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Unconscious Processes in Relation to the Environmental Crisis

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**Even beyond the threat of nuclear warfare, I think, the ecological crisis** is the greatest threat mankind collectively has ever faced. The stream of articles and books calling our attention to various aspects of this crisis comes from ecologists, population biologists, physicists, chemists, agriculturists, economists, architects, engineers, city planners, statesmen, historians, and, mainly, concerned laymen some of whom provide valuable insights into the psychological ingredients of the problem. But rarely, indeed, is a behavioral scientist heard from, and to the best of my knowledge very few psychiatric articles have appeared as yet concerning this subject, and but one contribution from a psychoanalyst, Peter A. Martin<sup>1</sup> of Detroit, who touched upon it briefly and incidentally in a talk I heard him give in April 1969. (See Note.) This environmental crisis embraces, and with rapidly accelerating intensity threatens, our whole planet. If so staggering a problem is to be met, the efforts of scientists of all clearly relevant disciplines will surely be required. It seems to me that we psychoanalysts, with our interest in the unconscious processes which so powerfully influence man's behavior, should provide our fellow men with some enlightenment in this common struggle.

My hypothesis is that man is hampered in his meeting of this environmental crisis by a severe and pervasive apathy which is based largely upon feelings and attitudes of which he is unconscious. The lack of analytic literature about this subject suggests to me that we analysts are in the grip of this common apathy. But a second factor, a special felt hazard in our profession, tends to inhibit us from

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making the special contributions we could make: we fear that an active concern with this present subject will evoke, from our colleagues, nothing more than a diagnostic interest as to whether we are suffering from psychotic depression or paranoid schizophrenia.

As to the evidence for the general apathy I postulate, our federal budget for 1971 includes only about one seventieth as much for dealing with environmental pollution as for military

purposes.<sup>3a</sup> I have no wish to speak lightly of our military needs, but it does seem evident to me that a citizenry actively aroused about the state of our, and the world's, ecology would not accept so feeble an effort in this area.

Of the mass of statistics concerning the environmental crisis, here are a few of the items that I find awesome. We are dumping into the ocean as many as a half million different pollutants, only a very few of which have been studied for possible effects upon ecologically vital processes.<sup>6a</sup> There is increasing concern lest in a few short decades the ocean become incapable of supporting living creatures, as are already many of our great rivers, various of our Great Lakes, and the Baltic Sea.<sup>12</sup> The pesticide DDT, to mention but one pollutant, has been discovered as far afield as in the bodies of Arctic Eskimos and Antarctic penguins and seals.<sup>6b</sup> Within less than two decades after their introduction, "The synthetic pesticides have been so thoroughly distributed throughout the animate and inanimate world that they occur virtually everywhere."<sup>2</sup> Seventy per cent or more of our planet's total oxygen production by photosynthesis occurs in the ocean and is largely produced by diatoms; recent studies have shown that DDT, which permeates all things in the ocean, impedes diatoms' production of oxygen.<sup>6, 18</sup>

As for the radioactive waste from atomic reactors, we are already heirs to some 80 million gallons, stored in tank farms. These tanks will have to be guarded for 600 to 1000 years. Several storage tanks have leaked thousands of gallons into the soil already, and a single gallon is enough to poison a city's water supply.<sup>3b</sup> David Lilienthal, the first chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, has stated, "Once a bright hope shared by all mankind, including myself, the rash proliferation of atomic power plants has become one of the ugliest clouds hanging over America."<sup>5</sup>

The accelerating overpopulation of the earth is a factor of transcendental importance. It is estimated that in 6000 B.C. there were 5 million people on earth and that it had required about 1 million

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years for the population to double from 2½ to that 5 million. From then on, doubling occurred about every thousand years to a total of 500 million (that is, half a billion) around 1650. Then the population doubled within only 200 years, to a billion in 1850. The next

doubling took only 80 years, to 2 billion by 1930. The doubling time at present is about 37 years. If population growth were to continue at the present rate—which it obviously cannot—for another 900 years, there would then be about 100 persons for each square yard of the Earth's surface, land and sea.<sup>6d</sup>

Famines, especially in the undeveloped countries with their higher growth rates, are one of the “solutions” **to** this clearly impossible situation. The population biologist Ehrlich notes that more than half the world is in misery now<sup>6e</sup> and that an estimated 5 million Indian children, for example, die each year of malnutrition.<sup>6f</sup> He is convinced<sup>ed</sup> that within this decade hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death in spite **of** any crash programs embarked upon now.<sup>6g</sup>

The United States, with less than one fifteenth of the world's population, uses well over half of all the **raw** materials consumed each year, and if present trends continue, in 20 years we will be much less than one fifteenth of the population, yet we may use some 80 per cent of the resources consumed.<sup>6h</sup> On the other hand, it has been pointed out that if the present level of American industrialization were **extended** to the rest of the world, the accompanying increase in environmental pollution would bring on another Ice Age, for the massive increase of smoke and dust in the air would diminish sunlight and produce a significant lowering of the Earth's temperature; an even greater danger would be the depletion of the world's oxygen supply caused by the increased chemical poisoning of the ocean.<sup>4</sup>

The world's current state of ecological deterioration is such as to evoke in us largely unconscious anxieties of different varieties that are of a piece with those characteristic of various levels of an individual's ego-developmental history. Thus the general apathy that I postulate is based upon largely unconscious ego defenses against these anxieties. I shall speak of those ego defenses having to do with (a) phallic and Oedipal levels of development, (b) the earlier era coinciding with, in Kleinian<sup>9</sup> terms, the depressive position, and (c) the still earlier era coinciding with the paranoid position

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### **Phallic and Oedipal Levels**

First, it is apparent in how moralistic a spirit most communications about this subject are conveyed; **the speaker or writer tells** us, from a morally superior and therefore safe position, projecting his own Oedipal guilt upon us, that we have raped mother earth and now we are being duly strangled or poisoned, as by a vengeful Jehovah, for our sin. Second, we are given to feel that the ecologists are calling upon us to relinquish our hard-won genital primacy, symbolized by our proudly cherished but ecologically offensive automobile, and return to a state of childhood, when genital mastery was something longed for but not yet achieved; our apathy includes an unconscious defiant refusal to do this. Third, our fear, envy, and hatred of formidable Oedipal rivals makes us view with large-scale apathy their becoming polluted into extinction. This defensive state is supported by the relatively imperceptible nature of atmospheric pollution; relatively undetectable immediately about oneself, it becomes horrifyingly evident from a distance, as from an ascending plane, as something attacking and enshrouding them—all the others with the exception of oneself and including, of course, one's Oedipal rivals. Freud,<sup>7</sup> it seems to me, gave *us* to understand that the Oedipal struggle, in normal development, has an innately foreclosed outcome: **a**fter much inner rage and anguish, the youth or young girl must eventually come to the realization that each parent belongs sexually to the other. I think Freud greatly underestimated how formidable an Oedipal rival the son or daughter remains to both the parents and how frequently it is the youthful contestant who becomes in essence the victor in intensity of emotional attachment in the Oedipal contest. Thus I think that one of the great reasons for fathers' relative apathy to conditions that threaten to extinguish their sons, whether these conditions be the war in Vietnam or the growing state of environmental pollution, is that these conditions promise to extinguish an Oedipal rival one has never at all finally conquered. Our unconscious hatred of succeeding generations, of our progeny and of their progeny in turn, our vengeful determination to destroy their birthright through its neglect, in revenge for the deprivations, in whatever developmental era, we suffered at our parents' hands, includes and extends beyond the Oedipal conflict. Our envy of the more favored rival is provided vicarious satisfaction by the simple leveling effect of the universal environmental

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pollution. The poor man can have the grim satisfaction of knowing that this pollution, to which he contributes, is menacing *not only himself but the rich man* also. Similarly, the majority of the earth's peoples who live in the undeveloped countries can see that the envied technologically developed countries are bringing about the latter's own downfall as part of the general ruin.

Among the many unconscious meanings that environmental pollution has for us is, I think, its externalization and reification of sexual guilt, guilt which through these transformations is rendered thereby more tolerable to us. The psychiatric dictionary gives only this meaning of pollution: "The discharge of semen and seminal fluid in the absence of sexual intercourse; the term is often used synonymously with nocturnal emission."<sup>8</sup> I surmise that the more archaic, Jehovahlike aspects of our superego so terrorize us as to render us unable to distinguish between the imperceptible and inexorable aging of our body on the one hand, and, on the other, the increasingly pervasive pollution of the morally pure ego ideal of our youth over the years of our adulthood and aging. This so-called moral pollution is projected, I suggest, onto the environment such that we feel that the pure air and water and so on of our childhood is now lost forever. Analogously, I have the notion that the well-known pictures of the mushrooming clouds of the first atom bombs may evoke in us a near physiological apathy that is necessary to our submitting to the mushrooming, Alice-in-Wonderland spurts in physical growth that we cannot stop as we are physically changed, with what may feel to be explosive suddenness, from child into adult. If these surmises are valid, it is of life-and-death importance that we become aware of these differentiations. Environmental pollution is a real problem in truly outer reality about which we are by no means powerless.

#### The Depressive Position

Mankind is collectively reacting to the real and urgent danger from environmental pollution much as does the psychotically **depressed patient bent upon suicide** by self-neglect—the patient who, oblivious to any urgent physical hunger, is letting himself starve to death or walks uncaring into the racing automobile traffic of a busy street. One day recently as I was driving on the Washington beltway, observing the general custom of traveling a few miles above the speed limit, it suddenly struck me that I was essentially hurrying to get off

it—to get its murderously threatening, bleak, lonely, crowdedness over with. I wondered if the same were true of most of the other drivers also, perhaps without their realizing it. I wondered, is this not a fair sample of how we all feel not only about the beltway but about our whole current life as it is? Is not the general apathy in the face of pollution a statement that there is something so unfulfilling about the quality of human life that we react, essentially, as though our lives are not worth fighting to save?

A few minutes ago I was suggesting that the fact of environmental pollution tends to shield one from becoming aware of the full depth of emotional depression within oneself; instead of feeling isolated within emotional depression, one feels at one with everyone else in a “realistically” doomed world. Pollution serves not only to foreclose the future upon progeny we unconsciously hate and envy, but also to obscure a past which we unconsciously resist remembering with poignant clarity. We equate the idealized world of our irretrievably lost childhood with a nonpolluted environment. We tend erroneously to assume that nothing can be done about the pollution of the present-day environment because of our deeper-lying despair at knowing that we cannot recapture the world of our childhood and at sensing, moreover, that we are retrospectively idealizing the deprived and otherwise painful aspects of it. The pollution serves to maintain an illusion in us that an unspoiled, ideal childhood is still there, still obtainable, could we but bestir ourselves and clear away what spoils and obscures its purity. In this sense, pollutants unconsciously represent remnants of the past to which we are clinging, transference-distortions which permeate our present environment, shielding us from feeling the poignancy of past losses, but by the same token barring us from living in full current reality. We can feel not that we have lost the world of our childhood, but that, omnipotently, we have spoiled it and are choosing to go on increasingly to spoil it through our polluting of it.

In current urban living, there is not the close-knit fabric of interpersonal relationships, enduring over decades of time, which would enable one to face and accept the losses inherent in human living—the losses involved in the growing up and growing away of one's children, the aging and death of one's parents, the knowledge of one's spouse's and

one's own inevitable aging and death. A technology-dominated, overpopulated world has brought with it so reduced a capacity in us

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to cope with the losses a life must bring with it to be a truly human life that we become increasingly drawn into polluting our planet sufficiently to ensure that we shall have essentially nothing to lose in our eventual dying.

### The Paranoid Position

In a monograph in 1960 I discussed the infant's subjective oneness with the nonhuman environment,<sup>14</sup> the manifold functions this environment fulfills in **various stages of normal** ego development, and the distortions that one finds, in these regards, in the histories and presentday ego functioning of schizophrenic patients. In 1961 I described schizophrenia as serving to shield the afflicted individual from a recognition of the inevitability of death.<sup>15</sup>

For several years I have spent a long day each month working as a consultant at the New York State Psychiatric Institute in New York City. One evening a year or so ago, as I was returning by cab on the Triboro Bridge, on the way to LaGuardia to catch the shuttle plane back to Washington, I was seized by an urge to leap from the cab and hurl myself off the bridge. Such urges are no stranger to me, a sufferer since childhood from a phobia of heights. But the urge this time was particularly powerful, and the determinant I was able to glimpse, this time, of this tenacious, multirooted symptom was particularly memorable, humbling, and useful to me. I felt I had to destroy myself because I simply could not face returning to my usual life in Washington, and the reason I found it intolerable to face was that I felt so shamefully and desperately unable “simply” to face the living out of my life, the growing old and dying, the commonest, most everyday thing, so my panicky thoughts went, that nearly all people do—all, that is, with the exception of those who commit suicide or take refuge in chronic psychosis.

However unique to my own individual life history must be the pattern of determinants that give rise to my particular omnipotent urge to destroy my life rather than surrender to the eventual losing of it through living and aging and dying, I insist that my urge is not entirely irrelevant to what transpires in my fellow human beings in general: I am convinced that

each of us in his or her own particular way must cope with some such irrationally omnipotent reaction to inevitable loss.

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I postulate that an ecologically healthy relatedness to our nonhuman environment is essential to the development and maintenance of our sense of being human and that such a relatedness has become so undermined, disrupted, and distorted, concomitant with the ecological deterioration, that it is inordinately difficult for us to integrate the feeling experiences, including the losses, inescapable to any full-fledged human living. Over recent decades we have come from dwelling in an outer world in which the living works of nature either predominated or were near at hand, to dwelling in an environment dominated by a technology which is wondrously powerful and yet nonetheless dead, inanimate. I suggest that in the process we have come from being subjectively differentiated from, and in meaningful kinship with, the outer world, to finding this technology-dominated world so alien, so complex, so awesome, and so overwhelming that we have been able to cope with it only by regressing, in our unconscious experience of it, largely to a degraded state of nondifferentiation from it. I suggest, that is, that this “outer” reality is psychologically as much a part of us as its poisonous waste products are part of our physical selves.

The proliferation of technology, with its marvelously complex integration and its seemingly omnipotent dominion over nature, provides us with an increasingly alluring object upon which to project our “nonhuman” unconscious strivings for omnipotence; hence we tend increasingly to identify, unconsciously, with this. Concomitantly, the more “simply human,” animal-nature-based components of our selves become increasingly impoverished (by reason of such factors as the overpopulation; the impersonal, driven turmoil of living in a technology-dominated society; the emphasis upon consuming material products; and so on), less and less capable of integrating our “nonhuman” components. More comprehensively, we become increasingly unable to consciously experience as an inner emotional conflict the war between the “human” and the “nonhuman” (autistic, omnipotence based) aspects of our self; hence we project this conflict upon, and thus unconsciously foster, the war in external reality between the

beleaguered remnants of ecologically balanced nature and man's technology which is ravaging them.

Many aspects of the ecologically deteriorating world in which we live foster in us, at a largely unconscious level, the mode of experience seen in an openly crystalized form in paranoid schizophrenia and

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postulated as characterizing the most threatened moments of normal infancy before the establishment of a durable sense of individuality. The pervasively and increasingly polluted world in which we live, where as one concerned individual was hardly overstating it when he said, "Everything we breathe, eat, and drink is going to kill us," is reacted to as being our all-permeating enemy. This tends to paralyze us into terrorized inactivity, all the more so because in this deeply regressed mode of experience we are not at all well differentiated from the environment, hence we have no clearly separate self with which to wage a struggle with the "outer" threat.

At this level of primitive ego functioning, there is not any differentiation between any good mother and bad mother. It is not to be assumed that, even at a conscious level, we have been accustomed to regarding nature as equivalent to a good mother, now in conflict with technology as a bad mother. Nature has often been a bad mother to man, often been rendered hospitable to man only through the workings of our good mother, technology. Now we are told that our good mother is poisoning us and that if we do not curb her and return nature toward its unfettered state, we are lost. We have worshiped technology, and our annual gross national product which epitomizes its growth, as a kind of god, and now we confusedly gather that we are supposed to starve this god in order to save ourselves. A major aspect of this realistic "paranoid" threat resides in our ever-present suspense, however fluctuating from consciousness to unconsciousness, lest we all die, in a matter of hours or even less, from undeclared nuclear warfare. As James Reston recently put it, "The bomb and the missile gave the President a power unprecedented in the history of nations, and tipped the balance in the American Federal system away from the Congress, for the nation could be destroyed before the Congress could even meet to debate a declaration of war."<sup>13</sup> The undifferentiated pervasiveness of all this menace evokes, deep in us, the frozen

immobility of the child whose parent (equivalent to such godlike, vague entities as the hydrogen bomb or the awesomely powerful military-industrial complex<sup>10</sup>) chronically threatens violence.

The secrecy, the subtlety of these threats makes them thoroughly akin to those which grip the patient suffering from paranoid schizophrenia. We are told that, without our having realized it, we have been taking in all manner of poisons, many known and many presumably still unknown. The known ones include—to mention only a

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few—lead (of which our body already carries one-third of a lethal dose),<sup>3e</sup> mercury, DDT, and radioactive wastes.

An enormously important factor is that at this level of ego dedifferentiation we project, as does the openly schizophrenic individual, our own murderousness—our own pervasive, poorly differentiated and poorly integrated murderousness, born of our terror and deprivation and frustration—upon the hydrogen bomb, the military-industrial complex, technology, and so forth. Also, because we tend to feel that sudden death from nuclear warfare is a threat entirely out of our control, we may prefer the slower, more controllable death that pollution offers as seemingly the only alternative. We know that pollution is a process to which we contribute daily; it is something which, in however small part, we know we actively do. On the other hand, to regard such slow strangulation as an inevitable agony is to yearn for the quick relief that nuclear warfare would bring.

At an unconscious level we powerfully identify with what we perceive as omnipotent and immortal technology, as a defense against intolerable feelings of insignificance, of deprivation, of guilt, of fear of death, and so on. It has been said that realistically, “When it comes to salvaging the environment, the individual is almost powerless.”<sup>3d</sup> Since the constructive goal of saving the world can be achieved only by one's working, as but one largely anonymous individual among uncounted millions, in adult concert with other citizens, it is more alluring to give oneself over to secret fantasies of omnipotent destructiveness, in identification with the forces that threaten to destroy the world. This serves to shield one from the recognition of one's own guilt-laden murderous urges, experienced as being within oneself, to destroy one's own intrapersonal and interpersonal world. Our

grandiose identification with technology is enhanced by the statistics which inform us that our autos collectively cause as much as 80 percent of the pollution of the air;<sup>3e</sup> that our production of wastes increases much faster than our population growth and will double within less than eight years;<sup>3f</sup> and that, as I mentioned earlier, we in the United States consume a vastly disproportionate amount of the earth's raw materials.

In childhood a fantasied omnipotence protected us against the full intensity of our feelings of deprivation, and now it is dangerously easy to identify with seemingly limitless technology and to fail to cope with the life-threatening scarcity of usable air, food, and water on our planet. By identifying with the rich diversity and wondrous

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integration of technology, we shield ourselves from feeling the full extent of the deprivation, the impoverishment, of our human lives. The Nobel bacteriologist, René Dubos, states, “Ecological systems can develop tolerance to pollutants but in the process they tend to lose their rich complexity and stability.”<sup>3g</sup> This is true, I believe, for man's psychological life as well.

For most of us, religion offers little hope of immortality to arm us against our fear of death, and we feel too ill assured that loved ones will be there to share our griefs or that we will live in the memories of our survivors; we sense too little contact with the descendants who will survive us. Our frustration at the knowledge that we are merely mortal is vastly intensified by the knowledge that we have created a technology which, seemingly omnipotent and immortal itself, has not extended our only allotted life span much beyond the biblical threescore years and ten. So we identify unconsciously with this technology which, being inanimate, cannot die. We find assurance that in its versatile devouring it has grown ever more powerful as it has leapt from feeding upon coal, the stores of which are now largely depleted, to oil, the stores of which are expected to be gone in about another thirty years,<sup>3h</sup> to uranium. We find reason to hope that before the limited stores of uranium are gone, atomic or some still more magical power will have enabled immortal technology to leave this ravaged planet behind for limitless interplanetary homes, and we secretly nourish the hope that we shall be among the handful it brings with it. In this realm of

omnipotent fantasy, in fact, mother earth is equivalent to all of reality, which is a drag and hindrance to our yearnings for unfettered omnipotence, and we want to be rid of it. Omnipotence is not, however, something for which man unambivalently yearns. In a recent paper concerning my analysis of a man who showed a borderline thought disorder,<sup>16</sup> I presented some examples of the data that showed not only his striving for the realization of his fantasied omnipotence, but also his fear lest this be fully realized and he be disqualified, thus, from sharing human love. It may be not **at** all coincidental that our world today is threatened with extinction through environmental pollution, to which we are so strikingly apathetic, just when we seem on the threshold of technologically breaking the chains that have always bound our race to this planet of our origin. While cognizant that this coincidence could be fully accounted for by the present developmental stage of technology alone,

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I suspect that we collectively quake lest our infantile omnipotent fantasies become fully actualized through man's becoming interplanetary and ceasing thereby to be man as we have known him, inseparable from earth. I surmise that we are powerfully drawn to suicidally polluting our planet so as to ensure our dying upon it as men, rather than existing elsewhere as—so we tend distortedly to assume—gods or robots, for example.

We project upon this ecologically deteriorating world the deepest intensities of all our potentially inner emotional conflicts—including, as I mentioned earlier, the conflict between the subjectively human and the subjectively nonhuman components of ourselves—and, since conflict is the essence of human life, we project in this same process, in large part, our aliveness. Thomas Wolfe was, I think, projecting upon the world his inner aliveness when he wrote in his notebooks of his struggle to find his place in the world: “What it may be finally I do not know but I must build up out of chaos a strong, sufficient inner life; otherwise I will be torn to pieces in the whirlpool of the world.”<sup>17</sup> To react with apathy to our present pollution-ridden “real, outer” world is, I think, equivalent to defending oneself unconsciously against the experience of becoming an individual human self, a self which, in the very nature of human living, must contain a whirlpool of

emotional conflicts, at times so chaotic as to threaten the dismemberment of one's very self.

Time does not permit me to include here the necessarily detailed data from my work with depressed or schizophrenic persons that would provide at least a measure of clinical documentation for these speculations. In my records there is relatively solid clinical evidence indicative, for example, of (a) patients' identifying with deadly smog; (b) patients' typically paranoid transference to me as the personification of their unwanted-child-self, that was treated in the parental family as the essentially nonhuman source of all the subtle and pervasive malevolence that actually polluted the idealized family atmosphere; and (c) the link between patients' subjectively nonhuman components and their parents' autism, such patients hating what to us is reality, because to live in that reality they would have to relinquish the yearning to identify fully with the supposed omnipotence of their parental autism. My previously mentioned monograph on the nonhuman environment is filled with detailed clinical data relevant to this subject.

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We live today at a time when we must save the real world or we shall use it as the instrument for destroying us all. I think that the greatest danger lies neither in the hydrogen bomb itself nor in the more slowly lethal effect of pollution from our over-all technology. The greatest danger lies in the fact that the world is in such a state as to evoke our very earliest anxieties and at the same time to offer the delusional "promise," the actually deadly promise, of assuaging these anxieties, effacing them, by fully externalizing and reifying our most primitive conflicts that produce those anxieties. In the pull upon us to become omnipotently free of human conflict, we are in danger of bringing about our extinction.

If you have found anything at all apropos among my various remarks in this elementary first effort, then I have made my initial point—namely, that we psychoanalysts must make some real contribution, along with our brothers in other fields of science, toward meeting the ecological crisis.

Note

Gail L. Baker, of The George Washington University, in her as yet unpublished article “Environmental Pollution and Mental Health,” which came into my hands on August 28, 1970, after my first draft of this article was written, includes a thorough review of the meager **literature** on this subject by behavioral scientists, including nonanalytic psychiatrists. My review of the psychoanalytic literature of the past few years yields no article on this subject, but in April 1969 I heard a psychoanalyst, Peter A. Martin, give an informal talk, subsequently published in June 1970, entitled “The End of ‘Our’ World.” In this he makes the following comments before turning to his main theme (one not relevant to the present paper):

Psychiatrists are familiar with the fantasy met in the early stages of schizophrenia that the world is coming to an end. . . . In the second half of this century, the actual presence of this destructive potential makes “psychotic” end-of-the-world fantasies not so obviously out of touch with reality.

Concern about world destruction is a common mass media subject. In such presentations we hear two popular theories of how the world will end. One is the “big bang” theory; the roar of nuclear explosions will herald the end of the world. Such forces may be considered as technological extensions into reality of the destructive impulses of the id. The second theory holds that the world will end with a whimper; predictions of overpopulation leading to famine, pollution, and an uninhabitable environment can be understood as stemming from two sources within the human being. One source might be extreme id impulses toward passivity which resist the obvious call for action to preserve the species. For those who believe in the debatable death instinct theory, such irrational inactivity could be explained in this way. The other source might be passivity or helplessness of the ego in the face of danger signals calling for preservation of the self.

The above preamble is presented to show what this paper is not about. . . .

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Martin then develops the theme of his paper, namely, the apparent drawing to a close of an era of training and practice in psychiatry in which young psychiatrists are imbued with the set of professional values to which we middle-aged psychiatrists have been devoted. “In

summary,” he says, “the group of psychiatrists, referred to as ‘our group,’ is observing the end of its world. ...”

Despite the obvious relevance to my paper of certain of his remarks which I have quoted, I have placed these in this footnote because, in the main, the nature of his paper is such as to confuse the development of my own remarks.

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