



Article

SOCIAL TRAUMA, NOSTALGIA AND MOURNING IN THE IMMIGRATION EXPERIENCE

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Immigration and exile can qualify as social traumas. The individual is deprived of a holding, secure environment in which to continue their life. The process of mourning is a necessary step to connect with “going on being.” Another psychic experience in migration is *nostalgia*; it helps the immigrant defend against the aggression resulting from current frustrations. The feeling of nostalgia can also be used to protect the ego from inadequacy. The complex components of nostalgia come from positive ones such as joy and gratitude connected with sadness about the associated loss of security, familiarity, and historical continuity. At other times, nostalgia cannot evolve, particularly in forced migration or exile. In this case, the individual enters a depressed state with accompanying feelings of self-pity, resentment, envy, and guilt, which prevents the mourning process from developing. To deal with these painful experiences, the person resorts to linking objects or linking phenomena that help them continue having contact with the past, while adjusting to their new environment.

KEY WORDS: immigration; exile; nostalgia; mourning; linking object and linking phenomena

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INTRODUCTION

Some of the overall characteristics of migration are complex psychosocial processes involving profound losses with long standing effects on the individual. At times, psychic depletion may occur, among other things, when a person arrives in a new country as an immigrant or an exile. Whatever the circumstances, these changes entail periods of

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disorganization, pain, and frustration, and may produce a catastrophic sense of loss. This feeling of homelessness is an emotional self-state. As a result of continuous contact with a new culture, the migration experience unchains a process that leads to the transformation of internal structures and internalized object relations (Lijtmaer, 2001). The initial experience of “culture shock” in immigration is a reactive process stemming from the impact of a new culture upon those who attempt to merge with it as a newcomer. Culture shock profoundly tests the over-all adequacy of personality functioning, is accompanied by mourning for the abandoned culture, and severely threatens the newcomer’s identity (Garza-Guerrero, 1974, p. 409). It may qualify as a traumatic separation because by definition a trauma is something that overwhelms an organism with its unexpected suddenness. However, once past that initial reaction, the immigration experience can also build character and resilience. It can be a process of new possibilities and of a hopeful future.

In this paper I will focus on the connection between trauma, mourning and nostalgia and the use of “linking objects” (Volkan, 1999, p.173). The physical leaving of one’s homeland is accompanied by thoughts and ideas migrating to other lands.

Migration embodies three stages: pre-migration, migration, and post-migration. It is important to distinguish immigrants who leave by choice, from exiles and refugees who have no alternative but to leave their native land immediately without preparation. If migration is by force, as is the case with exiles and particularly of asylum seekers, they leave against their will and often in haste to avoid threat. They carry only themselves. The exile’s and asylum seeker’s migration, unlike the immigrant’s, is usually precipitated by sociopolitical traumatic events. With the ongoing mass migrations in the world, refugees pay smugglers to take them to safety but there is no safe place to go since nobody wants them. They leave in a rush to save their lives and their families due to political and religious fear, death threats and/or persecution, rape of women, or forced labor. They do not have time to mourn their losses, there is no time for pleasantries or “ideal migration” where destination countries can choose who they will take in. Refugees suffer rejection, endure dehumanization and shame in addition to feelings of helplessness, loss of dignity, frustration, and anger since nobody wants them. Their initial hopes and dreams of escaping to a safe “haven” are transformed into nightmares of humiliation and fear (Varvin, 2017). Many of these asylum seekers are now, or will soon be, suffering from PTSD, due to massive psychic trauma. Such a traumatic assault often leads to the loss of physical cohesion and continuity of the self. The body no longer contains agency, affect, or objects, and fundamental bonds to benign others are lost.

An adult's experience of exile is perhaps most closely rooted in the infant's experience of attachment, separation, and loss (Lijtmaer, 2017a).

An exiled person will be unable to revisit the country of origin. What has been lost will remain lost. Leon and Rebecca Grinberg (1989) describe exile as a specific kind of migration in which "departure is imposed and return impossible," and that exiles, unlike other immigrants, are typically denied the "protective rite of farewell" (p. 157). They also note that children in any migration are like exiles because they have no say in the migration experience. The choice has been made for them, without their consent, sometimes thoughtfully, sometimes impulsively, by their parents. In some cases, it is a not matter of choice at all because desperate circumstances have forced the parents to move.

Catastrophic experiences that drive immigration are often infused with some kind of trauma, depending on the circumstances, a fact that adds an additional layer of complexity to the immigration experience for these individuals. I consider voluntary immigration as a traumatic event, too, because of its links to acculturation losses, and struggle for adaptation. However, whatever the motives for leaving one's home country, immigration typically activates mourning processes. Immigrants mourn parents, siblings, and sometimes even children. They also mourn friends and the broader network of relations that have been a stabilizing factor to maintain their identities. But just as importantly, immigrants mourn a sense of place, including the familiarity of objects and the architecture that once structured their lives. The loss of the smells, tastes, sounds, and the rhythms of life that so deeply shaped their sense of self in the world over the course of their development are part of the immigrant's experience of dislocation (Ainslie, Harlem, Tummala-Narra, Barbanel & Ruth, 2013).

TRAUMA, FERENCZI, AND THE TRAUMA OF IMMIGRATION

Ferenczi was curious about trauma beginning in his early days as a doctor, but his interest intensified during the First World War, when his work as a medical officer in the army provided him with the opportunity to closely and systematically observe the so-called "war neurosis," the emotional suffering of soldiers (Ferenczi, 1916–1917). Ferenczi continued to explore trauma in depth all his life, and his trauma related later papers are especially well known (for example, 1929, 1930, 1930–1932, 1931, 1932), as summed up by Jay Frankel:

What is traumatic is the unforeseen, the unfathomable, the incalculable. ... Unexpected, external threat, the sense of which one cannot grasp, is unbearable" (1932, p. 171). There are two related elements here. The first is

that trauma is incomprehensible. The other is that it comes without warning. Regarding the second, Ferenczi said that up to the moment of trauma the person is unprepared, undefended, and feels secure (1930–1932, pp. 239 and 254; 1932, pp. 69–70). Along these lines, trauma is “particularly dangerous” when it occurs in an unconscious state or other exceptional state of consciousness such as a trance state, that is, when the person is or most unprepared for it and unable to defend himself or herself (1931, p. 134; 1932, pp. 45–46). Reminiscent of his second type of war neurosis, Ferenczi said regarding the unwarranted feeling of security that precedes trauma: “One had to have overestimated one’s powers and to have lived under the delusion that such things could not happen, not to me” (, p. 254). After the trauma, one’s trust in the benevolence of the external world is destroyed and one feels deceived (1930–1932, p. 254) (Frankel, 1998, p. 43–44).

Ferenczi argued that we privilege present experience because only through lived experience in the here-and-now can we recognize the past as past. Ferenczi never abandoned a conviction that these current experiences needed to be analyzed in the context of the historical past, and in fact, he was highly critical of Rank, whose thinking developed in a less historical direction (Ferenczi, 1927, as cited in Aron, 2011, p. 285).

Ferenczi’s idea of trauma helps us understand that an individual when migrating is never totally prepared to endure the sudden changes that will require modifications in his/her perception of their inner world, their interpersonal realm, and the external reality. This traumatic loss of the “mother” and “mother country” as holding containers of safety, brings some degree of trauma. The feeling of loss of continuity of known places and people (the inside group or group of origin) and the outside group (host country), separation and uprooting, a sense of deprivation, a new culture, a new language, a struggle between past and present; all these will bring a mourning process to develop (see Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989, pp. 10–15).

This cultural dissonance is more dramatic when one is forced to suddenly leave the country of origin, as is the case with exiles and refugees. However, it is still present in a lesser degree when people migrate by choice. Some had experienced torture, enslavement or women had suffered sexual abuse, all of these are trauma. Going to a new country, particularly to an unwelcoming one, or staying in camps or jails, creates further trauma.

When we distinguish refugees or exiles from other immigrants, the former typically repudiate, at first, good memories of their country of origin. Immigrants, on the other hand, who have chosen to leave, have time to prepare. Therefore, their process of mourning and the associated feelings of nostalgia are quite different (Lijtmaer, 2001). On one level there are the adjustments to the geographical dislocation like climate, language, and culture. On another level some immigrants adapt to the loss of their old

home/country by repudiation and “counterphobic assimilation.” Akhtar states that: “By rapidly and fully taking the dictates of the adopted country, the immigrant seems to be declaring that no discontinuity exists between his prior and current norms of thinking, language, food, attire, and behavior. Denial thus extends to internal as well as external reality” (Akhtar, 2011, p. 13) or by a fantasy of returning some day in the future. Akhtar talks about the “someday” fantasy that idealizes the future and fosters optimism, and the “if only” fantasy that idealizes the past and lays the groundwork for nostalgia (Akhtar, 1996, in 2011, p. 14). Some immigrants have the fantasy of returning to their homeland someday. It rarely happens. If they do return, they find that they are not the same and the country is not the same. They lived in the past with their memories fixed during the time when they were in their native country. Ever wistful, he convinces himself/herself that “‘if only’ he/she had not left their homeland, his/her life would have been wonderful” (Akhtar, 1999, p. 90). Many become “perennial mourners” (Volkan, 1999, p.173). This happens when the mourner internalizes the mental representation of what was lost and turns it into an “introject.” Although the introject is an active object representation of the lost person or thing, the mourner does not identify with it and thus becomes a “perennial mourner.” As far as the mourner’s internal world is concerned, the introject is a very influential object representation that requires continuous attention. Therefore, the perennial mourner is doomed to be preoccupied with the introject (sometimes felt by the mourner as a foreign body lodged internally). The introject and the corresponding self-image of the mourner are in a constant and endless relationship (Volkan, 1999, as cited in Ainslie et al., 2013).

Furthermore, Volkan (1981, in Volkan, 1999) describes the high propensity among immigrants and refugees—especially those for whom home is invested with high ambivalence—for pathological mourning. These “perennial mourners,” as he calls them, make frequent use of “linking objects” to keep themselves in a limbo between the lost place of origin and the place of their current life, thus denying themselves “substantial rootedness” in either. These “linking objects” can be concrete photographs, maps, mementos, and so on, or they can be abstract inner entities such as thoughts, screen memories, traditionality or religiosity, or sometimes even an adhesion to fossilized notions like unquestionable nationalism or other internal objects (Joannidis, 2013, p. 135).

The distinction between immigration and exile brings to mind the profound psychic differences between departure and disappearance. When immigrants leave their native country, those left behind attribute intention and control to their move. They can imagine a purpose to the immigrants’ journey, and thus they are able to continue their own. Conversely, to

disappear is to vanish, to have left without any known intention, and to deny those left behind any words or images that might help them to bridge time and space in their imagination. One might say, in fact, that “moving on,” in the wake of disappearance, requires a psychic transformation of the disappearance into something like an experience of departure (Harlem, 2010).

Akhtar (1995) has convincingly argued that for immigrants, even without prior trauma, the task of assimilating a new adopted culture is akin to a third individuation. Both Akhtar (1995) and Garza-Guerrero (1974) integrate intrapsychic understanding of displacement with the importance of social and cultural issues. They view exile as a traumatic discontinuity. With such “culture shock,” there is a threat to identity and a powerful process of mourning. Thus, we can understand the impact of such separations in terms of a greater reliance on internal object relations, without losing sight of the important sociological and cultural aspects that define and shape identity. If the immigrant can go through the mourning process for what has been abandoned, this person can form a new identity that is

neither total surrender to the new culture nor the sum of bicultural endowment. The new identity will be reflected in a remodeled object representation that incorporates selective characteristics into the new culture that have been harmoniously integrated or that prove congruent with the cultural heritage from the past (Volkan, 2017, p. 6)

Variables that may have an impact on the immigrant mourning processes include the experiences that have driven immigrants from their home country, as well as the ways in which communication technology has altered their experience of distance from their lost homes. Some immigrants have suffered so much in their country of origin—racism, religious persecution, and genocidal attacks—that their sense of loss in relation to family and community is offset by the relief at having escaped these horrific and often life-threatening situations. Such circumstances obviously alter their psychological experience of leaving home as well as the attitude of the host country towards them. Similarly, the advent of less expensive and more readily available telecommunications—cell phones, Internet, Skype—may attenuate the impact of loss. Today, it is much easier to remain connected to loved ones left behind. It is also easier, via the Internet, to maintain contact with cultural forms that were important in one’s homeland, like watching home soccer teams or surfing the Internet in one’s native language (see Ainslie, 1998, pp. 283–300). Technological innovation over the last two decades has radically transformed the immigrant experience, allowing immigrants to maintain ties that, in the past, would have been severely

compromised if not altogether severed (Ainslie, et al., 2013). These innovations allow the mourning process to proceed in a less traumatic way. Connecting though technology

... can be helpful and fraught with conflict at the same time because, on one hand, keeping in touch with relatives and old friends makes the immigrant feel less lonely, more supported and encouraged...on the other hand, this preservation of old ties....can create isolation and marginalization (Lijtmaer, 2011, p. 8).

As an example, a middle-aged man, working in a menial job tried to save money to send to his family in South America. He came to the U.S. for economic reasons, leaving the family behind. With the use of Skype, he spoke to his wife and child every day. After a moment of elation at having seen them, he wanted more, to touch them and kiss them. Sadness took over him and he felt lonely. This lasted until the next Skype encounter, and then the cycle repeated itself.

Similar to this example, is the one of an exile who, because of political reasons, could not return or go for visits. Through Facebook and Skype this person kept in touch with old friends and family. These contacts helped him feel connected and being "there" with them sharing events, music, and other topics. However, he felt excluded and alone when those connections ended. On the other hand, a Latin American woman e-mailed her Santero in her native country when she needed solutions to her spiritual problems. After each contact she felt content and at peace with herself. These examples illustrate the pros and cons of technology in the immigrant experience. At times it helps the process of mourning and allows the distance between the two "mothers" (the old country and the host country) become smaller. Other times it leads to stronger feeling of longing and nostalgia.

NOSTALGIA, LINKING OBJECTS AND LINKING PHENOMENA

The term *nostalgia* (from the Greek for "return home" and "pain"), has complex components; from positive ones such as joy, affection, and gratitude, to sadness and the associated loss of security and historical continuity (Howell, 1999). Nostalgia, as a way of relating to a vanished past, inevitably seems to incorporate elements of distortion. Since no literal return in time is possible, nostalgia becomes an incurable state of mind, a signifier of "absence" and "loss" that can never be made "presence," except through memory and the creativity of reconstruction. The feelings

associated with looking back to the past reflect a bitter-sweet, affectionate, positive relationship to what has been lost. They express a contrast between “there” and “here,” “then” and “now,” in which the absent is valued as somehow better, less fragmented, and more comprehensible than its alternative in the present (Hirsch & Spitzer, 2002). In this regard, nostalgia—“if only fantasies” as Akhtar (1996) called them—go together with “someday” fantasies; they are both “fantasies of ideal times” (p. 737). Longing and hope, pathological optimism, and inordinate nostalgia, are related forms of idealization in which we love time and/or hate time for bringing us closer to or taking us further away from our dream (Levine, 2009, cited in Aron, 2011, p. 287).

Many immigrant individuals create linking objects or linking phenomena that help them continue having contact with the past, while adjusting to their new environment. Nostalgia is the affect that accompanies linking objects and linking phenomena and at times functions itself as a linking phenomenon (Volkan, 1999, p. 169). Volkan explains:

A linking phenomenon refers to a song, a smell, a gesture, an action, or an affect that functions as a linking object. For example, it was raining on the day a young woman attended her father’s funeral. The song “Raindrops keep falling on my head” came to her mind. Later, she utilized this song as a linking phenomenon whenever she felt internal pressure to complete her mourning (Volkan., 1999, p. 173).

A young female patient of mine, who had migrated recently from a politically unstable Central American country brought with her an old teddy bear (“Peluche”) who is with her most of the time. It was given to her by her grandmother who took care of her growing up. When she feels sad and misses her grandmother, she holds it and touches it and talks to it as if it were her grandmother. This linking object “links” and connects her with good memories of her past that at that moment gave her comfort.

When used creatively, nostalgia provides an interval of time for the immigrant or refugee to make adaptations to a new country. When such adaptations take place, the affect of nostalgia fades away, but usually does not disappear entirely. By contrast, there are situations where nostalgia cannot even evolve. A refugee or immigrant may openly or indirectly enter a depressed state and be filled instead with affects such as self-pity, resentment, envy, and despair, as is often the case among those who have been traumatized by war and forcefully exiled. The guilt for surviving, while others did not, and the sense of helplessness and humiliation are internalized and may overpower hope for the future.

When this occurs, it prohibits the gradual process of working through losses and changes, and the individual cannot adapt to his or her status of

refugee or exile, cannot achieve an internal distinction and continuity of past, present, and future. As a consequence, he or she may develop symptoms or character traits to cover up such a lack of internal distinction and continuity.

When nostalgia cannot evolve due to internal aggression resulting from forced migration, the exiled individual may enter a depressed state with accompanying feelings of self-pity, resentment, envy and guilt, and frequently physical ailments, which prevent the mourning process from developing. Howell (1999, p. 163) calls this process the “poisoning of nostalgia” wherein normal mourning of loss is undermined by a potential transgenerational enduring sense of betrayal of trust. For example, whenever the social system fails to contain, nurture, and protect individuals from poverty, natural catastrophe, social turmoil, economic crisis, violence, or war; when there is a blatant attack, on the part of the authorities on minorities, or even on the bulk of the population, as in the case of social repression, racism, genocide, or persecution; when there is a perversion of the social system, which fails to uphold current social values and laws while actually breaking them, on the part of the authorities, all these lead to trauma (de Tubert, 2006, p. 151; Lijtmaer, 2012). The individual cannot trust the society to provide a sense of security and comfort. Exiles most particularly suffer this lack of trust and hope, since they are dehumanized and rejected from the countries they try to reach. They attempt to escape inhuman conditions only to find a repetition of trauma in their new place. They have lost the trust and security of their homeland to arrive to a country where the trust and security is not provided. We understand that intergenerational transmission of trauma happens when a survivor parent deposits his or her “traumatized self” into their offspring. This trauma can be transmitted directly and indirectly, in speech, behavior, and affect. Powerful and dangerous secrets are transmitted across generation often through nonverbal, unconscious, or preconscious intersubjective processes. A parent’s silence or refusal to talk about their own traumatic experiences, can produce trauma in future generations. I, personally, felt betrayed by my mother because she kept silent about her experiences as a teenager in Poland where she lived until 1938 when she and her family escaped Europe and were allowed to migrate to Argentina (Lijtmaer, 2017b). In a similar vein, when Roger Frie discovered that his German grandfather had joined the Nazi Party he felt lied to and deceived which compromised his trust (Frie, 2017; Laub, 2018). He examined the process of remembering, its transmission, and dissociation. He had wanted to protect his cherished childhood memories and avoid potentially painful conversations, but at the same time, he felt betrayed.

This is similar to Ferenczi's (1933) notion of the child betrayed by the parent. The child speaks the language of "tenderness," the developmental need for affection and nurturance. The parent misinterpreting the communication of the child, speaks the language of "passion," and seeks to satisfy his/her erotic, power and dominance needs. The exile and asylum seeker are like the child, searching for nurturance. They are looking to the host country (the parent) for some form of comfort and acceptance, but nobody wants them, they feel like an unwanted child (Harris, 2014). There is also a parallel with Ferenczi's (1929) "Unwelcome child and his death instinct" paper—the asylum seeker has been in a way "dropped" by their motherland—there was some 'failure' in the governing system 'to keep them safe' - it becomes persecutory—and they are unwanted in the host country and face hostility, trauma, etc. This suggests that when one person has power over another, the less powerful person is always traumatized. The exiles and asylum seekers experience powerlessness since they must depend on others (the government or agencies associated with it) to determine if and when any country will accept them, if this acceptance is permanent or temporary, and what the conditions for their stay include. The authority these entities hold over the exiles or asylum seekers may produce feelings of powerlessness, helpless and hopeless.

Volkan (2017, pp. 20–23) talks about "linking objects" and "linking phenomenon"—things, pets, even people—that, for the mourner, embody externalized mental representations of dead individuals or lost things and the corresponding internal mental representations of the lost person or thing. They must be thought of as symbols that carry significance because they are bound up in the conscious and unconscious nuances of the internal relationships prior to the loss. These linking objects are psychological tools utilized for dealing with complicated mourning. Linking objects and phenomena should not be confused with childhood transitional objects that are reactivated in childhood. A transitional object represents the not-me, but it is never totally not-me since it connects the not-me with mother. Linking objects and phenomena are symbols that preceded a significant loss. They are associated with mourning only after the child has established object constancy and has a mental representation of the other (Volkan, 2017, p. 22).

Most immigrants and refugees keep linking objects and/or develop linking phenomena. Volkan (2017, p. 30) described the case of an adolescent who lived in an orphanage in Tunisia who kept rubbing his right shoe when Volkan was interviewing him. It turns out that this young man accidentally had stepped in a hot pan while his mother and grandmother were making cookies. His father had put ointment there to soothe his pain. He had a scar and when he touched it (the scar stood for his

lost family and home) he felt as if he could bring his family back. This example shows that when an immigrant, exile or refugee uses a linking object or phenomenon in a creative way to connect with their lost people, things, locations, or culture, linking can help them to accept these losses and continue with life.

IN CONCLUSION

In this paper I focused on the connection between trauma, mourning and nostalgia and the use of “linking objects” during exile and migration. The process of settling in a strange land and being an immigrant or exile has at its center meeting ourselves: making ourselves at home in the foreign and at home in our foreignness (Beltsiou, 2016, p. 89).

Exiles have no choice but to leave their home country without preparation and that leads to trauma. For exiles, it is not only the leaving, but also how they had to leave, and the trip itself, which can be dangerous. Frequently, they may not be granted entry into any country and may have to stay in detention centers that adds to their trauma. Even when migration is by choice some trauma also occurs. For both the immigrant and the exile some of the feelings that accompany them through their experience of dislocation and relocation can include: marginality, de-centered identity, a tension between loss and hope, future and past, idealization and denigration, separateness and belonging, and longing for familiar things now lost, such as their native language, food, geographic space and the non-human environment. What makes the experience of loss in immigration and exile complex, are the melancholy and nostalgia felt when the past is remembered in an idealized way. It is the ability to mourn or to resist the mourning. It is the nostalgia felt as a yearning for an imaginary past they did not have. Settling in a foreign land requires mourning the home lost and the home missed. It is the person’s attempt to establish links between the old self and the new one, the continuity of life in the face of cultural rupture (Beltsiou, 2016, p. 103). Mourning refers to an individual’s intense review of images of lost persons or things until this preoccupation with its associated affects, loses its intensity. The extent to which an individual is able to accept this loss intra-psychically, will determine the degree to which adjustment to a new life is made. Sometimes there are complications in the mourning process that may lead the person to become a “perennial mourner.” This is someone who remains preoccupied with aspects of the mourning process until the end of their lives without bringing it to a conclusion. Such a person keeps the object image of the lost person or object (country) within his/her self-representation as an attention-seeking and unassimilated “foreign body”

(Volkan, 2017, pp. 4, 18). This perennial mourner uses his/her energy to bring back to life the lost person or thing.

Through the process of mourning the person can use linking objects and linking phenomena in adaptive or maladaptive ways. Adaptively, a person can create or remember a song, a gesture, a place (linking phenomenon) or photographs, pictures, pets, or other objects (linking objects) whenever there is a need to mourn. The adaptive use of a linking object or phenomenon gives the person the time to work on denial of what is lost, to accept changes, and to realize what may be gained.

On the other hand, the perennial mourner beckons a linking object or phenomenon in their mind to control the wish to bring back the lost person or country and to fantasize about them. They become so pathologically and obsessively preoccupied with the linking objects or phenomena that they have no energy left to find new ways of living (Volkan, 2017, p. 23).

Even though immigration is part of the history of psychoanalysis, psychoanalysis has done poorly in addressing the complexity of immigration and exile. We might say it has insisted on keeping it unconscious. Maybe because psychoanalysis itself is a business of immigrants trying to fit in, from Vienna to London, New York, and Buenos Aires (Erös, 2016). Or maybe the traumatic experience of the Holocaust which forced many analysts to migrate, made it difficult for them to talk about their trauma.

Perhaps this is one of the reasons why psychoanalysis does not yet have a coherent framework for theorizing about the subjectivity of immigrants. Following Lobban (2013, p.3), psychoanalysis can borrow Du Bois's notion of "double consciousness," or the "sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (Du Bois, 1903, p. 2).

We can reshape psychoanalysis in light of current notions of diversity and use it to help us conceptualize the immigrant and exile experience. It may help us raise questions about discrimination, race, and ethnicity in the immigrants and exiles; or question our own prejudices about others different from us. It can help us understand the divided (binary) sense of self experiences in the new and in the old country, to comprehend the economic disparity and discrimination that they live.

The predominant tendency in the literature has been to see immigration as a psychologically damaging process, a traumatic event. However, the experience of immigration and exile can also build character and resilience: one is forced to become more humble, flexible, and tolerant. In addition to hardships, immigration can also add flavor, complexity, and adventure to one's life. This is an area that must be explored more in the future.

NOTE

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