

Immigrants and Refugees: Trauma, Perennial Mourning, Prejudice, and Border Psychology. Vamik D Volkan.

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Set against the contemporary backdrop of global refugee crises, Vamik D. Volkan's *Immigrants and Refugees: Trauma, Perennial Mourning, Prejudice, and Border Psychology*, draws from psychoanalytical theory, clinical examples, and decades of the author's personal experience to better understand the immigrant experience. Volkan frames mounting prejudice and reactive tension in the Western world as largely rooted in fear of cultural and religious contamination by asylum seekers fleeing conflict zones. He asserts that this perceived attack on homogeneity necessitates psychoanalytical investigation into large-group identity formation and the development of prejudice toward the 'Other' in the hope of preventing and ameliorating future traumas.

Volkan offers a distinctly clinical perspective on the topics addressed. Still, while illuminating, his psychoanalytic lens is ultimately limited in its application, as it lacks solution-based directives. He illustrates potential psychologies with intimate examples, emphasizing pathological responses and psychosis, but offers no portrayal of healing interventions. Such is the case when Volkan presents psychoanalytic theories to describe dislocation as an experience of loss that requires conclusive mourning to enable adjustment to a new life. He emphasizes perennial mourning (wherein mourning is experienced without conclusion) as the most common psychological condition of dislocated persons. One highlight of the book is a story of how a Georgian family struggles with perennial mourning. Volkan worked with this family for many years following their displacement to a refugee settlement, and he provides a multi-generational narrative that illustrates the subtle manifestations of perennial mourning in individual lives, the healing impact of emotional support systems, and the ways this support can reverberate throughout a community. While this case example is informative, Volkan does not go into detail regarding how such support can be tangibly achieved, undoubtedly challenging given the structural realities at play. Similarly, Volkan references his work with world leaders to facilitate peace dialogues, describing observed phenomena that challenged progress, but despite perspective on important psychological underpinnings, he neglects to describe what specific interventions or supportive techniques he employed in response. Illustration of trials, errors, and successes in this realm would be invaluable to practitioners assisting parties in conflict; modeling the application of his ideas and theory in practice.

Volkan devotes the second, leaner, part of the book to local host psychologies and prejudice development. He briefly outlines normal development of prejudice in childhood as related to identity determination. He goes on to introduce concepts such as large-group identity markers, formation, and learned 'suitable targets for externalization'. This brevity is disappointing given Volkan's suggestion that an investigation into hostile prejudice formation is critical. Though he provides a detailed clinical example of a former patient to illustrate how and why someone could employ prejudice, it seems limited in its lessons and application. According to Volkan's analysis, this particular patient employed prejudice towards Volkan over a short period in an attempt to individualize himself, 'Otherize' his psychoanalyst, and in doing so cast off his victimized past. However, as Volkan points out, this patient is dissimilar to the vast majority of people who express xenophobic attitudes, with ongoing expression, neglecting to examine or halt the psychological roots of their prejudices.

He introduces border psychology and fear of newcomers, asserting that members of

large groups externalize and project 'bad images' of themselves and others onto other large groups, creating psychological borders between them. His theory is very intriguing and future explanation of this phenomena and detailed case examples of interventions to assuage it would be welcomed.

A benefit of Volkan's psychoanalytical framework is the attention he pays to the unique dislocation experiences of children and adolescents, and how these traumas are relevant to early development. He stresses the often-minimized impact of parents' mourning on their children, the potential emotional neglect incurred during dislocation, and the 'double mourning' that adolescents may experience as they simultaneously face loss of childhood and of a familiar environment. He briefly mentions the unique exposure young people have in the digital era to global 'Others' and conflicting orientations and values, which can complicate their attempts toward identity alignment. This observation seems critical to address in more detail, given the narrative of youth as the most vulnerable to radicalization that is perpetuated in our current political discourse. While methodological suggestions to inform support of youth mental wellbeing are absent, Volkan's detailed clinical examples and personal reflections as a former adolescent refugee contribute great depth to the book.

Ultimately, *Immigrants and Refugees* functions primarily as a direct appeal to psychoanalysts to engage in interdisciplinary peace works. While the clinical theories and discipline-specific language that Volkan employs make it slightly less accessible to a wider audience, it is a relevant and necessary perspective to integrate into Peace and Conflict Studies. However, the book would be significantly more useful to health workers, professionals dealing with refugee crises, and other peace builders if infused with prescriptive suggestion and detailed methodological guidance. Throughout the book, Volkan highlights the need for more data on the internal world of displaced persons, how dislocation affects immigrant psyches, and how host psychologies are shaped in parallel. This perspective, combined more cohesively with conflict theory and intervention strategies related to malignant prejudice development are greatly needed today. Volkan contributes a welcome, if limited, voice to what ought to be a resounding chorus of perspectives related to displaced people and the hosts who receive them.

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