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Trauma and Resilience: Navigating the Impact of Exodus

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Abstract:
The relationship between displacement, home, trauma, and the self in the lived experiences of refugees is examined in this essay. This topic has recently grown to unanticipated and significant proportions. It asks how trauma might be viewed as the result of an internal displacement and to what degree and under what circumstances displacement in the outside world can be harmful. The forced relocation of refugees is associated with a certain amount of hardship because of the changes in their social, cultural, familial, and relational lives. The extent to which these alterations can signify a split so profound as to be traumatic is examined in the paper. In the most extreme traumatic situations, this might be interpreted as a shifting of the center axis of the self, where the ego complex cedes its place to other complexes, resulting in a profound alteration in the way the self is organized and functions. In order to comprehend the ramifications and reciprocal resonances for the psyche, it is necessary to take a closer look at the conscious and unconscious connections that exist between the inner and outer worlds, as demonstrated by the experience of refugees.

Keywords: Exile, trauma, refugee, home,

Introduction

For a variety of reasons, refugee mental health is still not well understood, even though migration—especially forced migration—is associated with a large degree of suffering (WHO 2018) (see Zipfel, Pfaltz, & Schnyder, 2019). Analytical psychologists have, nevertheless, made an effort in recent years to comprehend the intricacies of refugees' suffering (Alayarian 2019; Carta 2010; Luci 2016, 2017b; Papadopoulos 2002; Tyminski 2018, 2019). The term "refugee" is a 20th-century legal concept that was created in the midst of the Cold War; the United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees was adopted on July 28, 1951. This was the first of several conventions. Numerous human rights agreements converted the principles of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights into duties that signatory states' legal systems had to abide by. After two world wars and the horrific Holocaust, a period of profound and distressing unrest gave rise to the Universal Declaration. The 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, which removed geographical and temporal restrictions, broadened the scope of the Convention from its original intent to protect European refugees (during the Cold War, refugees were actually primarily seen as

the direct or indirect result of the East-West standoff). Article 1 of the Convention states that a refugee is:

A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reason of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of their nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such a fear, is unwilling to return to it … (United Nations, 1951).

Research in philosophy, sociology, and literature has highlighted the importance of home and 'living place' in shaping the human experience. Malpas (1999, p. 177) explains how "the possibility of mental life is necessarily tied to such engagement" and "our active engagement in place." Heidegger's philosophy skillfully highlights the significance of the connections between individuals and locations as "emotionally based and meaningful" in its examination of "dwelling" as "our being on earth" (1971, p. 147). "To dwell," in his opinion, encompasses a number of meanings, such as "to remain, to stay in a place … to be at peace, to be brought to peace, to remain at peace … preserved from harm and danger" (1971, p. 147).

Bachelard's portrayal of the home as the first shell that shields the being (1964, p. 7) likewise conveys the sense of a home enveloping and shielding its occupants like a caring father. A similar idea can be found in Dovey's (1985, p. 34) description of home as a place of holiness and safety, a place of assurance and steadiness that provides us with both tangible and intangible limits that anchor and organize our existence in space. During his exploration of Heimat, a German word that is difficult to translate but means both home and country, Gadamer (1992) makes reference to an experience that is so dependable and steady that it comes before all knowledge and judgment. Winnicott emphasized home as a site of origin by titling one of his writing collections, "Home is Where We Start From" (1986).
However, living requires a dynamic viewpoint as well, so it's not only a static activity. According to Sennet (2002), "home" is a movable desire rather than a real location; wherever one goes, home can always be found elsewhere. (page 207).

Home is also the "desired destination, the goal, the end, the telos," according to Papadopoulos (1987), p. 8. Finding a sense of "home" in the world entails looking for something; in other words, growth. This shows that home may be viewed as an archetypal theme that is inherent to the Self from the standpoint of analytical psychology. Two The theme of home can, according to Hobson's interpretation of Jung's criteria for classifying a theme or image as archetypal (1973, p. 72),: (1) be isolated sufficiently to be recognized as a typical phenomenon; (2) be demonstrated to occur in many parts of the world in many ages; (3) have a similar context and functional meaning whenever it occurs; and (4) be a fantasy image that is not learned through education, tradition, language, or religious ideas.

The assertion that "after the body itself, the home is seen as the most powerful extension of the psyche" (Despres 1991, p. 100) reflects the closeness of the bond between the Self and the home. For analytical psychologists like us, Carl Jung's assertion that he had a dream in which he saw himself as a house (1963, p. 155) is perhaps the best example of this viewpoint. The studies have suggested that a matrix of connections exists between the self as an internal subject and the "environment" that surrounds and supports the self as the source of the sensation of home. The self's need for security, familiarity, safety, nurturing, and chances for development and change are all met via a combination of compensating processes between the inner and outer worlds. The self is a mind that is interwoven with its body, as well as with its material surroundings and a network of interactions. These elements all contribute to our sense of continuity, rootedness, and texture of existence by serving as markers for variability and discontinuity. Because they serve as the "taken-for-granted" backdrop of more advanced mental processes that play in the foreground, their significance is typically disregarded and goes unrecognized until they are lost; in other words, they are the water beneath which we swim.

In the early stages of a person's development, this water stands for the majority of our possessions, with little to no sense of "me." The object relations theory states that a child's relationship with other subjects—or "human objects"—that meet their needs is how they develop self-awareness. When discussing the relationship between a mother and her child, Donald Winnicott was the first thinker to use the terms "nurturing environment" and "holding environment." He also occasionally referred to the mother as an "environment" (1960, p. 593). Winnicott partially understood that processes related to items and space play a role in the development of the self (see the terms "transitional object" and "transitional space"). The transitional object psychodynamics demonstrates that an object can possess subject qualities and that the environment and its items can serve as a transitional place for us to develop throughout our lives (Winnicott 1953).

Despite their significant differences, relational psychoanalysis and analytical psychology both develop an understanding of the self as a paradoxical multiplicity, with dissociability being seen as a key characteristic (Luci 2017a, pp. 96-100). This is a significant point regarding the theoretical foundations of the conceptualization of trauma as displacement. Since dissociation is a key component of both normal and abnormal functioning, these theories contend that the self is simultaneously multifaceted and discontinuous, separate, integral, and continuous (Bromberg 1998; Jung 1920, 1928; Mitchell 1991). By identifying "autonomous complexes" of quantum components of unconscious activity by their psychosomatic and affect-laden relationships, Jung specifically portrayed the self as an intractable paradox. These "autonomous complexes" function in discrete split-off bundles to become "splinter psyches," which have sufficient internal coherence and autonomy to infiltrate the conscious persona as alien states of mind (Jung 1934, para. 201). They are made up of emotional memories (both representational and non-representational) and core arousal states that can be remembered or re-enacted. They behave for brief periods of time as though they are the dominant personality of the person

experiencing this disruption of the ego's habitual viewpoint with anxiety.

According to Jung's view, the ego is just one intricate among many, albeit the master complex, which is centered on the hero's capable image and symbolizes the archetypal propensity for mastery. According to Jung, the ego is the complex at the core of an individual's consciousness, serving as a uniting and integrating force supporting a consistent identity of perspective, or "I-ness." But even if they don't have the ego's motivation to stabilize, the multitude of selves beyond the ego has the capacity to develop into mental states.

A structural alteration of personality, or more specifically, of the self, is the cause of the complicated post-traumatic conditions that are frequently described as the result of abuse and other severe relationship traumas among refugees. I have previously described these alterations as holes in, or even the breakdown of, the "psychic skin" (Luci 2017b). Here, I suggest that the destruction of 'psychic skin' in trauma causes an internal displacement in the self as a result of a significant shift in the way the inner and outside worlds interact, which fundamentally changes how the ego complex, along with various autonomous complexes, were previously organized. The French term ‘replacer,' which means "the removal of something from its usual place or position by something which then occupies that place or position," is where the word displacement originates. Although the word has more technical definitions, the focus is always on the movement as well as the removal of anything from its native habitat and its replacement with another item. A perception of territorial dispute is suggested in the word.

Complex PTSD (C-PTSD) is the most severe condition among refugees, particularly those who have experienced torture. It includes somatization and physical impairments, disturbances in the value-processing system, trauma-congruent, depression, impaired memory (Koul & Thakur 2022), hallucinations, personality changes, suicidal ideation, identity disorders, dissociative episodes and depersonalization, amnesia, conduct or substance abuse issues, somatization, and physical impairments, intensification of pre-trauma disorders or conditions, and difficulty with relationships and trust (Herman 1992).

The breakdown of the former identity in favor of absolute domination of the traumatic complexities stored in the body and mind, which are now severely disjointed, as well as in relationships with other people, is what we see in C-PTSD. Their control over the self creates a new organization that is characterized by a high degree of dissociation and a range of disruption of the self's global functioning. Based on the complex's level of autonomy, control, and organizing ability, as well as its relationship to the ego complex, Jung's theory of complexes distinguishes between healthy and pathological dissociation. Insofar as the complex and the ego-complex have a reciprocal interaction, processing some disjointed, unconscious aspects of personality and fulfilling or restoring functions, it serves a healthy purpose. It is becoming so pathological that the ego complex does not recognize it at all; instead, it functions as a wholly foreign aspect of the persona, an illustration of the

divided self. In trauma, it frequently occurs that the body insists on seeing something the mind cannot handle, forcing the psyche and soma apart and sacrificing their cohesiveness in the process. This indicates that memories are stored in the most basic form possible, as sensory or motoric bodily memories that are separated from emotion and thought and that are readily triggered following trauma.

Many survivors are obsessed with their bodies, even though they frequently do not suffer from serious physical harm. The exposure and disintegration of the mental body, the embodiment-in-mind, the subject to agency, the medium of volition, the container of affect, and the self-contained self are more closely linked to preoccupation than actual medical disorders. Suggesting that what is lost is the container's comforting and enforcing embrace, or what some relational theorists refer to as the "psychic skin" (Luci 2019). There is a severe disruption of self-experience when the ongoing nature of the sensory-dominated perception of trauma breaks down, with long-lasting effects on the fundamental self. The subject of these traumas feels something like "primitive agonies," a sense of dissolution, perpetual leakage, and experiences of unboundedness (Bick 1986) (Winnicott 1963, p. 90). Pain and bodily feelings cannot be identified without an internal and external sense. The senses—sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste—as well as the skin, which is situated at the surface of the body, are easily imprinted with traumatic experiences. Post-traumatic stress disorder makes it clear that there is no within and no outside—only a confusion of the two. In the same way that nightmares are not real dreams but rather replications of distressing events, flashbacks are fragments of experience that enter the mind rather than actual memories. The disintegration of the mental fabric, which filters and recombines what enters the outside world and what is conveyed internally to the outside world, is also indicated by the symptoms of rejection and a lack of symbolization. In summary, the transgressive nature of trauma disrupts the interplay between the container and contained, and thus, thinking and meaning; it results in a displaced "ego-complex," disconnected from traumatic complexes, and a struggle to create and give meaning to experience, an experience that is driven by sensation. Hypervigilance and hyperarousal are typical in such a situation. There is no way out of the trauma's immediateness, which is not situated in the past but is constantly relived in the present—not there, but here, always present, and always activated. Because a benign inward object cannot be housed 'without the psychic envelope' that includes a feeling of the core self, the essential attachments to a benign other are likewise gone in this circumstance. And because the mind switches to a paranoid, schizoid style of functioning in such a fragmented condition, 'the self and other' can only exist as objects.

According to international study results, refugees experience higher rates of both acute and chronic mental health issues; roughly one in three of them have PTSD or another trauma-related mental illness (Bogic, Njoku, & Priebe, 2015; Fazel, Wheeler, & Danesh, 2005; Steel et al., 2009). The mental health burden of traumatized refugees and effective therapies are little understood despite the urgent need for treatment (Acarturk et al., 2015; ter Heide, Mooren, & Kleber, 2016). At the moment, trauma-focused interventions like narrative exposure therapy have the strongest evidence for lowering trauma-related mental

health issues in refugees (Crumlish & O'Rourke, 2010; Nickerson, Bryant, Silove, & Steel, 2011; Nosè et al., 2017). Not much research has been done on other types of psychological therapies. Research on psychosocial therapies in various refugee populations is necessary, with an emphasis on practicality and cultural adaptability in addition to the interventions' efficacy.

Conclusion

Displacement and loss of a home can lead to a loss of self-identity and negatively affect one's well-being (Koul, 2024). Naturally, the degree of this influence varies depending on the intensity of the losses and experiences, as well as the individual's resources, personality, and availability of outside help. The degree to which the displaced person's self-reliance on its material and social surroundings for support in order to preserve equilibrium will determine the outcome. Although some suffering is unavoidable, a person's inherent traits and attachments to the social and material "objects" of their surroundings will determine how they react to relocation. In this way, trauma is always intricate, erratic, and cyclical.

One way to think of trauma is as internal relocation. Understanding trauma and its effects as the outcome of an intrapsychic displacement of the ego-complex and its relationship to autonomous traumatized complexes in the self is made easier by the Jungian theory of the Self, the complexes, and dissociation. In the worst cases, the self is dominated by strong, external traumatic experiences because the "psychic skin," which is the glue of the mind, has been seriously harmed. As an observer of the significant shifts in the self, its organization and self-perception, the perception of others, the perception of one's body, the creation of meaning, and the method of regulating effects and relationships, the ego-complex, which has been displaced and eradicated from the self, maintains its distance (Koul & Thakur 2023).

Restoring the patient's sense of belonging and home is the role of the therapeutic couple. For as long as it takes to enable a new grounding of the mind in the body, as well as in the objects and subjects of the new environment, this happens through authentic exchanges of positioned, embodied, and enabling experiences of connection, which are essential for selfhood.

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