Culture Shock: Its Mourning and the Vicissitudes of Identity

A. Garza-Guerrero M.D. ⓘ

EVER SINCE HARTMANN'S PLEA 32 years ago for an extension of the psychoanalytic theory of ego development into the field of adaptational influences upon ego maturation, there has been a sharpening of the psychoanalytic writers' attention to this important matter. Hartmann's concept of the conflict-free ego sphere (1939) became the groundwork for a solid frame of psychoanalytic and sociologic knowledge encompassing adaptational factors. Muensterberger (1968) has suggested that ego attitudes reflect cultural factors, for they have their roots in both "internal stimuli" and behaviorally adaptive determined "codes and demands." He differentiates aspects of human responses which may be called "precultural" or "protocultural." For example, maternal care is a universal mutually gratifying phenomenon to both mother and child and constitutes an aspect of "protocultural" human response. Along with these "protocultural" aspects, there are other human responses, which arise out of men's need for adaptation to a given culture, and affect largely the former. Thus, protocultural human responses, he felt, are functional prerequisites for later cultural influence.

Muensterberger has also described how, in conjunction with the gradual transformation and development of the infant's drives,

Staff psychiatrist, C. F. Menninger Memorial Hospital.

his cognitive-assimilative potentials are influenced and modified by the matrix of the largely socioculturally defined "techniques of transmission." He concludes that "a configuration of exogenous factors effectively influences the development of ego and superego, molding the individual into an identifiable cultural personality."

With these opening remarks about the reciprocal developmental influences of environment-culture upon constitutional and intrapsychic differentiation, let me pass now to the subject of this paper, i.e., culture shock.

G. Ticho (1971) has described culture shock as a result of a sudden change from an "average expectable environment" (in Hartmann's terms) to a strange and unpredictable one. The intricate process that follows such a confrontation or cultural encounter is indeed rich in psychological manifestations, whose intensity, form, and content may depend upon a diversity of functional variables. I shall try to narrow my focus to what I consider the two most conspicuous and fundamental elements of cultural shock: the mourning related to the loss of a culture and the vicissitudes of identity in face of the threat of a new culture.

In what follows, I will try to elaborate a working concept of culture shock which will specifically cover in essence these two elements. A review of pertinent literature regarding mourning and the sequential evolvement of the identity systems will be followed by an attempt to integrate diverse psychoanalytic concepts to explain their role in the process of culture shock.

Working Concept of Culture Shock

Generally speaking, culture shock is a term which embraces the numerous phenomena following the impact between a person of a certain cultural background and a relatively strange culture. I will not try to define culture shock, for I am afraid I would fall short of doing justice to its structural richness, psychosocial relevance, multiple variables, and polyphasic traits, or to the highly individualized reactions of the person involved. It is nevertheless my impression that three definable elements invariably constitute common denominators of this phenomenon.

1. Culture shock is a stressful, anxiety-provoking situation, a violent encounter—one which puts the newcomer's personality functioning to the test, thus challenging the stability of his psychic organization. When this crisis is resolved, further emotional growth may emerge; if it is not resolved successfully, diverse degrees of stagnation and even pathological regression may occur.

2. Culture shock is accompanied by a process of mourning brought about by the individual's gigantic loss of a variety of his love objects in the abandoned culture. Among others, these losses are outstanding: family, friends, language, music, food, and culturally determined values, customs, and attitudes.

3. The coexistence in this emergency situation of two factors, i.e., cultural encounter plus the painful mourning which follows the massive object loss—the forsaken culture—causes a serious threat to the newcomer's identity.

Thus, for the sake of simplicity and communication, I would suggest the following working concept: Culture shock 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.

Review of Pertinent Literature

Regarding Mourning

Traditionally, Abraham (1911) is considered a pioneer in the psychoanalytic study of depression. He first used a formula reminiscent of Freud's account of paranoia, emphasizing the use of the projective mechanism. In 1916, Abraham added further clinical corroboration to Freud's hypothesis of an oral pregenital stage of sexual life and pointed out the significant role of orality and hostility in depressed patients. By 1924, Abraham had abandoned his earlier conceptualization of the use of the projective defensive operation in depression; instead, he illustrated with his remarkable clinical skillfulness what becomes a solid matrix for future psychoanalytic understanding of depression: the use of introjection as a paramount coping device of the mourner in his attempt to recover

his lost love object. "My loved object is not gone, for now I carry it within myself and can never lose it" (1924, p. 437).

In "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917, p. 243) Freud stated that "Mourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal, and so on." Freud regarded the low self-esteem of melancholic patients as arising out of the ambivalence felt for the lost object, and assumed that in an ideal model of mourning the absence of hostility to the lost object accounted for the lack of low self-esteem. Thus, the key to the clinical picture, Freud wrote, is "that the self-reproaches [in melancholia] are reproaches against a loved object which have been shifted away from it onto the patient's own ego" (p. 248). Freud, like Abraham, used the terms introjection, internalization, and identification interchangeably. One nevertheless senses in these earlier contributions the fertile ground in which others later cultivated such fruitful additions, e.g., Edith Jacobson's contribution to the metapsychology of psychotic identifications.

Broadening the concept of introjection, Melanie Klein (1935), (1940) elaborated a sequential developmental theory of object relationships, beginning with part-object relations under the predominance of aggressive drives, the result of the infant's need to project his innate hostility—the "paranoid schizoid position." Her schema advanced then to a "depressive position," one which comes about with the infant's intrapsychic integration of "good and bad objects." With the infant's recognition of both hostile and loving feelings toward the same external object—mother—he develops a sense of concern for others and the capacity for guilt. Postulating that the "depressive position" was a universal phenomenon, Melanie Klein, in her developmental theory of object relations, considered normal mourning comparable to melancholia. Depending upon the way the depressive position was solved, diverse degrees of depressive predisposition will influence the individual to particular modes of reacting to object loss. Once the infant has solidly established his "good objects" within himself, a sense of reliance and trust upon them will protect him from annihilatory guilt, arising out of separation from or abandonment of his love objects.

Zetzel (1953), in a review of the "depressive position," disagreed

with Klein's unitary concept of depression and, granting the similarities between normal mourning and melancholia, believed that crucial differences between them should be stressed. She, as did many others (e.g., Kernberg,

1969), criticized Klein's cornerstone concept of the dominant role ascribed to a primary death instinct; furthermore, she wondered how far either successful or faulty solutions of such early (six months of life) developmental stages can be determinants of later crucial emotional struggles. Zetzel subsequently (1960) recognized the difficulties involved in regarding adult depressive illness as a repetition of infantile prototype struggles, and pleaded for a distinction between infantile experiences leading to predispositions and actual understanding of the specific content or meaning of a definite clinical syndrome in adult life.

Bibring (1953) moved the concept of depression from an intersystemic conflict to the ego itself. With this ego-psychological approach, he considered depression, just like anxiety, a "state of the ego" and felt that low self-esteem was the common denominator of depressions. He saw depression as a reaction of the ego to a "shocking awareness of its helplessness in regard to its aspirations" (p. 39) and described sets of narcissistic aspirations correspondent to respective developmental stages. In a very brief note regarding grief, he used the same formula: grief is a special case of ego helplessness related to the ego's awareness of its lack of power to undo the loss.

Edith Jacobson (1953), like Bibring, thought that loss of self-esteem ("narcissistic breakdown") was the central problem in depression. She advanced a metapsychological clarification of the concept of secondary narcissism. Departing from Hartmann's (1950) distinction of the self and the system ego, Jacobson argued that cathexis of the ego with narcissistic libido should not be equated with secondary narcissism. With these premises, Jacobson stated that "narcissistic identification" as it was elaborated initially by Freud actually was a fusion of self- and object representation in the system ego and that, in this type of identification, the ego does not take the characteristics of the love object. What happens is that now "The self is experienced or treated as though it were the love-object." In a later paper (1953) Jacobson defined

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grief as a special case of sadness and stated that (in contradistinction to depression [pathological mourning]) grief and, implicitly, mourning were free of both aggression and conflict.

One of the most extensive and detailed accounts distinguishing normal mourning from its pathological counterpart is found in Grinberg's *Culpa Y Depresion*(1963). Grinberg's major contributions in this book as they relate to the subject under present discussion are his painstakingly detailed descriptions of the mourning related, not only to the loss of the love object, but to the

concomitant loss of "ego aspects" invested in the lost object—the mourning for the self.

Pollock (1961) considers the task of the ego in mourning an adaptive one; it requires a reorientation in the perceptual sphere involving both self and object. There are two requirements, he wrote, for the task of mastering the early anxiety separation, "a total internalization is required, or a greater dependence on previously internalized and integrated relationships in the ego of object representations" (p. 349). Pollock made a careful analysis of the mechanisms of introjection and identification. Both are internalizing operations but introjection is a mode or technique—a process—and identification is the end result of that same process. If the lost object had previously been adequately "assimilated"— that is, a process of identification had taken place—a normal mourning appears; but if the lost object had been introjected without a true identification, the object remains as an "encapsulated image" onto the ego. In this case, object loss reactivates the ambivalent feelings connected with the introjected object, which, in turn, had retained the original characteristics of the object: a pathological mourning will ensue.

I have found Bowlby's (1961) review of the whole process of mourning indispensable to formulating the concept of culture shock. Bowlby's aim is to discern the adaptational potentialities of mourning. He describes the process of mourning as having three phases. Phase one is characterized by the urge to recover the lost object. Phase two is one of disorganization. Behavior that was organized in synchronicity to the lost object, now, lacking it, becomes disorganized. The third phase is that of reorganization; the acceptance of the objects lost and readiness to accept

new objects; discrimination between inappropriate behavioral patterns oriented toward the lost object and appropriate striving toward new objects takes place.

There seems to be general agreement regarding several aspects of mourning. First, it is a reaction to a real loss of a loved object; the painful yearning to recover what was lost is reminiscent, affectively and adaptively, of earlier infantile object loss or separations. Successful outcomes in the working through of the mourning process will depend upon the adequacy of the integration and stability of previously internalized object relations. Object loss significant enough to bring about a reaction of mourning represents a threatening, transforming, and remodeling force to the identification systems of the mourner.

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Although Freud broadened his formulations of mourning from individual simple object loss to a general multiple object loss such as fatherland, an ideal, etc., mourning related to loss of multiple objects has not been widely studied. Now, if the mourner's identity (mourning related to individual single object loss) is so painfully threatened, what are the vicissitudes of the mourner's identity in a mourning secondary to a massive object loss, as in the case of culture shock? This question brings us to our second element of study: identity formation.

Regarding Identity Formation

An attempt to explore the concept of mourning without a concomitant inquiry into the development of the identity systems would be far from complete, more so with the case of mourning related to cultural shock in which conflicts of identity are the *sine qua non* of the cultural encounter. The literature regarding this matter is abundant; I shall, however, review only what I thought of particular relevance to the question of culture shock. In such a review, one feels a sense of continuity and fruitful complementarity.

Erikson (1956) defined identity formation as a transforming dynamic concept, a lifelong, largely unconscious process, always in modification in accordance with the social reality of a given moment. What is actually attained will be submitted to constant revision in the light of ongoing social realities. Erikson described

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"ego identity" as evolving sequentially and concomitantly to psychosocial critical stages of development, in an epigenetic model. Introjection and projection, he suggests, are the preceding steps for later childhood identification; later, as the result of the child's interaction with a meaningful, trustworthy member of his family, a sense of identity develops in response to reciprocally reinforcing familiar role expectations. He defines ego identity as "the awareness of the fact that there is a selfsameness and continuity to the ego's synthesizing methods" (1959, p. 23). Furthermore, there is a sense of inner sameness or continuity in reference to one's own self-perception, as well as in reference to the perceptions of others.

Jacobson's (1954), (1964) valuable contributions to the metapsychological understanding of identity formations are so many indeed, that to summarize them is rather difficult. She described a gradual evolvement of object relations, beginning with a symbiotic mother-child unit, in which fusion of object-representations and self-representations exist and, therefore, a blurring of ego boundaries. Toward the second year of life, a gradual transition occurs from the

symbiotic mother-child unit to a stage of individuation and the beginning of secondary ego-autonomy. A shift from the infant's primitive desire to fuse with his love object to a wish for realistic likeness with them takes place, "selective identification," which is based in part on introjection. Jacobson's schema of identity formations, like that of Erikson, is conceptualized as a dynamic process in a state of constant transformation. Beginning with a state of fused self images and object images, her schema goes through a differentiation of them and therefore delimitation of ego boundaries. From there, more mature types of internalizations gradually take place, e.g., imitating behavior, role playing, etc., then selective identifications of childhood, adolescent identity remodeling, and postadolescent identity formation.

Kernberg (1966), (1971) has elaborated a comprehensive, painstaking, thorough exposition of the development of the "identification systems," which integrates the work of Jacobson and Erikson, besides bridging concepts of object-relations theory from the English school of psychoanalysis with those of the so-called "ego psychological" approach. His model links the mechanisms of internalization of object relations with the vicissitudes of instinctual drive derivatives, on the one hand, and the building up of intrapsychic

structures, on the other. Introjection, identification, and ego identity constitute, he suggests, three different sequential levels, in that order, in the process of internalization of object relations. Kernberg (1966) clearly distinguished introjection as an independent psychic structure, "mainly growing out of primary autonomous functions (perception and memory)" which, even though they may be related to oral conflicts, "don't grow out of them." This is in contradistinction to Klein's conceptualization of introjections as a "consequence of the mode of oral incorporation." In Kernberg's model, identification is the next higher level, a form of internalization of object relations. It demands a higher level of maturation for its successful achievement, one in which the child's cognitive and perceptual development has reached the point of recognizing the socially assigned roles to those objects with which he interacts. The infant will tend to imitate them. Identification is not only a mechanism of growth of the psychic apparatus, but also can be used for defensive purposes. Identification brings about ego transformations manifested behaviorally in interpersonal interactions. Identification comprises an object image with a given role in interaction with the self, perhaps with a corresponding complementary role in its corresponding affective disposition of a less diffuse quality than in introjection.

Ego identity, Kernberg wrote, represents the highest level of organization in this sequence of the development of the "identification systems." Whereas introjections and identifications are structures of the psychic apparatus at large, ego identity is a structure specific to the ego which evolves out of its synthesizing functions. Ego identity as a final consolidated organization is characterized by the following three aspects: (1) an awareness of a sense of continuity of the self; (2) a sense of "consistency" between the external representational world of objects in relation to the concept of the self, and vice versa; (3) a sense of "confirmation," that is, a corroboration of one's own identity in interaction with the environment, and the individual sensing of this environmental recognition.

In a brief review such as this, it is really impossible to do justice to all the valuable contributions made regarding the problem of identity formation. However, I felt that a sketchy review

of the mechanisms of introjection and identification and their concomitant role in the building up of intrapsychic structures in the light of object relations theory was a necessary detour for the clarification of the problems related to mourning, e.g., the role of identification as a paramount defensive operation in mourning; its distinction from introjection; the differentiation of normal forms of mourning from their pathological counterparts. Above all, I hope this digression will help in understanding mourning in relation to cultural shock, in which a severe threat to the sense of identity exists.

The Process of Cultural Shock

I have been suggesting that mourning and threats to the individual's identity are two inseparable phenomena in cultural shock. Both mourning and the vicissitudes of identity are related to the massive loss of loved objects involved in leaving a given culture and its implicit violent removal from an "average expectable environment." In what follows, I will attempt to describe a sequential schema of the whole process of culture shock. This model may sound similar to that suggested by the process of mourning related to the loss of a single loved object, e.g., the death of a father, close relative, etc. However, its differences will be stressed, particularly those related to identity remodeling and its transformation; in culture shock, the latter assumes significant relevance.

A warning note is necessary here. This model of culture shock is the result of my observations in "uncomplicated culture shock." By this I mean culture shock resulting from a more or less voluntary decision by a newcomer to leave his country for diverse reasons, e.g., professional needs, training, economic problems, etc. At the time the newcomer left his culture, he was still in interaction with his usual "average expectable environment." This is in contradistinction to "complicated culture shock"—that is, one in which the newcomer left his country for the very reason that his "average expectable environment" was no longer that "average" for his particular ego identity. One example of "complicated culture shock" would be that suffered by refugees from sociopolitical upheaval in the abandoned culture. One can postulate that similarities occur in both types of culture shock; nevertheless, their

different backgrounds may account for different parameters whose nature and characteristics are beyond the scope of this paper.

The word process implies that a series of sequential stages appears in culture-shock from its commencement to its final solution. Whereas some psychodynamic features prevail at a particular time, overlapping occurs, and, thus, elements found earlier in the process may still be present in later stages, and vice versa. With these warnings in mind, let us now for the sake of simplicity describe the process of culture shock in the following phases:

Phase I: Cultural Encounter

This is the phase that indeed deserves the name "culture shock," for shock implies a sense of suddenness, acuteness, abruptness. Its departing point is the newcomer's encounter with his new culture. It is a stage of exploring cultural differences and similarities. The newcomer tests the accuracy of his— realistic or unrealistic—preconceived anticipations regarding the new culture. At times, if the discrepancy is too great, disillusionment readily emerges. Attempting to fit into his new environment, the newcomer senses asperity or unevenness in the matching of his interactions with his new environment. Peevishly, the newcomer realizes that certain parts of his psychic baggage no longer gear smoothly with his external world of objects. Discrepancies between this new world of external objects and his endopsychic representations of the abandoned culture become apparent (Miller et al., 1971). Subjectively the experience is one of puzzlement; an afflictive admixture of feelings characterize this stage: anxiety, sadness, hostility, desperation, a yearning to recover what

was lost, are conspicuously observed—reminiscent of the mourning related to the death of a loved object.

Hand in hand with these painful longings for the multiple lost love objects—original culture—a growing sensation of discontinuity of identity emerges. It is as if out of his usual habitat, the newcomer no longer has the necessary corroborative environmental feedback for his ego identity. Exposed to his new culture, the newcomer's interaction with it fails relatively and temporarily to provide the basic elements upon which his own identity is solidly maintained. For, as defined above (Erikson, 1956); (Kernberg, 1966), ego identity is the over-all structuring of the ego's internalized

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object relations. Its final consolidation implies: (1) a sense of continuity of the self, that is, an awareness of self-sameness; (2) a sense of consistency in one's own interpersonal interactions. This consistency derives from a stable and integrated concept of object representations. (3) A sense of confirmation of one's own identity in interaction with the environment; this confirmation derives from the environment's recognition of the individual's characteristic ways of interacting and, in turn, the individual's sensing this environmental recognition.

All these elements—a sense of continuity, consistency, and confirmation—are particularly in danger in this phase of culture shock. The severity of the threats to the individual identity runs parallel to the severity of the concomitant mourning. Thus, the more serious the break with the newcomer's continuity of his identity, the greater his yearning for those lost love objects (abandoned culture) which in the past provided a comfortable sense of continuity. On the other hand, the greater his longing for those lost love objects, the more afflictive the threats to his identity.

The ego's adaptive task in this phase is aimed at mastering the painful experience of mourning and the uncomfortable feelings of a loose identity. Here a greater reliance on previously internalized and integrated object relationships is necessary. At this moment the newcomer's comfort will depend heavily on the "goodness" of his internal world of objects. He will seek relief in those past good object relations which once provided comfort to the self. Thus, a typical defensive mechanism of this phase is a rich, exuberant, reactivation in fantasy of those particular "units of self images and object images" and their corresponding gratifying "affective link" (Kernberg, 1971) which in the past were a source of what now is missed and lacking. Reactivation in fantasy of past

good object relations and greater dependence on one's own internal world of objects mitigate the newcomer's confrontation with his strange new culture.

A major mechanism of defense frequently put in motion by the newcomer is an identification reminiscent of the identification related to the mourning of a deceased beloved person. At times, the behavioral patterns of the foreigner are only an accentuation of a previously acquired identity, e.g., the newcomer's home is at first frequently supersaturated with typical ornaments

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from the abandoned culture. Indulging himself with his foreign food and often dressed in his typical foreign clothes, he finds relief for his mourning and accentuates his identity at a time when the latter is shaky. Sometimes, mechanisms of identification in the strict sense of the word takes place: a 35-year-old medical doctor from Mexico who came for training to the United States found himself becoming "more Mexican than ever." To his surprise, he found genuine enjoyment in listening to "mariachi" music, accompanied by tequila (music and drink typical of his country). In the past, he had despised mariachi and tequila for not being "chic," and had preferred an imported brand of whiskey, "more in tune with his professional and social class." What started as an idealization of his original country, out of depression, gradually became a more realistic impression of his country. Doctor X. began to appreciate those valuable aspects of his culture that he had not previously considered worthwhile. Later on, he was able to deidealize those aspects of his culture which he had idealized in the first phase of culture shock—cultural encounter—gaining not only a more realistic image of his own country, but a more realistic and accurate image of his new culture, for which at first he had become too critical and derogatory.

Although this brief clinical vignette took us beyond the initial phase of culture shock—culture encounter—I wanted to describe it for the purpose of distinguishing an identification in the strict sense of the word from other primitive forms of internalizing object relations. In this clinical example, a true identification took place. That is, internalization of newly acquired self images and object images were integrated with those already internalized self images and object images of the past, bringing about a transformation of the total concept of the self. A consolidation of these new self- and object images into a remodeled identity took place.

A greater dependency on the "goodness" of the internal world of objects, reactivation in fantasy of those past good object relations which once provided the self with support and security, and mechanisms of identification are basic

defensive operations geared to recover what was lost by alleviating both mourning and the menace to identity. Hence, the degree of stability and integration of the previously internalized object relations will determine the fate of this crucial phase of culture shock. Instability and unintegrated

states of internalized object relations will readily lead to pathological variants of coping with this phase of culture-encounter. For example, instead of the usual temporary period of isolation related to mourning, hesitation to give up the past, and resistance to meld with the new culture, one sometimes observes a hunger for objects with which to identify.

Doctor W., for example, came to the United States right after his graduation from a reputable school of medicine in South America. His encounter with the new culture ostensibly lacked the vicissitudes of identity and mourning that I have described as characteristic of this phase. On the contrary, he remembered his past culture with scornful contempt and appeared eager to give up his past, to become suddenly and totally identified with the American way of life. He immediately bought a brand new expensive car, dressed in an American style, and smoked cigars. Doctor W. gave frequent parties in a titanic attempt to "really get involved" with his fellow Americans. Manifestations of mourning for his past culture were conspicuously absent. He even changed around a few letters in his name so that its pronunciation sounded more in tune with the English language. His mood fluctuated from a state of jubilation to one of boredom, emptiness, and inexplicable depression, he felt loneliness in spite of so many "American friends" and his rapid pseudoadaptiveness to the new country. Fairly soon he became unrealistically critical of the American way of life, for which he blamed his depression and loneliness; he despised his "American friends" and denigrated their life style, the very life style with which, upon his arrival, he had readily pseudoidentified.

So far I have been describing a case in which mourning for the abandoned country did not take place; instead a "pseudoidentification" without a working through of mourning took place. A "false self" was a temporary and rapid but rather pathological solution to a crisis situation (Winnicott, 1954), (Guntrip, 1968). Doctor W.'s readiness to imitate his new culture regardless of the rough discontinuity with his past culture, his sudden contempt and devaluation of his abandoned country, with an undiscriminating total acceptance of the new culture, are reflective of a nonintegrated internal world of objects. The existence of split-off ego states (secondary to nonintegrated self-object units) allows for

this rapid nonassimilative acquisition of new behavioral patterns. But integration of these newly pseudo acquired object relations with past self-object images into a stable and consistent concept of the self—true identification—did not occur in this case.

Phase II: Reorganization

Once the initial shock of the cultural encounter is over, a gradual acceptance of the new culture develops. This phase encompasses the working through of the process of mourning described earlier and the subsequent intrapsychic reorganization.

In this phase, timid attempts to merge with a new culture, if followed by disappointment, will fluctuate with stubborn adherence to the lost culture. Successful interactions, will gradually reinforce disengagement with the past culture. Social reunions of newcomers from the same fatherland are permeated by a sensation of *déjà vu.* Their conversations frequently involve depressively idealized remembrances of the abandoned culture and derogatory remarks about the new culture. Subjectively, the experience in this stage is one of depression, discouragement, and dejection; at times these feelings are concealed, for to recognize them means to be weak and may speak badly for the newcomer's capacity to make adjustments. Intermingled, however, with this low spiritedness and feelings of resignation, cheerfulness and encouragement begin to appear.

Now the mourning for the abandoned culture is gradually worked out. The yearning for past lost loved objects decreases, as well as the initial confusion over identity. As stated above, both reactivation in fantasy of those good object relations which in the past provided security and comfort to the self, and the mechanisms of identification tending to recover what was lost, ameliorate both the mourning and the initial shakiness of identity. At the same time through the same process, the previous identity is not only reaffirmed but reintegrated under the influence of the new culture. Mourning for the abandoned culture is, I suggest, a prerequisite for an adequate solution of culture shock. Mourning, with its adherence to the past and resistance to indiscriminately accepting the new culture, allows for a process of reorganization to take place. Mourning thus constitutes a healthy inhibiting force

in the process of merging with the new culture. it is a period during which a careful re-examination of past object relations—ego identity—occurs, while the present—the new culture—is being carefully scrutinized. Mourning for the lost culture triggers off a complex psychodynamic process which, if adequately solved, brings about:

1. Reaffirmation of the foreigner's past identity through reactivation in fantasy of past good internalized object relations and recuperative identificatory mechanisms geared to recovering what was lost.

2. A more accurate and realistic concept of the abandoned culture.

3. Both of which will enable the foreigner to accomplish a more realistic reassessment of the new culture, a preliminary step for successful reorganization of the personality based on discriminating, selective identifications with the new culture.

Thus, the mourning process in this model refers to a "reshaping" of internalized object relations under the influence of the new culture, i.e., "reintegration" of the internal world on the basis of the interaction with the new environment, as well as a "reshaping" of the self-concept on the basis of new experiences with others and the experience of the internal world of objects.

Reaffirmation and reintegration of one's own identity in interaction with the new culture, a more realistic concept of the past culture's endowment and, hence, enhanced capacity for a realistic impression of the new culture, are all reflections of an enrichment of the self. They constitute fundamental presteps for a successful reorganization of the personality to take place. This reorganization of the personality—ego identity—will be centered around discriminating, selective, carefully scrutinized internalization of those aspects of the new culture which harmoniously fit with the newly "reshaped" identity (E. Ticho, 1966). While in the initial phase of culture-encounter, the identificatory mechanisms put in motion by mourning were to some extent those aimed at recovering what was lost, in this phase of reorganization, the internalization processes are geared to selective identifications, screened internalizing of the new culture's aspects, aimed not only at recovering what was lost but at enriching the self with a new experiential environment.

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The internalization of these selective identifications brings about intrapsychic, structural retransformations, e.g., integration of new self-object images with other self-object images. Intrapsychic retransformations are in turn manifested

in retransformations of behavioral patterns in interpersonal interactions. In other words, intrapsychic reorganization also brings about reorganization of behavioral patterns, which is reflected in the interaction with the new environment. Behavior, which was adaptive in the past culture, may potentially become unadaptive in the new culture. Thus, a behavioral reorganization oriented toward the new culture is an indispensable task in a successful solution of culture shock. This reorganization is ultimately related to the synthesizing functions of the ego. A trend toward a gradual and harmonious reorganization of ego identity, the result of internalized selective identifications fitting in with the new culture, leads to a successful solution of culture shock.

On the other hand, unsuccessful forms of mourning for the past culture, e.g., if pathologically prolonged and thus persistently oriented toward the past culture, lead to severe maladjustments. The problem of normal forms of mourning leading to successful solutions of culture shock versus pathological modalities relating to unsuccessful solutions can best be conceptualized along a continuum: At one extreme, the most ideal satisfactory mourning process begins with reactivation in fantasy of past good object relations and identificatory mechanisms; this process helps to recover what was lost, brings about a reaffirmation of identity and a more realistic evaluation of the past culture. Furthermore, successful mourning also prepares the newcomer for a discriminating internalization of selective identifications from the new culture. These preliminary steps are a prerequisite for a harmonious reorganization of ego identity in tune with the new culture. At the other extreme of this continuum are those cases in which mourning reactivated conflictual nonintegrated internalized object relations; here, neither a reaffirmation of identity nor a realistic impression of the past culture comes about; the newcomer is ill prepared for a realistic assessment of the new culture. In addition, discriminatory selective identifications is severely handicapped. Between the two extremes, one finds a whole variety of more or

less successful outcomes, e.g., from relatively benign forms of paralyzing adherence to the past culture and resistance to meld with the new culture—chronic complainers at parties and social reunions—in an otherwise at least socially marginal adjustment, to the more severe forms of prolonged mourning with persistent primitive idealization of the abandoned cultures, unrealistic devaluation of the new culture, unresolved identity crisis, lack of an adequate reorganization of ego identity and severe social and professional maladjustments. The absence of mourning, however, constitutes another pathological variable. Moreover, a distinction should be made between

pathological and healthy outcomes of culture shock. For example, prolonged mourning, unresolved identity crisis, depressive illness, paranoid reactions and chronic psychosocial maladjustments should be carefully distinguished from healthy mourning and the vicissitudes of identity brought about by culture shock. "Culture shock is a self-limiting crisis" (G. Ticho, 1971).

Phase III: New Identity

New identity here refers neither to a total engulfment in the new culture nor to the mere sum of bicultural endowments. Neither does new identity mean a stable achievement, but rather denotes a continually re-edited process (Erikson, 1950). A new identity will reflect the final consolidation into a remodeled ego identity of those selective identifications with the new culture which were harmoniously integrated or fitted in with the past cultural heritage. What actually ensues from the crisis of culture shock, if adequately solved, is a fecund growth of the self. What began as a threat to identity, mourning, and low self-esteem ends in a confirmation of both ego identity and self-esteem (Erikson, 1959) If mourning and threats to identity brought about by culture shock called for a greater dependency on one's own internal systems of object relations, a successful way out will increase a sense of reliance on them. Subjectively, the experience of this phase could be depicted as a gradual feeling of "belonging" to the new culture, a comfortable growing sensation of fitness reflected in interpersonal interaction with the new culture. These interpersonal interactions will now gradually provide what was scarcely given during the early phase of culture encounter, a sense of self-sameness

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and continuity, confirmation, and reciprocal corroboration of one's own identity in interaction with the new environment.

A residue of the initial intense longing for the past culture will still remain; it will never actually leave completely, but will no longer have a paralyzing effect. Nostalgic remembrances of the past cultural patrimony will no longer preclude a gradual, constant internalization of certain aspects of the new culture. The foreigner's feeling of missing his original culture will no longer have a restraining effect on the process of cultural merging. As Freud once wrote to Ludwig Binswanger on the anniversary of his deceased daughter's 36th birthday, "We know that the acute grief we feel will remain inconsolable and will never find a substitute. Everything that comes to take the place of the lost object, even if it fills it completely, nevertheless remains something different" (Binswanger, 1957, p. 106). Thus, diverse degrees of orientation and, hence,

attachment to the past culture will always remain. The patrimonies of the past culture will have become structured within the psychic apparatus and, as such, will exert a guiding influence on the synthesizing functions of the ego in the process of cultural integration.

With the reservation in mind that the sequential phases of the process of culture shock overlap, a new identity represents the end result of the process of culture shock. Whereas the first phase—cultural encounter—is characterized by mourning and threats to the newcomer's identity which bring about reactivation in fantasy of past good object relations and mechanisms of identifications aimed to recover what was lost, during the second phase the task is to organize the ego identity on the basis of selective identifications extracted from the new culture, which are now internalized and integrated, fitting in with the original psychic baggage. The third phase constitutes the final consolidation of newly acquired cultural traits, new object relations in the broadest sense, into the organization of ego identity. Ego identity comprises a stable and integrated concept of the self and an integrated and stable concept of total objects in relationship with the self (Kernberg, 1967).

As stated earlier, new identity here does not refer to a static achievement. A new identity is actually only a transitional period in the constantly ongoing process of human growth. Human growth

implies a continual exposure to new experiences; a continual internalizing of object relations submitted to a continual process of reorganization and reshaping of the self in the light of the everpresent need for interpersonal relations. The ongoing internalization of object relations runs parallel to the ongoing structuralization of the internalized object relations into the substructures of the psychic apparatus.

"Depersonification" (Jacobson's term, 1964) of the newly acquired cultural aspects through the process of integration into highly organized, psychical structures, e.g., superego, ego ideal, and autonomous ego functions, constitutes, indeed, the final result of a normal process of culture shock. That is, cultural traits that were initially taken in an active, energy-consuming process, will be later neutralized, gaining secondary autonomy. Cultural traits that were internalized out of reorganizing, adaptive needs, will now assume a quality of spontaneity, a spontaneity which in turn fosters a feeling of "belonging" with the new culture. Besides, through cycles of internalization of object relations, intrapsychic reorganization, and structuralization, new cultural aspects, which were initially relatively unharmonious and therefore unsuitable with the past

cultural heritage, later are apt to be internalized. One recalls the surprising change sometimes observed in attitudes, values, and the like, following a prolonged process of acculturation—attitudes and values that during the initial cultural encounter were conflictive in nature.

As stated at the outset, culture shock is a complex phenomenon comprising many psychosocial variables. The scope of this paper was limited to only two of the fundamental elements: first, the mourning for the abandoned culture and, second, the concomitant vicissitudes of identity. I suggested that both mourning and these vicissitudes of identity are the most conspicuous elements of every single case of culture shock; however, a variety of highly individualized factors will determine its intensity, length, form, content, modalities, and outcomes. Some of these factors are the degree of similarity between the cultures involved, language difficulties, the newcomer's age and religious beliefs. Not to be discounted are the reasons for a change of country, geographic and climatic factors, educational background, and the strength of family ties. One must also consider how receptive the new environment

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is and whether there are racial or other conflicts. Thus, every foreigner will have his own highly personalized version of culture shock, which will be reflected in turn in a gamut of peculiar psychodynamic manifestations. But, regardless of the parameters involved, mourning and vicissitudes of identity will always, I suggest, be at the core of culture shock.

SUMMARY

Culture shock is a polyphasic psycho-sociophenomenon, a reactive process stemming from the impact of a new culture upon those newcomers who attempt to merge with it. The violent removal from an "average expectable environment" and subsequent exposure to a new, relatively unpredictable, strange new environment, triggers off the process of culture shock. Mourning for the massive loss of loved objects—the abandoned culture—and its concomitant threats to the individual's identity constitute the common denominator of culture shock. Also, I have emphasized adaptive functions of mourning as prerequisites for a successful solution of culture shock. The sequential stages of the process of culture shock were described, from the initial mourning and the various threats to the newcomer's identity, the working through of mourning and the vicissitudes of identity, to final transformations and reintegration of the newcomer's identity.

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