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The Honourable Auspice of
Szczecin University's Rector

Alone Together

*An International
Pandisciplinary Symposium
on Solitude in Community*

10th-12th April 2019



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Szczecin University's Rector

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An International Pandisciplinary Symposium on Solitude in Community

Welcome



Welcome to this international pandisciplinary symposium on solitude in community, the first of its kind (we think) but not the last (we hope). We are Julian Stern of York St John University, and Małgorzata Wałejko of the University of Szczecin, the co-hosts of this event. It is good to see so many people coming together to discuss this important topic.



Why this symposium? Both of us have been working for many years on issues related to aloneness – in both positive and negative forms, as solitude and as loneliness. In November 2017, we realised the links between our strands of research and, thanks to the Erasmus programme, met in York in February 2018. At that point, we started arranging this symposium, as both of us felt that there were many people, across a very wide range of academic disciplines and professional contexts, who were interested in different aspects of aloneness. We call it a ‘pandisciplinary’ symposium: we are not simply bringing disciplines together to talk ‘over the garden wall’; we are bringing people together who are interested in aloneness, to discuss these issues.

It is a great delight that people are coming to the symposium from nine countries (Australia, Belgium, Canada, Poland, Romania, Sweden, the UK, and the USA), and we have other colleagues from these countries and also from Hong Kong, China, and from Israel who would have liked to have attended.

A number of people have asked about publications arising from the symposium. We are not publishing a ‘conference proceedings’ volume. However, there are two linked publications that we are hoping to organise. Jarosław Horowski, editor of *Paedagogia Christiana*, has suggested that there might be a special edition of that journal in 2020 (edited by Julian Stern and Małgorzata Wałejko), to which contributors to this symposium may wish to submit articles. Jarosław will say more about this, during the symposium. And the publishers Bloomsbury are interested in a proposal for a handbook of solitude, silence and loneliness (edited by Julian Stern, Chris Sink, Małgorzata Wałejko, and Wong Ping Ho), to which contributors to this symposium may be able to contribute. Although nothing is definite yet, we are delighted to have these two possibilities for publishing on this important topic.

We would like to thank a number of people who have made the symposium possible. The event is organised under the auspices of Professor Edward Włodarczyk, Rector of the University of Szczecin, and Professor Karen Stanton, Vice Chancellor of York St John University, and we are enormously grateful for their individual and institutional

(and financial!) support. We are also most grateful for the support of Sophie Lievesley and the team from the York St John conference office, and Simon Bower and the technical team, who have organised so many of the details of the event. And during the event, we will be supported by a team of student volunteers, and we are very grateful to them for giving up their precious holidays to help us.

As much as possible of the symposium will be filmed, and photographs will be taken. If you do not want to be filmed or photographed, please let one of us know – if possible, in advance of the event. We do not intend making the films generally available (unless we ask specific permission, after the event), but are hoping to record sessions as a record of the event and to share (if requested) with those present – for example, for presenters to remind themselves of questions (and answers!), or for those who wanted to attend two simultaneous sessions.

We have given each of the parallel presenters 20 minutes to talk, and 10 minutes to respond to questions. If everyone sticks to those times, we will have the best balanced discussions, and the greatest chance to be on time for food and drink as well.

The symposium will take place in the De Grey building (number 27 on the map on the following page), in the lecture theatre on the ground floor (DG 017) and in rooms DG 016 and 019 on the ground floor and DG 123 on the first floor. Registration and refreshments will be served in the De Grey foyer. Lunch will be served in the Holgate building, in the middle of the campus. You are most welcome to look around the campus – and we especially recommend the quad (the original buildings from the 1840s) and the chapel (an interesting 1960s building).

Beyond the university, York is one of the UK's great tourist centres – with up to seven million visitors a year – and is easy to walk around. We would recommend wandering around the city walls (which is free), the Railway Museum (also free), and – although these will cost you money – visiting the shops within the city walls and York Minster (one of the great European cathedrals). There are many places to eat and drink around York, with a number of easy and cheap places along Gillygate (just a few metres from the university), including *Mamma Mia* (<http://mamma-mia-york.co.uk/>) (an excellent Italian bistro) and the *Gillygate* pub (<https://thegillygate.com/>) (a traditional pub with good food too). York has been a significant city for two thousand years, and the Roman Emperor Constantine (originally from Serbia) ruled the Empire from York, starting in 306 CE. Constantine, whose statue sits outside York Minster, went on to establish Christianity as the main Roman religion, and established a single European currency that lasted 1000 years. But please don't mention such pan-European unity at the moment, unless you want to see a lot of UK citizens cry.

For wifi, log in to YSJ Guest, and use the password *elitethoughtful77*. If you want to tweet from the event, you could use the hashtag *#alonetogether2019*.

If you have any questions during the symposium, please ask one of us or any of the other staff and students of York St John University.

Julian Stern and Małgorzata Wałejko

Programme

Day 1: Wednesday 10th April 2019

18.00 – 18.30	Arrival registration and refreshments	De Grey Foyer
18.30 – 19.30	<p>Introduction to the symposium: Julian Stern (York St John University, UK) and Małgorzata Walejko (University of Szczecin, Poland)</p> <p>Plenary seminar 1: Sandra Bosacki (Brock University, Canada): Silence, solitude, and social cognition in adolescence: research and educational implications</p>	De Grey Lecture Theatre (DG 017)
19.30 onwards	Dinner (arrange your own)	

Day 2: Thursday 11th April 2019

09.00 – 09.20	Arrival registration and refreshments	De Grey Foyer						
09.20 – 09.30	Welcome to the Symposium: York St John University Vice Chancellor, Professor Karen Stanton	De Grey Lecture Theatre (DG 017)						
09.30 – 10.30	<p>Introduction to Day 2: Julian Stern</p> <p>Plenary seminar 2: Julian Stern (York St John University) and Małgorzata Walejko (University of Szczecin): Solitude, the uncommunicable and the uncommunicated in education</p>	De Grey Lecture Theatre (DG 017)						
10.30 – 11.00	Mid-morning refreshments	De Grey Foyer						
11.00 – 13.00	<p>Parallel sessions A (three or four 20-minute presentations each followed by 10 minutes discussion)</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 33%;">A1 (DG 016)</th> <th style="width: 33%;">A2 (DG 019)</th> <th style="width: 33%;">A3 (DG 123)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> <p>Teresa Olearczyk (Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Krakow University, Poland): Anthropology of upbringing: silence as a way of human development</p> <p>Axel Seemann (Bentley University, USA): Is “loneliness” a state of mind?</p> </td> <td> <p>Catherine Heinemeyer (York St John University, UK): Figures on a windswept shore</p> <p>Elzbieta Perzycka (University of Szczecin, Poland): Images of creative loneliness of inhabitants of Kenya: analysis of visual messages</p> </td> <td> <p>Piotr Krakowiak (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland): Loneliness of family caregivers of dementia patients. educational challenges for public education and support in local communities</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	A1 (DG 016)	A2 (DG 019)	A3 (DG 123)	<p>Teresa Olearczyk (Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Krakow University, Poland): Anthropology of upbringing: silence as a way of human development</p> <p>Axel Seemann (Bentley University, USA): Is “loneliness” a state of mind?</p>	<p>Catherine Heinemeyer (York St John University, UK): Figures on a windswept shore</p> <p>Elzbieta Perzycka (University of Szczecin, Poland): Images of creative loneliness of inhabitants of Kenya: analysis of visual messages</p>	<p>Piotr Krakowiak (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland): Loneliness of family caregivers of dementia patients. educational challenges for public education and support in local communities</p>	De Grey (DG 016, DG 019, DG 123)
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	<p>Ewelina Łęgowska (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland): Can solitude and loneliness be overcome by supporting children and youth in bereavement? Analysis of methods of help after losses implemented in the Pomeranian Region in Poland</p>	<p>Sarah Whiter (Leeds Trinity University, UK): Virtual friendship – a paradox or a panacea for loneliness?</p>	<p>Richard E Cleveland (Georgia Southern University, USA): Aware I am alone: intersections of solitude and mindfulness</p> <p>Olga Szykaruk (University of Szczecin, Poland): The exile's lament: solitude and togetherness in Ovid's later works</p>	
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch			De Grey Foyer
14.00 – 15.30	<p>Parallel sessions B (three 20-minute presentations each followed by 10 minutes discussion)</p>			De Grey (DG 016, DG 019)
	<p>B1 (DG 016)</p> <p>Alan Ford (John Macmurray Fellowship, UK): To be is to be related: aloneness, isolation, performance and narcissism</p> <p>Christophe Perrin (Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium): The phenomenon of solitude</p> <p>Elżbieta Dubas (University of Lodz, Poland): Diverse aspects of solitude together: ambivalence of solitude: learning solitude</p>	<p>B2 (DG 019)</p> <p>Łukasz Miciuk and Monika Dubas (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland) (presenting virtually): The roles of solitude and loneliness in personality development</p> <p>Eva Alerby (Luleå University of Technology, Sweden): Silence, senses and solitude in the light of texture</p> <p>Barbara Chojnacka (University of Szczecin, Poland): The isolation/loneliness of the parentified child in family</p>		
15.30 – 15.45	Afternoon refreshments			De Grey Foyer
15.45 – 16.45	<p>Parallel sessions C (two 20-minute presentations each followed by 10 minutes discussion)</p>			De Grey (DG 016, DG 019)
	<p>C1 (DG 016)</p> <p>Jarosław Horowski (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland): Education to loneliness being a consequence of opposition to the purpose of the community's activities</p>	<p>C2 (DG 019)</p> <p>Grażyna Erenc-Grygoruk (West Pomeranian Business School, Poland): Causes of loneliness of students of early-primary school education in the opinion of teachers</p>		

	Alison Wray (Cardiff University, UK): Loneliness as a product of poor communication: a 'soft' cause of dementia	Eleanor M Godway (Central Connecticut State University, USA): Alone together: persons in relation	
16.45 – 17.00	End of Day 2 summary: Julian Stern		De Grey Lecture Theatre (DG 017)
17.15 – 18.00	Rest		
18.00 – 19.00	Drinks Reception		De Grey Foyer
19.30 onwards	Dinner (optional 'conference dinner' offsite)		Venue to be confirmed

Day 3: Friday 12th April 2019

09.00 – 09.30	Arrival refreshments		De Grey Foyer
09.30 – 10.30	Introduction to Day 3: Julian Stern Plenary seminar 3: Piotr Domeracki (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland): The paradigmatic conceptualizations of loneliness and communitiveness in a monoseological discourse		De Grey Lecture Theatre (DG 017)
10.30 – 11.00	Mid-morning refreshments		De Grey Foyer
11.00 – 13.00	Parallel sessions D (four 20-minute presentations each followed by 10 minutes discussion)		De Grey (DG 016, DG 019)
	D1 (DG 016) Gary Shepherd (York St John University, UK): Do therapists ever get lonely? Aleksander Cywiński (University of Szczecin, Poland): Solitude of the island towards Europe Joanna Król (University of Szczecin, Poland): Loneliness in the collective: youth in the socio-educational sphere in Poland in 1945-1989 Piotr Petrykowski (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland): Generation people with hollow eyes?	D2 (DG 019) Agnieszka Szajner (The Polish University Abroad in London, UK/Poland): Economic loneliness of students of the Kenyan University of Pwani Lidia Marek (University of Szczecin, Poland): Images of solitude in Kenya (as seen by observer-researcher from Europe) Kamil Węgorowski (University of Szczecin, Poland): Collective pictures of loneliness – case studies based on youths from China, Japan, and South Korea David Weir (York St John University, UK): Solitude as an	

		executive virtue or the value of wilderness time	
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch		De Grey Foyer
14.00 – 15.30	Parallel sessions E (three 20-minute presentations each followed by 10 minutes discussion)		De Grey (DG 016, DG 019)
	E1 (DG 016) Michael T Buchanan (Australian Catholic University, Australia) and Julian Stern (York St John University, UK): Religious education leader connectedness: a study of the lived reality of Catholic education Henrieta Serban (Institute of Philosophy and Psychology “Constantin Rădulescu-Motru” and Institute of Political Science and International Relations “Ion I. C. Brătianu” of the Romanian Academy, Romania): The faces of solitude in philosophy, society and politics Katarzyna Wrońska (The Jagiellonian University, Poland): The praise of self-instruction in the 21st century – with a background on historical self-education proposals in Poland during the partitions and interwar period	E2 (DG 019) Gill Simpson (York St John University, UK): In community, alone, in community: reflections on the Nicene Creed Moira von Wright (Ersta Sköndal Bräcke University College, Sweden): Mediating loneliness: Diaconia in the margins of civil society Rafał Iwański and Magdalena Leszko (University of Szczecin, Poland): Prisoners of care: predictors of health outcomes and caregiver burden among family caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer’s disease	
15.30 – 16.00	Afternoon refreshments		De Grey Foyer
16.00 – 16.30	End of symposium summary and evaluation: Julian Stern		De Grey Lecture Theatre (DG 017)
16.30 onwards	Rest and dinner (arrange your own)		

Abstracts

Eva Alerby (Luleå University of Technology, Sweden): Silence, senses and solitude in the light of texture [B2]

In this presentation, I will illuminate, elaborate on and discuss silence, senses and solitude in the light of texture. Texture can be simply described as a surface quality, both tactile and visual, covering both nature and culture, indeed life itself. As a professional term, texture is used not only in arts and crafts but also in disciplines such as music, language and gastronomy, although with slightly different meanings (Loan, 2002). In today's society, and more specific in (art)educational settings, texture is essential for both visual and tactile attention and aesthetic compliance (Doseth Opstad & Alerby, 2017).

The presentation will be based on different philosophical directions, predominantly the thinking of the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who emphasised that there is something that exists beyond what is said, which cannot be communicated verbally and which he terms a silent and implicit language. In textures, it's the silent and solitude space in between that's make a difference that's make a difference. Texture will also be discussed in relation to senses, with a starting point in Merleau-Ponty's theory of the lived body (Merleau-Ponty & Lefort, 1968).

The concept of texture and its intertwined relations with silence, senses and solitude will be explored and elaborate on, with the ultimate goal of moving beyond traditional explorations. By doing so, possible unknown and uncertain dimensions of significance for (art)education might occur.

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Sandra L Bosacki (Brock University, Canada): Silence, solitude, and social cognition in adolescence: research and educational implications [Plenary 1]

"I enjoy my time alone." 14 yr. old female. What does this mean for young adolescents – girls/boys?

How can teachers and family members encourage "emerging adolescents" or children on the cusp of adolescence, to develop adaptive ethical and emotional skills to help them navigate times of silences, solitude and social connections throughout the teenaged years?

What are the key issues regarding silence, solitude, and social cognition in young people's lives, and implications for education and emotional health?

Specifically, in this talk I will explore the question: How do young teens use their ability

to understand others' minds and emotions to navigate their relationships with themselves, their peers, and during times of silences and solitude?

To address this question, I will critically examine research on emerging adolescents' ability to understand mind, emotion, and spirit within their private and public worlds, and how they use this ability to help them navigate their experiences of solitude and their relationships.

These questions and others will be discussed within the context of education and developmental psychology research, and draw from examples from recent and ongoing cross-sectional and longitudinal research with Canadian, Polish, and American children, and adolescents.

Finally, I will discuss how teachers and researchers can apply findings from developmental social cognitive research into the classroom, and develop innovative strategies that honour, respect, and protect the silences in students' lives, and their private times spent in solitude.

If there is time, I will explore the question: Is the overarching aim of education to nurture and improve the ethical, moral, emotional and social lives of youth? If not – how are we trying to help children grow?

Michael T Buchanan (Australian Catholic University, Australia) and Julian Stern (York St John University, UK): Religious education leader connectedness: a study of the lived reality of Catholic education [E1]

Michael Buchanan and Julian Stern have researched leadership in Catholic schools, and in particular the leadership of religious education and possible challenges of connectedness or isolation (Buchanan 2013, 2018, Stern 2013). The ambiguity of relationships between RE leaders and their schools and their religious communities may lead to a distinctive experience of leadership in these schools. RE leaders may be expected to bear the weight of moral and spiritual responsibilities, because of their positions, and yet may – because of this – appear disconnected from both 'ordinary' teacher issues and 'ordinary' leadership issues. Potentially experiencing a degree of exclusion both from in-school professional communities of teachers and of leaders, the RE leaders may yet not feel fully part of the broad educational aims of the Catholic church either, as they have little direct authority within the church.

In this innovative research project, the authors have explored RE leader connectedness (and/or disconnectedness) in Catholic schools around the world. Respondents make use of artistic representations of both connectedness and disconnectedness, to describe (by choice of picture and by explaining their choice) the nature of their connectedness. They complement such descriptions with comments on connectedness and disconnectedness in general and what in their schools, and in themselves, might change in order to improve a sense of connectedness. Initial responses from Australis, Hong Kong in China, the USA, the UK and Germany are presented here, in order to generate a picture of the lived reality of RE leaders in Catholic education. There are many positive descriptions of RE leadership, provided by respondents, as well as descriptions of problematic disconnection.

It is hoped that this is a preliminary study for a larger global study of RE leadership in Catholic schools.

Perspectives and Challenges; New York: Continuum.

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Barbara Chojnacka (University of Szczecin, Poland): The isolation/loneliness of the parentified child in family [B2]

Parentification is a phenomenon occurring in the family life and consists of reversing the roles between the child and the parent or parents (Böszörményi-Nagy, Spark 1973). It is understood as a functional and/ or emotional change of roles in which the child devotes their own needs in order to adapt and take care of the instrumental or psychological needs of the parent (Schier, 2010). Functional parentification consists of using the child to carry out work related to housekeeping and organisation of family life, duties such as cooking, cleaning, washing, taking care of their siblings and other family members, even earning money (Hopper et al., 2011). Emotional exchange of these roles involves placing the child in the role of a trustee, family judge, therapist or even the mediator in the parental conflicts (Hopper et al., 2008). The reversal of family roles, often unconscious, seems to be socially accepted phenomenon. Children become so-called "small heroes", showing specific strength and valour, since they take over responsibility for their family environment, support parents and guardians. However, this kind of heroism is marked by efforts exceeding their strength, since it is undertaken due to the sense of duty, need to "save" the family system, maintain intrinsic bonds or loyalty.

The presented research is embedded in the interpretive paradigm. The experience of the family roles reversal appears as a phenomenon, as a mechanism or a set of behaviours that happen in the course of human life, and therefore constitute an element of the person's biography, thus shaping it in various ways.

The research material allows the author to distinguish specific stages of parentified childhood (proper childhood, transition phase, adult childhood), within which appear categories such as responsibility, involuntary heroism, self-containment and loneliness. With regard to the last two categories, the author wishes to construct the image of a lonely child experiencing the reversal of family roles. There is a peculiar paradox at work: the loneliness of the child within the family environment. There is a lonely struggle for survival and proper functioning of the family, keeping up appearance of normal functioning family, maintaining family homeostasis and meeting their own needs and needs of their loved ones.

In this presentation, the author wishes to show the picture of lonely childhood combined with the experience of parentification. The biographical perspective allows to capture the meanings that "adult children" attribute (or had attributed) to, their experiences and consequences of these experiences.

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Richard E Cleveland (Georgia Southern University, USA): Aware I am alone: intersections of solitude and mindfulness [A3]

This presentation intends to explore solitude via the construct and practice of mindfulness (Kabat-Zinn, 2005). It is the author's belief that parallels between these two constructs not only exist, but complement each other in furthering the well-being of individuals and communities. Specifically, the author will offer three perspectives through which mindfulness may aid in forming foundational understandings of solitude. These lenses include Theoretical, Practice, and Research. The Theoretical lens will begin the presentation providing introductory understandings of both solitude and mindfulness. Definitions will be framed within the contexts of school (Langer, 2000; Stern, 2015) and beyond (Cleveland, 2018; Krägeloh, 2016; Pauly, Lay, Nater, Scott, & Hoppmann, 2017). From here integral parallels between the two constructs will be outlined. The perspective of Practice will review the few existing examples of solitude fostered through mindfulness practices (Salmon & Matarese, 2013). Further, the author will propose additional models for recognizing solitude as an important part of mindfulness. Finally, the Research component will summarize a current project being conducted by the author investigating mindfulness experienced alone and together.

Similar to previous studies examining solitude through biophysical data (Pauly et al., 2017), the project analyzes individuals' cognitive and physical arousal states via heart rate (HR) and electrodermal activity (EDA) while engaged in mindfulness meditative practices. Specifically, research participants' HR and EDA data are collected while engaged in various conditions of mindfulness meditation (i.e., solitary, communal, guided, and non-guided). The presentation concludes with a time of dialogue between the author and session attendees.

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Aleksander Cywiński (University of Szczecin, Poland): Solitude of the island towards Europe [D1]

The title of the conference reminds me the beautiful song of the New Zealand band Crowded House. The title is "Together Alone", and it was realized at 1993. It is a unique combination of rock music and the Moorish tradition. In this song, the words are: "We were as close/As anyone can be/Now you are gone/Far away from me/As is once/Will always be/Together alone". It is probably about death. It speaks also about eternal, divine life circle. So we have a deeply mystical text. At the same time, I have other associations caused by recent political events. I mean Brexit. Well, our present influences the reading of cultural texts. I would like to say what is unimaginable from the point of view of a 40-year-old resident of Szczecin, a city in Central Eastern Europe, in a post-communist state, Poland. I am interested not only in the solitude of individuals, but in more whole communities or nations, in the face of a larger population, in this case the EU. In my speech, I would like to ask the question: what does Brexit teach me in the times of post-truth?

Piotr Domeracki (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland): The paradigmatic conceptualizations of loneliness and communitiveness in a monoseological discourse [Plenary 3]

In my presentation I am concentrated on - as its title says - The paradigmatic conceptualizations of loneliness and communitiveness in a monoseological discourse is concentrated on a controversial and having not only one and satisfactory for different discussing it parts solution problem of the limits of the phenomena of loneliness and communitiveness. It is placed on a ground of the monoseological discourse as being intrinsic to it. The term 'monoseology' is derived from two combined ancient Greek words - 'monosé', which means 'loneliness', and 'logos' - translated etymologically as 'a rational, critical thinking' and more specifically as 'a science', 'a theory'.

Hence monoseology, in its wider meaning, is used to designate all sciences interested in analyzing and conducting systematic research on loneliness; in a narrower sense the term 'monoseology' means simply just the philosophy of loneliness. It is quite commonly agreed that loneliness has only got bad sides in itself but communitiveness on the contrary has got only bright ones. Therefore loneliness deserves on clear and firm criticism while communitiveness is assessed in a univocally positive way. This, in turn, translates to an unquestionable preference to ideas, feelings, motives and acts which are of community character and use. On the other hand, loneliness is recognized as a reason of our pain, suffering, fears, sadness and horrible despair. It results that our key ambition, need and aim should be avoiding and preventing each form of loneliness in our private and social life at all costs. But, as it occurs, this causes a lot of further - not only theoretical but unfortunately also practical - problems, which some researchers and ordinary people must face. This kind of unilateral and unambiguous interpretation both loneliness and communitiveness is called in the article "monolectical". In addition, it is shown in it that 'monolectics' of communitiveness or loneliness is insufficient for possibly objective and complete picture of this two. In consequence it is argued that monoseological discourse is able to gain it and to develop itself only by turning to the dialectical method of explaining. The fundamental thesis and belief as well, expressed on the ground of the dialectics of loneliness and communitiveness, is that loneliness and communitiveness are not at all isolated but strongly complementary. A practical conclusion arises from this statement according to which each of us should intertwine in his or her life some periods of communitiveness and then some episodes of loneliness.

Elżbieta Dubas (University of Lodz, Poland): Diverse aspects of solitude together: ambivalence of solitude: learning solitude [B1]

Solitude can be regarded as a *universal* phenomenon of human existence since it concerns people regardless of their stage of development and in every historical and socio-cultural conditions. This is mostly the result of an *ontological* cause of solitude – being torn between Self and Other, between the unquestionable value of one's own individuality vs. the need for society and culture for full personal development of each individual. Solitude as a human experience is extremely *varied*, multidimensional and hard to define. Solitude is also an *ambivalent* phenomenon, because relatively "same" situation of solitude can trigger different feelings in different people; it can also trigger different feelings in the same individual during his or her lifetime, as their needs, expectations, necessities and abilities to cope with life change. The term „solitude” can be considered as a *superior cognitive category*, including a lot of meanings, such as negatively perceived *loneliness* and *positive solitude*. What proves especially interesting for educators is bringing out positive aspects of solitude, teaching how to experience solitude in a creative way, so as to develop a Person and strengthen the Community. *Being together* is a special case of solitude. Seemingly it should bear no

signs of loneliness. Because Others are the most frequent “way” of coping with negative solitude. However, often “being together” increases the loneliness, for example when there is no understanding or if it is connected with the need for seclusion so as to undertake self-fulfilment activities. “Being together” encompasses loneliness, seclusion, as well as positive solitude. “Being together” perfectly shows the ambivalence of solitude and its varied aspects. It is a big challenge for a solitude educator to turn “being together” into positive solitude. How to “be together” and at the same time “be for oneself”? Reflections over a complex situation of “being together” and solitude, presented in this paper, will be illustrated with selected examples of surveyed adults’ views.

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Grażyna Erenc-Grygoruk (West Pomeranian Business School, Poland): Causes of loneliness of students of early-primary school education in the opinion of teachers [C2]

Teachers, by opening themselves to the needs of especially youngest students, should constantly accompany them in overcoming loneliness and presenting its positive sides. The article presents the causes of school loneliness of early school primary school students starting their compulsory adventure with learning.

In the light of literature and own research, the search included only a fragment of the problem, including family, school and student. Teachers’ knowledge about the causes of student loneliness should be the starting point for prevention it or use this knowledge in the best intentions for the student’s development.

Alan Ford (John Macmurray Fellowship, UK): To be is to be related: aloneness, isolation, performance and narcissism [B1]

‘I have often said that the sole cause of man’s unhappiness is that he does not know how to stay quietly in his room.’ (1)

According to Pascal human beings crave distraction rather than engage in true relationships. I argue that a sense of the real and of identity can be found only in good

enough personal relations.

According to John Macmurray a person is constituted by total and simultaneous self-revelation with the other, a giving of oneself: and in this relatedness both partners become real. This is love, the need to see one's reality attested in the reality of another human being. Fear always results in withdrawal from relationship in defensiveness or the desire to defeat the other. Yet, paradoxically' withdrawal is necessary in order to discover what is real and who one is. This will be explored in light of John Macmurray's comments about the 'rhythm withdrawal and return', where love is seen to resolve this paradox and, where it is absent, identity and personal relations must become confused. (2)

This paradox is also explored in DW Winnicott's, 'The Capacity to Be Alone', where he argues that this capacity is a form of health, a becoming real but, again, ' ... [The] basis of the capacity to be alone is a paradox; it is the experience of being alone while someone else is present', beginning in the child-carer, relationship. (3) This paradox will be spelled out, explored and, one hopes, resolved.

Sherry Turkle's book, *Alone Together*, (4) describes an entirely different state of being alone: in isolation rather than relation, created by the culture of the smart phone, behind which we hide, narcissistically from relationship.

I try to show that identity is a process of separation, *but in relation*. One cannot be related when one is not separate: when one is not 'alone together', in Macmurray's sense.

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Eleanor M Godway (Central Connecticut State University, USA): Alone together: persons in relation [C2]

"We must meet, we must communicate with one another; we must, it seems, be alone together."

"If the *terminus a quo* is a helpless total dependence on the other, the *terminus ad quem* is not independence but a mutual interdependence of equals."

That only if we in some sense are alone can we be together illustrates Macmurray's account of the "practical contradiction" involved in being a person. "I" become "I" at the point at which I must distinguish myself from "not - I", namely "you". The baby learns he is dependent on an Other because at some point, the Other will inevitably fail to fulfil his needs, and alone, abandoned he is afraid. And when, as must happen if he is to survive, the Other returns and cares for him again, he no longer trusts her: he withdraws. The relationship has changed, and now baby and caregiver initiate a future together which may be positive or negative: towards communion, mutual delight in

being together, i.e. love, or if trust is not restored, the baby may withhold any positive response. If the negative becomes dominant, as he grows up, he will tend to distrust others, and needing power to assert his will, will be either aggressive or manipulative. He will not risk meeting the other “alone”, without defense, and so will never experience the “I – Thou” breakthrough that Buber describes.

Solitude can be a withdrawal into isolation, a refusal to communicate, a “no” to a future with others, a defensive reaction to a hostile world – thus an expression of the negative. Hence the imposition of solitude by others is a truly destructive practice, a violation of the personhood of the victim. Or, ideally, withdrawal can be the negative which constitutes and sustains the positive, when it is an occasion to reflect on a challenging situation so as to return to it with renewed awareness – to be able to communicate more openly, ready to take risks, to act with, rather than react against. As Macmurray puts it, “all meaningful action [is] for the sake of friendship”. Thus will solitude will be for the sake of community.

References

Martin Buber: *Between Man and Man
I and Thou*

John Macmurray: *The Self as Agent
Persons in Relation*

Catherine Heinemeyer (York St John University, UK): Figures on a windswept shore [A2]

This short performance reflection, held together by the orally told story of The Stolen Child, will resummon another occasion on which I told that story, during a weekly session with teenage inpatients at a psychiatric inpatient unit, Maple House. Storytelling is a practice riddled with metaphors of ‘communitas’, concretised by experience and titbits of verifiable fact, such as Ryan’s (2008) evidence for a convergence of breath and heartrate between storyteller and listeners. During my two-year storytelling residency at Maple House, I used to talk about aspiring to provide an ‘other room’ within which each person present could safely meet, and did experience many such moments.

Yet the setting convenes a population which is usually too transient to be a real community – who often sense, indeed, that they are better off *not* forming one. It was accordingly rare to feel that everyone present was ‘together in the story’. There was usually someone who liked the cadence of a storytelling voice while she was plaiting her friend’s hair but was not interested in the story itself, someone who was fired up by a certain image in it, someone who was aggravated by it.

Perhaps what I was providing was something more like a rock surface, with ledges and handholds for those who wished to hook onto it for a little while. In fact there was often a ‘windblown’ atmosphere, like a wide open shore, sparse, exposed, all of us aware of each other’s presence but wandering separately.

A young woman entered a small coastal town, going first from house to house but, after one door after another closed in her face, she retreated to the rocky shore.....

Reference

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Jarosław Horowski (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland): Education to loneliness being a consequence of opposition to the purpose of the community's activities [C1]

The subject of my analysis is loneliness as a consequence of exclusion from the community. This exclusion is understood as a result of the individual's opposition to the goal recognized by the community as a common good. I assume that an individual takes into account the consequences of opposition, but makes a specific decision for moral reasons (after recognizing the good of community members). I recognize the ability to oppose and to accept the exclusion from the community as the purpose of education. I wonder what character traits a person capable of making the decision about the opposition should have, and then on this basis I formulate the teleology of education. I recognize these character traits as moral virtues especially cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude. The presentation is made of three parts. In the first part I introduce the problem of decision of opposition as a consent to loneliness. The second part reflects on the characteristics of a person who is capable of expressing opposition. In the third part I refer to the teleology of education and I formulate best possible answers to the question of education for loneliness.

Rafał Iwański and Magdalena Leszko (University of Szczecin, Poland): Prisoners of care: predictors of health outcomes and caregiver burden among family caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's disease [E2]

Background and Objectives: Adjusting to dementia diagnosis is a complex process. Caregivers tend to experience feelings of loneliness and isolation, which in turn may have adverse effects on their well-being. Although the detrimental effects of caregiving on psychological and physical health are very well- documented, more research is needed to give a comprehensive portrait of the caregiving experience, especially in the area of loneliness and social isolation. The primary aim of the proposed research is to build the clinical groundwork for the low-cost interventions for caregivers of individuals diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease (AD).

Research Design and Methods: A total of 120 family caregivers of individuals with AD were interviewed using semi-structured interview guides. Participants were also randomly assigned to either the psychoeducational intervention group or the control group. Both groups were interviewed and asked to complete a set of questionnaires but only the intervention group was provided with a 3-session training which aimed at reducing caregivers' anxiety and depression levels by teaching coping strategies to increase caregivers' confidence in managing difficult behaviors. We compared participants' knowledge about Alzheimer's disease, their levels of caregiver burden, self-rated health, loneliness and depression at the baseline and after the training.

Results: Lower socioeconomic status and number of hours spent on providing care, and higher frequency of behavioral problems exhibited by dementia patients were associated with higher levels of depression symptoms and caregiver burden. Older caregivers and those who have been providing care for more than 8 years received significantly higher scores on loneliness scale. Loneliness was positively associated with scores on depression scale and negatively correlated with caregiver's size of social network. Those caregivers who were provided with the training had significantly reduced depressive symptoms in comparison with the baseline assessment and with comparison to the control group.

Discussion and Implications: Results from this study offer important insights into the caregiving experience for both psychologist and other healthcare professionals.

Key words: caregiving, dementia, interventions, loneliness, social isolation,

Piotr Krakowiak (University of Torun, Poland): Loneliness of family caregivers of dementia patients. educational challenges for public education and support in local communities [A3]

For many years in Poland we have been able to change the attitudes towards patients with cancer and their families. We have learnt from worldwide hospice movement, and have created our own strategies in order to make social education for end-of-life care effective. Nationwide project with provocative name: *Hospicjum to też życie* (Hospice is also a life) has helped our hospices but also improved acceptance and support for cancer patients and their families in Poland (P. Krakowiak et al, *Solidarity and Compassion*, 2018). Situation of patients with dementia and their families is very different in Poland and many other European countries. Most still feel ashamed of being the family with 'mental problems', often isolating themselves from others. Most of our local communities are not supporting those who suffer and those who care for them - often at home for many years. Social educators and social workers have to answer to this question of many family caregivers: How to handle feelings of guilt, isolation and loneliness when you're a family caregiver for someone with dementia. There are some good advices: First, connect. Caregivers can't benefit from the magical power of social supports if there are not enough caring people in their lives. Then - express yourself. Accept praise. Dementia caregivers often are compared to marathon runners because the challenge before them is a long course. Battling loneliness means allowing people into your life in any way you can manage to connect. (B.J. Jacobs, J.L Mayer, *Meditations for Caregivers*, 2016). Having good experiences with cancer patients and their families, how can we train and prepare our community leaders, social workers and local communities in order those who are lonely heroes of caring for dementia patients feel more included and supported around us? What can we learn from others, who have already developed tools and created strategies supporting family caregivers, like UK organization Carers UK (www.carersuk.org). We have to find solutions to this social challenge.

Joanna Król (University of Szczecin, Poland): Loneliness in the collective: youth in the socio-educational sphere in Poland in 1945-1989 [D1]

Political, social, and economic life in Poland in years 1945-1989 was organized within the monocratic order. It meant the existence of one center of power and control as well as the subordination of all social processes to immediate political goals. Education, and especially the formation of the young generation, also found itself in the orbit of political influence. The promoted educational model was built on the ideal of the so-called socialist morality. It included, among others, ideality, the cult of work, scientific worldview, and collectivism. The collectivism was treated as the goal, method, and the form of the educational work.

The compulsion to function in a group and being controlled by a group might have aroused in many members a sense of loneliness, isolation, or even rejection. The sense of rejection implied isolation. On the other hand, there was a chance to reformulate isolation into a sense of loneliness. I read loneliness as a positive value, i.e. as a journey into oneself, an opportunity for self-development and finding the inner freedom. Therefore, the following paradoxical questions can be posed: Was

collectivism inspiring and creative, and was collectivism the source of individual emancipation? Were the youth conspiracy, youth subcultures, and all religious movements contesting the system the proof of the isolation of young people or of their creative loneliness? The answer to these questions is the main goal of my speech.

Ewelina Łęgowska (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland): Can solitude and loneliness be overcome by supporting children and youth in bereavement? Analysis of methods of help after losses implemented in the Pomeranian Region in Poland [A1]

Loneliness can be dramatic after the loss of somebody from family, friends or significant others. When this tragic situation affects an adult, it seems to be an extremely difficult but inevitable turn of life. In the case of a child, we never know how situations of loss and grief will affect the further fate of a young person. Solitude might be experienced by children after a loss of the parent, sibling or another person. Schools and families are not always ready to recognise and help to overcome bereavement of children and teenagers, often leading to exclusion and loneliness among others.

The aim of this presentation is to show that solitude in the grief process can be overcome by the variety of methods of supporting children and young people in the process of mourning. This work will also show new, hitherto unknown methods of working with young people. The essence of this work is to recognize the risks of exclusion and loneliness of children in grief. The presentation will show the distribution of places supporting bereaved children in the Pomeranian Region in Poland. Review of existing literature shows that in the Pomeranian region different forms of therapies have been used in order to reduce loneliness and problems of bereaved children and teenagers. There are many forms of help and assistance offered by various institutions. In this presentation I would like to show all of the propositions that are used in the Pomeranian Region, mapping them and describing main groups and types of assistance. With this the strengths and weaknesses of this support system will be evident, stressing especially the problem of risks of solitude of young people suffering after the loss.

Methodology: An electronic database search in Polish language was used to collect articles for this literature. Information from the websites of all centres in the Pomeranian Region as well as from the hospices and hospitals, NGO's and other helping institutions were collected. The list and typology of different methods of working with bereaved children and teenagers in the Pomeranian Region will be created and presented. Special attention towards key-words: "loneliness" and "solitude" in all results will help to find correlation among these concept and concepts of loss, grief & bereavement.

Conclusion: The Analysis of existing methods of supporting bereaved children & teenagers in the Pomeranian Region will be presented. New forms that can effectively help in working with young people after a loss will be offered. Methods of helping young people in grief to overcome solitude and loneliness and existing tools of their inclusion in schools and local communities will be presented. Risks of experiencing loneliness and solitude among bereaved children & teenagers in their school environment will be carefully studied and explained.

Lidia Marek (University of Szczecin, Poland): Images of solitude in Kenya (as seen by observer-researcher from Europe) [D2]

In the core of tensions in the contemporary world we may find the issue of solitude and sense of loneliness, despite the presence of other people. Solitude may have different

faces inspiring us to proceed with theoretical and empirical studies. The paper is based on several major theoretical objectives that define solitude as a state selected by a person (provoking creativity, supporting self-reflection and self-fulfilment) on the one hand, and in the case of loneliness it may lead to depression, stagnation and regression, on the other. Such solitude is an experience extending beyond generations and always overwhelming mind and emotions of a given person. Additionally, observer/researcher's mind and emotions can be absorbed as well. Empirical inspiration for the paper has been provided by materials collected (photographs and interviews) during a study visit to Kenya, Africa. Analyses are divided into several themes: creative solitude, solitude of a woman, solitude of a child, solitude in a crowd, solitude of another person, solitude in illness and disability, 'solitude of a white man in black Africa'. Conclusions have the form of general reflections that summarise findings of the observation and analysis of selected visual messages that reflect the experience of different types of solitude by citizens and tourists in Kenya. Photographs were taken during a field visit as a part of TICASS, a science and research project.

Łukasz Miciuk and Monika Dubas (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland): The roles of solitude and loneliness in personality development [B2]

Abstract: The aim of paper is to present various views on the role of solitude and loneliness in the process of personality development.

This issue will be discussed in the light of psychodynamic, trait, cognitive, social-cognitive, humanistic, existential and sociobiological approaches to personality. Different psychological theories perceive the role of loneliness and solitude as positive or negative, depending on such variables as e.g. system of personal constructs, level of convergence between biological predispositions and personal goals, means of fighting existential dilemmas, self-esteem maintenance, artistic creation, boosting authentic life etc. Especially important to notice is that solitude, understood both mentally and socially, gives person the opportunity to listen to the inner voice and reflect on such aspects of existence which tend to be ignored but seem significant for self-understanding.

Teresa Olearczyk (Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Krakow University, Poland): Anthropology of upbringing: silence as a way of human development [A1]

Nowadays there has been an unprecedented dynamic development of science, as well as the related culture of chaos, noise and also children's hearing loss. External factors, such as the motion of moving vehicles and people, are conducive to the feeling of being lost and they result in feeling of solitude. More and more visible climate changes cause the intensification of anxiety. A man locked in the space of everyday life forgets about the time, about the fact that human life is limited in time, and this fact obliges us to the reflection on the meaning of life and the quality of its survival.

In the space around people, the number of various devices and goods of all kinds constantly increases, but at the same time the decrease of silence and human dignity is observed. As a phenomenon difficult to define, ambiguous, silence can be considered in several aspects; it is an element of the culture of behavior, it fosters concentration and reflection.

Little attention is paid to the phenomenon of silence, the lack of silence is more and more deeply felt. Only recently has the need for silence appeared, which has become to be noticed. We have an intuitive awareness of the value of silence for human development, but we only get to know it when we are running out of silence. The

omnipresent noise destroys the silence not only in public area, but also in private: the ability to protect places where silence has a privileged position is lost. The demand for noise grows as it is common to recognize it as aesthetic value, for example in music. Contemporary man has a strong need for space in which he could turn to the inner world.

The value of silence is most appreciated by the creators and artists, for whom silence is a necessary condition for work, or creativity. This is the group that is the most aware of the fact that entering into silence and loneliness is associated with concentration.

In the speech I would like to answer the fundamental question: what caused that silence has become a scarce commodity, although it is one of the most important human needs. I will emphasize the affirmative aspects of silence in anthropological terms and point out that it is natural human need for the development towards the fullness of humanity.

For this purpose, I will explain what silence is. I will settle the differences between silence and muteness. Silence as an unfathomable phenomenon still fascinates and divides researchers. In the text, I intentionally ignore the negative aspect of silence, because it does not help the development of personality, I focus on the positive aspects of silence for the human personality development. I reach deep inside.

Christophe Perrin (Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium): The phenomenon of solitude [B1]

In philosophy, the problem of solitude has been traditionally shelved or even completely ushered in its two major questions for ground reasons. First off, from the standpoint of being, no being can be or so it seems – no one can produce themselves and be self-sufficient – or can be a being – the one who lives outside of the city is either a beast or a god. Second, from the standpoint of knowing, no being can know or so it seems – no one would know anything at all without learning from the other – or can know themselves – no one would know who they are without being taught by another being. However, when it so happens that philosophy more or less tackles solitude, it relies on two unconvincing presuppositions. The first is that to be alone one has to be first, which is striking since no one can be without being immediately alone to be or to be who they are. The second assumption is that solitude can be both good and bad, which is puzzling since it is hard to construe how a same reality can be felt so differently. At best it ensues from this a two-pronged approach to solitude: *solitary solitude* both sought-after and happy, and *lonely solitude* both sustained and sad.

Once the distinction has been set up, solitude is after all very missed out because, and – I will support this thesis – the two forms of solitude are no solitude. As such, the first one is sheer *isolation* and the second refers to *loneliness*. And it is impossible to understand the phenomenon of *solitude*, that is the *soloist solitude* without drawing a clear line between solitude, isolation and loneliness for which only one philosopher (H. Arendt) – in a rather unsatisfactory manner maybe – strove.

Elzbieta Perzycka (University of Szczecin, Poland): Images of creative loneliness of inhabitants of Kenya: analysis of visual messages [A2]

Human loneliness has many faces. Each of us experiences it in an individual way and saturates it with emotions. Among the depressing images filled with a sense of loneliness, we also find individually chosen loneliness, creative loneliness, giving many opportunities to develop, to do something for ourselves and others. Loneliness that

makes man truly free. Providing a sense of realizing our abilities, and even generating the strength of transgression. This dimension of loneliness has been the basis for this speech. It appears in the theoretical context (more precise understanding of the phenomenon / creative state of loneliness) and in the empirical context (analysis of visual messages depicting creative loneliness). The empirical diagnosis of this interesting phenomenon was located in the experiences of the inhabitants of Africa - Kenya. The images were made during a field trip carried out as part of the TICASS research and development project.

Piotr Petrykowski (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland): Generation people with hollow eyes? [D1]

The article will attempt to describe the situation of the young modern man through the symbolism of the desert. In both oral tradition and written tradition (e.g. the Bible), the desert is depicted as a place of disorder that threatens man, and as a seat of evil spirits and malevolent forces. The Author refers to the description of a specific traumatic experience that Israelites had during their journey after they had escaped from Egypt. The Author also refers to the place of the temptations of Christ but, nevertheless, the article also presents another view of the desert, in which it is understood as a place of spiritual revival, a space for human freedom and the place where the need for solitude can be fulfilled. Wandering through the desert, without any signposts, any lasting traces in the sand, or any landmarks is, according to the Author, an accurate metaphor for the condition of the modern man. How many temptations and dangers await us out on the desert? What are the ways out or, perhaps more accurately, what are the means of escape? This text is also a dialogue with E. Fromm's concept and quasi-concepts referring to magic, and an attempt to determine how many forms of escape from freedom can be specified.

The Author will discuss the essence of freedom and its limits, when faced with helplessness and solitude. Are we bound to be forever torn between dependency and unrestrained freedom of the possible life styles? The author argues that individuals who are constantly tempted and allured by the "oases of happiness" become "people with hollow eyes". This category is discussed by the author from the perspective of the challenges of modern education and the essence of man.

Keywords: meaning of life, helplessness, bereaved, the condition of the modern man, metaphor

Axel Seemann (Bentley University, USA): Is "loneliness" a state of mind? [A1]

Loneliness is widely seen as one of the great social and public health crises of our times. Empirical work tends to focus on subjects' reports on their own perceived loneliness. The underlying assumption is that there is a mental state of being lonely that is universal across populations and readily identifiable by their members.

Yet it is not obvious that there is such a unified mental state. This paper asks whether loneliness is best thought of as a mental state, as something that is internal to the subject's mind and to which the subject has direct access. It lays out the conditions that have to be met if loneliness is to be thought of as a mental state by drawing on the debate between 'internalists' and 'externalists' about experience in the philosophy of mind. The working hypothesis is that the wide range of phenomena that can be classified under the label of 'loneliness' point towards a relational analysis, according to which understanding what a particular individual's experience of loneliness consists in is impossible without considering the context in which the experience takes place. It is

thus not possible to fully understand loneliness by drawing on phenomenological analysis alone.

Loneliness is an experience characterized by the perceived *absence* of social connection, and thus the perceived lack of a particular relation between the individual and her environment. I draw on work in developmental psychology, in particular the notions of 'primary' and 'secondary' intersubjectivity, to say more about how to understand this relation, and tentatively draw out some implications for empirical loneliness research. Along its lines, while we can spell out some general characteristics about the kind of relation between subject and environment that may be described as loneliness, its causes are context-dependent. I end by highlighting the particular challenge this poses for attempts to alleviate the condition.

Henrieta Serban (Institute of Philosophy and Psychology “Constantin Rădulescu-Motru” and Institute of Political Science and International Relations “Ion I. C. Brătianu” of the Romanian Academy, Romania): The faces of solitude in philosophy, society and politics [E1]

There is a metaphysical facet of solitude, rather poetical. Loneliness appears in the Romanian national poet Mihai Eminescu (1850-1889) as a state of the end of soul, a state of deep estrangement, characteristic for the old age. Under the „star of loneliness” we find the archetype of the old man ('the old man king Lear,' in Mihai Cimpoi's view). In the poem *Departate sunt de tine...* (*Afar I am from you...*) solitude comes from the unbearable existential and romantic distance created by a barren heart ('Afar am I from you and lonely by the fire/.../awakening before me the trifles of the past'): in Eminescu's metaphysical poetry loneliness is governed by sentiments of melancholy and loss, as well as by the strange lucidity of witnessing personal death as genius, poet, not-himself alter ego (Fichte). The genius, the philosopher, the poet oppose the solitude, while challenging the predetermined order of the world. In the Romanian philosopher Lucian Blaga (1895-1961), the human being is destined to acquire knowledge and confront the all-encompassing 'horizon of mystery', through thought, inspiration and creativity. In D. D. Roșca (1895-1980), another Romanian philosopher, the spirit and the nature, the good and the evil, repel each other eternally, catching man in between, showered by uncertainty, solitude, mystery, metaphysical disquietude, which man has the chance, ability and, we may say, privilege to transform into creativity and creations, rejecting resignation. For the Russian Nikolai Berdiaev there is solitude in the very search for something beyond the daily universe – mystery as a mystical subjective part of the self, escaping the objective realm. Nikolai Berdiaev, *Self-Knowledge: An Essay in Autobiography*, 2009). For Emil Cioran each (and everyone) we meet (or we have met) displays a false sociability and a false solitude, which brings us in meditation closer to the bitter truth of loneliness, perceiving the solitude as a human sentence to misery. (Emil Cioran, *Singurătate și destin [Solitude and Destiny]*, 1931-1944, 1991) However, considering the everyday facets of the solitude against the metaphysical solitude, we find that there is no deeper solitude than that of difference, sickness and old age. Related to these states of mundane loneliness, which are scaring human condition, there are the socio-political faces of solitude, all of them, faces of marginalization.

Gary Shepherd (York St John University, UK): Do therapists ever get lonely? [D1]

Psychotherapy is a profession of relationships and caring. A working therapist may see up to 30 people in various states of distress each week and will use a range of specific, professional skills to help alleviate the distress. In each session the therapist will encounter people in a variety of emotional states, some at the beginning of therapy who

may be highly troubled, some in the middle or at the end of therapy who are less troubled and more reflective about themselves and their life. Inevitably a proportion of a therapist's clients will share some of the same traits as the therapist, such as shared sense of humour, similar family dynamics, similar employment history or close cultural experiences. In other caring settings such as in nursing or elderly care, the carer is free to develop an 'I-thou' relatedness (Buber 1965) by bringing such things as openheartedness, mutuality, honesty and frankness to the growing relationship. The therapeutic relationship is different.

Why is it that a psychotherapist who interacts with a range of human beings in a variety of distressed and reflective states over months and sometimes years does not recognise and act on the urge to form deep 'I-thou' relationships with their clients whom they closely identify with? How is it that the therapist is able to suppress their natural longing for relatedness without feeling the associated desperation of loneliness? Avoiding loneliness is said to be the strongest motivational drive in human beings. The drive emerged at the time the new-born infant awoke from its oceanic symbiosis to recognise the horror of the separateness of itself. Since then, both longing for reunification with the other and the drive to avoid existential feelings of being alone in the world have superseded all else (Mijuskovic 2012 p. xxx).

In this paper I argue that psychotherapeutic practice has been unconsciously designed to psychologically defend against loneliness. I propose there are three layers of defence therapeutic practice has built into therapy to stave off both the wish for prolonged intimacy and the desperation of existential loneliness. Firstly the relationship itself, which although purporting to be an I-thou relationship (especially towards the end of therapy) has actually been constructed to be a professionalised monological 'I-It' encounter. This fits in with many psychodynamic therapies which often may seem punitive or harsh to clients especially in the early stage of therapy. Secondly authentic feelings evoked in therapy and which may alert the therapist to their wish for prolonged intimacy and their subsequent existential loneliness, have been intellectualised through the concentration on transference and countertransference in the relational space. Therapists are encouraged to provide a 'blank screen' free of emotion or relatedness to their clients which the clients then use to project their feelings onto. The therapist may experience the clients' hate, loathing, anger or any number of other emotions within this process which may be prolonged by years within the therapeutic frame. Therapists may experience similar feelings but may also experience love, compassion, sadness, happiness or other feelings linked to the wish for unification with the other. These feelings are normally filtered through intellectual analysis and rationalisation within the frame of reference, avoiding any phenomenological instincts, wanting or loneliness. The final defence within therapeutic practice enables the therapist to avoid loneliness with the promised fantasy of an I-thou relationship within clinical supervision. In supervision the therapist is encouraged to speak about their client, transference and countertransference and strategies they may use in order to help progress their client work. Very rarely do supervision sessions involve analysis beyond client work that actually explores the deeper feelings of the therapist and their own drives, wishes and loneliness. This work, it is assumed has gone on within the frame of personal therapy and which has little connection with the supervision of client work.

Gill Simpson (York St John University, UK): In community, alone, in community: reflections on the Nicene Creed [E2]

The Apostles' Creed provides a doctrinal understanding of the central beliefs of Christianity providing a universal statement of faith for Christians everywhere, a starting point for understanding faith. This paper is an account of one perspective on the Creed

which begins in a narrow Christian community, moves through isolation and solitude, and ends at the edges of a new community; one which edges towards the human goal of self-acceptance and understanding.

The doctrines are often perceived as all-or-nothing and exclusive. But are there grounds for a more nuanced approach? Theologically, some insiders like Paul Tillich have developed new and ground-breaking academic approaches to Christianity, while traditional church theology maintains a stubborn outward attitude of non-compromise. Other insiders who have attempted to develop a more existential moral approach have been often vilified and disowned by the Church. But is there a third way? One which encompasses, not theological technicality or angry emotional rejection, but a gradual dawning, personal realisation that we are all moving from one type of community to another and the answers lie in doubt rather than certainty.

The paper analyses internal and external dialogues the author has had in moving from the confines of a small Evangelical Christian Church community through solitude, to the tentative edges of a new multi-vocal community. Starting with an analysis of faith modelling methodologies as a tool to evaluate the faith narrative, the author will examine the multiplicity of voices that have informed her journey, stopping on the way to challenge and encourage the young adult who recognises that she no longer 'fits', to acknowledge the voices of the dissenters (Richard Holloway and Dave Tomlinson), to accept a different form of spiritual friendship (Thomas Merton, Jean Vanier and Henri Nouwen) and to encounter an evolving community which allows new voices in – the voices of gender, of doubt and of radical interpretation - in the form of Dorothee Soelle. Then to revisit the Apostles Creed and to ask whether, in the famous words of T.S. Eliot, "...at the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time".

Julian Stern (York St John University, UK) and Małgorzata Wałejko (University of Szczecin, Poland): Solitude, the uncommunicable and the uncommunicated in education [Plenary 2]

After silence that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music.

The uncommunicable: from ignorance to mystery, through solitude. A celebration of ignorance, the value of mystery, and how solitude inspires a proper uncertainty

The uncommunicated: from privacy to self-protection, through solitude. Privacy is not trumped by authenticity, mystery and wonder are for the many not the few, and solitude provides space and time.

Conclusion: opportunities for solitude in education. Education is not therapy, a community is made by, not an alternative to, solitude, self-realisation is never complete, and some things ... we must pass over in silence.

Agnieszka Szajner (The Polish University Abroad in London, UK and Poland): Economic loneliness of students of the Kenyan University of Pwani [D2]

The modern world today strives for a broadly understood globalization. Although it has brought millions of people out of poverty, we can still observe the phenomena of economic exclusion and this includes educational restrictions.

It is important to note that unequal access to education is quite a common problem affecting third world countries. We observe inadequate or ineffective programs of

active education policy, poor regulations of the world financial sectors, which makes the society to lose on it grossly, while at the same time we note concentration of means, corruption in certain countries and the use of political influence in others.

In this article I will deal with the phenomenon of “economic loneliness” of Kenyan Pwani University students at Kilifi, as well as their struggles with the educational system, difficulties in planning and concluding the educational path and sacrifices on the way to building their educational career. I will try to answer the question why this situation is prevailing and how to look for solutions to make sure the implementation of education policy takes place.

Olga Szykaruk (University of Szczecin, Poland): The exile’s lament: solitude and togetherness in Ovid’s later works [A3]

*Here I am the barbarian no one comprehends,
the Getae laugh foolishly at my Latin words.*

The presented paper is an exploration of the later works of Publius Ovidius Naso (43 BCE-17/18 CE) – namely, *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*. A celebrated poet in his heyday, he was exiled from Rome by Augustus, never to return to his homeland again. The circumstances and causes of such a harsh sentence have never been explicitly stated: neither by Ovid himself, nor by any authors to come after him. Some historians speculate that the causes are related to another of the poet’s works – the infamous *Ars Amatoria* that had once shocked the citizens of Rome. Others would argue that moral outrage was but a convenient disguise of Augustus’ actual motives, quite possibly related to scandalous affairs of a political or personal nature.

The main subject of the paper is an interpretation of Ovid’s later works as examples of the poetry of exile, and the state of exile itself as being an undefined, liminal, and apparently heart-wrenching stage between solitude and togetherness. While removed from his home and from those close to his heart, the poet remained a Roman citizen, keenly identifying as a part of that community. His proximity to other peoples, most notably the Getae, never became togetherness – his was a curious and bitter experience of a member of the dominant group becoming the Other, as exemplified in the motto.

After an exploration of the aforementioned themes, conclusive observations on the nature of exile, it’s place among historiographical tropes and the universal experience of exiles across the ages are made.

Moira von Wright (Ersta Sköndal Bräcke University College, Sweden): Mediating loneliness: Diaconia in the margins of civil society [E2]

This paper discusses different descriptions of ‘diaconia’ and the social practice carried out by deacons. Leaning on examples from a participatory study (in the evangelical Lutheran church), it suggests that a distinctive aspect of the diaconal situation is loneliness and that diaconia can be understood as situational practices that mediate loneliness.

For five months I have met with several deacons, talked with them about their passions, followed them in their work and participated in their activities, taking in impressions of what diaconia might *mean* and what it is like to *be* a deacon in the Church of Sweden. Not surprisingly, I have found that being a deacon is much about being present and responding to people in need; navigating in unforeseen situations and sometimes

taking vast responsibilities and risks. However, rather than assuming the common view that diaconia is about attitudes, identity, and planned activities “that lead to an increased life quality for the persons who are involved”¹, I conceive of diaconia as practices pursued in the recognition that they are situational and perishable. Therefore, I have chosen to understand diaconia as relations and situations; as events in a *topos*. With this lens such phenomena as loneliness, trust and ephemerality become central dimensions of the diaconal situations.

One could say that diaconia is especially hospitable to loneliness and singularity: the action of the deacon tends to be directed towards what is believed to be good, but nevertheless it is a single act in the sense that it is “a free address of someone to someone else”². The deacon manages the diaconal situation in a way that makes him or her a mediator of loneliness.

1) Erik Blennberger & Mats J Hansson, 2008, p. 24. *Diakoni – tolkning, historik, praktik*. Stockholm: Verbum. (my translation)

2) Alain Badiou, 2012, p. 9. *Philosophy for Militants*. London & New York: Verso.

Kamil Węgorowski (University of Szczecin, Poland): Collective pictures of loneliness – case studies based on youths from China, Japan, and South Korea [D2]

While everybody has once experienced loneliness, the word is interpreted variously. Loneliness is a concept as diverse as we are. In my study, I undertake to examine the collective dimension of the concept of loneliness and compare how it is understood and experienced in different countries. The subject of research is the concept and experience of loneliness in students from East Asia – Japan, South Korea and PRC. To find out about similarities and differences, I conducted interviews with 12 students, including 3 Chinese, 5 Korean and 4 Japanese, both male and female, on the definition and interpretation of loneliness in their home countries and their personal experience of loneliness. Another source of data was the new media – blogs, videoblogs, and travelogs found in popular channels such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter authored by people who live in these countries as visitors. I assumed that they may provide valuable knowledge as they view the countries under study from a certain distance, experiencing them differently from members of local communities, that is, noticing behaviours that constitute cultural norm for the latter. In order to place the results in a broad sociocultural context, I will briefly refer to selected literature on the countries under study, including academic handbooks and scholarly articles on history, society, culture, education, and religion.

David Weir (York St John University, UK): Solitude as an executive virtue or the value of wilderness time [D2]

The quote that launches the request for proposals for papers to submit at this conference is “We must meet; we must communicate with one another; we must, it would seem, be alone together” (John Macmurray) but the suggestion in this paper is that being together requires some explicit attention to what is meant by “being alone” as a CEO or an organisational leader. So we will be considering such questions as.....

What did Jesus actually do in the Wilderness?

Why do babies and teenagers sleep so much?

What is Latency? How may its effects be felt?

Is Organisational life all about “the other”?

...Or about how to become ready to manage the encounter with “the other”?

If “Kindness” is a leadership virtue, how do we gain the strength to be “kind”?
Where/How/When do you learn to do your Identity?

Superficially, there seem to be many opportunities in current management development for taking time out, escaping from the organizational setting to explore self and others in horse riding, trail finding, even experiencing the wilderness as opportunities to re-establish contact with a lost “real self” and subsequently benefit from this new knowledge in later encounters in the “real world”. We argue that this misses an important aspect of these experiences and that these encounters require nourishment of a different kind that we identify as the power of “latency”. In complex behavioural systems there is power to be created and maintained in the uniqueness of solitude, whether or not we are officially enacted as organisational leaders. All of us are members of networks that need to be powered to be available when they are needed.

Sarah Whiter (Leeds Trinity University, UK): Virtual friendship – a paradox or a panacea for loneliness? [A2]

This paper builds on Turkle’s (2011) comments on the impact of technological engagement and changes in relationship formation; it concurs that digitally we are “together alone”, but asks the question if this connectedness fulfils our idea of genuine friendship and belonging, and negates loneliness. It critically navigates the concept of blurring boundaries between the real and virtual, and considers notions of identity, friendship, and trust, online.

Social media is used by many as a means of maintaining connections with friends in the real world, and is considered a core component of their life. Another view suggests the individual has become a solitary unit; rather making a choice to seek out connection or “solace”. Reliance on social media for belonging and social interaction is seen as problematic by some researchers. The use of social media to garner approbation from “likes”, and use of “selfies” makes the user vulnerable.

Using qualitative research and empirical evidence in the field of social media, traditionally accepted notions of friendship, and identity are examined. Forum discussions and interview data show the impact of an online presence on self esteem and social inclusion.

This research concludes that identity is a performance that is multifaceted, and social media affords opportunity for duplicity. Earlier research suggests that the Internet would facilitate less loneliness. However, more recent findings indicate the reverse, linking Internet communication with a decrease in sociality. This paper questions if virtual friends can be considered to offering a support network which ameliorates loneliness and strengthens social ties? The findings indicate an evolution in Internet engagement which concurs with Turkle that in essence we remain “together, alone”.

Turkle, S. (2011). *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*. New York: Basic Books.

Turkle, S. (2011b). The Tethered Self: Technology Reinvents Intimacy and Solitude. *Continuing Higher Education Review*, vol 75. Available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ967807.pdf> (Accessed 10/05/18).

Keywords: loneliness, connection, friendship, social media, belonging, identity

Alison Wray (Cardiff University, UK): Loneliness as a product of poor communication: a 'soft' cause of dementia [C1]

Loneliness is an acknowledged risk factor for, and consequence of, dementia. But why, exactly? I will explore the role of communication in causing social isolation in the dementia context. Conceptualising communication in terms of its intentionality reveals how, as dementia undermines communicative effectiveness, people are fundamentally disempowered, triggering survival instincts that engender anxiety and often a flight, rather than fight, reaction—that is, withdrawal.

Brain and cognitive reserve are known to protect people against the 'hard', biological, causes of dementia. Two new concepts, social and emotional reserve, help understand variations in resilience to the 'soft', social exacerbation of symptoms.

Social reserve encompasses:

- a) Infrastructure: society's provisions to support and improve the lives of vulnerable people, such as care services, transport, legal and ethical protection, information, postal, tele- and internet communications, radio and television, and financial assistance
- b) Attitudes, assumptions, beliefs and priorities, determining people's level of affirmation
- c) Supportive family, friends and social groups, providing both a barrier to isolation and practical assistance with often mundane challenges that otherwise become insuperable
- d) Social credibility: the extent to which people are listened to and taken seriously as agents of their own destiny

Dementia-causing diseases gradually undermine people's primary capacities, but social reserve determines how much this diminishes them and forces them into an exclusion zone where they are perceived as *different in kind*, rather than *different only in degree* from others.

Loneliness is a typical consequence of low social reserve because of:

- (i) the absence of interacting others
- (ii) poor communication training, impeding effective interaction, and
- (iii) the onward impact on people's *emotional reserve*—their inner resilience to the dementia experience—which applies also to the undiagnosed, where symptom expression might have been delayed by greater social reserve.

Low emotional reserve in turn erodes people's sense of identity, self-confidence and optimism, attracting further withdrawal.

Katarzyna Wrońska (The Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland): The praise of self-instruction in the 21st century – with a background on historical self-education proposals in Poland during the partitions and interwar period [E1]

In the presentation, the author proposes to consider the present sense and meaning of self-instruction - in connection to the issue of being alone - with a background of selected historical concepts of self-education in Poland.

Considering education and its role in learning to think, that - as the author assumes - requires being alone as a way of human existence is a philosophical starting point.

Therefore self-instruction presents itself as an adequate example illustrating the possibility of experiencing and learning to be alone as a way of being a person.

In the times of the partition, self-instruction was a very popular postulate among Polish intellectuals involved in activities promoting civil and patriotic attitudes in the country subjected to denationalizing politics.

In the interwar period, the concepts of self-instruction were still developing due to defects in created official school system at the time.

The author focuses on one of them, created by Władysław M. Kozłowski. Kozłowski himself assessed his work for the education of compatriots as fulfilling a civil duty and acting for a free and democratic Poland.

Today recalling the concept of self-instruction allows us to see it as a necessary humanizing complement to school in Poland, balancing between the extremes of encyclopedicism and instrumentalism.

It can be used to bring out a few arguments for education not being reduced to professionalization and which promotes the human condition as *vita activa*.

Firstly, postulating self-instruction as an education running parallel to the formal one makes sense if we want education to leave room for independent choice; to not extinguish initiatives to reach for knowledge and reading selflessly, and to not be transformed into a tool and a market product ordered by various stakeholders.

Secondly, self-instruction is unavoidable if we think about learning throughout life. One must be able to get out of school and school thinking, which molds the minds of children and young people, and not to help them to become independent in thinking.

Finally, we can take into account self-instruction as a form of resistance to schooling but not in its extreme form of descholirisation, due to the risk of larger losses than profits, including solitude and isolation.

Some Relevant Books by Participants



