Chapter X

‘Small uneasinesses & petty fears’: Life-cycle, Masculinity and Loneliness[1]

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At around the age of twenty-two, though separated by two decades, two young Scotsmen, Henry Robert Oswald Senior (1790–1862) and John Dunlop (1823–1867), each spent several months writing a journal. Both were at a similar stage of life, having completed their education and training, and were about to embark on the early stages of their careers. Oswald wrote between 1812–13, describing his first six months as Government Surgeon to John Murray (1755–1830), 4th duke of Atholl, Governor General of the Isle of Man, and Dunlop recorded his experiences from 21 October 1845 to 8 August 1846, first as a medical student in Paris and then on his voyage to India after he secured the post of Assistant Surgeon to the 32nd (Cornwall) Regiment of Foot.[2] During a time of transition, both men determined not only to record their experiences, but also, importantly, their inner states. Oswald began his diary in November 1812 on arriving in Edinburgh after an absence of nine months with his militia regiment in England, planning to note ‘such things and thoughts therein as may be useful and a lesson to me in future life’.[3] Dunlop explained his intentions in the opening of his ‘Journal of my life’ by quoting D. Sherwin: ‘The Great thing to be recorded is the state of your own mind; and you should write down everything that you remember, for you cannot judge at first which is good or bad, and write Immediately when the impression is fresh for it will not be the same a week afterward’.[4]

Neither young man applied the word loneliness in their journals, nor did they refer to themselves as lonely; occasionally they use ‘alone’ to describe their state, although both were surrounded by people.[5] Yet both reported feelings and states that various scholars and commentators would come to associate with loneliness, which Fay Bound Alberti

identifies as an emotions cluster, including a lack of belonging, weak social connections, alienation, isolation, concerns about physical and mental health, and a range of emotions including anxiety and fear, and 'feeling states' such as homesickness and nostalgia.[6] It is not surprising that they did not discuss their condition through the language of loneliness, since this was yet to emerge and be applied as the label for a 'recognizable experience' that we associate today with its modern, pathologized, form.[7] As Bound Alberti and others argue, loneliness was a by-product of modernity.[8] Keith Snell observes that modernity created phenomena that produce the experience of loneliness, namely 'atomistic migrant[s], wage-dependent individuals, and "self-resilient" ideologies'.[9] Certainly, as will be shown, both Oswald and Dunlop were subject to some of these forces. Following the application of psychoanalytic theory to loneliness, from the early twentieth century, it took on a pathologized form, with psychology also offering a framework for experiencing and expressing it.[10] Even so, Oswald and Dunlop recorded concerns about their mental wellbeing, which they related to their situation. Both men also used descriptions that align with Bound's observations that loneliness is physical, evoked through metaphors such as coldness, or through the loss of home. Finally, both men described their experiences at 'pinch-points' in their life-course, which, Bound Alberti notes, are times when loneliness occurs, such as childhood and old age.[11]

Noting that some of the men's experiences accord with current definitions of loneliness is not, however, an argument that the two men were experiencing a state of loneliness that is universal, albeit without the use of the word to name their feelings. Rather this chapter proposes that their circumstances produced a range of emotions and states that were akin to the modern concept of loneliness, but were, nonetheless, historically specific to the social, cultural, and gender structures of the first half of the nineteenth century. Both men were seeking to establish themselves as surgeons, and in order to do this were obliged to

travel and live away from their familial homes, residing, in Oswald's case as a surgeon with patrons' families and, in Dunlop's, with his regiment as an assistant military surgeon enroute to a posting in India. Both experienced this phase of their lives as precarious and the changes they encountered left them disorientated. Oswald reflected, 'my situation at present is so dependent & uncertain', while Dunlop wrote, early in 1845:

> it seems a question whether anything can be more uncertain than the life of a military man. One day he is in England, living as at home, the next he is ordered to brace the deep, and embark upon a new life: to face a new and tropical climate, to take leave of friends, to go through new scenes, and perhaps to meet new enemies and an early grave.[12]

For both men, as Dunlop's journal entry hints, it was distance—physical, conceptual and emotional—that was the frame through which they experienced and conceived of the states that speak to us of loneliness. This was made especially acute by their stage of life, in which they were moving from youth to maturity, seeking to attain independent professional status. Oswald and Dunlop, like many other young men seeking place, had to engage with distance in several forms. This included a spatial component since they were physically distanced from their familial homes and their parents and siblings. In turn, this provoked another form of emotional distance, sometimes evoked through the comfort of family or childhood homes contrasted with the discomfort of temporary homes. Such men might encounter both emotional and social distance in their temporary abodes, as they navigated new social networks in their fledgling attempts to meet the requirements of their professions.[13] Finally, they were aware of a temporal distance between their current situation and their future aspirations of independence, status, and recognition. Thus, their sense of distance meant that Oswald and Dunlop feared or experienced 'subjective'

aloneness which, as Snell remarks, is felt among other people.[14] This was not uncommon. Henry Parkes emigrated to Australia in 1839, at the age of twenty-three, and wrote on board ship: ‘more solitary and companionless than I ever was in all my life in this stagnant crowd of human beings’.[15] Parkes had the benefit of travelling with his wife. Neither Oswald nor Dunlop had such support. For them, being ‘alone’ at this transitional point in life was difficult, vulnerable, even dangerous to body and mind.[16]

A further aspect of the men’s experiences that can be historicised is the relationship between masculinity and their perceived states of uncertainty, disruption, and distance, which were deeply entwined as Rosi Carr’s study of late Georgian naval officers demonstrates. In the first place, these were feelings that had the potential to destabilise or cause them to fail to achieve standards of masculinity, which by the mid-nineteenth century valorised confidence, risk-taking, and, as Andrew Popp notes in this volume, individual and daring entrepreneurship. They were also perhaps less tolerant of introspection.[17] Manliness was powerfully embodied too, conveyed through emotionalised bodies and objects that celebrated good health, fitness, and, across the two generations represented by Oswald and Dunlop, physical and mental robustness.[18] As such, both men had to square their vulnerable conditions with their notions of ideal manliness, where the experiences of what we understand as loneliness could be perceived as indicating subordinate or weak forms of manhood.[19] Indeed, Elaine Chalus shows in this volume that in some situations loneliness could be feared to unman those exercising authority. Indeed, there is evidence that in trying to navigate their complex feelings, both men used standards of masculinity to assess and manage their situations. John Tosh has demonstrated, for instance, that male emigrants to the colonies in the period 1815 to 1852 were presented as demonstrating ‘masculine virtues’ and testing themselves as men.[20] Men encountered a further tension in doing so, however. Male youths were given some

leeway in conforming to codes of mature masculinity because society recognised that this was a period of growth and learning. Youths could, therefore, make and recover from behavioural mistakes, usually around socialising, including alcohol consumption, gaming, and other boisterous activities.[21] Indeed, to varying extents, Oswald and Dunlop engaged in sociability, often, it seems, to distract them from their feelings of isolation. Yet, at their age and stage of life, they were moving beyond the period of toleration, so that they also used ideas of unmanliness to discipline their practices, thoughts, and behaviours.[22]

The rest of this chapter analyses Oswald and Dunlop's journals alongside the qualities ascribed to loneliness as an emotions cluster. It uses three themes. First, that of 'distant homes', which explores the men's responses to separation from family, and notions of discomfort. Secondly, 'distanciation', referring to the process wherein they scrutinised their physical and mental health and monitored the actions they took to distract from their negative feelings. The third theme is 'distance and proximity', which uncovers Oswald and Dunlop's anxieties over their social and professional connections. Space limitations mean the men's language or tropes are not situated in the wider literary forms of the period. It is important to note, nonetheless, that nineteenth-century print culture offered examples of loneliness to readers. Loneliness served a narrative function in Victorian novels, where it was used to explore the inequality of social and gender roles.[23] Analyses of life-writing that include accounts of loneliness, alienation, and social isolation, indicate not only that the intersection of gender, class, wealth and race shaped writers' experiences and presentation of self to readers but, in turn, contributed to narratives of migration and imperial colonisation by the later nineteenth century.[24] Journals also offer a fruitful form of life-writing for exploring loneliness, given that, in Stephen Bending's words, the 'journal is both an attempt to create social contact and a reminder of its absence'.[25]

Distant Homes: Separation and Discomfort

At the end of 1845, John Dunlop recorded that he was leaving Paris, where he was a medical student, and would be ‘gazetted to an assistant Surgery in her Majesty’s service’.[26] While he ‘rejoiced’ about this, he was uneasy about its implications:

> I was also not ignorant that this summons to London would sever that delightful tie of domestic life, which I had so long enjoyed, that it would launch me forth into the world, and into the uncertain and adventurous life of a military surgeon, where separated from home and all its endearing connections I would require to form a home within my own circle, and in the narrow confines of a small quarter in a barrack, where I must live, all independent and isolated amidst the vicissitudes of a foreign climate and perhaps a foreign war. When making haste for my departure such thoughts now and then forced themselves upon me; but I was so much occupied with a thousand things, that it is only now when quietly settled for a short space here that they came with their full force on my mind.[27]

Dunlop understood his professional future to be ‘uncertain’, a state which causes anxiety and was compounded by his separation from domestic family life. Indeed, his journal entries in Paris indicate that his mother was present, since he noted his ‘domestic circle['s]’ anxiety over her health and care for her.[28] Such familial connectivity may well have exacerbated his worries over his ‘isolated’ future life. He went on to use the term ‘alone’ to describe his situation: ‘A father’s house must be left some time or other; and such being the case I shall try to console myself by anticipating the future alone’.[29] In envisaging his potential loneliness through contrast with a loving domesticity, Dunlop deployed that pervasive cultural motif, which John Tosh has shown shaped many middle-class men’s

sense of self.[30] He certainly hoped this would not be a permanent 'flight', for he immediately consoled himself by recognising that after an absence he could 'return and enjoy the society of my dear parents, and as a melancholy solace, shall look back as on a pleasant dream, on the happy days of childhood, and a youth spent under the tender care of a affectionate mother and the careful guidance of a kind Father.'[31]

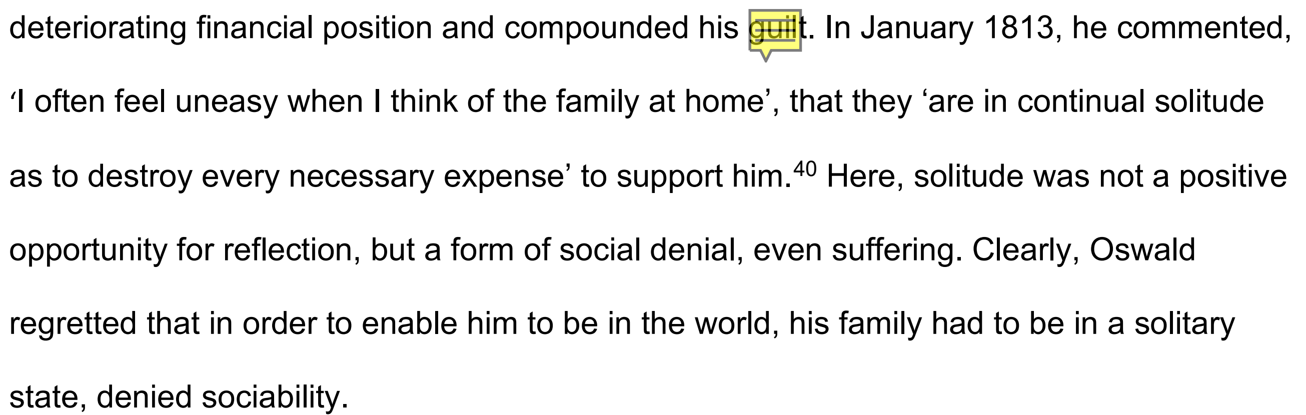
Like many other people in a similar situation, Dunlop found solace in nostalgia, both for his family home and its inhabitants.[32] He also utilised nostalgia for his 'native country', since he was leaving for Calcutta: 'a new world, where new things and new people must be my companions'.[33] Written aboard 'the gallant barque British Sovereign, sailing along the coast of Portugal', Dunlop was already conjuring the 'green fields, the healthy hills, even the black clouds & the dull mists of my 'ain countrie' as a mitigation for the uncertainties of life ahead.[34] As Claire Walker argues in this volume with regard to early modern nuns, this feeling state was not its medically dangerous counterpart.[35] Here the positive emotions of nostalgia served to combat the negative emotions of loneliness and promote confidence.[36] In a society which demanded that people travelled widely, and rewarded it, Dunlop did what was necessary to manage his apprehension and sense of dislocation through positive emotions:

> But think not that I leave old England with the melancholy feeling of an exile. Hope whispers to me that I shall see it again, and a cheerful somebody whispers that my new life may not be unpleasant; so I try to be cheerful, and some success has followed my exertions. I have not much to say as to our embarkation.[37]

Still, it is interesting that he elected not to write about the moment of departure, which hints that cheerfulness could only go some way to ameliorating the melancholy.

Oswald did not record nostalgic yearnings for his childhood home, when reflecting on his separation. When he mentioned visiting his family home in November 1812, just before leaving for the Isle of Man, and taking leave 'with fortitude on both sides', his focus was on his father's financial misfortune. 'Our only consolation', he commented, 'together with good conscience, was that from my being countenanced by sensible patrons things might probably brighten'. For Oswald, leaving home for a profession was a matter of profound guilt for having been 'tempted to leave them in the Days of their prosperity. Had not my predilection for a profession induced me to do so I might instead of spending 5 years in expenditure having become a farmer early and saved some of the family substance'. His education and training, he worried, 'had incurred expenses that would have now gone far in giving my little Brothers a similar one'. The responsibility, obligations, and 'mortifications and disappointments' of trying to set himself up with 'a too empty purse' provided a constantly unsettling context to his first months on the Isle of Man.[38] This was not alleviated by his ongoing communications with his family.

Elsewhere in this volume, Elaine Chalus and Andrew Popp show that correspondence narrowed the distance between separated couples, managing the loneliness they encountered through the intimate connections it enabled. Unfortunately, neither Oswald nor Dunlop gained such solace from their familial letters. Dunlop was separated from his family by considerable spatial and temporal distance. Thus, the arrival of letters for him simply caused apprehension about what he might discover in them. Anticipating his arrival in Calcutta he wrote: 'I live in the hope of being rich in letters and expect many kind things in them, but let me not look forward with too sanguine a mind. I may hear news not only pleasing but sad.[39] For Oswald, residing somewhat closer to his family home, receiving letters only heightened his worries because they brought further news about his father's



deteriorating financial position and compounded his guilt. In January 1813, he commented, 'I often feel uneasy when I think of the family at home', that they 'are in continual solitude as to destroy every necessary expense' to support him.[40] Here, solitude was not a positive opportunity for reflection, but a form of social denial, even suffering. Clearly, Oswald regretted that in order to enable him to be in the world, his family had to be in a solitary state, denied sociability.

Yet sociability had its own challenges for young men setting out on their careers and could be linked to emotional troubles and feelings of loneliness. On his arrival on the Isle of Man on 26 November 1812, for instance, he delivered a letter from Dr John Barclay to his patron's factor, Mr Scott, requesting his services in Oswald's favour. He noted about Scott: 'Thought he received me coldly'.[41] As scholars of loneliness have observed, loneliness is felt in the body and, thus, metaphors of heat are often invoked to capture or convey its impact.[42] Oswald used coldness frequently to indicate his sense of isolation, or what he tended to term distance, from others. Coldness was associated with indifference, the opposite of the warmth of domestic comforts. In January 1813, on visiting the Archdeacon's residence, he met 'a relation of Mr Gawne's, they were coolly polite but shewed me indifference or aversion.'[43] The family of his master George Bell showed him a cold heart in 1810, while the Farmer family were 'coldly polite' in March 1813, which left him feeling 'indifferent or rather displeased'. His own emotional reactions to this caused him unease:

> I wish I could subdue every such passion. But then I would do at the risk of having the character of a cold hearted humdrum. Nor would I wish to overcome the fine and honourable feelings and I am afraid that if the first were overcome the last must also suffer.[44]

Oswald feared returning coldness with coldness because that would affect his 'self presentation', a term he used frequently when thinking about his presence in society.[45]

Oswald also complained about those who grudged food to people who 'messed' with them: '[t]his is experienced by tutors, families, apprentices … etc'. He observed, '[t]hough satisfaction ought to be considered as a sensual pleasure but a necessary requirement yet there is a gratification in it which cannot be denied & which few people would consent to forgo'.[46] His expressions evoke the imagery used in the twenty-first century of loneliness as a form of 'bodily hunger', an expression of disconnection and the need for human contact.[47] Satisfactory food and warmth fed more than his body. Indeed, on the initially rare occasions that Oswald reported feeling happy with others, he used the term 'warm'. When he penned some lines of verse in January 1813 about an idealised patron, they were kind, provided a decent, caring home for visitors: 'No cold hospitality there'.[48] When leaving friends at Ormiston, he commented that their hospitality 'made me feel very warmly in return'.[49] After settling into his lodgings and having finally received the trunk that had gone missing on his journey to the Isle of Man, he used these tropes of comfort, perhaps signalling the waning of his acute feelings of loneliness: '27th January spent the day as usual, walking & got my trunk which has been long waiting safely the packet containing books & dined at Home on beef steaks & ale & spent the eve in reading & noting & arranging accounts & expenditures with much comfort & satisfaction.' Being reunited with his possessions soothed Oswald, acting as 'emotional objects' to convey the sense of home and comfort that he had hitherto lacked.[50]

In the mid-nineteenth century, Dunlop also turned to an object that resonated with a sense of home. In June 1846, he was convalescing in his bunk from an illness, and even though

he had recently suffered from the oppressive heat, he recorded gaining comfort from ‘my plaid (that faithful companion of my wanderings)’.[51] Comfort could also be secured from habits, mixed with nostalgic national pride; he clearly found relief in all things Scottish Thus, Dunlop also noted that he was gaining delight from re-reading Walter Scott’s novels, commenting, ‘the more they are read, the more will their beauties be seen, and the more will a Scotsman have reason to be proud of his country as he sees old and young engaged in Scott’s heart stirring details’.[52] Spatially distanced from home and family, these two young men suffered emotional distance as a consequence, or what we would call loneliness. Required to establish themselves in new social networks that were initially unfamiliar, both in the sense of not-familiar as well as being largely cut off from familial comfort, these men felt adrift.

Distanciation: bodies and minds

Studies of loneliness in the past and present note that it causes lowered mood and physical and psychological discomfort and illness. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, people ascribed the states of melancholy, or ‘dejection of spirits’, to being alone.[53] Oswald regularly reported on both physical and mental health problems in his journal. The first was a repeated stomach complaint that took the form of bowel problems. The second was a variety of states of mind, including melancholy, lowness of spirit, anxiety, and, at times, something akin to paranoia. Perhaps of especial significance for the theme of loneliness, he linked the physical and psychological disorders to each other, but also to his situation. Although he related his digestive problems to his diet, especially consuming bread and cream, he also linked them to his state of mind. For example, he noted on one occasion: ‘My stomach complaint greatly encreased together with … restless uneasiness’.[54] He made the link between his health and his circumstances explicit when

he declared, there ‘can be no doubt that certain afflictions of the bilious system have great affect, when conjoined with *extreme circumstances* especially in producing a melancholic turn of mind’ [my italics].[55] Twenty years later, Dunlop also worried that his low emotional disposition and ‘discontent’ was partly ‘down to the sense of an ill-conditioned mind where a grumbling spirit finds a better welcome than a contented one’.[56]

Reading Oswald’s journal entries shows that the occasions when he reported most physical and mental distress was when he was disengaged from his immediate social network, separated from home and family, and living with distant social superiors on whom he depended for his future professional status. As such, it was alleviated by changes in his situation. Following a visit to his patron’s wife, the duchess of Atholl, he commented, for instance, that the duke was absent: ‘I must say that I felt much easier in the absence of his distant behaviour’.[57] When Oswald was reporting more easy familiarity with his peers in Douglas, he also recorded that his digestive ailment was improving. In February 1813, after an evening playing cards, he mentioned ‘stomach complaint trifling’ and ‘my spirits & bodily bulk & strength increasing’.[58]

At several points in Oswald’s journal, it is possible to suggest that the acuteness of his feelings pertaining to his situation led him to fear that his mental health was breaking down. Oswald recorded his feelings with honesty, although at times he worried about their implications for his state of mind. After reporting on his extreme unhappiness when dwelling with the Bell family, he returned later to the entry and added a half page that read: ‘The page regarding my situation in Mr Bell’s family arose more from the Diseased state of my feelings than reality. It is true I was very dependant there and felt it much but Mr B has been a good friend to me notwithstanding’.[59] Although he appears to have done little self-

censoring, on 23 January 1813, he commented following a visit to an ‘insane woman’ he was treating:

> Did not reason tell me that the many wild imaginations and ridiculous notions that daily pass through my mind, were foolish, and prevent me from jotting them down here. I might justly consider myself a mad man; indeed at some futurity, if I live, when I look over this diary I believe I will consider myself a silly fellow.[60]

His mental distress was surely a result of his sense of friendlessness and social isolation. This was not uncommon. As Alison Duncan shows, unmarried women’s loneliness was closely linked to their inability to access the polite sociability that offered them belonging and secured social status. Through January Dunlop continued to reflect on his ‘derangement of the imagination’ caused by his concerns about other people’s perceptions of him. Although he said, ‘I can give no reason’ for the feeling, he confessed fretting, ‘that either me or my conduct have given and do give cause of great inquietude and vexation to some unknown persons’. He also observed that these feelings, which he described as an ‘Enigma’, ‘originate merely from what I could call mental expressive motions of the body with meaning looks of and finite sentences from many individuals’.[61] Simultaneously open to public scrutiny, yet still to find a social network that enabled both personal and professional support, Oswald felt his emotional and mental state to be severely threatened.

One way to deal with loneliness is to engage in activities that distract temporarily from its emotional and psychological toll. Bending has shown, for example, that Lady Mary Coke recorded in her journal that gardening ‘amused my thoughts’ when ‘Nobody came to see me’.[62] Oswald attended festivities over Christmas and the New Year of 1813, and then

recorded more regular socialising once he had removed from Castle Mona to lodgings in Douglas. He played billiards, dined with other families, and played cards in ‘company’. As this became more frequent, he began to miss regular diary entries. After missing six days, he observed: ‘If talking to a number of persons & spending time whole evenings in company be a sign of progress in my profession I certainly will succeed’.[63] When Oswald was obliged to mix with others, both professionally and socially, he had fewer opportunities for troubling self-reflection.

Dunlop likewise distracted himself from his low spirits. In June 1846, he described feeling disorientated. He ruminated:

> This voyage to me is peculiarly irksome and why I really cannot say. The ship is good; the voyage hitherto most rapid and we continue to be wafted on our course by gentle breezes over a comparatively smooth sea. All my companions are agreeable and our gallant Captain is most attentive … and why should I then develop under all these favourable circumstances hang this head down, look dolorous and wish the voyage would end.[64]

Dunlop could not fully explain why he found his situation so difficult, though for the modern reader it resonates with several of the states that fall within loneliness as an emotions cluster. His musings do indicate that in order to distract himself from his challenging state of mind, he socialised with his fellow companions, engaging in ‘gossip, light reading, and an occasional escapade up the rigging’.[65] He was quite explicit about his rationale: such ‘occupation is sought for little else than to cover what is disagreeable and to prevent the thoughts from taking their colour from surrounding circumstances’.[66] This ‘bonding’ with his fellows extended to xenophobic and racist mocking of the Portuguese and some African

customs officers that they encountered when they anchored at Porto da Praia, Santiago, the latter of which, he jeered, ‘gave rise to not a little merriment among our fellows’.[67] This resonates with Carr’s argument elsewhere in this volume that men’s attempts to combat loneliness through forging homosocial emotional communities in maritime and colonial spaces also articulated the category of ‘whiteness’, and enabled them to assert racialised and classed selfhoods.

Although keeping busy and forming new social connections distracted both men from their feelings of isolation and discomfort, their leisure activities had ambivalent consequences for them. On the one hand, they helped the men to move beyond feeling alone to being embedded in new social and professional networks. Furthermore, they were activities that had some appeal as subversive forms of masculinity.[68] But, on the other hand, both men simultaneously worried that these distracted them from professional success. Oswald, for example, noted that social visits were opportunities to make ‘myself known’ to potential clients.[69] But he also feared that these pursuits were unproductive. He commented: ‘I felt checked in my own mind from wasting time & aspiring to such amusement’.[70] Once Oswald was in his own lodgings, rather than residing with the duke and duchess at Castle Mona, he had access to more opportunities to socialise. But this caused him to worry about obtaining a balance between mixing with people and attending and chatting with patients who also lived at a distance from each other. The former was ‘certainly not “redeeming the Time”’, he commented, and the latter, ‘is in every point of view very unprofitable’.[71] This sentiment adhered to notions of Christian Manliness wherein every moment must be accounted for and be socially and economically profitable.[72]

The combination of loneliness and retaining a sense of one’s own masculine standing was thus especially challenging for young men. Given some leeway to perform a mode of

masculinity that incorporated less respectable behaviours, due to youth or homosocial associations, which would alleviate their feelings of social isolation, they also had to police these behaviours since they undermined their professional ambitions. After visiting patients early in 1813, Oswald recorded:

> Come home wrote a letter to father & shortly after prepared for dinner … where spent a pretty pleasant evening in a family way which is by far the best conversation played at cards till 10 oclock & came home at ½ 12. Cards or any games that waste time I would wish to avoid and I have little relish for them. But to spend an hour at them mainly for the sake of sociability can only be considered as faulty in so far as it wastes time & in many ways besides that is time wasted if a man allows them to lead him to gambling or discord & dissolution he must be a weak man.[73]

As this suggests, Oswald often did not know what kind of public man he should be and he was anxious to avoid being perceived as vicious, or even light-hearted. On this occasion, his journal entry reveals further self-excoriation, since being out till after midnight meant he missed the last post for his letter to his father, leaving him to berate himself for disappointing his family. Dunlop similarly found it difficult to balance his time between study and leisure at Chatham and on board ship. His new companions distracted him from homesickness with company and cards, but his journal entries reveal that they also revealed to him his lack of self-control and propensity to late nights and unmanly weakness.[74] His account of his weeks on-board ship speak of the slow passage of time, the tropical heat producing a languor, and his dissatisfaction with himself that his plans to study were 'lost, in an ocean of apathy and sloth', crowded out by gossip and cards.[75]

Distance and proximity: social connections

A major feature of loneliness is lack of satisfying social contact. As Snell observes: 'Loneliness may be defined as suffering self-recognition of separateness'.[76] Oswald's journal reveals that he felt this acutely, although it was framed and experienced by the connected frames of patronage and masculinity. One of the major sources of uneasiness in his early career was his status of dependence on patrons, especially navigating his obligations to them and their family in return for their favour and support. Required to board at patrons' residences, he assessed them according to their goodness, kindness, provision of food and financial support, and their manner in conversation with him, all of which related to their capacity to forge meaningful social, professional and, perhaps, emotional connections with him. This is revealed in his reports of what he perceived as his superiors' distance, expressed not only in their cold hearts, as explored earlier, but also their silences.[77] He frequently bemoaned the duke of Atholl's taciturnity and silence in his company, when dining at his table, which he worried might be the result of his own behaviour and felt to be 'cutting'.[78] Whether he felt well-treated by patrons or not, his inferior status and duties to them led him to express feelings that closely align with loneliness, including social isolation, physical and mental discomfort, and alienation. He ascribed his distaste to his 'pride or delicacy' and acknowledged that he had to 'get over such childish fastidiousness for such actions when properly managed seem to offer the surest paths to friendship and confidence'.[79] Yet this remained difficult. He remembered his time with George Bell's family in 1810, for example, as one when he felt ashamed, humiliated, and embarrassed. In many ways, Oswald's experience of the emotions cluster of loneliness was through these cognate and painful feelings. Even when he detected that he was benefitting from 'superiors' acting on his behalf, he felt uneasy. After visiting Mr Gawne, he wrote:

> [he] introduced me to many of his acquaintances amongst them to Mr La Motte, Surgeon. If I mistake not he did not do it with a view to my professional establishment but rather as a politeness which he as a public man wished to perform. Even in this point of view feel obliged to him.[80]

As Oswald noted some pages later, ‘a complete dependence on superiors is very galling to pride especially when perpetually in view of the person on whom you depend’.[81]

As well as the difficulties that Oswald encountered in navigating the practicalities and distant emotional and social relations between him and his patrons, he had to contend with the meanings of his ‘Dependant circumstances’ for his masculine identity.[82] Independence was a quality of full manhood and citizenship. As Matthew McCormack explains, this ‘entailed domestic attachment as well as public freedom’ and was a self-identity that drew ‘upon a political culture that privileged freedom from obligation [and] self-ownership’.[83] Independence and dependence, as McCormack reveals, and Oswald clearly felt, was a hierarchical relationship, where the dependent was disempowered.[84] But, as Oswald was learning, the empowering position of independence was not quickly or easily achieved since it required time and conducive relationships, to acquire. No wonder that he admired a Mr Wilson and noted that he ought ‘to cultivate’ his favour, because he ‘has an independent mind & manner honest firm & decided & far advanced in years & experience.’ Such manly traits were not just constructive for Oswald, they were also aspirational, given that he worried about his own ‘timidity’, which added to his sense of dislocation.[85] Young men who were still in training remained, therefore, in a somewhat liminal and discomforting phase of life. As Oswald remarked at the start of his journal about his ‘antagonists’, ‘If they knew the fragile means on which I stand in this world & the state of that family for which I wish to succeed surely they would hesitate to obstruct’.[86]

Two decades later, when Dunlop contemplated the changes of his circumstances, he called upon new tropes of masculinity:

> I have certainly set out on in the great race of life, and I pray heaven that I may be preserved from the dangers and the snakes which undoubtedly attend it. I must confess also that the parting from my friends has been felt deeply, But I must keep up my heart, and erect myself as every thing depends on myself now.[87]

The language of bodily erectness was central to the manly emotionalised body and to the emerging requirements of male self-reliance, which Dunlop evokes at the end of his sentence.[88] For Dunlop, masculinity was a tool to tackle the troubling feelings of being separated from home and friends and becoming self-reliant. As shown earlier, ideals of manliness could be used to discipline the self, when the paths to alleviating loneliness, through sociable distraction, could themselves be problematic.

Codes of masculinity were also adapting to the challenges of modernity. It is possible to see Dunlop grappling with this. In January 1845, while waiting with other 'medical expectants' at Chatham, before his voyage to India, he reflected:

> I have been thinking of a subject for the last few days, which is of the greatest importance, and whose bearings, will greatly affect my afterlife, if I live. I allude to the gradual change which will undoubtedly come over my way of thinking by a residence in the army. I have been brought up quietly and perhaps not improperly. Naturally of a mind to which the pleasures of domestic life are most agreeable and altho' perhaps not altogether unacquainted with my own powers in some things, still

> very unwilling to push myself forward in anything, and having nothing of that energy, and presumption which form the character of a "pushing man".[89]

For Dunlop, one way to both alleviate isolation and move away from his attachment to agreeable domesticity was to be a 'pushing man'. This was a feature of individualism and entailed a sense of energetic movement forward to the future, along with a degree of entitlement and confidence.[90] He went on to hope that his job as an assistant military surgeon would draw this quality out of him and necessitate a 'promptitude of action'. He contrasted this with civil practice, which, he declared, would entail him negotiating other rival practitioners and 'professional intrigue' at the same time as trying to 'advance his professional character and position'.[91]

Of course, this bleak account of establishing professional status echoes the deep anxieties that Oswald recorded a generation earlier and paints the backdrop to his feelings of social isolation. Interestingly, Oswald also referred to a 'pushing' man, when describing Captain Murray, who acted as a Croupier at the duke's table. In Oswald's opinion Murray was 'blustering', 'frank' and 'is only interested in pushing his way'.[92] Oswald, however, held the view of a more deferential, polite society that operated through patronage. Thus, he noted that while this might lead to 'familiarity', and could be emulated, yet he worried that such pushing might be seen as 'over politeness' and censured. By the 1840s, pushing had prevailed, though, as Dunlop's journal reveals, young men still might find it difficult to enact, especially when feeling vulnerable and missing their families.

Oswald's comment, cited above, that it was troubling to be 'perpetually in view of the person on whom you depend', captures how young men worried about how others saw them, and felt exposed to public scrutiny, feelings exacerbated by weak social

connections.[93] Oswald's journal reveals the pain he felt at lacking friends who could help him navigate these circumstances. His journal entries indicate that he only very gradually came to feel at ease in company, a process that seemed to coincide with his move away from Castle Mona, the duke of Atholl's residence, to take up lodgings in Douglas. Nonetheless, alongside his alienation from the socially distant duke and, to a lesser extent, duchess, he constantly worried about those he interacted with as peers or clients. Sometimes he remarked that he felt 'neglected' or excluded from the 'company'.[94] Deeply concerned about making his mark in society as a medical practitioner, he questioned his self-presentation at several junctures. Was he too quiet? Did his reluctance to play cards and lack of talent in playing a musical instrument affect his standing? He confessed to his journal that he was 'always afraid of being wrong & of offending'.[95] It is not surprising that he scrutinised the behaviour of other members of the company. In late January 1813, he dined with the Deemster (a judge on the Isle of Man) and a company of 'unknown people':

> Nothing entertains me more in company than to cipher the secret emotions of the various personages & still greater would it be to know if the opinions & form from that had any truth or correctness. My mind is often so engaged in this that I run a chance sometimes of neglecting the conversation & employment I be engaged in at the time.[96]

He was painfully aware that at his stage of life accurately interpreting the moods of his 'audience' and fashioning an accomplished professional persona had enormous consequences. He reminded himself that since medical practitioners were 'public men', actions can 'break our reputations'. He went on: 'A Physicians success depends almost altogether on popular fame. A few malevolent insinuations unless he is a man of ability and address is sufficient to blot his character forever'.[97]

What Oswald sought in his social interactions, therefore, was clarity, candidness, and openness from those around him. After he moved to live in lodgings, he confessed to his journal that he was worried that although his 'situation requires me to shew a somewhat respectable table & establishment' his purse did not stretch that far. He needed to keep up appearances to succeed but feared debt. Even worse, 'I have no friend to confide in'.[98] Similarly, he longed for honesty. He denounced:

> sham friends—worse than enemies & that I had a friend who would candidly tell me my faults & the worst that is said of me that I might act without hazard & not do wrong unwillingly—or if I have an enemy, that he were but open & unkind who would correct my faults or whom I could boldly confront or contemn for his.[99]

At times, he worried that the lack of reliable friends and fear of what others thought of him was contributing to 'mental affliction', which 'I have no doubt has led to many of the forgoing foolish fears & conjectures'.[100] As he settled into life in Douglas and recorded the expanded list of people he was meeting, however, he began to confide in other men. For example, he detailed a 'long Dark ride' home:

> when in the course of conversation told Mr [Gawne] that if there were any who set themselves to oppose and obstruct my success either from selfish motives or designs against me that all they could do would be to injure a young man whose hopes of success in this world were his profession and that they could do nothing else for I was determined to resist evil and cruelty and if they had views wherein I had a part to act they would meet with disappointment.[101]

Perhaps in articulating his particular fears and situation as a 'young man' he not only uncovered the 'pinch-point' of loneliness in practice for those in his situation, but also found a way to establish the social networks that would help him feel more connected.

Conclusion

Oswald and Dunlop's journals show that it is possible to historicise loneliness when it was becoming a category which people applied to themselves and others in the nineteenth century. Analysing their experience deepens our understanding of loneliness in several ways. For young men in the early stages of their professional lives, being distant, or 'alone', was a vulnerable condition that forced them to question the state of their mind and habits and could cause powerful feelings of dislocation, discomfort, and disruption. We can expand the pinch-points of life when loneliness is experienced, therefore, from childhood, adolescence, and old age, to include the early twenties for professional men in this period. Their experiences also show that we can include feelings like shame, embarrassment and humiliation into the emotions cluster of loneliness. These emotions were most strongly felt when they were poorly aligned with the gender values the young men needed to demonstrate. Thus, Oswald talked of being 'plagued & ashamed' simply because he kept having good luck at cards, which seemed, in his perception, not to match his aspirant professional status.[102] Oswald's experience of loneliness as a state of being scrutinised also reveals that it is possible to add exposure to the metaphors applied to evoke its sufferings. For young 'public men' who were building a nascent career, loneliness not only included feeling socially isolated, dependent, and lacking in friends, it entailed feelings of personal inadequacy. As Oswald reflected, 'In every company I see party work going on and from all I can gather it appears that my abilities are called in question. I can say that I am afraid of examination by any I have seen in this Island however in a professional view

especially.' He wished to be less visible: 'Let me go quietly and steadily on without any endeavour to shine.'[103] For young men, modern masculinity was demanding and contributed to the conditions for loneliness. It directed them away from the safety of families into an uncertain, competitive, lonely world, it provided them with high standards to attain, and if it proffered some ways to ameliorate the discomfort they felt, it demanded that they manage the temptations that such distractions offered through harsh self-discipline.

(8630 words)

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[1] National Library of Scotland [NLS], MS 9003, Diary of H. R. Oswald Snr, describing his first six months as surgeon to the 4th Duke of Atholl, Governor General of the Isle of Man (1812-13) f. 16v. I am very grateful for Michael Brown's generosity and support, first for alerting me to the two men's journals, sharing them with me, along with his expertise, and secondly for his cheerful willingness to talk through these subjects.

[2] Medical Officers of the Malta Garrison entry, No 160 Assistant Surgeon John Dunlop MB (Ed 1845) LRCS (Ed 1845), 6 Feb 1823 [Greenock] – 30 July 1867 [Jamaica] https://www.maltaramc.com/regsurg/d/dunlopj.html Accessed 17 April 2022.

[3] NLS, MS 9003, f. 1r. For Oswald's surgical identity, see Michael Brown, *Emotions and Surgery in Britain, 1793-1912* (Cambridge, 2022)

[4] NLS, MS.9296, Journal of John Dunlop, in it he describes his life as a medical student in Paris and his impressions of France and of his fellow students. In 1846 he joined the army as an assistant surgeon and the last part of the manuscript describes his voyage to India 1845-6), inside cover, 22 Oct 1845.

[5] Keith Snell distinguishes between 'objective' 'alone-ness' and 'subjective' aloneness. The former is the state of living alone, the latter refers to the feelings of loneliness experienced even when other people are present. K. D. M. Snell, 'The Rise of Living Alone and Loneliness in History', *Social History* 42, 1, 4-5.

[6] These are identified in Fay Bound Alberti, *A Biography of Loneliness: The History of an Emotion* (Oxford, 2019), pp. 6-20.

[7] Bound, *Biography of Loneliness*, pp. 6, 8, 10.

[8] Bound, *Biography of Loneliness*, p. 31.

[9] Snell, 'Living Alone', 3, 6.

[10] Bound, *Biography of Loneliness*, p. 35, Snell, 'Living Alone', 23.

[11] Bound, *Biography of Loneliness*, p. 10.

[12] NLS, MS 9003, f. 45r; NLS, MS.9296, pp. 99-100.

[13] Michael Brown, *Performing Medicine: Medical Culture and Identity in Provincial England, c.1760–1850* (Manchester, 2011).

[14] Snell, 'Living Alone', 4-5.

[15] Cited in John Tosh, '"All the masculine virtues": English emigration to the colonies, 1815-1852' in *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family & Empire*, ed. John Tosh (Harlow, 2005), p. 174.

[16] For the public health challenges due to loneliness see Snell, 'Living Alone', 4.

[17] For several of these themes, see Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*.

[18] Joanne Begiato, *Manliness in Britain, 1760-1900: Bodies, Emotion, and Material Culture* (Manchester, 2020), pp. 10-19, 35-50.

[19] Sociological studies show the powerful impact of hegemonic notions of masculinity on men's experiences of loneliness today, see J. Ratcliffe, A. Wigfield, & S. Alden, 'A lonely old man': Empirical investigations of older men and loneliness, and the ramifications for policy and practice', *Ageing and Society*, 41, 4 (2021), 794-814.

[20] Tosh,"masculine virtues", p. 180 and passim.

[21] Begiato, *Manliness in Britain*, pp. 88-91. Also see Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, p. 67.

[22] Begiato, *Manliness in Britain*, pp. 69-83.

[23] Marie Hendry, *Agency, Loneliness and the Female Protagonist in the Victorian Novel* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019), pp. 2-4; Bound, *Biography of Loneliness*, p. 33.

[24] Julia Wells, 'The "Terrible Loneliness": Loneliness and Worry in Settler Women's Memoirs from East and South-Central Africa, 1810-1939', *African Quarterly Studies*, 17, 2 (2017), 47-64.

[25] Stephen Bending, '"Miserable Reflections on the Sorrows of My Life": Letters, Loneliness, and Gardening in the 1760s', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 25, 1, Emotions (Spring, 2006), 42. For an example of the links between loneliness and emigration, see Bernadette Whelan, 'Women on the Move: a review of the historiography of Irish emigration to the USA, 1750–1900', *Women's History Review*, 24:6 (2015), 900-916.

[26] NLS, MS.9296, p. 88.

[27] NLS, MS.9296, pp. 89-90.

[28] NLS, MS.9296, pp. 49-50.

[29] NLS, MS.9296, p. 90.

[30] John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (Yale University Press, 1999), chapter 8; see also Begiato, *Manliness in Britain*, pp. 12-13.

[31] Dunlop was the generation of men who, in Tosh's thesis, preceded those who were encouraged socially and culturally to leave the domestic circle, from around the 1880s. Tosh, *A Man's Place*), chapter 8; NLS, MS.9296, pp. 89-90.

[32] Psychologists claim that 'nostalgia is a psychological resource that regulates loneliness, A.A. Abeyta, C. Routledge and S. Kaslon, 'Combating Loneliness With Nostalgia: Nostalgic Feelings Attenuate Negative Thoughts and Motivations Associated With Loneliness', *Frontiers in Psychology* 11,1219 (2020) https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01219. For nostalgia and the family in the later Georgian period see Joanne Begiato, 'Selfhood and 'Nostalgia': Sensory and Material Memories of the Childhood Home in Late Georgian Britain', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 42, 2 (2019), 229-246.

[33] NLS, MS.9296, pp. 101-102. For the role of nostalgia for the childhood home in the formation of national culture see Begiato, 'Selfhood and 'Nostalgia''.

[34] NLS, MS.9296, pp. 101-102

[35] Thomas Dodson, *What Nostalgia Was: War, Empire, and the Time of a Deadly Emotion* (Chicago, 2018)

[36] Abeyta, et al. "Combating Loneliness'.

[37] NLS, MS.9296, pp. 103-104. For the changing nature of homesickness and its waning cultural toleration in a society that 'celebrated the freely moving individual who maximized happiness and

who could be at home anywhere in the world' see Susan Matt, *Homesickness: An American History* (Oxford, 2011), p. 4 and passim.

[38] NLS, MS 9003, ff. 2v-3v.

[39] NLS, MS.9296, p. 136.

[40] NLS, MS 9003, f. 23v.

[41] NLS, MS 9003, f. 7v.

[42] Bound, *Biography of Loneliness*, pp. 14, 196-7.

[43] NLS, MS 9003, f. 26r.

[44] NLS, MS 9003, f. 75v.

[45] NLS, MS 9003, f. 20v.

[46] NLS, MS 9003, f. 12v.

[47] Bound, *Biography of Loneliness*, pp. 180-1.

[48] NLS, MS 9003, f. 30r.

[49] NLS, MS 9003, f. 6v.

[50] NLS, MS 9003, f. 42r. For emotional objects and their power, see Stephanie Downes, Sally Holloway, and Sarah Randles (eds), *Feeling Things: Objects and Emotions Through History* (Oxford, 2018).

[51] NLS, MS.9296, p. 120.

[52] NLS, MS.9296, p. 121. For Scott's role in making the Scottish nation, see Juliet Shields, *Nation and Migration: The Making of British Atlantic Literature, 1765-1835* (Oxford, 2016).

[53] For example Mary Coke, in her journal 1767, Bending, 'Miserable Reflections', 41.

[54] NLS, MS 9003, f. 9v.

[55] NLS, MS 9003, f. 12r; p 28v.

[56] NLS, MS.9296, pp. 118-119.

[57] NLS, MS 9003, f. 58r.

[58] By March, he noted that with the alleviation of his stomach complaint, his 'sensation of depression & stupidity is also only occasional', NLS, MS 9003, ff. 52r, 86r.

[59] NLS, MS 9003, between ff. 5-6.

[60] NLS, MS 9003, ff. 36r, 36v.

[61] NLS, MS 9003, ff. 39-39v, 40r.

[62] Bending, 'Miserable Reflections', 41.

[63] NLS, MS 9003, f.40r.

[64] NLS, MS.9296 pp. 117-18.

[65] NLS, MS.9296, p. 115.

[66] NLS, MS.9296, p. 129.

[67] NLS, MS.9296, p. 113.

[68] Begiato, *Manliness in Britain*, pp. 83-7; Rosalind Carr 'The importance and impossibility of manhood: polite and libertine masculinities in the Urban Eighteenth Century' in *Nine Centuries of Man: Manhood and Masculinity in Scottish History*, eds. L. Abrams, and E. L. Ewan (Edinburgh, 2017); Kate Davison, 'Occasional Politeness and Gentlemen's Laughter in 18th. Century England', *The Historical Journal*, 57, 4 (2014), 921-945.

[69] NLS, MS 9003, f. 80v.

[70] NLS, MS 9003, f. 23r.

[71] NLS, MS 9003, f. 40v.

[72] William Van Reyk, "Christian Ideals Of Manliness In The Eighteenth And Early Nineteenth Centuries", *The Historical Journal*, 52, 4 (2009), 1053–73.

[73] NLS, MS 9003, ff. 35v, 36r.

[74] NLS, MS.9296, p. 92.

[75] NLS, MS.9296, pp. pp. 111, 112.

[76] Snell, 'Living Alone', p. 4.

[77] NLS, MS 9003, ff. 4-6.

[78] NLS, MS 9003, f. 6v.

[79] NLS, MS 9003, f. 4.

[80] NLS, MS 9003, f. 26r.

[81] NLS, MS 9003, f. 27r.

[82] NLS, MS 9003, f. 4.

[83] Matthew McCormack, *The Independent Man: Citizenship and Gender Politics in Georgian England* (Manchester, 2005), pp. 27, 201.

[84] McCormack, *Independent Man*, p. 27.

[85] NLS, MS 9003, ff. 47r, 49r.

[86] NLS, MS 9003, f. 10v.

[87] NLS, MS.9296, ff. 89-90.

[88] Begiato, *Manliness in Britain*, pp. 50-2, 69-83.

[89] NLS, MS.9296, pp. 96-9.

[90] For the rise of individualism that rewarded those who moved over those who stayed, see Matt, *Homesickness*, pp. 58-9, 149-51; Tosh, '"All the masculine virtues"', 180.

[91] NLS, MS.9296, ff. 96-9.

[92] NLS, MS 9003, f. 9r.

[93] NLS, MS 9003, f. 27r.

[94] NLS, MS 9003, f. 15v.

[95] NLS, MS 9003, f. 27v.

[96] NLS, MS 9003, f. 41r.

[97] NLS, MS 9003, f. 32v-33r.

[98] NLS, MS 9003, f. 34v, 35r.

[99] NLS, MS 9003, f. 10r.

[100] NLS, MS 9003, f. 13r, 3v.

[101] NLS, MS 9003, ff. 43-43v.

[102] NLS, MS 9003, ff. 55r.

[103] NLS, MS 9003, ff. 56r.