

them as such. Mothers wear “mother” uniform, and it is not until much later that one learns she is a guard. The therapist who talks about the patient is easily mistaken for a guard. (pp. 38, 39; emphasis added)

Returning to Feldman, one might say that his interpretive style is too easily mistaken for “guard talk,” leaving the patient either isolated and alone, hence silent in the session, or compliantly furnishing his analyst with associations. The latter is precisely the analytic situation Feldman was describing. It is to his credit that he noticed the lack of contact with his patient, although he did not question what, in my view, is the overvalued idea, namely the need for transference interpretations.

This volume gathers and unites Feldman’s many contributions over the years. It gives the reader the pleasure of tracing Feldman’s thinking and his clinical sensibilities. It is full of invaluable ideas on a wide range of clinical phenomena, counterbalanced by one overvalued idea on psychoanalytic technique.

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#### **Loneliness and Longing: Conscious and Unconscious Aspects**

*edited by Brent Willock, Lori C. Bohm, and Rebecca Coleman Curtis*  
New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis, 2012, 338 pp.

Loneliness and longing is a huge topic. After evolving for millions of years, we social mammals have developed a profoundly complex system for attachment. The experience of non-connection can range from mild longing to a catastrophic affective state with lifelong consequences. Willock, Bohm, and Curtis have enlisted 25 authors to engage this loneliness behemoth theoretically and clinically. Their stated intent was to “address the inner sense of

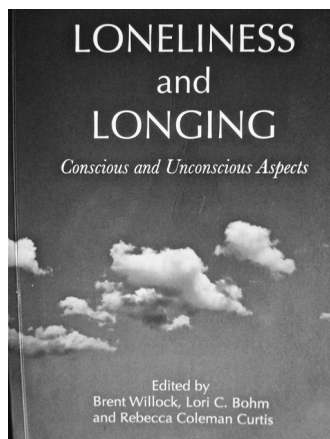
loneliness—that is, feeling alone even in the company of others—by drawing on different aspects of loneliness and longing” (p. i). These aspects included loneliness in the consulting room, the relationship between loneliness and love, the effects of social networking and the Internet, how loneliness changes throughout the life cycle, and healing the analyst’s loneliness. It is a broad net, indeed, that is required to contain such a creature.

The 26 chapters here are organized into 10 sections, some of which are more cohesive than others. Bohm’s straightforward introduction describes the contents of each chapter clearly and succinctly. Although all the chapters were interesting and worthwhile reading, for the sake of brevity I will review several of the contributions that stood out for me.

In the opening chapter, Sandra Buechler candidly and eloquently blends clinical and personal observations with a review of some of the psychoanalytic literature on loneliness. One quote seemed to capture a nugget for understanding the nuances of this experience. She writes, “The experience of aloneness is therefore shaped, partially by who we are with when we are alone, and by whether or not other emotions, such as curiosity are prominent. A third factor is whether or not the aloneness was chosen” (p. 16). This chapter piqued my interest, and I was looking forward to more exploration of the complexity of our internal objects/relationships and loneliness.

Section 2 includes three chapters about loneliness and the Internet. This is a fascinating area with a massive and largely unknown influence globally and transgenerationally. All three authors raise questions about online sex and relationships, the significant pull of living “on the grid,” in this case, as a “Second Life” avatar, and social networking. Writing about adolescents, the “650-friends-Facebook” social scene, and “hooking-up” sexual/romantic world, Karen Lombardi quotes a patient as describing her sexual activity as “a two minute foray, a sexual sound bite transferred to an anaesthetized body” (p. 63). This is indeed a chilling, disembodied loneliness disguised as a culturally valued connection. Tentative opinions about the powerful personal/cultural motivational matrixes that drive these activities and their psycho-social effects are offered.

Section 3 contains three disparate but interesting chapters. Amira Simha-Alpern reviews some of the literature on the centrality of relation-



ship in human motivation from an object relations, intersubjective, and relational point of view and provides a clinical illustration. Arlene Richards and Lucille Spira's chapter on Proust explores loneliness and the erotic possibility of longing for, but not actually having, someone's presence.

Susan Ostrov Weisser is an English professor, and her chapter on loneliness in the life cycle is a writerly piece. It is a refreshingly personal, poignant, insightful, humorous, and thought-provoking description of parts of the author's life, her loves, romances, losses, solitudes, loneliness, and growing older ("with or without cats").

In the following section, Graeme Taylor's excellent chapter on loneliness in the disaffected (alexithymic) patient combines clear theoretical descriptions of the traumas of inadequate attachments, the "naked horror" of intense emptiness and loneliness and hopelessness, the defences against feeling these overwhelming affects (usually by "evacuating part of their psychic reality rather than feeling it"), and the personal and interpersonal consequences of this emotionally crippling sequence. Although Taylor is writing about alexithymic patients, it seems clear that alexithymia, as he is talking about it here, is at one end of a spectrum upon which we all have our home.

In the section on healing the analyst's loneliness, Jenny Kaufmann's description of her struggle with the impact of her mother's suicide when she was 26 months old is remarkably personal and compelling. The vastness and complexity of the impact of such a loss is stunning. In the same section, Bruce Herzog writes about his traumatic experience of his wife's sudden death. He describes his coping with the profound impact on him and how his work as a therapist and analyst was both a source of respite and engendered intense transference reactions. In this section and the next, both John Sloane and Phillip Classen discuss the intersection of psychoanalysis with the comfort and strength of their religious faith in their personal experiences of loneliness and pain.

Art Caspary's chapter on the film *No Country for Old Men* was delightful. The connections amongst Chigurh's psychopathy, the socially idealized and legally protected psychopathy of the corporation, and the global (at least Western Hemisphere) collapse of the old moral order is well worth pondering. Allow me to quote his penultimate paragraph:

I haven't believed in Hollywood endings for a long time and I don't believe in either the great patriarch in the sky, the great selfobject in the sky or pyramidal power. I don't believe government will help unless we can recapture it from its current owners. It makes perfect sense to me that evil can and does walk away with the trophy. I know how Bell feels to see the certainty of

justice exposed as just one more human creation, corruptible and transient. I agree this is no country for old men because we were taught to believe things couldn't work out this way. We have lost that belief and we are sad for our loss. (p. 219)

I think it was Joseph Campbell who said that a civilization cannot survive the loss of its myths and gods.

Michael O'Loughlin's chapter about Ireland's "Great Hunger" was emotionally intense. He quotes Garrett O'Connor's concept of "malignant shame" and links it to an ongoing sense of "cultural inferiority" that comes from generations of political oppression and the systematic brutalization and humiliation of a group. O'Loughlin's belief is that shame is an isolating emotion and that trauma becomes an isolating experience (both intrapersonally and interpersonally) that is passed down through the generations.

In the section about non-human connections, Elizabeth Allured describes the importance of our connection to nature that is rarely discussed in psychoanalytic circles. She refers to Searles's writing about relatedness to the non-human environment. He talks about a sense of kinship between us and the non-human environment in terms of our shared atomic, anatomic, and physiological structures, our shared evolutionary history, and our shared biological fate, becoming, once again, a part of that non-human environment. We are all, quite literally, stardust.

Henry Seiden's chapter "On the Longing for Home" places "Odysseus—not Oedipus—as the figure from antiquity most representative of the universal psychological experience of our species." His quote from A. Bartlett Giamatti about "home" can get the cognitive/emotional associational networks humming.

Home is an English word virtually impossible to translate into other tongues. No translation catches the associations, the mixture of memory and longing, the sense of security and autonomy and accessibility, the aroma of inclusiveness, of freedom from wariness, that cling to the word home . . . Home is a concept, not a place; it is a state of mind where self definition starts; it is origins—the mix of time and place and smell and weather wherein one first realizes one is an original, perhaps like others, especially those one loves, but discrete, distinct, not to be copied. Home is where one first learned to be separate and it remains in the mind as a place where reunion, if it were to ever recur, would happen. (p. 268)

Psychoanalytic history is strewn with the casualties of isolation and extrusion, exile and disowning. Kenneth Eisold reviews this rather pain-

ful story and opens up the Pandora's box of analytic tribalism as a defensive solution to the conflict between differentiation and belonging. Brent Willock describes the history of loneliness from the vantage point of various psychoanalytic theories. He ends by making a strong case for the benefit, if not the necessity, of a "comparative-integrative" approach for the survival and growth of psychoanalysis.

A few nits are worth picking here. This is such an eclectic ensemble that I suppose it should not be surprising that although there are some attempts at defining terms like *loneliness* and *longing*, it is clear there is no universal agreement. There are times when loneliness is referred to as an affect. It is, in fact, many different complex affective states. I imagine the editors wanted to introduce the concepts of loneliness and longing into the theoretical psychoanalytic conversation with a greater sense of focus than has been the case. If that is true, then the introduction has been done and the focus will, hopefully, follow. There were some chapters with varying degrees of tangentiality. I was initially looking for more depth of current theoretical perspectives on the vicissitudes of loneliness. However, it became clear that I was using a telescope and asking it to be a microscope.

Overall, the chapters are well written and comprehensible. There is plenty of rich and sensitive clinical material and courageous, informative, and compelling personal accounts. This is quite a journey. It is analogous to a month-long trip around the world. And each country is rich and different and complex—a day in each place barely scratches the surface. So many of these chapters offer ideas that are thought provoking and tantalizing. But there is just so much! In a way, the format of this book reflects something of the "comparative-integrative" theoretical approach that Willock is advocating, in that its broadness offers the potential to open up the discussion in many fertile, unexpected, and creatively unfettered ways. I suspect this is exactly what the editors were planning—to present a Cooke's Tour of the world of loneliness and longing that would encourage us to travel and explore more.

Now, I wonder if I could find that little theoretical principality that specializes in thoughts on the inherent loneliness of consciousness . . . (with or without cats).

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