

## Article

# ENIGMA: CRIME AND DELINQUENCY IN CYBER ERA JUVENILE OUTBURST: HOW TO EXPLAIN JUMP/LEAP IN BEHAVIOR DEVELOPMENT

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years a series of serious murders committed by juveniles have happened in Japan. Although many specialists and experts have tried, it is very difficult to clear causal relationships. As such these cases are expressed as “Outbursts of Juveniles”. It is thought that social surroundings in cyber era exert some influence on juveniles implicitly and explicitly. With a development of cyber era, not only behavior patterns of juveniles have changed in general, but also problematic situations of crime and delinquency have changed in particular. In this article what kinds of influence and change have occurred are focused and considered.

## 2. Discharge of Suppressed Juvenile

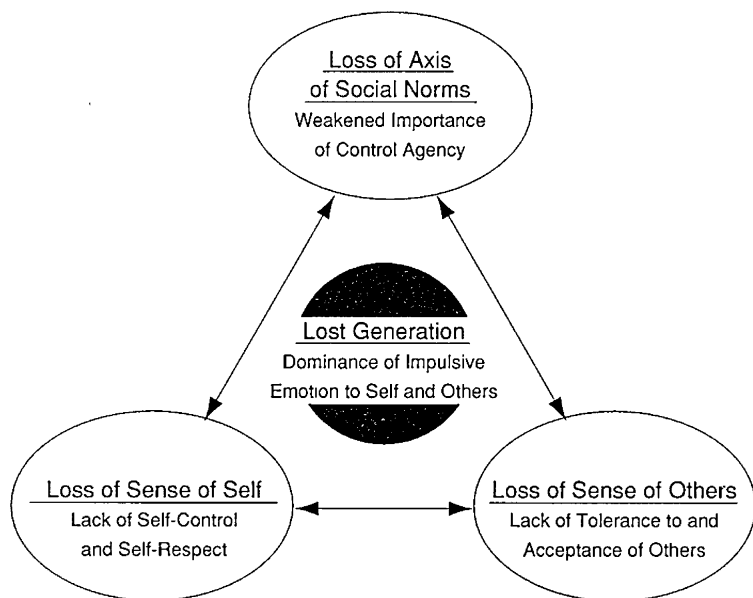
### 2.1 Triple Loss

As represented by words such as “get angry” or “break down”, recent delinquencies can be understood as a form of instantaneous and impulsive manifestation of individual emotion/passion. On the impulse of the moment, they indiscriminately

selected victims and cause grave results.

Juveniles of our time tend to reinforce an introverted disposition through following factors: poor personal relations in childhood through increasing of nuclear families and decreasing of children, rising rate of private room possession, under- or lack of development of self-control ability through ordinary over-protection and over-interference, escape from actual society with burdensome human relations into virtual society yielded by highly-informationalization, inconspicuous patterns of behavior as the way to get on in life in order to avoid being targetted of bullying. Urged by an introverted impulsive sensibility which regards self-preservation as the most important, they illogically and

Figure 1 Triple Loss :  
Structure of Impulsive Emotion



Source : Kiyonaga,K. (ed.) , The World of Juvenile Delinquency,  
Tokyo : Yuhikaku, 1999, p.178 (originally in Japanese) .

impulsively become delinquents.

It is said that a triple loss (sense of self, sense of others, and axis of social norms) is related to outbreaks of recent impulsive delinquency. A loss of sense of self causes a lack of self-control ability and self-respect, a loss of sense of others causes a lack of tolerance and receptivity, and a loss of social norms attenuates importance of control agencies. Moreover this triple loss makes a huge cave in their minds and creates juveniles who are swayed by passion (see Figure 1).

## 2.2 Reproduction Process of Violence: Circle of Victimization and Offence

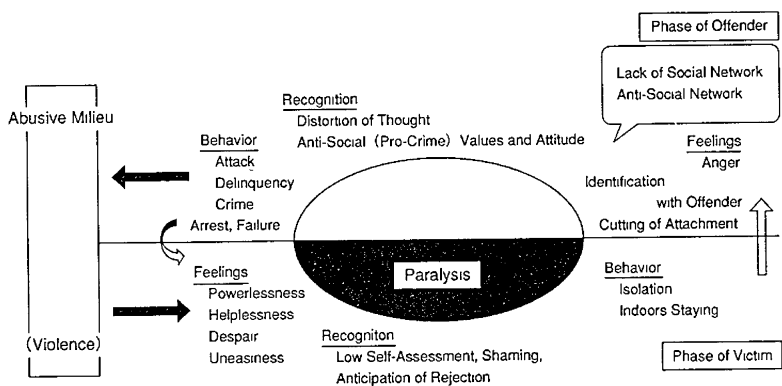
As recent delinquencies are characterized by a circle of victimization and offence, most of delinquents and criminals have experienced abuses in their childhood. Here it is critically important why victims transform themselves into offenders. Surrounded by abusive environment, such as physical and mental abuse by parent(s) or protector(s), bullying at school, juveniles get to feel powerless, helpless, despair and uneasy.

Abused, neglected and insulted, they begin to regard themselves as worthless, different from others, and disgraceful. They think that it is hardly possible for them to be loved by others. Being afraid of being refused by others, they depart from others, shut themselves in their homes and become more and more isolated. The state of apparant death or paralytic symptoms, such as not look at, not listen to and not feel, is considered as a way of coping with abusive environment.

Having their back against the wall, such as unbearable pain heaped by endless abuses and bullyings, and hopeless situation, they begin to give serious thought to transforming themselves into offenders and getting power in order to escape from such a situation. Cutting their attachment to others, identifying themselves with offenders, overestimating themselves, they get to feel

privileged. After going through the process of paralytic symptoms of feelings, cutting of attachment, identification with offenders, they hold only feelings of anger against abusers, bullies and society. In this way anger turns into a driving force to all aggressive behaviors. More and more isolated from the society, they learn values and attitudes from anti-social and pro-criminal networks and get to have distorted thoughts which rationalize crime and delinquency. Feelings of anger, biased recognition of reality, acquisition of anti-social and pro-criminal way of thinking and attitudes cause abrupt aggression, delinquency and crime. These behaviors create abusive environment, and violences are reproduced (see Figure 2).

Figure 2      Reproduction Process of Violence:  
Cycle of Victimization and Offence



Source : Fujioka, J., "Think about Mentality of Juvenile Delinquency"  
Research on Criminal Investigation, No.579, 1999, p.50  
(originally in Japanese).

### 3. Catastrophie and Abrupt Violence

#### 3.1 Discontinuity, Non-linearity and Instability

According to Katz, we experience discontinuities in rather orderly systems. Interpersonal conflicts undergo escalating dynamics until an abrupt, non-linear change occurs. Catastrophe model is applied in order to explain such a dynamic phenomenon or a movement.

Concerning this an example of aggressiveness of a dog (state variable) is given. In order to explain this example, we define two independent control variables. Dog's anger is defined as first control variable. When it reaches at a certain level, an attack will be predicted. As a second control variable, dog's fear is defined. When it reaches at a certain level, the reverse response flight will occur. If starting at a point of stability, anger and fear are at a minimum level, with increase of two control variables, two threshold levels (for attack and flight) will be approached at a same time. So far, linearity can be seen. But at the threshold, the dog switch from attack to flight (bimodality). Here we find a bifurcation with two possible outcomes. Dog's behavior is unpredictable, the system is unstable and state variables are discontinuous. This instability occurs even though control variables are continuous.

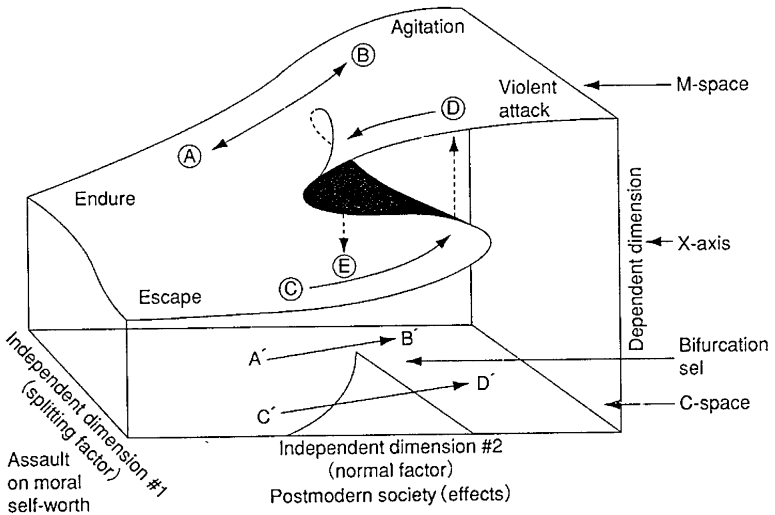
#### 3.2 Catastrophe Model and Criminology

Katz and Lyng mention that in the coming of (post) modern society alienation and hyperreal, clock time and commodification are responded to by a search for experiences that arose visceral, sensual and emotional states (foreground factors).

We identify the dependent variable as behavior that might result from interacting effects of two independent variables. The

behavioral space (M-space) may include four state: endure, escape, agitation and violent attack. We define the normal factor "a" as effects of postmodern society, alienation and hyper-real, clocktime and commodification. And the splitting factor "b" is defined as assault on moral self-worth. The increasing effects of postmodern society in interaction with increasing perceptions of assaults on moral self-worth produce an increasing intensity in the emotional state "humiliation". In a mild form this would manifest itself by the subject, who endures these defilements of self, in greater intensities it may translate into aggressive display or posturing etc., and its most intense forms, humiliation may manifest in rage and violent attack.

Figure 3 Cusp Catastrophe Model



Source : Molovanovic, D., "Catastrophe Theory, Discourse, and Conflict Resolution : Generating the "Third Way", in B.A. Arrigo (ed.), Social Justice and Criminal Justice, Belmont : West/Wadsworth. 1999. p.207.

According to Milovanovic the splitting factor, assault on moral self-worth, may be a factor for production of continuity and discontinuity. The line CD and DE indicate discontinuous change (the jumps from one place to another). Small differences in the initial conditions of normal and splitting variables may produce divergencies. The acceptance of humiliation and the escape option might be maintained until one reaches the area of the double fold, and here humiliation would be transformed into rage and violent attack.

This model is useful in understanding of escalating hostilities and violence. With an increase in reciprocating incremental assaults on self, arguments or differences (which often have anger and fear as latent constitutive elements) may culminate in the cusp region, where an additional small increase of either control parameter may produce an unexpected violent attack (see Figure 3).

#### 4. Postmodern Society and Subject Transformation

##### 4.1 Loss of Subject Superiority

The system of capitalistic economy and scientific technologies swallow subjects without their awareness and become an automatic system which control human beings. There subjects don't choose, but automatic movements of the system control human beings. Human beings are not subjects who choose as they like any longer, but they become auxiliary existences who only serve to these systems and programs and appropriately operate them.

In the era of the Post-Industrial Revolution when mechanical information systems have become mainstream, human beings don't have rights of direct control over apparatuses in all sense. Moreover these apparatuses form huge systems which combine with other apparatuses. There the concept of "subject" easily becomes extremely uncertain.

## 4.2 Cyborg Subject

We are put in the status of operator of apparatus and programs. It is not human beings but apparatus and programs that make something. Human beings can only function apparatuses and programs appropriately. This is already clear in the field of mass-media. There fragmental images which are made by media decide our mode of activity and living. Moreover it is not some other human beings, classes or groups but media system itself that decides our mode of activity and living.

The cyborg subject is an amorphous moving organ which changes with advancement of time. He/She is the ceaseless process which makes module-type self through making resource innumerable fragmented information and making memory and unconsciousness included in his/her own. He/She tends to diversify infinitely under the society in which resources of information disperse rapidly. He/She becomes a loosely collective moving organ who combines not one or few program(s) but lots of various programs within the individual and rewrites them with the advancement of situation.

## 5. Violence in Cyber Space

### 5.1 Plundering of Time as Deterrent Apparatus of Violence

As an anger needs rhythm, it calms down as time goes by. A flaming which occurs in cyber space, in other word, flaring up attack and anger happens within a certain hasty rhythm. In an exchange of emotional e-mails, there is no time to construct calm logics in most cases. As soon as one types sentences and send them in a flash, he/she receives a reply without a minute. Emotional words sometimes steal into sentences and rhythms of



anger come into being.

According to Virillio, electronic media deprive their users of time for thinking. In the world of e-mail, within a plundering of time, we can see phenomena in which angers are fed back and amplified. All e-mails which have been sent and received so far are left in memories. If one send a e-mail through quoting and editting them, a recipient remember his/her forgotten angers. After that a game of anger begins.

## 5.2 Loss of Physicality and Identity

When we examine violence in internet, a loss of physicality is important. As a result of loss of physicality in cyber space, an aggressiveness is often reproduced on an enlarged scale in a genuine form. In the former real community, a phonetic communication plays a central role and is based on physical body. With an advent of letters signs incresingly leave bodies, become independent and develop into electronic media. The system of abstracted meanings has turned to a sharp edged tool. When holding de-physicalized and abstracted communication circuits, human beings take on terrible brutality. With a system of signs detached from body, they can accomplish a huge violence. Now within a cyber space, they can use violence as intelligent manipulation such as indiscriminate attack with virus.

Moreover in cyber space we can become anonymous and use plural different names. Without identity one can utter antithetical things with using different names. That situation makes room for yielding aggressiveness. As human beings are animals whose cerebrums have extremely developed and can create diverse scenes in their brains. When they get electronic media which enable them to make all kinds of images in their hand, a possibility of unlimited violence emerges.

### 5.3 Transformation of Citizen and Information

In addition in cyber era citizens take on power and weapons. Using internet they can make terrorism. There happens cases in which they snarl at each other such as a notice board prompting rape. In cyber era technical experts and citizens hold lots of information and can use it without restraint. As such information can be easily transformed into violence.

## 6. Amplification of Aggressiveness in Cyber Space

### 6.1 Desire for Technical Rationality

Young people are heaven-sent children of 21st century enlightenment and cyber children who innocently enjoy just now started changes. Why they like computers and cyber space? This is in a sense a manifestation of natural inclination of human beings. The reason why human beings identify themselves with machine and computer and why they dream to combine their own body with mechanics (making cyborg) is that they wish to be omnipotent existence.

Human beings pursue a technical rationality because they feel dissatisfaction of incompleteness of their own existences from their heart. All of us have strong desire to jump into the clear and precise world constructed by digital information by detaching ourselves from routine activities and chains of meanings. But here waiting a pitfall because in general technical rationality is realized with repression or exclusion of emotion.

### 6.2 Amplification of Aggressiveness

In the 21st century each of us will wander about in the com-

plex cyber space which is repeatedly woven. Some may look for thrill and excitement, and others may wish healing of distress and relief. In any way it is noteworthy that there a desire for power and aggressiveness of each are endlessly amplified.

The body of human being who had lived through hunting and gathering from the earliest times, is haunted by aggressiveness and violence by nature. We suppress them by physical limit of our own bodies rather than by norms under the institution of modern state. The awareness that one's body and other's body are only a transient tiny pieces of flesh puts on its brake to a endless desire for power for itself.

However through para-experience of various physical senses within the virtual reality, this sense of "his/her own physical limit" becomes strangely diluted. He/She feels that his/her own life won't be broken and lodge in his/her body. As a result aggressiveness, desire for dominance and power without brake begin to make reckless driving. In the virtual society we are in danger of losing sociality in such a degree that has never experienced before. Problems such as criticism, slander and framing in the internet, which are recently widely noticed, are thought to be phenomena which show a part of these dangers. In the cyber space a person who is usually mild can abruptly undergo a complete transfiguration into aggressive being.

In short it is important that a desire for power and an aggressiveness which are latent within human being by nature are amplified. Internet/Computer is intrinsically an apparatus which has externalized a desire for power of human being, i.e. a desire to put in order and dominate a surrounding world. It contains not only a vector of abstraction, formality and de-physicalization but also a vector which physically satisfies a micro-level desire for power of human being. Virtual reality can be an apparatus for actualizing this desire.

## 7. Conclusion

Development of internet can be understood as an extension of nervous system rather than an extension of physicality. Through internet our extension of nervous system is advancing faster than ever before. There also feelings of distance and time is changing faster than ever before. This change may proceed beyond feeling of reality and flexible plasticity of human being. Today limits of physical naturality which can't catch up with such an expansion of nervous system may begin to emerge.

Between an artificial expansion of nervous system at an increasing tempo and a body as creature discrepancies may have begun to emerge. These discrepancies are spouting out in the form of stress and physical abnormal conditions or in the form of increasing interest in religion and life, and by any chance may manifest in the form of catastrophe of human being at a stroke.

The problem how to confront with technology is the most important challenge against human beings as a species and we cannot avoid to answer.

### 【Notes】

- 1) This monograph is based on the paper titled "Enigma: Crime and Delinquency in Cyber Era — Juvenile Explosion: How to Explain Jump/Leap in Behavior Development," and presented at International Conference on Youth Development in Cyber Era: Trends and Challenges, December 15-16, 2000, City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong.
- 2) This is a part of research results on "complexity criminology" with Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Japan.

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