

Editorial

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Psychiatry and Nature

The recent fires which are added to the continuing circle of natural disasters have a tremendous impact to all of us. The issue of the ecological disaster concerns us not only as citizens but also as members of the psychiatric community. We are obliged to identify, reveal and show the dangers that have implication to human beings, especially to their psychic well being, and minimize their resources to nature. It is evident that inhabitants of cities and industrial areas are in a great need of a relationship with the nature. This is why they seek, desperately, life close to the countryside during their vacations and they want to spend time either in the forest or the beach.

Of course the relation between Human and Nature is immemorial and comes to blows with the phylogenic alterations that lead to the dominance of its species. The civilization's advancement itself was firstly dictated by the composition of the corporate trials to manage to face the natural threats, to make the society deal with the catastrophic outer forces and, part of it, to "humanize" the nature. This huge action that is taking place at the same time with the progress of the civilization was accompanied from the beginning with the uniqueness of the solidarity between the threatened human beings, their fellow-feeling assembly which reappears –often in an impressive way, ignoring the national boundaries– and nowadays. In opposition to other forms of destruction and self-destruction (like the war that is characterized with the merciless savagery of the inner human nature), the threat that comes from natural, uncontrolled up to a point, phenomena connects people under the model of an archaic past which remains in the humanity's memory. Meanwhile, however, the societies of our days are not only responsible for their citizens' protection but also for the extra fellow-feeling responsibility towards the environmental forms of nature that often seem to be at the catastrophic human interferences' mercy.

Unfortunately, as it is noticed by anthropologists, the impermanent expressions of a broadened solidarity soon go down and are replaced by the facts' oblivion by which it was caused. For this reason a concern of the sciences and especially of our science should remain the classic resistance against this amnesia, which is only interrupted by original but insufficient actions of protest when we are struck by one more new tragedy.

It is mandatory for our patients who have psychiatric disorders to reassure their access to a different ecological reality. This is a request connected with the therapeutic perspective – an issue which must be included in our scientific dialogue. It is not necessary to underline the fact that the co-existence and the occupation of patients with nature was proved "therapeutic" and protected them from negative human relationships. It has also provided them with the opportunity to think in depth, as well as to reconcile with the world. However, we don't have to forget that in the past Psychiatry abused nature as it used "picturesque areas" in order to isolate mental health patients in asylums, far away from the cities and the "normal people".

We would like to believe that the recent disasters will provide us with the opportunity to insist and re-examine the relationship between our internal and external nature, the relationship between therapists and patients in relation to the natural disasters and the relationship between Psychiatry and Nature. We hope that we will be able to achieve the above in the context of the scientific events planned by Hellenic Psychiatric Association.

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References

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