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16. On the Sense of Loneliness (1963)

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In the present paper an attempt will be made to investigate the source of the sense of loneliness. By the sense of loneliness I am referring not to the objective situation of being deprived of external companionship. I am referring to the inner sense of loneliness—the sense of being alone regardless of external circumstances, of feeling lonely even when among friends or receiving love. This state of internal loneliness, I will suggest, is the result of a ubiquitous yearning for an unattainable perfect internal state. Such loneliness, which is experienced to some extent by everyone, springs from paranoid and depressive anxieties which are derivatives of the infant's psychotic anxieties. These anxieties exist in some measure in every individual but are excessively strong in illness; therefore loneliness is also part of illness, both of a schizophrenic and depressive nature.

In order to understand how the sense of loneliness arises we have—as with other attitudes and emotions—to go back to early infancy and trace its influence on later stages of life. As I have frequently described, the ego exists and operates from birth onwards. At first it is largely lacking in cohesion and dominated by splitting mechanisms. The danger of being destroyed by the death instinct directed against the self contributes to the splitting of impulses into good and bad; owing to the projection of these impulses on to the primal object, it too is split into good and bad. In consequence, in the earliest stages, the good part of the ego and the good object are in some measure protected, since aggression is directed away from them. These are the particular splitting processes which I have described as the basis of relative security in the very young infant, in so far as security can be achieved at this stage; whereas other splitting processes, such as those leading to fragmentation, are detrimental to the ego and its strength.

Together with the urge to split there is from the beginning of life a drive towards integration which increases with the growth of the ego. This process of integration is based on the introjection of the good object, primarily a part object—the mother's breast, although other aspects of the mother also enter into even the earliest relation.

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If the good internal object is established with relative security, it becomes the core of the developing ego.

A satisfactory early relation to the mother (not necessarily based on breast feeding since the bottle can also symbolically stand for the breast) implies a close contact between the unconscious of the mother and of the child. This is the foundation for the most complete experience of being understood and is essentially linked with the preverbal stage. However gratifying it is in later life to express thoughts and feelings to a congenial person, there remains an unsatisfied longing for an understanding without words—ultimately for the earliest relation with the mother. This longing contributes to the sense of loneliness and derives from the depressive feeling of an irretrievable loss.

Even at best, however, the happy relation with the mother and her breast is never undisturbed, since persecutory anxiety is bound to arise. Persecutory anxiety is at its height during the first three months of life—the period of the paranoid-schizoid position; it emerges from the beginning of life as the result of the conflict between the life and death instincts and the experience of birth contributes to it. Whenever destructive impulses arise strongly, the mother and her breast, owing to projection, are felt to be persecutory, and therefore the infant inevitably experiences some insecurity. This paranoid insecurity is one of the roots of loneliness.

When the depressive position arises—ordinarily in the middle of the first half of the first year of life—the ego is already more integrated. This is expressed in a stronger sense of wholeness so that the infant is better able to relate itself to the mother, and later to other people, as a whole person. Then paranoid anxiety, as a factor in loneliness, increasingly gives way to depressive anxiety. But the actual process of integration brings in its train new problems, and I shall discuss some of these and their relation to loneliness.

One of the factors which stimulates integration is that the splitting processes by which the early ego attempts to counteract insecurity are never more than temporarily effective and the ego is driven to attempt to come to terms with the destructive impulses. This drive contributes towards the need for integration. For integration, if it could be achieved, would have the effect of mitigating hate by love and in this way rendering destructive impulses less powerful. The ego would then feel safer not only about its own survival but also about the preservation of its good object. This is one of the reasons why lack of integration is extremely painful.

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However, integration is difficult to accept. The coming together of destructive and loving impulses, and of the good and bad aspects of the object, arouses the anxiety that destructive feelings may

overwhelm the loving feelings and endanger the good object. Thus, there is conflict between seeking integration as a safeguard against destructive impulses and fearing integration lest the destructive impulses endanger the good object and the good parts of the self. I have heard patients express the painfulness of integration in terms of feeling lonely and deserted, through being completely alone with what to them was a bad part of the self. And the process becomes all the more painful when a harsh super-ego has engendered a very strong repression of destructive impulses and tries to maintain it.

It is only step by step that integration can take place and the security achieved by it is liable to be disturbed under internal and external pressure; and this remains true throughout life. Full and permanent integration is never possible for some polarity between the life and death instincts always persists and remains the deepest source of conflict. Since full integration is never achieved, complete understanding and acceptance of one's own emotions, phantasies and anxieties is not possible and this continues as an important factor in loneliness. The longing to understand oneself is also bound up with the need to be understood by the internalized good object. One expression of this longing is the universal phantasy of having a twin—a phantasy to which Bion drew attention in an unpublished paper. This twin figure as he suggested, represents those un-understood and split off parts which the individual is longing to regain, in the hope of achieving wholeness and complete understanding; they are sometimes felt to be the ideal parts. At other times the twin also represents an entirely reliable, in fact, idealized internal object.

There is one further connection between loneliness and the problem of integration that needs consideration at this point. It is generally supposed that loneliness can derive from the conviction that there is no person or group to which one belongs. This not belonging can be seen to have a much deeper meaning. However much integration proceeds, it cannot do away with the feeling that certain components of the self are not available because they are split off and cannot be regained. Some of these split-off parts, as I shall discuss in more detail later, are projected into other people, contributing to the feeling that one is not in full possession of one's self, that one does not fully belong to oneself or, therefore, to anybody else. The lost parts too, are felt to be lonely.

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I have already suggested that paranoid and depressive anxieties are never entirely overcome, even in people who are not ill, and are the foundation for some measure of loneliness. There are considerable individual differences in the way in which loneliness is experienced. When paranoid anxiety is relatively strong, though still

within the range of normality, the relation to the internal good object is liable to be disturbed and trust in the good part of the self is impaired. As a consequence, there is an increased projection of paranoid feelings and suspicions on others, with a resulting sense of loneliness.

In actual schizophrenic illness these factors are necessarily present but much exacerbated; the lack of integration which I have so far been discussing within the normal range, is now seen in its pathological form—indeed, all the features of the paranoid-schizoid position are present to an excessive degree.

Before going on to discuss loneliness in the schizophrenic it is important to consider in more detail some of the processes of the paranoid-schizoid position, particularly splitting and projective identification. Projective identification is based on the splitting of the ego and the projection of parts of the self, into other people; first of all the mother or her breast. This projection derives from the oral-anal-urethral impulses, the parts of the self being omnipotently expelled in the bodily substances into the mother in order to control and take possession of her. She is not then felt to be a separate individual but an aspect of the self. If these excrements are expelled in hatred the mother is felt to be dangerous and hostile. But it is not only bad parts of the self that are split off and projected, but also good parts. Ordinarily, as I have discussed, as the ego develops, splitting and projection lessen and the ego becomes more integrated. If, however, the ego is very weak, which I consider to be an innate feature, and if there have been difficulties at birth and the beginning of life, the capacity to integrate—to bring together the split-off parts of the ego—is also weak, and there is in addition a greater tendency to split in order to avoid anxiety aroused by the destructive impulses directed against the self and external world. This incapacity to bear anxiety is thus of far-reaching importance. It not only increases the need to split the ego and object excessively, which can lead to a state of fragmentation, but also makes it impossible to work through the early anxieties.

In the schizophrenic we see the result of these unresolved processes. The schizophrenic feels that he is hopelessly in bits and that he will never be in possession of his self. The very fact that he is so fragmented results in his being

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unable to internalize his primal object (the mother) sufficiently as a good object and therefore in his lacking the foundation of stability; he cannot rely on an external and internal good object, nor can he rely on his own self. This factor is bound up with loneliness, for it increases the feeling of the schizophrenic that he is left alone, as it were, with his misery. The sense of being surrounded by a hostile world, which is characteristic of the paranoid

aspect of schizophrenic illness, not only increases all his anxieties but vitally influences his feelings of loneliness.

Another factor which contributes to the loneliness of the schizophrenic is confusion. This is the result of a number of factors, particularly the fragmentation of the ego, and the excessive use of projective identification, so that he constantly feels himself not only to be in bits, but to be mixed up with other people. He is then unable to distinguish between the good and bad parts of the self, between the good and bad object, and between external and internal reality. The schizophrenic thus, cannot understand himself or trust himself. These factors allied with his paranoid distrust of others, result in a state of withdrawal which destroys his ability to make object relations and to gain from them the reassurance and pleasure which can counteract loneliness by strengthening the ego. He longs to be able to make relationships with people, but cannot.

It is important not to underrate the schizophrenic's pain and suffering. They are not so easily detected because of his constant defensive use of withdrawal and the distraction of his emotions. Nevertheless, I and some of my colleagues, of whom I shall only mention Dr Davidson, Dr Rosenfeld and Dr Hanna Segal, who have treated or are treating schizophrenics, retain some optimism about the outcome. This optimism is based on the fact that there is an urge towards integration, even in such ill people, and that there is a relation, however undeveloped, to the good object and the good self.

I now wish to deal with the loneliness characteristic of a prevalence of depressive anxiety, first of all within the range of normality. I have often referred to the fact that early emotional life is characterized by the recurrent experiences of losing and regaining. Whenever the mother is not present, she may be felt by the infant to be lost, either because she is injured or because she has turned into a persecutor. The feeling that she is lost is equivalent to the fear of her death. Owing to introjection, the death of the external mother means the loss of the internal good object as well, and this reinforces the infant's fear of his own death. These anxieties and emotions are heightened at the stage of the

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depressive position, but throughout life the fear of death plays a part in loneliness.

I have already suggested that the pain which accompanies processes of integration also contributes to loneliness. For it means facing one's destructive impulses and hated parts of the self, which at times appear uncontrollable and which therefore endanger the good object. With integration and a growing sense of reality, omnipotence is bound to be lessened, and this again contributes to the pain of integration, for it means a diminished capacity for hope.

While there are other sources of hopefulness which derive from the strength of the ego and from trust in oneself and others, an element of omnipotence is always part of it.

Integration also means losing some of the idealization—both of the object and of a part of the self—which has from the beginning coloured the relation to the good object. The realization that the good object can never approximate to the perfection expected from the ideal one brings about de-idealization: and even more painful is the realization that no really ideal part of the self exists. In my experience, the need for idealization is never fully given up, even though in normal development the facing of internal and external reality tends to diminish it. As a patient put it to me, while admitting the relief obtained from some steps in integration, ‘the glamour has gone’. The analysis showed that the glamour which had gone was the idealization of the self and of the object, and the loss of it led to feelings of loneliness.

Some of these factors enter in a greater degree into the mental processes characteristic of manic-depressive illness. The manic-depressive patient has already made some steps towards the depressive position, that is to say, he experiences the object more as a whole, and his feelings of guilt, though still bound up with paranoid mechanisms, are stronger and less evanescent. More, therefore, than the schizophrenic, he feels the longing to have the good object safely inside to preserve it and protect it. But this he feels unable to do since, at the same time, he has not sufficiently worked through the depressive position, so that his capacity for making reparation, for synthesizing the good object, and achieving integration of the ego, have not sufficiently progressed. In so far as, in his relation to his good object, there is still a great deal of hatred and, therefore, fear, he is unable sufficiently to make reparation to it, therefore his relation to it brings no relief but only a feeling of being unloved, and hated, and again and again he feels that it is endangered by his destructive impulses. The

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longing to be able to overcome all these difficulties in relation to the good object is part of the feeling of loneliness. In extreme cases this expresses itself in the tendency towards suicide.

In external relations similar processes are at work. The manic-depressive can only at times, and very temporarily, get relief from a relation with a well-meaning person, since, as he quickly projects his own hate, resentment, envy and fear, he is constantly full of distrust. In other words, his paranoid anxieties are still very strong. The feeling of loneliness of the manic-depressive centres, therefore, more on his incapacity to keep an inner and external companionship with a good object and less on his being in bits.

I shall discuss some further difficulties in integration and shall deal particularly with the conflict between male and female elements in both sexes. We know that there is a biological factor in bi-sexuality, but I am concerned here with the psychological aspect. In women there is universally the wish to be a man, expressed perhaps most clearly in terms of penis envy; similarly, one finds in men the feminine position, the longing to possess breasts and to give birth to children. Such wishes are bound up with an identification with both parents and are accompanied by feelings of competitiveness and envy, as well as admiration of the coveted possessions. These identifications vary in strength and also in quality, depending on whether admiration or envy is the more prevalent. Part of the desire for integration in the young child is the urge to integrate these different aspects of the personality. In addition, the super-ego makes the conflicting demand for identification with both parents, prompted by the need to make reparation for early desires to rob each of them and expressing the wish to keep them alive internally. If the element of guilt is predominant it will hamper the integration of these identifications. If, however, these identifications are satisfactorily achieved they become a source of enrichment and a basis for the development of a variety of gifts and capacities.

In order to illustrate the difficulties of this particular aspect of integration and its relation to loneliness, I shall quote the dream of a male patient. A little girl was playing with a lioness and holding out a hoop for her to jump through, but on the other side of the hoop was a precipice. The lioness obeyed and was killed in the process. At the same time, a little boy was killing a snake. The patient himself recognized, since similar material had come up previously, that the little girl stood for his feminine part and the little boy for his masculine part. The lioness had a strong link with myself in the transference, of which I shall only give one instance. The little girl had a cat with her and this led to

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associations to my cat, which often stood for me. It was extremely painful to the patient to become aware that, being in competition with my femininity, he wanted to destroy me, and in the past, his mother. This recognition that one part of himself wanted to kill the loved lioness-analyst, which would thus deprive him of his good object, led to a feeling not only of misery and guilt but also of loneliness in the transference. It was also very distressing for him to recognize that the competition with his father led him to destroy the father's potency and penis, represented by the snake.

This material led to further and very painful work about integration. The dream of the lioness which I have mentioned was preceded by a dream in which a woman committed suicide by throwing herself

from a very high building, and the patient, contrary to his usual attitude, experienced no horror. The analysis which was, at that time, very much occupied with his difficulty over the feminine position, which was then at its height, showed that the woman represented his feminine part and that he really wished it to be destroyed. He felt that not only would it injure his relation to women, but would also damage his masculinity and all its constructive tendencies, including reparation to the mother, which became clear in relation to myself. This attitude of putting all his envy and competitiveness into his feminine part turned out to be one way of splitting, and at the same time seemed to overshadow his very great admiration and regard for femininity. Moreover, it became clear that while he felt masculine aggression to be comparatively open and, therefore, more honest, he attributed to the feminine side envy and deception, and since he very much loathed all insincerity and dishonesty, this contributed to his difficulties in integration.

The analysis of these attitudes, going back to his earliest feelings of envy towards the mother led to a much better integration of both the feminine and masculine parts of his personality and to the diminution of envy in both the masculine and feminine rôle. This increased his competence in his relationships and thus helped to combat a sense of loneliness.

I shall now give another instance, from the analysis of a patient, a man who was not unhappy or ill, and who was successful in his work and in his relationships. He was aware that he had always felt lonely as a child and that this feeling of loneliness had never entirely gone. Love of nature had been a significant feature in this patient's sublimations. Even from earliest childhood he found comfort and satisfaction in being out of doors. In one session he described his enjoyment of a journey which led him through hilly country and then the

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revulsion he felt when he entered the town. I interpreted as I had done previously, that to him nature represented not only beauty, but also goodness, actually the good object that he had taken into himself. He replied after a pause that he felt that was true, but that nature was not only good because there is always much aggression in it. In the same way, he added, his own relation to the countryside was also not wholly good, instancing how as a boy, he used to rob nests, while at the same time he had always wanted to grow things. He said that in loving nature he had actually, as he put it, ‘taken in an integrated object’.

In order to understand how the patient had overcome his loneliness in relation to the countryside, while still experiencing it in connection with the town, we have to follow up some of his associations referring

both to his childhood and to nature. He had told me that he was supposed to have been a happy baby, well fed by his mother; and much material—particularly in the transference situation—supported this assumption. He had soon become aware of his worries about his mother's health, and also his resentment about her rather disciplinarian attitude. In spite of this his relation to her was in many ways happy, and he remained fond of her; but he felt himself hemmed in at home and was aware of an urgent longing to be out of doors. He seemed to have developed a very early admiration for the beauties of nature; and as soon as he could get more freedom to be out of doors, this became his greatest pleasure. He described how he, together with other boys, used to spend his free time wandering in the woods and fields. He confessed to some aggression in connection with nature, such as robbing nests and damaging hedges. At the same time he was convinced that such damage would not be lasting because nature always repaired itself. Nature he regarded as rich and invulnerable, in striking contrast to his attitude towards his mother. The relation to nature seemed to be relatively free from guilt, whereas in his relation to his mother for whose frailty he felt responsible for unconscious reasons, there was a great deal of guilt.

From his material I was able to conclude that he had to some extent introjected the mother as a good object and had been able to achieve a measure of synthesis between his loving and hostile feelings towards her. He also reached a fair level of integration but this was disturbed by persecutory and depressive anxiety in relation to his parents. The relation to the father had been very important for his development, but it does not enter into this particular piece of material.

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I have referred to this patient's obsessional need to be out of doors, and this was linked with his claustrophobia. Claustrophobia, as I have elsewhere suggested, derives from two main sources: projective identification into the mother leading to an anxiety of imprisonment inside her; and reintrojection resulting in a feeling that inside oneself one is hemmed in by resentful internal objects. With regard to this patient, I would conclude that his flight into nature was a defence against both these anxiety-situations. In a sense his love for nature was split off from his relation to his mother; his de-idealization of the latter having led to his transferring his idealization on to nature. In connection with home and mother he felt very lonely, and it was this sense of loneliness which was at the root of his revulsion against town. The freedom and enjoyment which nature gave him were not only a source of pleasure, derived from a strong sense of beauty and linked with appreciation of art, but also a means of counteracting the fundamental loneliness which had never entirely gone.

In another session the patient reported a feeling of guilt that on a trip into the country he had caught a field-mouse and put it in a box in the boot of his car, as a present for his young child who, he thought, would enjoy having this creature as a pet. The patient forgot about the mouse, remembering it only a day later. He made unsuccessful efforts to find it because it had eaten its way out of the box and hidden itself in the farthest corner of the boot where it was out of reach. Eventually, after renewed efforts to get hold of it, he found that it had died. The patient's guilt about having forgotten the field-mouse and thus caused its death led in the course of subsequent sessions to associations about dead people for whose death he felt to some extent responsible though not for rational reasons.

In the subsequent sessions there was a wealth of associations to the field-mouse which appeared to play a number of rôles; it stood for a split-off part of himself, lonely and deprived. By identification with his child he moreover felt deprived of a potential companion. A number of associations showed that throughout childhood the patient had longed for a playmate of his own age—a longing that went beyond the actual need for external companions and was the result of feeling that split-off parts of his self could not be regained. The field-mouse also stood for his good object, which he had enclosed in his inside—represented by the car—and about which he felt guilty and also feared that it might turn retaliatory. One of his other associations, referring to neglect, was that the field-mouse also stood for a neglected woman. This association came after a holiday and implied that not only had he been left alone by the analyst

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but that the analyst had been neglected and lonely. The link with similar feelings towards his mother became clear in the material, as did the conclusion that he contained a dead or lonely object, which increased his loneliness.

This patient's material supports my contention that there is a link between loneliness and the incapacity sufficiently to integrate the good object as well as parts of the self which are felt to be inaccessible.

I shall now go on to examine more closely the factors which normally mitigate loneliness. The relatively secure internalization of the good breast is characteristic of some innate strength of the ego. A strong ego is less liable to fragmentation and therefore more capable of achieving a measure of integration and a good early relation to the primal object. Further, a successful internalization of the good object is the root of an identification with it which strengthens the feeling of goodness and trust both in the object and in the self. This identification with the good object mitigates the destructive impulses and in this way also diminishes harshness

of the super-ego. A milder super-ego makes less stringent demands on the ego; this leads to tolerance and to the ability to bear deficiencies in loved objects without impairing the relation to them,

A decrease in omnipotence, which comes about with progress in integration and leads to some loss of hopefulness, yet makes possible a distinction between the destructive impulses and their effects; therefore aggressiveness and hate are felt to be less dangerous. This greater adaptation to reality leads to an acceptance of one's own shortcomings and in consequence lessens the sense of resentment about past frustrations. It also opens up sources of enjoyment emanating from the external world and is thus another factor which diminishes loneliness.

A happy relation to the first object and a successful internalization of it means that love can be given and received. As a result the infant can experience enjoyment not only at times of feeding but also in response to the mother's presence and affection. Memories of such happy experiences are a stand-by for the young child when he feels frustrated, because they are bound up with the hope of further happy times. Moreover, there is a close link between enjoyment and the feeling of understanding and being understood. At the moment of enjoyment anxiety is assuaged and the closeness to the mother and trust in her are uppermost. Introjective and projective identification, when not excessive,

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play an important part in this feeling of closeness, for they underlie the capacity to understand and contribute to the experience of being understood.

Enjoyment is always bound up with gratitude; if this gratitude is deeply felt it includes the wish to return goodness received and is thus the basis of generosity. There is always a close connection between being able to accept and to give, and both are part of the relation to the good object and therefore counteract loneliness. Furthermore, the feeling of generosity underlies creativeness, and this applies to the infant's most primitive constructive activities as well as to the creativeness of the adult.

The capacity for enjoyment is also the precondition for a measure of resignation which allows for pleasure in what is available without too much greed for inaccessible gratifications and without excessive resentment about frustration. Such adaptation can already be observed in some young infants. Resignation is bound up with tolerance and with the feeling that destructive impulses will not overwhelm love, and that therefore goodness and life may be preserved.

A child who, in spite of some envy and jealousy, can identify himself with the pleasures and gratifications of members of his family circle, will be able to do so in relation to other people in later life.

In old age he will then be able to reverse the early situation and identify himself with the satisfactions of youth. This is only possible if there is gratitude for past pleasures without too much resentment because they are no longer available.

All the factors in development which I have touched upon, though they mitigate the sense of loneliness, never entirely eliminate it; therefore they are liable to be used as defences. When these defences are very powerful and dovetail successfully, loneliness may often not be consciously experienced. Some infants use extreme dependence on the mother as a defence against loneliness, and the need for dependence remains as a pattern throughout life. On the other hand, the flight to the internal object, which can be expressed in early infancy in hallucinatory gratification, is often used defensively in an attempt to counteract dependence on the external object. In some adults this attitude leads to a rejection of any companionship, which in extreme cases is a symptom of illness.

The urge towards independence, which is part of maturation, can be used defensively for the purpose of overcoming loneliness. A lessening of dependence on the object makes the individual less vulnerable and also

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counteracts the need for excessive internal and external closeness to loved people.

Another defence, particularly in old age, is the preoccupation with the past in order to avoid the frustrations of the present. Some idealization of the past is bound to enter into these memories and is put into the service of defence. In young people, idealization of the future serves a similar purpose. Some measure of idealization of people and causes is a normal defence and is part of the search for idealized inner objects which is projected on to the external world.

Appreciation by others and success—originally the infantile need to be appreciated by the mother—can be used defensively against loneliness. But this method becomes very insecure if it is used excessively since trust in oneself is then not sufficiently established. Another defence, bound up with omnipotence and part of manic defence, is a particular use of the capacity to wait for what is desired; this may lead to over-optimism and a lack of drive and may be linked with a defective sense of reality.

The denial of loneliness, which is frequently used as a defence, is likely to interfere with good object relations, in contrast to an attitude in which loneliness is actually experienced and becomes a stimulus towards object relations.

Finally, I want to indicate why it is so difficult to evaluate the balance between internal and external influences in the causation of loneliness. I have so far in this paper dealt mainly with internal aspects—but these do not exist *in vacuo.* There is a constant

interaction between internal and external factors in mental life, based on the processes of projection and introjection which initiate object relations.

The first powerful impact of the external world on the young infant is the discomfort of various kinds which accompanies birth and which is attributed by him to hostile persecutory forces. These paranoid anxieties become part of his internal situation. Internal factors also operate from the beginning; the conflict between life and death instincts engenders the deflection of the death instinct outwards and this, according to Freud, initiates the projection of destructive impulses. I hold, however, that at the same time the urge of the life instinct to find a good object in the external world leads to the projection of loving impulses as well. In this way the picture of the external world—represented first

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by the mother, and particularly by her breast, and based on actual good and bad experiences in relation to her—is coloured by internal factors. By introjection this picture of the external world affects the internal one. However, it is not only that the infant's feelings about the external world are coloured by his projection, but the mother's actual relation to her child is in indirect and subtle ways, influenced by the infant's response to her. A contented baby who sucks with enjoyment, allays his mother's anxiety; and her happiness expresses itself in her way of handling and feeding him, thus diminishing his persecutory anxiety and affecting his ability to internalize the good breast. In constrast, a child who has difficulties over feeding may arouse the mother's anxiety and guilt and thus unfavourably influence her relation to him. In these varying ways there is constant interaction between the internal and external world persisting throughout life.

The interplay of external and internal factors has an important bearing on increasing or diminishing loneliness. The internalization of a good breast which can only result from a favourable interplay between internal and external elements, is a foundation for integration which I have mentioned as one of the most important factors in diminishing the sense of loneliness. In addition, it is well recognized that in normal development, when feelings of loneliness are strongly experienced there is a great need to turn to external objects, since loneliness is partially allayed by external relations. External influences, particularly the attitude of people important to the individual, can in other ways, diminish loneliness. For example, a fundamentally good relation to the parents makes the loss of idealization and the lessening of the feeling of omnipotence more bearable. The parents, by accepting the existence of the child's destructive impulses and showing that they can protect themselves

against his aggressiveness, can diminish his anxiety about the effects of his hostile wishes. As a result, the internal object is felt to be less vulnerable and the self less destructive.

I can here only touch on the importance of the super-ego in connection with all these processes. A harsh super-ego can never be felt to forgive destructive impulses; in fact, it demands that they should not exist. Although the super-ego is built up largely from a split-off part of the ego on to which impulses are projected, it is also inevitably influenced by the introjection of the personalities of the actual parents and of their relation to the child. The harsher the super-ego, the greater will be loneliness, because its severe demands increase depressive and paranoid anxieties.

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In conclusion I wish to restate my hypothesis that although loneliness can be diminished or increased by external influences, it can never be completely eliminated, because the urge towards integration, as well as the pain experienced in the process of integration, spring from internal sources which remain powerful throughout life.

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