of a child	18.3	23.0	36.2	32.8	45.5	44.3
18. Education regarding life and death	44.1	47.5	46.5	46.3	9.3	6.1
19. Sexual education within the home beginning with young children	51.5	58.2	39.2	34.8	9.3	6.9
20. International contributions such as peace keeping operations and peace keeping forces.	50.9	46.4	27.1	36.1	22.0	17.5
Total score (mean)	42.9	44.6	30.7	29.7	26.4	25.7

Note : Approve (5. 4 point scale rating)

　　　Neither (3 point scale rating)

　　　Disapprove (1. 2 point scale rating)

mena of women's advance into job markets (female, 89.3%; male 64.5%); euthanasia or death with dignity (female, 74.6%; male 68.6%); heart transplants and brain death (female, 72.8%; male 68.2%); informing a patient when cancer is discovered (female, 69.9%; male 67.7%); and establishment of an institute for space development (female, 73.1%; male 61.9%). Significant differences showed up in making sexual harassment on the job a crime (female, 70.5%; male 46.1%). There were no significant differences regarding the disapproval response regarding compulsory military service (male, 87.1%; female 86.1%) and genetic engineering (male, 59.3%; female 56.6%).

Table 5

With respect to the social phenomena listed below, exppress any latent anxiety according to the following 5 point scale: 5. Strong anxiety, 4. Somewhat anxious, 3. Difficult to say, 2. Almost to say, 1. No anxiety whatsoever.

Social Problems	Anxiety		Neither		No-Anxiety	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
1. Increase in the proportion of old people in the population	74.9	83.6	11.6	6.6	13.6	9.8
2. Lack of natural resources and food	78.8	82.3	11.6	8.6	9.6	9.0
3. Economic depression, unemployment, bankruptcy	61.2	57.2	18.9	21.8	19.8	21.0
4. Radical conflict over national self interest in international relationships	62.9	65.4	21.9	19.3	15.2	15.3
5. The rapid increase in population in the third world	50.6	50.7	25.8	30.5	23.5	19.0
6. The generation gap and the increase of egoism in personal relationships	40.1	42.8	30.8	30.9	29.1	26.3
7. The lowering of the age of serious juvenile delinquency	48.0	53.1	24.2	27.2	27.8	19.8
8. The increase in divorce and the breakdown of the family	39.0	46.5	26.2	28.0	34.8	25.5
9. The increase in the national debt	24.5	30.8	40.7	40.3	34.8	28.8
10. Problems related to health and medical care	47.7	54.3	27.2	25.1	25.2	20.6
11. The spread of AIDS	76.8	88.2	10.3	9.5	12.9	5.3
12. Evil effects of drug abuse	48.2	61.7	23.9	19.8	27.9	18.5
13. The drop in the birth rate	29.1	40.4	32.8	31.7	38.1	28.0
14. The increase of multiple pollution sources	73.5	79.0	16.6	16.5	9.9	4.5
15. Global warming, destruction of the ozone layer, increase in acid rain	86.7	92.6	8.6	4.5	4.6	2.9
16. Destruction of the ecosphere resulting from deforestation	88.1	89.9	8.9	7.0	3.0	4.1
17. Ethnocentrism and the rise of Neo-Nazism	37.7	39.6	33.8	35.8	28.5	34.6
18. Increase of refugees	48.7	54.7	33.4	29.2	17.9	16.0
19. Increase of homeless people	37.4	49.4	39.1	34.6	23.5	16.0
20. Increasing test competition	21.6	37.5	27.2	28.0	50.3	34.6
21. Frequency of domestic violence, abuse of children, rape and other violent acts	51.4	71.6	26.8	16.9	21.9	11.5
22. Problems of waste disposal and increasingly egotistic citizens	59.2	74.5	27.8	18.9	12.9	6.6
23. Weakening of the welfare state (Welfare in a static society)	52.3	52.7	34.8	34.6	12.9	12.8
24. The coming of the genderless society (Androgyny)	22.0	22.6	45.5	38.7	32.5	38.6
25. Polution and radiation resulting from accidents at nuclear facilities.	79.1	80.2	12.3	12.3	8.6	7.4
26. Increase of numerous new religions such as the Unification Church, etc.	29.2	34.5	30.1	28.4	40.7	37.0
27. Spreading alcoholism (women, young people, etc.)	20.9	25.5	38.1	38.3	41.0	36.3
28. Increase of illegal immigrants	37.4	50.6	30.1	32.1	22.5	17.3
29. Acts of radical political groups, terrorism	45.4	37.0	30.5	37.9	24.1	25.1
30. The tendency of young people to avoid permanent full-time employment, preferring part-time jobs	15.2	16.1	30.1	29.6	54.7	54.3
Total anxiety score (mean)	49.6	55.5	26.9	24.8	23.5	19.7

Note : Anxiety (5. 4 point scale rating)
      Neither (3. point scale rating)
      No-Anxiety (1. 2 point scale rating)

Table 5 shows latent anxiety regarding some social phenomena. Those where sex differences are evident are: increase of illegal immigrants (female, 50.6%; male 37.4%); the evil effects of drug abuse (female, 61.7%; male 48.2%); the drop in the birth rate (female, 40.4%; male 29.1%); frequency of domestic violence, abuse of children, rape, and other violent acts (female, 71.6%; male 51.4%); problems of waste disposal and increasingly egotistic citizens (female, 74.5%; male 59.2%); and increasing test competition (female, 37.5%; male 21.5%).

High level anxiety was reflected in both male and female students in the following: global warming, destruction of the ozone layer, increase in acid rain (female, 92.6%; male 86.7%); destruction of the ecosphere resulting from deforestation (female, 89.9%; male 88.1%); the spread of AIDS (female, 88.2%; male 76.8%); scarcity of natural resources and food (female, 82.3%; male 78.8%); increase in the proportion of old people in the population (female, 83.6%; male 74.9%); and radiation and pollution resulting from nuclear accidents (female, 80.2%; male 79.1%). These latent social anxieties were mostly concerned with pollution of the environment, lack of food, reflecting a concern for the viability of the ecosphere. In the students' consciousness there is a sense of crisis when looking towards the 21st Century. The modern AIDS plague is spreading everywhere in the world and there is no medical treatment in sight. We can sense students' feeling of isolation and despair in their responses to the questions.

The mean anxiety score is shown in Table 5. In every case the consciousness of crisis and feeling of anxiety is more strongly expressed by female students. This is consistent with a previous study (Maruyama, K. 1989).

IV. Conclusion

The results of this study show that there were some sexual differences concerning the intensity of anxiety and consciousness of global crisis. Japanese college students, especially females, are sensitive on a deep level have conflicting anxiety feelings expressed in hedonistic behaviors. The intensity of latent anxiety and crisis could be used to predict responses to many social phenomena regarding the pollution of the environment and attitudes toward death. General life attitudes are optimistic, but such optimism seems to be at least in part pretended and seems somewhat unnatural.

I believe that if it were possible to give advice to students about the direction of their lives and give them the opportunity of deep introspective and productive thought, they might find some effective original thinking for solving the global crisis without escaping from these diffi-

cult social phenomena into the future.

I believe that nothing should ever be regarded as a tragedy or crisis if it occurs after a productive life. The inevitable death of all persons poses a serious challenge to the meaningfulness of human existence.

There is a need to incorporate more discrete probes into attitudes toward the global crisis not only among young people but also among aged people.

References

(1) Dewberry, C., M. Ing, S. James, M. Nixon, et al. Anxiety and unrealistic optimism. *Journal of Social Psychology*. Vol. 130. 151-156, 1990.

(2) Drake, R. A. Lateral asymmetry of personal optimism. *Journal of Research in Personality*, Vol. 18, 467-507, 1984

(3) Johnson, E. J. & A. Tversky. Affect, generalization and the perception of risk. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*. Vol. 45, 20-31, 1983

(4) Maruyama, K. Ethos of life and death — Attitude toward life and death and social anxiety of Japanese youth. *The Journal of Seigakuin University*, Vol. 1. 163-180, 1988

(5) Maruyama, K. A structural approach to social anxiety and religious attitudes of Japanese youth. *The Journal of Seigakuin University*, Vol. 2. 129-147, 1989

(6) Ross, W. & F. Sicoly. Egocentric biases in availability and attribution. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. Vol. 39. 322-336, 1979

(7) Weinstein, N. D. Unrealistic optimism about susceptibility to health problems. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, Vol. 5, 441-460, 1982

(8) Weinstein, N. D. Unrealistic optimism about future life events. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. Vol. 39, 806-820, 1989.

(9) Weinstein, N. D. & E. Lachendro. Egocentrism as a source of unrealistic optimism. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 8, 195-200, 1982