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Table of Contents:

Index of Authors:

Adverse Childhood Experiences and complex PTSD: A Theoretical Model Exploring Psychedelic Drugs as a Therapeutic Treatment

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Abstract

Complex posttraumatic stress disorder (cPTSD) has several detrimental consequences, including severe anxiety, emotional detachment, mood irregularities, and vivid flashbacks to trauma. In many cases, cPTSD can be linked back to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Treatments for cPTSD that involve psychedelic drugs are potentially beneficial, but unfortunately they are understudied in psychology labs due to their classification as a Schedule I substance. Thus, theoretical work is needed to explain potential mechanisms involved in treatment programs. In this new theoretical model, I clarify the mechanistic links between ACEs and cPTSD and then examine why psychedelic drugs may be an ideal therapeutic tool for the treatment of cPTSD.

Toxic stress theory posits that exposure to extreme, frequent, and persistent ACEs without the presence of a supportive caretaker chronically activates the stress response system (Jones et al., 2021). Toxic stress results in dysregulation of the limbic-hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (LHPA) axis, elevating levels of catecholamines, cortisol, and proinflammatory cytokines (Thermo Fisher Scientific, n.d.). The toxic stress induced by ACEs causes cPTSD due to the persistent exposure to multiple adverse events leading to re-experience of the traumatic events, avoidance behaviors, and paranoia. Psychedelic drugs unlock repressed memories, engaging positively with negative self-concept and dysregulated emotions, which are both characteristic of the Disturbances of Self-Organization symptom cluster of cPTSD.

Presentation of this theoretical model would allow for public recognition of the potential benefits of this treatment and further exploration into this topic.

Keywords: PTSD, psychedelics, adverse childhood experiences, stress

Dreams and Prophecy: The Mantic Interpretation on Psychotherapy

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ABSTRACT

The mantic and prophetic dream interpretation is an ancient practice that has been applied in different contexts and at different historical times. With Freud's psychoanalytic proposal to interpret patients' dreams, the meaning of dream content and experience becomes a central element of the psychotherapeutic process. Freud obviously had an enormous cultural knowledge of ancient texts and ancient practices. The incubation technique in Freud's psychotherapeutic proposal was considered an innovative psychological strategy for understanding the patient's thoughts and feelings, but little attention was paid to the mantic quality that had distinguished the incubation process and dream interpretation for many centuries and across several civilizations. In recent decades, the mantic meaning of dreams has been considered useful within the ethnopsychiatric approach to restore the patient's ability to develop a new perspective in relation to a traumatic situation. In this article I will try to explain the use of mantic dream interpretation during the psychotherapeutic process.

KEYWORDS: mantic dreams; prophecy; psychotherapy; ethnopsychiatry; dream-interpretation; trauma

1   INTRODUCTION

One of the oldest divinatory practices is to interpret the signs in a dream. When men began to imagine something, he also began to create and consequently to interpret something that seemed mysterious and unknown to him. Dreams belong to this dimension of the unknown.
Recent research in neuroscience attempts to explain the dream experience as a consequence of several cognitive processes, one of which is a particular brain dynamic in which neurotransmitters and biochemical elements interact. From this interaction, the brain generates bizarre episodes that are difficult to relate to the dreamer's real life (Hobson, 2002). In other dreams, you can easily identify with a "realistic style" and understand that the dream is a reformulation of something you have experienced in your life.
Normally, we can define two levels of consciousness: when we are awake and when we are asleep (Oppenheim, 1956). These two levels of consciousness influence each other. Our life experiences, attitudes, and decisions can be changed according to this interaction between the waking and dreaming experiences. It has happened to all of us that we wake up disturbed from a nightmare or dream about a certain situation that distresses us. The impressions we experience during a dream are powerful enough to affect our emotional state and behavior. A dream can be enough to solve a problem, create music or simply warn us about someone or something.
The dream code is translated into scenes, symbols, sensations, and feelings that reflect our past, present, and future (Nathan, 2011). This statement could be irrefutable, yet the mantic quality of the dream seems to be an unusual and aberrant element. Dreams as a revelation of the future can be considered an archaic method or even superstition: How can we scientifically explain the possibility of a mantic quality of dreams?
For our ancestors, who lived in a time when cosmic vision and "earthly matter" were not so far apart, it was obvious that the dream presented itself as a kind of doorway, a passage between the human and the non-human worlds (Hillman, 1979). Going through this door, one can visit other worlds or receive important messages or nocturnal visitors from the underworld that tell us how to cure an illness, how to behave in an important situation, or how to solve a certain problem.

2   DREAMS AND THERAPY

Human beings, in general, sleep almost a quarter of life. The importance of dreams is therefore undeniable. Over the years, researchers have worked to find an answer to the function of dreams. Freud (1997) argued that dreams should "purge" the preconscious daytime residue through a masking process of our desires and urges. This process would help the dreamer integrate his or her life experiences. In order to understand what experience this content refers to, the dream represents a kind of symbolic code that has a psychological meaning that can be understood and interpreted. Interpretation has the main function of transforming the manifest content of the dream into a latent content. The interpreter searches for a meaning through a process of decoding a sequence of images, scenes and signs in order to understand to which life experience the dream refers. Freud emphasizes that the dream is not merely unconscious material, but a form of thought presented in a dream-like form. This form may represent ways to satisfy a desire (repressed or removed) or to resolve conflicts. Chalfen (1964) underlines an existential feature and uses an interpretive approach based on the patient's feelings. The author proposes a model based on the free associations to the dreamer's life experience. It is important that the patient reveals his emotions and ideas about his dream without being manipulated in any way. Kaplan (1973) suggests a rational perspective to support that unconscious material

can be shared by members of a group. A similar concept is found in the analytic approach, which is based on an archetypal model and symbolic interpretation (Jung, 1961; von Franz, 1988). For the neurophysiologist Jouvet (1997), the main function of a dream is the regeneration of a person's identity. According to the ethnopsychiatric method proposed by Tobie Nathan (2011), the interpreter can make the dream work in the real world. Therefore, the interpretation is not only a narrative, but can be a precise action that can contribute to the healing process of the patient. In the ethnopsychiatric method, the psychotherapist must collect the somatic stimuli, the thoughts and ideas that remain from the dream. In psychology, it is considered that the dream is a "special form of thinking" that is developed during sleep.

Dream interpretation according to the ethnopsychiatric method proposes to begin the analysis of the dream by asking the patient for his impressions and free associations to images, sensations, words, characters, and actions, or to dramatize the dream in order to understand the affinity between the scene depicted and the scene experienced in real life. Dream dramatization occurs whenever there is an impasse, either because the dream is vague and the patient cannot remember further details, or because it is difficult to achieve an association between the life story and the dreamed scene. In these circumstances, the patient is asked to dramatize the scene so that we can understand the connection between the life events and the dream.

In psychotherapy, the dream indicates the transformation and development of the patient's suffering. It can therefore serve as a diagnostic tool to understand how the patient is doing. The fears, worries and psychological suffering are highlighted in a dream. Nobody dreams about something he is not worried about.

Nathan (2011) explains that the logical sense of a dream arises from an idea. It is important to note that a dream narrative is always a personal experience. The dream can be defined as a form of virtual reality in which the images and figures usually have a therapeutic function because they show a new path. The dream represents a problem-solving formula. Nathan states that this is the reason why, even if most psychological theories deny the predictive capacity of the dream, the interpretation will eventually work as a prediction (Nathan, 2011).

A dream interpretation always has a divinatory function, for it is primarily directed to the future; it is directed to the past only when it reveals a hidden event, a rupture, a transgression, or a traumatic event (Nathan, 2011). In the ethnopsychiatric method, the dream is always a transformation of images into words, it is a masquerade that links the divinatory function to our destiny (Sala, 2013). This, moreover, is not a new idea, it is a common feature from Mesopotamia to the Roman and Greek emperors (Artemidorus Daldianus; Oppenheim, 1956; Wickkiser, 2008), and from Freud to the contemporary Tobie Nathan. The idea that we can give a patient the ability to imagine the future, using the divinatory function and the idea of destiny, presupposes that a positive interpretation can be an input to accomplish a transformation and restore the possibility to rebuild an idea of the future. This ability to imagine a positive future is impaired in most cases of severe suffering and trauma. In this procedure, the psychotherapist must collect the dream material that can be used to create a positive prophecy. In a normal state, it is difficult for the dreamer to remember a complete dream experience or event, but in trauma patients the problem may be a complete inability to sleep and dream or/and the patient repeatedly recalls the traumatic event in a symbolic or realistic form.

In the case of trauma or psychological distress, it is how you tell a story that may or may not enhance a patient's recovery process. Patients come to therapy because there are compelling themselves to live the wrong novel. However, creating a prophecy is a complex process. The psychotherapist must make logical sense of a magical operation, explain the images that "populate" the dreamer's mind, and convince him or her to be the protagonist of the prophecy he or she has dreamed. In this procedure, the psychotherapist must also have a thorough

knowledge of the dream model, the cultural background and the particular characteristics of the dreamer (Nathan, 2010/2012).

2.1   Time and consciousness: present, past and future

Over the past decade, researchers have been trying to understand the relationship between time and consciousness. Time is crucial to memory because it establishes a chronology that helps define scenes in a sequential framework, thus giving logical meaning to events. In dreams, memory is fragmented. To reconstruct the dream novel, it is important to remember the different dream scenes and images that composes the dream.

Macduffie and Mashour (2010) explain that there is a unique state of consciousness that encompasses three temporal dimensions: experiencing the present, processing the past, and preparing for the future. The three dimensions of time - past, present, and future - cannot be easily separated. During the dream, we can assist to a kind of modeling process in which the three temporal dimensions are interconnected. When we wake up, we organize our thoughts along an internal timeline. During this process, we move through the present and often make associations in our memory that plan future actions. The neural system is engaged in this process: remembering the past and imagining the future (Schacter, Addis and Buckner, 2007). The thoughts associated with the future are recombinations of perceptions of previously experienced events. Some authors suggest that the ability to construct an episodic hypothesis for the future is an adaptive advantage (Friston and Kiebel, 2009). Revonsuo (2000) explains how dreams can be a preparation for future consciousness. The author suggests that dreaming is a mechanism to better cope with life-threatening events. It is a form of phylogenetic memory: dreaming as an evolutionary process where our ancestors can transmit a memory to us for survival. This idea is consistent with the psychogenealogy hypothesis: our tendency to repeat the actions of our ancestors because we have embodied a genealogical memory and internalized thoughts, actions that we share with them. It has also been proposed that our memory is only an epiphenomenon of our ability to project (Suddendorf & Corballis, 2007). This may explain why, in most cases, a patient affected by trauma or mental distress is unable to easily plan or positively envision the future.

A central question for understanding the neurobiological mechanisms that characterize the dream experience is: when do we dream? This question is very important in explaining a common belief in different traditional cultural systems. As Nathan (2011) points out, the dreams that are made in the morning are those that relate to the future, instead dreams that are made during deep sleep, in the first part of the night are related to daily life experiences and life events.

From the early studies of Nathaniel Kleitman, who became famous for discovering REM sleep, it seems obvious that dreams occur during this specific phase (Lavie, 1996). However, more recent studies have shown that dreams can also occur during N-REM sleep, just as REM sleep can occur without dreams (Solms, 2000). REM sleep occurs predominantly in the morning, instead NREM sleep is associated with heavy sleep (Cavallero, Cicogna, Natale, Occhionero & Zito, 1992). The fact that REM occurs mainly in the morning may explain why the dreamer can easily remember and report the REM dream experience compared to N-REM (Baylor & Cavallero, 2001). In addition, REM dreams are more bizarre and have more emotional elements (Scarone et al. 2008; Suzuki et al. 2004). The NREM dream report instead shows more episodic memory content (Baylor & Cavallero, 2001), which could explain why our brain produces more content about our ordinary life and life events in the first part of sleep. According to Llewellyn (2016, p.11) "Dream bizarreness may be an aspect of the prospective coding process rather than a concrete signal of things to come. A prospective code, generated in REM dreaming, may identify a personally salient, non-obvious probabilistic pattern in past events

and portray that pattern in an unconscious, sensorimotor image which, if mobilized as a predictive code in wake, supports cognition in wake through rapidly co-ordinating sensory input with appropriate action". However, I believe that it is precisely this prospective coding and the probabilistic pattern that can explain the predictive factor of a mantic dream, if we consider that the three dimensions of time are interconnected and work together to model our consciousness. So, it is possible to collect a sign in a dream that reveals the future events.

The neurochemical environment of REM sleep benefits the dreaming experience as the prefrontal cortex is deactivated, which decreases the insight, judgment, self-awareness processes and working memory function (Muzur, Pace-Schott & Hobson, 2002; Voss, Holzmann, Tuln & Hobson, 2009; Perry, Ashton, & Young, 2002). Emotional stimulation is also increased during REM sleep, as the amygdala and paralimbic cortex are appropriately activated. Finally, there is a great tendency to create fantasy material, as the visual spatial imagination area of the brain - the parietal operculum - is activated during this phase of sleep (Macduffie & Mashour, 2010).

There are some exceptions to this neural process. The dreamer may in some cases be aware of the fact that he is dreaming. The most famous phenomenon is the case of lucid dreaming, in which the dreamer is not only aware that he or she is dreaming but is also able to manipulate the dream experience (Stumbrys, Erlacher, Johnson & Schredl, 2014). This is important for this research because in some cases, after an induction training with the patient, one of the solutions for finding a mantic positive effect of a dream experience could be the creation of an artificial environment following the lucid dream procedure. In this case, the spontaneous experience would be eliminated, and the psychotherapist would have to be able to put the patient in hypnotic state during the induction exercises.

3   MANTIC DREAM AND PROPHECY

Dreams are the door to the house of the Lord of the Dead, says Hillman (1979). What exists beyond the dead is a mystery to us. If it is true that we go to the underworld every night, or at least we can say that we go to an unknown space and time, then this evidence can also be used to develop the idea of predestination and prophecy in a positive sense. This means trying to find a functional narrative based on a dream interpretation in order to solve a trauma or a psychological suffering. For this reason, the interpretation cannot be created by the dreamer himself (von Franz, 1988). Patients suffering from any kind of mental distress are not able to develop a positive theory about any aspect of their life.

The same evidence can be applied to experts. We all have theories about ourselves or about what is happening in our lives. When we interpret our own dream, we will introduce into the dream characteristics, additional elements, ideas and thoughts that might deviate from the main theme of a particular dream. A dream interpreter is needed to determine whether the dream is substantial or meaningless in its appearance and, consequently, how it can be interpreted and translated for the dreamer. When the psychotherapist gives an interpretation, he gives the patient a new input, a new thought in relation to his dream, and thus he already changes the patient's mind. Even if his interpretation is rejected. The interpretation itself always has an impact on the patient's future.

In general, dreams can be translated in at least three ways: 1. interpretation based on an intuitive or deductive understanding of associations; 2. interpretation based on some form of quantitative data, that is, a sign is interpreted based on similar or the same previous signs that have been systematically observed and analyzed; 3. the interpreter may verify the deity's message using magical practices, this practice is especially common in traditional societies.

In a psychotherapeutic treatment, it is important to first understand the meaning that the patient attaches to a symbol: what associations does the patient build? (Nathan, 2011; von Franz, 1988). Only after this clarification can the psychotherapist formulate his interpretive theory. The goal of this form of interpretation is to provide the dreamer-patient with a precise action to take in the real world.

Nowadays, in a society where the connection with the deceased has been completely forgotten, at least in Western cultures, it is essential to begin the procedure with a reminiscence of the family's ancestors, pointing out their strengths and limitations. This is a common procedure when psychotherapists collect the patient's biography. This information is important in understanding which ancestors may be the mantic dream messenger. In most cases, this messenger clearly shows up in the dream and gives a precise information. In other cases, the prophecy is constructed by the psychotherapist together with the patient.

Prophecy is a solution to a problematic situation of the patient. It may emanate from a new thought, a specific action, or a sequence of actions that the dreamer must perform.

Some examples are ordering an offering, a prayer, a vow, a conversation with a certain person, a letter, any action that needs to be performed in real life. These actions cannot be considered as the elixir to solve the problem. They are the beginning of a path that will eventually help the patient to overcome his suffering and build a future. Moreover, it is not always possible to make a positive prophecy. Sometimes, when a terrible nightmare occurs and the bad feeling remains with the patient, this cannot be ignored. In such cases, it is necessary to proceed with a prescription that will dispel the nightmare and the terrible feeling that something bad is going to happen. This prescription can be a small ritual or a prayer if the dreamer is devoted to religion. The idea is to protect the dreamer not from evil, but from his "evil ideas".

4   CASE STUDY

In these case studies I will present three different mantic dreams and analyse the interpretation in favour of the patient.

4.1 The magic dishes

Lucy is a single woman, 45 years old. In the last year, her life, she says, began to go off the rails. Her fiancé leaves her after a 10-year relationship, and just a few months later she loses her job. She is very anxious, discouraged, suffering from depression and insomnia. When she comes to therapy, almost a year has passed during which she has been looking for a job without success. She is struggling to keep her house, as she says, "*It's the only thing I have.*" She recently received a letter from the bank informing her of the repossession proceedings. Lucy cannot remember her dreams because she sleeps 2/3 hours a night and when she is exhausted, she takes a psychotropic drug to sleep. This is a classic case where the patient is completely absorbed in her suffering, which deprives her of the ability to sleep and remember her dreams. Finally, after a long period without dreams, Lucy has a dream to tell:

I was washing the dishes after lunch. I was alone in my mother's kitchen. Suddenly a man comes to the door. I was very angry and began to wash the plates as quickly as possible and throw the dishes to the entrance of the house, where the man looked at me.

I asked her why she was angry; she replied that she absolutely did not want the man to enter the house. It was not clear to me if "the man" stood for her lost fiancé or if it was the bank manager. It was probably both, but I chose to deal with the looming problem of losing her house. Lucy dreamed this dream a day after she received the letter from the bank manager. She was angry and scared because, as she told me at the beginning of the session, the house was

the only thing she had. For me, the dream was a clear message from her future. There was no need to present my interpretation. Lucy understood the meaning of her dream: "*Although it was not a good dream, I wake up with a sense of relief. I feel strong! I know now that no one will take my house away from me!*". Weeks later, she told me that with the help of her mother, she had made an agreement with the bank manager to continue paying for the house with a lower loan.

4.2 The goodbye earrings

Mary is a young widow, 37 years old. Her husband died four years ago. Two years ago she came for psychotherapy. After a long period of mourning, one day she has a dream that warns her that her grief will come to an end:

"*I was in a church, alone. I was so sad and crying. I had been in a car accident, with me in the car was my son, he was a boy, blond hair like his father, so beautiful, he was 12 years old. And he died in the car accident and I felt so guilty and so sad. My only son. After my husband now my son... I was in the church, it was the funeral ceremony, I was crying and crying. Suddenly I felt someone was on my back, I turned around and saw my husband with a woman next to him. A beautiful young woman. Oh, I was so sad...how could he show up to our son's funeral with his new girlfriend...?*"

Mary had no children. The dream announces a change in Mary's grief. In this session we talk about the possibility that her husband might already have a new family in the life beyond the grave. Mary constantly rejects the possibility of remarrying or starting a sentimental life with a new partner. Months later, she dreams another dream:

"*I was traveling by car; my husband was driving and I was sitting next to him. It was a sunny summer day. At a certain point, he stops the car on an incline and hands me a gift. It was two ruby earrings... He put them on my ears, one by one, caressing my face. Then I said to him "I will always be by your side", and he kissed me on the forehead*".

I suggested my interpretation to Mary: it was a goodbye dream. Mary rejects this interpretation. She does not want to separate herself from the memory of her husband. As she often said during the sessions, dreams are the only place where she can still meet her husband. It is clear to me that the dream also announces that someone is coming into the patient's life. When I connect the two dreams, there is a classic representation of an ending: the funeral and the ruby earring (in many cultures, the ruby is the jewel associated with death and love). Mary's words to her husband also seem to be a way of saying goodbye, just as the kiss on the forehead is a common gesture of blessing. Mary resisted my interpretation. But the prophecy was to come true. This was the last dream she had with her husband, and after a few months she met a person who became her new companion.

4.3 Bloody future

Dorothy is 42 years old and has been trying to get pregnant for about 6 years. Two years ago, she applied for medical help. She has already undergone two artificial inseminations. Both procedures ended in spontaneous abortion. Obviously, this situation has caused the patient great distress. In one of the last sessions Dorothy tells me a disturbing dream:

"I was sitting on the water and blood was running from my mouth and from my vagina. My sister stood peacefully in front of me and looked at me".

I ask her if she has started a new treatment. She had started the last fertilization treatment. It is quite clear that the dream either represents her anguish and anxiety or contains a mantic prediction. However, this prediction is not positive. For me, a new abortion was about to take place. The scene needs no interpretation. In addition, Dorothy's sister, who can be considered our messenger, consciously chooses not to become a mother. This interpretation should be avoided, of course, because not only does it not help the patient, but it could cause even more suffering or anticipatory stress and anxiety.

Dorothy, however, is horrified after this dream. She says that only her sister can reassure her in the dream. So we talk about her sister and about women who do not want to have children, and at the end of the session I give her a prescription. I explain to her that in various traditional contexts (Jewish, Islamic, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, etc.) the first thing we do when we have a bad dream is to tell a person the dream, as it was believed that this process would purify the dreamer and the dream. I told her that if she wanted to get rid of the dream, she could follow the advice of these traditional practices: Take a pot of water, tell the water the dream and pour the water away.

5   CONCLUSION

The interpretation of a dream as prophecy is not a common procedure and can be used only under certain circumstances. These circumstances are: 1) the patient is at a turning point in the psychotherapeutic process; 2) there is a need to encourage the patient to a new and creative action or thought; 3) the dream representation has a clear mantic meaning and can be transferred to the patient; 4) the patient is obsessed with a dream and cannot overcome the negative effects of the dream.

The mantic interpretation is useful only if the patient is able to accept and work out the interpretation. As we saw in the first case study, it is often the dreamer who first understands the meaning of the dream. Obviously, dreams are a complex subject, and it may happen that in a single dream we consider several situations and different life experiences that overlap in the same image.

Recent neuroscientific studies help us understand how this can happen in our consciousness. The fact that past, present and future are interconnected and can be represented in one and the same dream experience could be the beginning of an interesting field of research to understand some phenomena as prophecies. It can also be important to understand if there is a privileged dream phase where we receive messages from our ancestors or mantic information. This can help us identify which dreams have a predictive meaning or a purifying effect. Besides this question, which can be interesting especially for the technical procedure, this dream interpretation method is about restoring the ability to formulate projections from a previous experience and to formulate a positive prophecy.

The dream has always been a narrative to be deciphered. The problem that a psychotherapist must overcome in interpreting a dream is: what is the right story for my patient? And how should I tell it to him? In Western cultures, the notion of divinity, spirituality and ancestor worship has completely disappeared. Asking a patient to purify himself of a terrible dream, as we saw in the third case study, can be seen as superstition or even incitement to paranoia. However, these ideas only reflect the contemporary thoughts that Western culture has about traditions and ritual practices that not so long ago were a regular way to deal with a problem, even in Western culture.

The dream experience is an enigmatic experience, personally and collectively. This enigmatic quality helps to create and manipulate the idea of predestination, protection, and a sense of community. The concept of predestination can help the patient think about his future and create a possible transformation of a present or past situation that is causing him suffering. The sense of protection and community helps to counteract the sense of loneliness and isolation that characterizes much psychological suffering.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

"Author declares no conflict of interest."

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Exploring Mind and Soul of Social Character: Dialectic Psychodynamics of Economism and Humanism in Society, Organizations, and Individuals

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ABSTRACT

Building on and extending previous theorizing, this contribution draws on the critique of neoliberal ideology in conjunction with radical humanism to deconstruct the ambivalent normative foundations of applied psychology and related fields of social science. Presented is a systemically embedded and integrated dialectic and dynamic model of ideological undercurrents shaping the political-economic, social-institutional, and psychodynamic structures of society, organizations, and individuals. Integrating dialectic antipodes of genuine ideas versus interest-guided ideology with social character theory, neoliberal economistic doctrines and antithetical humanist philosophical concepts are contrasted as opposing political, social, and psychological or "fantasmatic" logics. Based on psychoanalytic theory, neoliberal fantasies of success, superiority, and submission are derived from these and positioned against humanist consciousness of evolution, equality, and empowerment. This normative fabric of advanced capitalist societies is interpreted with reference to the conference theme as the mind and soul of social character. Economistic psychodynamics are linked to social alienation, humanist antipodes to psychological fulfilment. Personal meaning is introduced as a meta-dimension of existential alienation, respectively, wellbeing. Stressing the fundamental unity of insights regarding external and internal realities, complementarity of denaturalization and critique of societal ideologies with critical self-reflection and personal development is recommended. In this sense, the presented analysis aspires to contribute to clearing the mind and strengthening the soul by cultivating radical humanist philosophy versus neoliberal economistic rationality.

KEYWORDS: Neoliberal ideology, radical humanism, dialectic analysis, psychodynamics, social critique, ethical issues

1   INTRODUCTION

Building on a seminal model of neoliberal ideology [1, 2, 3] in conjunction with the psychodynamic tradition of analytic social psychology [4, 5, 6], objective of this contribution is to develop, deliberate, and promote a deepened, systemically embedded and integrated, as well as dialectic and fundamentally critical understanding of the antagonistic normative undercurrents shaping the interdependent political-economic, social-institutional, psycho-spiritual structures of society, work organizations, and individuals [7, 8, 9]. Neoliberalism, a vaguely defined and ambiguous concept, is rooted in classic economic theorizing that forms the ideological basis of capitalism, representing the current version of globally dominant political-economic doctrine [10, 11, 12]. The multifaceted and contradictory internal logic of this interest-guided system of ideas and practices has been critically analyzed elsewhere in detail and sophistication beyond the scope of the present discussion. For instance, neoliberalism has been deconstructed as simultaneously constituting a set of political and economic practices, a paradigm for reorienting (or dismantling) public policy and programs, a hegemonic ideological project, a mode of psychological control or "governmentality", and a specific state form, designed to advance the particular interests of small class of capital owners, investors, top-level managers, and their political agents [13, 14, 15]. Neoliberal economism manifests in unconstrained scope and power of global financial markets and transnational corporations, worldwide commerce and consumerism, and decline of public services and social welfare systems. In short, neoliberalism normalizes the supreme rule of the interests of economic elites through a "totalization" of the logic of money and markets, accumulating unfathomable wealth and luxury for a small minority, while imposing increased personal risks and demands, austerity, and poverty upon the majority. The current contribution builds on, elaborates, and extends previous theorizing, documented in preliminary attempts to deconstruct the contradictory ideological basis of the applied field of work and organizational psychology and related disciplines, such as industrial, occupational or vocational psychology, organizational behavior, human resource management, and business and management studies [7, 8]. Recapitulating earlier arguments, this renewed undertaking is informed and guided by the adoption of thoughts and ideas from radical humanism, as propagated by social-philosopher and psychoanalyst Erich Fromm [4, 5, 6]. Integrating the dialectic distinction of original (genuine or authentic) ideas versus distorted (interest-guided) ideology with basic tenets of social character theory, neoliberal economistic doctrines and antithetical humanist philosophical concepts are contrasted and positioned across nested levels of abstract political (societal), applied social (organizational), and implied psychological or "fantasmatic" (individual) logics [2, 7, 9]. The resulting matrix of interwoven logics is suggested as representing the dominant (explicit or propagated), respectively latent (potential or undeveloped), side of the normative fabric of advanced Western capitalist societies, institutions, and subjects [16, 17]. With reference to the conference theme, neoliberal and humanist components can be metaphorically interpreted as representing the mind and soul (or conditioning and consciousness) of contemporary social character. Notably, the conceptual development of the matrix model is work in progress and the following considerations are preliminary and partly fragmentary, subject to further elaboration, integration, and revision, intended to provide instructional and inspirational value as a basis for further discussion and deliberation in subsequent steps.

2   TOWARDS A MULTI-LEVEL DIALECTIC MATRIX MODEL

Social character theory posits that the socio-economic structure of society shapes personal orientations and psychological character structures among its members in a way that they want to do what they should to do [8]. Social character theory combines the Marxian dictum that the material conditions of life determine human consciousness with the dynamic conception of character in psychoanalytic theory [4, 5, 6]. Thus, the social character results from the interaction between dominant socio-economic structures of society and the socio-libidinous structure of individuals. As such, it is not a deterministic concept, but describes shared tendencies that vary according to the socio-economic status or social class the respective individuals occupy in the focal society. The unique character of a person is assumed to result from a dynamic interaction between collective social character tendencies and individual psychological predispositions, as well as person-specific socializing influences (e.g., familial circumstances). The social-philosopher and psychoanalyst Erich Fromm, theoretically developing the concept, has identified and analyzed different ideal types of the social character in different historical phases of the capitalist political-economic system, such as the hoarding, receptive, authoritarian, and marketing character [4, 5, 6]. Later, the ego-oriented character was identified as a complementary type in advanced Western capitalist societies increasingly governed by neoliberal doctrine and hegemony [5, 9]. Accordingly, societies can be evaluated according to the extent that they permit or promote, respectively, inhibit, impede, or undermine the realization of human potentials with regard to physical, social, and psychological well-being and health, including personality development and growth, higher levels of self-awareness, consciousness, and self-actualization. Advanced capitalist societies, however, are evaluated as psychologically "insane", promoting destructive (e.g., egoism, greed, rivalry) and impeding "productive" behavior and character orientations (e.g., altruism, dedication, growth). Largely compatible with this assessment, the focal model of neoliberal ideology specifies individualism, competition, and instrumentality as core political logics or "dogmatic pillars" of economistic thinking [1, 7, 9]. While these more abstract political logics are assumed to operate initially on the level of public policy and societal institutions (e.g., labor laws and market regulation), they also manifest in the applied social logics of hierarchically nested lower-level institutions, such as work organizations (e.g., management and employment practices). These, in turn, are suggested to influence the mindsets of individuals through psychodynamic processes analyzed as fantasmatic logics (e.g., idealized narratives and aspirations) [2, 9, 18]. Although several related social (e.g. individualization, contracts, quantitative assessment) and fantasmatic logics (e.g., meritocracy, social Darwinism, growth and progress) associated with neoliberalism have been suggested, it is unclear, how these reflect the three core political dogmas [1]. In earlier contributions, the authors have started addressing this issue, using the focal model of ideology to critically analyze and evaluate psychological research on flexible workplace practices [7, 8, 19, 20]. Individualism, competition, and instrumentality were seen as mirrored in the applied social logics of management practices emphasizing employee self-reliance (e.g., contingent employment), tournament situations or contests (e.g., internal labor markets), and economic rationalization (e.g., work intensification) [20]. Corresponding fantasmatic logics on the individual level were identified in mental frames of perpetual success (e.g., outstanding performance and achievement, excellence and exceptionality), superiority (e.g., outperforming and dominating others, winner-loser mentality), and submission under the rules of money and markets governing neoliberal capitalism (e.g. adaptation and assimilation, fulfilling social roles, seeking acceptance and status, tolerating inequality and injustice) [7]. The present contribution refines this suggested multi-level matrix model [1, 7, 20]. Additionally, it also elaborates the suggested dialectic extension of

complementary antipodes to neoliberal economism by discussing alternative sets of oppositional political, social, and fantasmatic logics based on ideas of radical humanism. Suggested antagonistic counter-principles, exemplifying philosophical concepts counteracting neoliberal political logics on the societal level, were radical humanist ideas of individuation, solidarity, and emancipation [6, 16]. Accordingly, on the organizational level of workplace practices, these more abstract, higher-level concepts were argued to manifest in applied social logics of self-actualization at work (e.g., personalized tasks), common good or community (e.g., sharing of resources), and social transformation (e.g., participatory change). Focusing on individually negotiated work and employment conditions, suggested ideological antipodes were used as an analytic grid to contrast the humanistic ideal of employee-oriented management practices that contribute to or facilitate psychological wellbeing, health, and personal development with the anti-type of a labor political power strategy, reproducing neoliberal agendas of divisiveness, austerity, and economic performativity [20]. On the individual level, fantasmatic logics of neoliberal ideology were contrasted with humanistic narratives and utopian aspirations of evolution, equality, and empowerment, discussed in the context of fulfillment of psychological needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy [7]. Taken together, these fantasmatic representations are part of the psychological deep-structure and foundation of the higher-level political and social logics underlying the design of societal and economic institutions [2, 18]. The resulting dialectic multi-level matrix model is displayed in Table 1. The following sections describe each of the altogether 18 cells of the matrix, allocated to three levels and containing references to relationships to self, others, and authorities [4, 6, 9]. The latter taxonomy was introduced as additional organizing and structuring element, based on radical humanist theorizing on social embeddedness of identity, interactions, and institutions, reflecting the own person, other people, and structures of power, as central and interdependent foci of socio-psychological relatedness.

Table 1: Multi-Level Dialectic Matrix Model of Economism and Humanism in Society, Organizations, and Individuals

	Self (Identity / Person)	Others (Interactions / People)	Authorities (Institutions / Power)
	Societal Level	**Societal Level**	**Societal Level**
Political Logics of Neoliberal Ideology	**Individualism** Naturalization of individual self-interest and attribution of full responsibility for one's own life situation; shift of societal risk toward individual members	**Competition** Markets as best way to ensure progress and optimal allocation of resources in all areas of society; competition and rivalry as inherent to human nature	**Instrumentality** Objectification and utilization of humans for particular interests according to cost-benefit calculations for maximizing performance and profits
Political Logics of Radical Humanist Ideas	**Individuation** Emphasis on conditions for personality development and self-transcendence; overcoming self-interest in meaningful social contexts and relationships	**Solidarity** Empathy, supportive social relationships, collaboration with others; sharing resources with those facing adversity; universality of human experience	**Emancipation** Revealing, overcoming and transforming limiting power-dependence relationships; liberation from oppression and exploitation
	Organizational Level	**Organizational Level**	**Organizational Level**
Social Logics of the Neoliberal Workplace	**Self-Reliance** Contingent employment with limited commitments; employees responsible for performance, health, learning, and careers	**Contests** Competitive allocation of performance-based rewards to individual employees based on zero-sum, winner-take-all-type tournaments	**Rationalization** Focus on increasing metrics of economic performance and efficiency; work intensification; employees as human resources
Social Logics of Humanistic Management	**Self-Actualization** Secure working conditions to support individual and collective autonomy, self-determination, learning, and socio-moral development	**Community** Seeking common good in diversity and pluralism; consideration of personal needs, win-win strategies, generative resources	**Transformation** Alternative organizing beyond hierarchies, coercion, and manipulation; promoting participation and democratization
	Individual Level	**Individual Level**	**Individual Level**
Fantasmatic Logics of Neoliberal Social Character	**Success** Idealizing excellence, outstanding achievements, and performance; exceptionality; overcoming odds of the situation	**Superiority** Focus on outperforming and dominating others, winner-loser mentality; inequality as result of individual differences and effort	**Submission** Responding adaptively to market forces; conforming with social roles, seeking status and recognition; system-justification
Fantasmatic Logics of Radical Humanist Consciousness	**Evolution** Attaining psychological growth and personality development; knowledge, self-realization, insight, higher-level consciousness	**Equality** Realizing the universality of human experience, dignity, and interconnectedness; perspective-taking for equal rights and social justice	**Empowerment** Active role in radical social reform, challenging and overcoming power structures, oppression, exploitation and inequality

3   POLITICAL LOGICS OF NEOLIBERAL IDEOLOGY

3.1   Individualism

On the societal level, core to the broader political, socio-economic, and cultural transitions in the era of neoliberal hegemony, is a fundamental value change towards a specific, socially corrosive form of excessive individualism [21]. This tendency, on the one hand, disproportionally emphasizes individual agency and self-interest. Thus, maximization of personal utility is declared not only an inherent part of human nature, but a rational and even desirable feature [13]. On the other hand, it attributes complete responsibility to individuals for their life situation, including education, occupation, wealth, health, and happiness. Thus, holding them fully accountable for their outcomes, while downplaying or neglecting situational influences and societal conditions, such as social stratification and inequality, privilege and discrimination, structural unemployment, and economic crisis, etc. [21, 22]. As such, neoliberal individualism serves the normalization and institutionalization of a "fundamental attribution error", resulting in systemic shifts of societal risks and responsibilities towards individual members. In line with ideological objectives of neoliberalism, the resulting logic of complete self-reliance, or "hyper-autonomy", effectively undermines, degrades, and erodes communal organization, collective pursuit of shared interests, and social support systems (e.g., labor unions, welfare systems, charity), as well as social cohesion, interpersonal relationships, and taking responsibility for others, on all levels of society [12, 13, 23]. In the matrix model, individualism as a political logic of neoliberal ideology on the societal level is suggested to manifest on the organizational level as a social logic of employee self-reliance in the neoliberal workplace, and on the individual level as a fantasmatic logic of success, integral to the neoliberal social character. These exemplary social and fantasmatic logics are discussed in more detail below. The dialectic antipode to a political logic of individualism is found in the humanist idea of individuation and its derivatives of self-actualization and evolution.

3.2   Competition

Representing unabated market fundamentalism, a second core feature of neoliberal ideology is dogmatic adherence to a political logic of competition as the only legitimate form of societal coordination and regulation [1, 12, 13]. In often biologistic analogies, explicitly or implicitly drawing on ideas of social Darwinism ("survival of the fittest"), competition is "naturalized" as inherent to the human species and revered as the one best way to ensure efficient allocation of resources, performance, and progress in all areas of society and in domains of life [7, 8]. As the central institutions of neoliberalism, so-called "free markets" are idealized as "quasi-divine" entities, omnipotent and unfaultable, capable of reliably determining the value, ensuring availability, and improving the quality of all goods and services needed to advance human welfare within and across societies [24]. The expansiveness of the market form corresponds with progressive commodification of the world. Indeed, one of the most universal commodities is the work capacity (labor power) of people, competitively traded and utilized in the form of "human resources" on societal (external) and organizational (internal) labor markets [25]. According to the logic of competition, more and more areas of society are organized to resemble contests or tournaments, based on rivalry and winner-looser mentality, as a driving force in interpersonal relationships and interactions, corroding cohesion, collaboration, and prosocial (non-competitive) attitudes and behavior.

3.3   Instrumentality

The neoliberal political logic of instrumentality generally refers to the "objectification" and utilization of human beings for purposes that are not primarily in their genuine own interest, but serve the goals of those in positions of power and authority [26, 27]. For instance, in the logic of labor markets, people are conceptualized as tools or "resources", traded and used (exploited) according to cost-benefit, means-end, or input-output calculations for the purpose of maximizing economic objectives, like profits, market share, or capital returns [20, 24, 25]. Instrumentality signifies the "reification" and commodification of human life and social relationships, criticized in the humanist tradition as a practical step towards political-economic fascism by negating or relativizing the absolute and unconditional value of human beings as ends in themselves [17, 27]. As such, instrumentality, the subordination of human life as a means to achieve monetary or material goals and interests, is truly at the core of economistic vs. humanist thinking. In the logic of instrumentality, the intrinsic value of human life, productive activity and social relationships are reduced to extrinsic (market-based) economic utility.

4   POLITICAL LOGICS OF RADICAL HUMANIST IDEAS

4.1   Individuation

Proposed as a dialectic antipode to the neoliberal political logic of "rugged individualism", the conceptually antithetical and semantically proximal term of "individuation" was adapted from analytical individual psychology [29, 30, 31]. The main focus here is the individual person, their self, or identity, with regard to the humanistic ideal of fully developing one's potentials and existentially becoming "who one is meant to be". Considered a central property of the human condition, individuation is inherent in humanistic psychology in notions of personality development, personal growth, and (self-)insight, addressed in numerous concepts and ideas, such as following a calling or finding meaning, becoming a fully developed or fully functioning person, socio-moral development, self-realization, and attaining higher levels of (expanded) consciousness, as well as in transformational experiences of paradigm shifts, spiritual awakening, enlightenment, and epiphany [32, 33]. Contrary to neoliberal individualism, resulting in social isolation and alienation, individuation includes elements of self-transcendence, that is, overcoming self-interest and ego by cultivating empathy, altruism, and dedication to the need of others in meaningful social contexts and relationships. As a political logic, individuation mandates an emphasis on societal conditions for optimal personal development, such as support for life-long education and learning as well as pursuit of diverse and heterogeneous forms and pathways of psychological and spiritual growth, including opportunities for collaboration, collective pursuit of common goals, and mutual support in absence of economic interest and pressure [19, 20, 34]. On the subordinated institutional or organizational level, the political logic of individuation is expressed in the social logic of humanistic management, inherent in notions of self-actualization at work, as opposed to neoliberal employee self-reliance.

4.2   Solidarity

The humanistic antipode to neoliberal logics of market competition, political logics regarding solidarity focus on social relationships and interactions, emphasizing structural support, cohesion and collaboration, shared use of resources, and collective action for the common good [35, 36, 37]. Solidarity is typically directed at those who are in a similar situation as oneself, are facing struggles or adverse conditions, being exploited, marginalized,

discriminated, excluded or otherwise disadvantaged (e.g., poverty, violence, injustice). Practical solidarity is expressed in the Marxian dictum that an ideal society should treat everybody, not according to contributions or possessions, but according to individual needs and abilities. Enacted solidarity requires perspective-taking, insight into common situations and shared interests, rendering it a core component of "class consciousness" [38]. Counteracting social stratification and inequality as inherent polarization tendencies of political-economic governance, institutionally, solidarity means redistribution of resources from social groups disproportionately appropriating and accumulating them, to those who most need them (e.g., strong welfare systems, high taxes on wealth). As a social logic, solidarity orients organizations and workplace practices towards structural participation and communal organizing, e.g., reducing differences in status, pay, and privileges [20, 31, 34]. A positive fantasmatic logic behind solidarity is equality, emphasizing universality of the human condition, relatedness, and connection among all people, and inherent value of prosocial and democratic attitudes and actions. This humanistic vision contrasts with individual self-interest and personal advantage, expressed in neoliberal market fantasies of superiority, leverage and competitive advantage, idealizing imageries of dominating and outperforming others.

4.3   Emancipation

The political logic of the humanistic ideal of emancipation, probably the most comprehensive concept discussed here, incorporates multiple layers of meaning [39, 40, 41]. Emancipation generally refers to liberation or attaining freedom by overcoming exploitative or limiting power-structures and dependence relationships. In classic social critique, this refers to abolishing class rule and coercive wage labor relationships by overturning the one-sided appropriation of the means of production by the ruling elite [38, 42]. Complementing this macro-emancipatory meaning, today mostly abandoned as unrealistic or utopian, the organizational literature has highlighted micro-emancipatory actions through which individuals increase their freedom at work, for instance, by resisting pressure and counteracting control by management or by crafting meaning and opportunities for fulfillment in their work activities 40]. Controversial is, if, or at what point, micro-emancipation, maintains, stabilizes and contributes to, rather than challenges, overcomes or reduces domination and suppression [41]. Political logics of emancipation emphasize freedom and human rights of all, not in the sense of economic liberties, but as relieve from artificial economic necessities, pressures, and crisis (e.g., unconditional income, de-commodification, redistribution). Social logics promoting emancipation in the workplace are oriented toward employee autonomy and participatory influence, self-organization and self-determination, such as semi-autonomous work groups and organizational democracy [43, 44]. This counter-model of humanistic as opposed to neoliberal management was framed as organizing for social transformation versus economic rationalization. Underlying fantasmatic logics contrast humanistic visions of empowerment to realize freedom from oppression and economic necessity with the neoliberal injunction of submission under the rule of the market and capitalist institutions.

5   SOCIAL LOGICS OF THE NEOLIBERAL WORKPLACE

5.1   Self-Reliance

First, on the organizational level, the political logic of individualism from the societal level translates into a social (managerial) logic of employee self-reliance in the neoliberal workplace [1, 8, 45]. According to neoliberal management principles, employment is offered

on a time-restricted basis, contingent on demand and with high skill and performance requirements, but with limited employer obligations or commitments, thus ensuring economic organizational flexibility in utilizing human resources (e.g., labor costs). In a reversal of paternalistic employment strategies, employees are held responsible for "self-managing" their performance, health, learning, and careers, negating earlier notions of employer reliance and organizational support [19, 20, 22]. Exceptions to this social logic of self-reliance are typically restricted to a small group of essential core employees, receiving privileged treatment (e.g., high pay and broad benefits), as long as their performance is indispensable for organizational objectives. A dialectic antipode to a neoliberal ideology of employee self-reliance has been found in the concept of self-actualization at work from humanist psychology. Whereas the former signifies a one-sided shift in risks and responsibilities that effectively threatens and deprives the majority of employees of stable and supportive, meaningful, and developmental work experiences, the latter emphasizes the need to provide working conditions that support autonomy, psychological growth, and social embeddedness, as part of a humanistic approach to management and alternative organization.

5.2   Contests

Second, transmitting or implementing the more abstract political logic of competition from the societal level into actual practices at the institutional level is an applied social logic of tournament situations or contests [1, 7, 8]. In the neoliberal workplace, zero-sum, winner-take-all-type contests are pervasively organized for the competitive performance-based allocation of incentives and benefits to among employees, thus incorporating and capitalizing on a mechanism for perpetual increases of reference standards and outcomes [46]. In particular, tournament-type contests are increasingly used to determine variable pay, promotions and development opportunities or continuous employment, as well as authorization of personalized work tasks and individual working conditions [19, 20, 22]. From a humanistic management perspective, contests based on rivalry and establishing ranks of superiority and inferiority among employees should be replaced with and counteracted by communal forms of organizing based on solidarity, cultivating values of equality, justice and cohesion [37]. From this point of view, the social logic of contests is bound to reinforce a dehumanizing winner-looser mentality, or superior-inferior mindset, drawing on latent fascist themes of meritocracy and social Darwinism inherent in the economic imperative of perpetual competition-based profit generation and capital accumulation.

5.3   Rationalization

Thirdly, the pervasive social logic of economic rationalization characterizing contemporary workplaces can be constructed as an organizational-level manifestation of a political logic of instrumentality at the societal level [1, 8, 27]. Both refer to the relationship between individuals and institutions of power and authority as an asymmetric complex of means and ends, subservience and domination, submission and superiority. Specifically, rationalization refers to quantitative increases in economic efficiency as expressed in some outcome to input ratio (e.g., produced market value and labor costs), as the underlying goal of various management instruments, programs, and interventions [20, 47]. Particularly, the social logic of rationalization is embodied in the concept of high-performance work systems, resulting in continuous increases in productivity and profitability, at least partly driven by (competitive) work intensification and precarious employment practices. Note that, while rationalization targets quantitative increases in economic efficiency and performance, typically implemented top-down by management and at the expense of the health and wellbeing of the working

individuals, the humanistic antipode of social transformation aims at qualitative changes towards organizational participation and democratization and improved working conditions and experiences [17, 19, 47]. In contrast, rationalization is the dictum of treating employees as human resources, striving for their optimal utilization to achieve economic goals.

6   SOCIAL LOGICS OF HUMANISTIC MANAGEMENT

6.1   Self-Actualization

On the organizational level, as a social logic applied to the workplace, the political logic of the humanist idea of individuation was identified as corresponding with the humanistic management concept of self-actualization at work [29, 30, 31]. Organizing for self-actualization involves provision of stable and secure working conditions, designed to support individual and collective self-determination, self-efficacy, and socio-moral development, rather than being determined by economic pressure and power struggles. In addition to individual autonomy and learning, this includes opportunities to cooperatively pursue personally significant and societally beneficial work tasks within participatory frameworks of workplace democracy and social and ecological sustainability [20, 34, 43, 44]. As a manifestation of the political logic of individuation, the normative ideal of self-actualization as a social logic of humanistic management is assumed to facilitate the progressive development and realization of higher-order needs for growth, belonging, prosocial impact, and self-transcendence on the individual level [16, 17]. Accordingly, a corresponding fantasmatic logic of radical humanist consciousness is a developmental orientation towards individual and collective psychological growth and evolution.

6.2   Community

A second social logic of humanistic management, referring to supportive relationships and interactions among employees, is found in the principle of community and collaboration towards the common good, included here as the practical application of a political logic of solidarity and a conceptual antipode to the social logic of competitive contests in the neoliberal workplace [35, 36, 37]. With regard to management practices emphasizing employee-oriented flexibility, sense of community shows in support for personalized and dissimilar but considered and fair treatment according to individual needs and situational requirements, emphasizing win-win strategies and generative resources, such as learning, positive work relationships, and a socio-morally supportive organizational climate [19, 20 ,22]. Communal forms of organizing are characterized by egalitarian and participatory structures and decision-making processes, allowing for the integrative balancing of pluralist interests and diverging goals of various stakeholders, such as employees, managers, investors, and customers, towards the genuine common good [34, 48]. Such an approach exposes and negates the progressively hegemonial (unchallenged and unquestioned) unitarist and economistic logic of managerialism, counterfactually posing as the embodiment of rationality and orientation toward the common good while advancing particular interests and power structures.

6.3   Transformation

Finally, a conceptual antipode to the third dimension of economic rationalization at the organizational level, the social logic of transformation is not aimed at efficiency-oriented (quantitative) "improvements" of the organizational status-quo, but rather directed towards emancipatory (qualitative) changes at the institutional level and in the workplace more

specifically [39, 40, 41]. Relating to the power of authorities and institutions, social transformation implies a transition towards alternative forms of organizing promoting humanist ideas of self-determination and self-actualization or individuation through autonomy and influence, participation and democratization [32, 33]. That is, transcending conventional approaches to organizational power and control through hierarchies, subtle coercion, manipulation, and subjectification or "governmentality". In the case of flexible workplace practices, transformative aspects have been discussed in the context of creating employee-oriented personalized organizational structures and processes [19, 20]. As a social logic, transformation recognizes, formulates, and communicates the need for radical social reforms of the institutions of capitalism. The latter, however, are also acknowledged as theoretically and practically impossible within the closed economistic ideological framework of neoliberalism.

7 FANTASMATIC LOGICS OF NEOLIBERAL SOCIAL CHARACTER

7.1 Success

Nested within an overarching political logic of individualism, and transported via the associated applied social logic of self-reliance, the self-focused neoliberal fantasmatic logic of success on the psychological level manifests as an individual character orientation towards outstanding achievements and perpetual performance, idealizing excellence and exceptionality, portrayed as necessary for overcoming the odds of the situation, such as the forces of social stratification and market dynamics [8, 11, 12]. Similar ideas have been formulated in the analysis of individualistic ideologies of self-willed wealth and self-willed success [21]. The broader theme has been previously described as a fantasmatic logic of growth and progress [1, 13]. In social character theory, the focus on success and excellence is a core feature of the most recently identified ego-oriented personality type of the neoliberal era [4, 5, 9], the flexible individual without any fixed attributes, deriving value only from its immediate actions and their utility to self and others within economic exchange relationships.

7.2 Superiority

Closely related to the fantasmatic logic of success, idolization of superiority, dominance or supremacy is a direct consequence of a political logic of competition, as implemented in the social logic of perpetual contests and tournament situation [46]. Superiority puts the focus on outperforming and dominating others, cultivating a winner-loser or superior-inferior mentality, where inequality and injustice are legitimized as results of individual differences in motivation, abilities, and efforts [9, 12, 13]. Neoliberal fantasies of superiority thus proliferate acceptance of status differences and social stratification, hierarchical order, and the (ever widening) gap in wealth and power between societal elites and underprivileged or marginalized social groups, also referred to as social dominance orientation [49]. Fantasies of superiority are an important aspect of the competitive marketing-oriented social character of advanced market-based capitalism, initiating the accelerated transition to the neoliberal era.

7.3 Submission

The third fantasmatic logic of submission represents the psychological relationship of the individual with institutions of power and authority, as manifesting from an overarching political logic of human instrumentality and implemented through the applied social logic of economic rationalization in contemporary workplaces [20, 26, 27]. The psychoanalytic term submission is used here with reference to the purported ideal of responding adaptively to

changing situations and market forces, successfully fulfilling social roles and obtaining wealth, status, and recognition by acknowledging, accepting, and succumbing to the order of political-socio-economic institutions, injunctions, and implications of neoliberal capitalism [10, 13, 49]. Psychodynamically, this type of active system justification and stabilization relates to the compliance, conformity, and obedience of the authoritarian social character of earlier stages of the historical development of capitalist societies within oppressive traditional feudal systems and modern dictatorships [4, 5]. In all cases, submission refers to the projection of own vital forces and attribution of omnipotence to a supreme and powerful institutional entity, either as the state or in market form.

8   FANTASMATIC LOGICS OF RADICAL HUMANIST CONSCIOUSNESS

8.1   Evolution

The self-focused dimension of the fantasmatic logic of radical humanism, corresponding with the social logic of self-actualization, as a manifestation of a political logic of individuation, can be expressed as an aspect of personal identity, oriented towards personal evolution, in the sense of organic psychological and spiritual development and growth, learning, maturation, and realization of higher-level consciousness [30, 32, 33]. For instance, an archetypal fantasmatic logic of evolution involves narratives of a personal journey, overcoming adversity, growth, self-insight, and homecoming. These developmental or transcendental imageries differ from performative or functionalistic neoliberal fantasies of success and growth, excellence, and exceptionality, mandated by social logics of self-reliance and "responsibilization" against the "odds of the market", serving functions of normalizing shifting increased risks and externalized adverse outcomes projected upon individual members of society [9, 21, 22]. In contrast, humanistic fantasies of evolution emphasize the realization of potentialities for full and comprehensive human development in its psychological, physiological, social, and spiritual dimensions [28, 32]. The normative humanist ideal of individual and collective evolution thus contrasts with the fantasmatic neoliberal logic of perpetual quantitative growth and "progress" towards economic criteria or other externally specified objectives.

8.2   Equality

Focusing on interactions and connections with other people, the humanist fantasmatic logic of equality on the individual level was chosen to represent correspondence with political and social logics of solidarity and community on the societal and organizational levels of analysis [35, 36, 37]. More specifically, affirmative attitudes towards equality constitute the psychological foundation of communal forms of organizing and solidarity towards other individuals and social groups. Importantly, equality is based on realizing the universality of human experience, dignity, and interconnectedness of all human being, as well as perspective-taking to promote equal rights and social justice for all [16, 17, 48]. Thus, equality is the psychodynamic antithesis to neoliberal fantasies of superiority and dominance, which serve to legitimize and normalize even the most unreasonable and intolerable degrees and manifestations of political-economic inequality and injustice [13, 49]. Insights into the need for equality, thus, can provide an antidote of humanist consciousness to the distorting and disfiguring dehumanizing psychological effects of economistic thinking.

8.3   Empowerment

The third distinguished component of radical humanist consciousness, the fantasmatic logic of empowerment relates to bottom-up actions directed toward authorities or institutions, aimed at resisting, challenging, and overcoming power structures, oppression, exploitation and inequality [50, 51]. As such, empowerment is conceptualized as the individual-level or psychological prerequisite of a social logic of institutional transformation as a manifestation of a broader political logic of emancipation [39, 40, 41]. Depending on the focus on structural and/or psychological aspects, empowerment can be operationalized in terms of necessary means, knowledge, sense of direction, self-efficacy and intentional efforts towards enacting social reforms and bringing about change. Thus, humanistic fantasies of empowerment are not limited to exceptional accounts of revolutionary mindset, but also comprise everyday actions of civil courage and disobedience, spontaneous moral outrage over unjust conditions, and resistance and refusal to participate in an oppressive and exploitative system [50, 51]. Alongside with an orientation towards personal evolution and equality of all people, empowerment to collectively overcome the limiting status quo, provides a third fantasmatic cornerstone of radical humanist consciousness, suggested as an antipode to the neoliberal social character.

9   EXPLORING MODEL DIALECTICS AND DYNAMICS

The suggested matrix model (2 x 3 x 3) is not devised as static, but intends to offer a dialectic and dynamic framework [52]. Beyond simplifying notions of isolated one-directional cause-and-effect relationships, however, the underlying socio-psychodynamic analysis assumes complementary and dialectic interdependencies, extending and cascading across systems-levels via bi-directional processes of top-down and bottom-up influence, intersecting within individuals as forms of "reciprocal determination" or "elective affinities", shaping social character structures, affective and behavioral patterns, and states of consciousness [1, 2, 3]. Starting point of this analysis on the societal level is a trinity of neoliberal political logics, prescribing individualism, competition, and instrumentality as the core principles governing advanced Western capitalist societies. For purposes of dialectic analysis, these economistic and socio-morally corrosive political logics are antagonistically counterbalanced on the societal level by radical humanist ideas of individuation, solidarity, and emancipation, representing relationships to self, others, and authority [20, 21]. On the organizational level, neoliberal political logics manifest in workplace practices embodying social logics of self-reliance, contests, and rationalization, whereas humanistic management practices emphasize oppositional principles of self-actualization, community, and transformation. These manifested social logics, in turn, mediate or channel the socializing forces of political logics from the societal level towards shaping unconscious (sub- or semi-conscious) psychodynamic imageries and narratives (fantasmatic logics) on the individual level (and vice versa). Based on psychoanalytic theory [2, 4, 5, 9], the latter are exemplified by archetypal neoliberal fantasies of success, superiority, and submission, which can be construed to reflect ego-oriented, marketing-oriented, and authoritarian components in social character theory. These complexes are theoretically opposed to antithetical ideals of humanist consciousness, which incorporates productive orientations towards personal evolution, equality, and empowerment. Dysfunctional tendencies of neoliberalism manifest severely in the sphere of work, notably, in management practices capitalizing on employee self-reliance, instead of job security and benefits, competing for jobs and pay on internal and external labor markets, and subjection to a multitude of interventions, from supervision and performance assessment, motivational trainings, to restructuring and change management. Importantly, these measured are primarily

aimed towards achieving economic objectives (e.g., efficiency, profits, shareholder value, market position) that are not first and foremost benefitting those who are mobilized (i.e., "instrumentalized") for purposes not in their own best interest [24, 25, 26]. Increasing hegemonic proliferation of a managerial ideology of "unitarism", notwithstanding, employment is characterized by inherent conflicts of interest on the societal (e.g., labor protection), organizational (e.g., participation), and individual (e.g., personal time) level. While, in theory, humanistic management can introduce additional layers of employee-oriented workplace flexibility, implementation of similar flexible work and employment practices within a neoliberal paradigm can provide a vehicle for economic rationalization and divisive labor-political power tactics [20, 21]. In further steps towards constructing a nomological network of established psychological constructs, economistic psychodynamics have been linked to states of social alienation from critical sociology, namely, self-estrangement, normlessness/isolation, and powerlessness. Their positive antipodes were connected to the domains of basic need fulfilment from humanistic social psychology, competence, relatedness, autonomy. Personal meaning was suggested as bipolar meta-dimension (meaninglessness vs. meaningfulness) of existential alienation, respectively, wellbeing. These additional considerations are summarized in the following.

10   CONSTRUCTING A NOMOLOGICAL NETWORK

On the individual level, higher-order political and social logics resurface in semi-, sub- and unconscious fantasies, narratives, and imaginaries, reflecting manifestations of either neoliberal ideologies or humanist ideas [1, 2, 7, 8]. Imageries of neoliberal logic are exemplified in fantasies of success, excellence and exceptionality, superiority or dominance, and submission or adaptativeness. The rugged individualism of complete self-reliance under uncertainty and competitive conditions demands perpetual success, performance and achievement, demonstrating invincibility against the hardship of the markets, dominating over others by outperforming them in tournament-like winner-looser contests [21, 22, 46]. At the same time, requiring submission under the "supreme rule" of the invisible hand of the economy and market institutions, fulfilling prescribed social roles, seeking status and affiliation [23, 24, 25]. On the other side of the ideological spectrum, humanistic imaginaries tend to emphasize oppositional narratives of evolution and growth, justice and equality, as well as empowerment and revolution [16, 17, 32, 33]. Importantly, these suggested labels are exemplary and preliminary. To strengthen the theoretical foundation of these fantasmatic aspects, relationships have been construed with conceptualizations of: (a) alienation from critical sociology; (b) basic psychological need fulfillment from humanistic social psychology; (c) psychological research on meaning in life and work, converging with aspects of workplace spirituality [7]. These are comprehensive and elaborated concepts, drawing on decades of theorizing and empirical research, and only some cursory notes on the suggested role of these concepts in relation to the ideological matrix model can be offered here.

10.1   Alienation

Alienation is a core concept of social critique, initially conceived as an objective state arising from material societal conditions, i.e., concentrated ownership of means of production and wage labor (the employment system), combined with interest-driven competitive accumulation of capital through extraction of "surplus value" from the labor process [4, 38, 42]. Subsequent research has adopted a subjective redefinition of alienation as a psychological response to adverse working conditions, such as highly repetitive tasks (division of labor) and lack of control or influence at work, converging with depression,

learned helplessness, and occupational burnout [53, 54, 55, 56]. One influential conceptualization distinguishes the dimensions of self-estrangement, normlessness, isolation, powerlessness, and meaninglessness [53, 55]. Self-estrangement refers to a loss of connection with one's "inner self", in the sense of personal congruence, authenticity, and agency, or the loss of a positive identity. Normlessness means lack or loss of shared prosocial norms and values, providing positive interactions and connection to other people. Isolation, feelings of being disconnected, separated and detached from social others, is subsumed here under the dimension of normlessness. Powerlessness captures lack of influence and control, feeling dominated by structural and social coercion and pressures [50, 51]. Meaninglessness, lack of purpose, orientation, and community, is included as a meta-dimension of alienation. While not exhaustive regarding the broader critical notion of alienation, these concepts partly correspond with analyses of the psychological pathology of advanced capitalist societies [4, 5, 6]. On the level of personal inquiry, they provide a starting point and structure to reflect about sources of alienation in one's own life, and how these relate to higher-level political and social logics, often adopted or accepted without questioning, including changes could to live more authentically up to the fulfillment of endorsed humanistic values and ideals.

10.2   Fulfillment

The fulfillment of human needs and development of human potentials are core ideals and aspirational goals of humanistic psychology. Numerous more or less convincing and complete taxonomies of human needs exist. Based on advances in social psychological self-determination theory empirically well-established are basic needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy [57, 58, 59]. In other words, this refers to experiences of personal self-efficacy and accomplishment; felt acceptance and connection in a social group; and having (some) influence over the environment, specifically, freedom from constraints over choosing and carrying out own, self-determined, intrinsically motivated actions. In decades of research, fulfillment of these needs has been shown to contribute to intrinsic (autonomous) motivation, psychological wellbeing, and functioning in different life domains (e.g., work, sports, health) [57, 59]. In the broader framework of self-determination theory, basic psychological needs theory is embedded into other sub- or mini theories, such as cognitive evaluation theory, organismic integration, and individual causality orientations theory [57]. For the present purpose, the fulfillment of psychological needs for experiencing competence, relatedness, and autonomy (self-efficacy, connection, discretion) is seen as the basis for experiencing meaningfulness [60]. Antipodes to self-, other-, and authority-oriented fantasies of success, superiority, and submission, fulfillment of needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy are construed as associated with humanistic fantasies of evolution, equality, and empowerment [1, 2, 7, 8]. Thus, these aspects of humanist consciousness are suggested as contraindicated to the corresponding alienating fantasies of the neoliberal social character. Personally, genuine fulfillment of needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy also provides a practical gauge and approach to structuring and evaluating own experiences, for instance, with regard to work, scholarship, or any other life domain or activity.

10.3   Meaning

Meaning, significance, or sense of purpose, is fundamental to comprehensive wellbeing, psychological functioning, and personality development [60, 61, 62]. Meaning has been defined as comprising sense of coherence (e.g., fit between own values, beliefs and needs and the situation), direction (e.g., ethical norms, moral values, developmental goals and opportunities), significance (e.g., benefitting and helping others, contributing to personal

important causes), and belonging (e.g., felt acceptance and inclusion in a social group), either with regard to life in general or a specific domain, such as employed work [60, 63]. Following self-determination theory, meaning relates to fulfillment of psychological needs for competence, relatedness and autonomy, triggering states of self-efficacy, social connection, and internal locus of control [57, 58, 59]. Meaninglessness, on the other hand, corresponds with dimensions of social alienation, i.e., self-estrangement, normlessness/isolation, and powerlessness [53, 54, 56]. Meaninglessness and -fulness thus reflect bipolar meta-dimensions of alienation, respectively, psychological fulfillment, considering that meaning is a complex experience, assuming mixed, hybrid or paradox forms of "existential involvement" [60, 62]. Personally, attempts to create meaning (e.g., by helping others, contributing to a socially important cause) and efforts to remove (ideological) barriers or obstacles to meaning (e.g., overcoming economistic thinking) thus are complementary strategies for cultivating humanistic consciousness as an emancipatory project.

11   CONCLUSION

The humanist principle of synergistic unity of insights regarding external and internal social realities emphasizes the complementarity of the (externally directed) denaturalization and critique of societal ideologies with (internally directed) critical self-reflection and psychological development. To conclude, the presented analysis intends to contribute to both, that is, clearing the mind and strengthening the soul, based on cultivating radical humanist philosophy to counteract socially corrosive tendencies of neoliberal economistic rationality. An important entrance point, figuratively speaking, a "portal" or "gateway" into the internal or mental ideological matrix, meaning is a central dimension of human experience and can be intuited and consciously reflected. The internal matrix refers to the personal mental (cognitive and affective) representation of the normative structure of concepts and descriptors, suggested here in more abstract and theoretical terms from an academic perspective. Certainly, actual experiences of meaning, fulfillment, and alienation include a fuller range of physical, psychological and spiritual aspects, which can help guiding decisions on how to adopt, enact, and promote humanist ideals on a personal level. Hopefully, the present preliminary elaborations are helpful in initiating and supporting such efforts.

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Forgiveness Meditation: Mindful Self-Healing

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Abstract

Rising like lotus blooms from bloodied war-torn devastation and muddied destitution of war crimes, divided societies and imperialistic ravages of Western colonialism, the two Indochina nations of Vietnam and Cambodia have shown amazing power of resurgence in less than 50 years. In many regional league tables, Vietnam notably, have even pulled ahead to show amazing achievements in GDP and education. What has happened seems like a distant past today. What are the unique cultural roots of this human resilience and socio-economic dynamism?

At an individual level, it is not often that post traumatic stress disorder of abused victims show their mental and emotional suffering. One can only note the behavioral signs which impede normal life and block success. Part of this presentation is to share with the audience the clues to help one recognize such indicative signs with the objective of supporting those who are suffering. There is an effective way to uproot the self-blame, anger and hatred associated with suppressed memories and to overcome the submerged negativities in subconscious minds of the afflicted. Forgiveness meditation is a mindful self-healing way of peaceful living, and when paired as an integral part Insight Meditation, the underlying benefits can empower the healed to progress onward to bigger success.

Real-life cases of two personalities who have taken different paths to demonstrate the power of mindful living towards human resilience and effective healing in the midst of bleak uncertainties are shared:

A. A Cambodian (multiple) noble peace prize nominee who demonstrated not only to his people, but also the world, to seek the only resource where we can find true peace and genuine understanding of truths… in our own hearts. Like many of his compatriots, his entire family, friends and disciples were massacred. A forest monk and meditation master turned peacemaker at the United Nations, he walked step by step bringing forth the spring of hope in the hearts of the shell shocked survivors. Tens of thousands wept as he chants the timeless metta verses of loving kindness and other traditional spiritual chants lost in the unspeakable sorrows of war and ideological conflicts.

B. A postwar Vietnamese case study of a globally successful social entrepreneur, she was left to fend for herself aged 16 years after her entire family was killed by foreign powers. Her social enterprise employed the war destitutes, former prostitutes and the disabled to produce quality handicrafts and furniture made from organic resources. Her voice is recorded here to illustrate her maxim of "one must forgive to move on but the painful lessons must never be forgotten" in order to sustain success.

Keywords: forgiveness, meditation, self-healing, mindfulness

"I Am Not What Happened to Me, I Am What I Choose to Become" Walking the Journey with Cambodian Wounded Healers

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Abstract

The term "wounded healer" was originally coined by psychologist Carl Jung (1951), who believed that individuals are compelled to treat clients because of the "wounds" they carry from their own earlier experiences. This paper will explore Jung's wounded healer concept through a trauma-informed lens, situated within a Cambodian context. Findings presented in this paper emerged from a larger body of work on the study of trauma and resilience, which was conducted in Cambodia. Perspectives captured in the data arose from 40 participant interviews of two distinct groups: 26 trauma survivors (aged 18-30) who had been supported by non-government organisations (NGOs) in Cambodia and 14 key informants, made up of social workers and psychologist employed working in the field of child protection. It is through these unique perspectives on recovery from trauma and what may compel an individual to work in the human services sector (often with other trauma survivors) that is presented in this paper. Not all participants working in the NGOs disclosed direct trauma histories during the interview process. However, in the context of modern-day Cambodia and in the aftermath of the genocide, it would be unusual to find a Cambodian who has not been touched by trauma in some way.

Key Words: Intergenerational trauma, Cambodia, Khmer Rouge, Wounded Healer, Meaning Making

Introduction

Cambodia is a country in Southeast Asia with a rich history. Since gaining independence from colonial France in 1953, Cambodia has undergone multiple restructurings in terms of power, governing bodies, population decline and growth and sources of funding for economic development. Yet to truly understand Cambodia's modern-day context, the country's history of violence must first be taken into account. In particular, the rise to power of the Khmer Rouge (KR) regime and the Cambodian genocide.

At first, the KR was seen by many as an honourable alternative to the Lon Nol government of the Khmer Republic, which was renowned for its corruption (Hansen, 2004; Kiernan, 1996). In reality, this regime, under the leadership of Pol Pot, pushed the country towards radical communism between 1975 and 1979 (Hansen, 2004). These practices would ultimately decimate the country's population and economy (Hansen, 2004). During the KR regime, an estimated 1.5 to 2 million Cambodians were killed, or roughly one quarter of the country's 1975 population of 7.8 million (Kiernan, 2008).

In post conflict societies such as Cambodia, researchers propose that a culture of violence will remain normalised if not addressed (van Schaack et al., 2011; Haleem, 2019). It has been argued that the violence and trauma collectively experienced by Cambodia as a nation during the KR era and the Cambodian Civil War, has normalised the presence of violence in the country, especially violence against women and girls (Brickell 2017; Eisenbruch, 2018).

Furthermore, the extensive amount of consequence-free violence at the hands of the KR with seemingly little justice, shaped a standard during the conflict era which extends into the present day. It is likely that this contributes to the ongoing physical and sexual violence against women and girls and violence against children being normalised (Brickell 2017; Eisenbruch, 2018). Violence against women and girls remains one of Cambodia's "most systemic and widespread human rights abuses" (Brickell, 2017, p.294). In 2013, a survey by the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) in collaboration with UNICEF Cambodia found that violence against children, regardless of sex or age, in Cambodia was widespread (MOWA et al., 2014; Brickell, 2017).

Furthermore, survivors of the KR era received little to no psychological support for the atrocities they endured (Miller et al., 2019), thus resulting in widespread intergenerational trauma. A common definition of intergenerational trauma is the transmission of historical trauma and its negative effects and impact across generations (Bombay et al., 2014). This susceptibility has been highlighted by numerous studies which have noted that the children of traumatised parents are more prone to being traumatised themselves, suggesting that trauma can be inherited (Field et al., 2013). This is because traumatised parents lose their ability to undertake their parental functions effectively (Field et al., 2013; Klaus & Vivodin, 2014). With over 60% of the country's population being born after the KR regime, research on the children of KR survivors provides significant evidence of secondary traumatisation among these children (Field et al., 2013).

It is therefore unsurprising that collective societal trauma has been transmitted to the younger generation in Cambodia during their childhood development (Breidenstine et al., 2011; Miller et al., 2019). This is evidenced by one study in Cambodia which noted that children of traumatised parents had problems coping with distressing situations (Baider et al., 2000), while another study found that the same population exhibited poor styles of attachment (Lyons-Ruth et al., 2005). These studies indicate that the trauma experienced by KR survivor parents is now being transmitted to their children (Field et al., 2013). Another study found that 14.2% of the

Cambodian population still suffers psychologically due to the trauma experienced during the KR regime (Miller, et al, 2019).

Another consequence of the KR regime can still be seen in the lack of mental health services in present-day Cambodia (Parry & Wilkinson, 2019). Many mental health professionals were killed during this period and the only psychiatric hospital was destroyed and never reopened (MacCabe, 2007). In modern-day Cambodia, services have been developed in a decentralised manner, with NGOs playing a vital role in rebuilding mental health services across the country (Parry & Wilkinson, 2019). However, treatment and psychological support services for trauma survivors remain limited due to a lack of funding (Aberdein & Zimmerman, 2015).

Additionally, mental health resources that are available are often through NGOs. However, despite efforts being made through a collaboration between the government and NGOs to educate mental health professionals, there continues to be a large skill shortage in the fields of psychology and social work (Stockwell et al., 2005; Parry & Wilkinson, 2019). NGOs in Cambodia tend to favour trauma-focused interventions and counselling to support their beneficiaries, although the qualifications for people working in this capacity vary widely (Aberdein & Zimmerman, 2015). As such, the field of mental health support is largely unregulated, with no national clinical guidelines for the treatment of mental disorders (Olofsson et al., 2018).

All these contextual factors in modern-day Cambodia, are impacted further by the fact that ongoing conflict, violence and suppression (often identified as originating during the KR era) creates vulnerabilities such as intergenerational trauma (Blackburn et al., 2010). Therefore, many of the population has been touched by trauma. This is especially relevant when trauma survivors choose to work with other survivors in a professional capacity (Linley et al., 2005).

"Wounded healer" is a term coined by psychologist Carl Jung (1951), who believed that individuals are compelled to treat clients because of the "wounds" they carry from their own earlier experiences. Some researchers note that there is the potential vulnerability for some wounded healers to be re-traumatised, as they might have difficulty with compassion fatigue as a result of their trauma (Zerubavel & Wright, 2012). Given Cambodia's traumatic history, there is considerable potential for re-traumatisation of mental health professionals working with trauma survivors in Cambodia. Furthermore, there is already research evidencing the re-traumatisation of court personnel working in prosecuting members of the KR regime (van Schaack et al., 2011).

The wounded healer archetype has been adapted in a variety of cross-cultural settings. Researchers Benziman, Kannai and Ahman (2012) examined cultural representations of the archetype and presented parallels between the Christian, Muslim, Jewish and African versions. This cultural perspective of healing through helping others was particularly relevant to this study. Jung (1951) believed trauma could be defined by unbearable "psychic pain" or anxiety. Trauma history and personal struggles create a certain level of complexity, particularly when navigating discussing incidences of trauma and abuse (Miles et al., 2020).

This study's aim was to contribute to the growing body of work in the field of resilience and recovery from trauma in Cambodia. It was hoped that the knowledge generated might be used to further strengthen programs working with trauma survivors in cross-cultural settings. To date, there has been limited research into wounded healers outside of western countries. This paper seeks to addresses some of these gaps in the literature, by exploring the wounded healer phenomena in Cambodia.

Methods

The overarching aim of this study was to understand what factors enable recovery from trauma (Wyatt, 2021a). This was done by collecting qualitative data that could help understand the lived experiences of 26 young people in Cambodia with extensive trauma histories. How did they manage this? What has helped them move forward and cope with events of the past? The narrative of 14 individuals working in the field of child protection with backgrounds in psychology and social work were also captured to add to the rich, complexity of the data, found in the narratives of the young people (Wyatt, 2021b).

An exploratory case study approach was adopted drawing on Grounded Theory (GT) to address the research questions. A GT approach was incorporated into data collection as it enables an inductive technique that involves highly descriptive accounts of social interactions, with a focus on participant meaning making and interpretation (Bryman, 2008; Hansen, 2006). Health researchers Floersch et al. (2010) found that integrating GT, thematic analysis and narrative methods was appropriate in case study research, as together they illustrate the "different interpretive scopes on meaning making" (p.182).

Recruitment of 26 young people that were supported by NGOs began in 2019 once ethics approval had been received (please see below). The main participating NGOs that the young people were recruited from are Hagar International (Hagar), This Life Cambodia (TLC) and Flame Cambodia (Flame). These organisations all work by supporting children and young people who have often experienced extensive trauma in their young lives (Wyatt, 2021a). Social workers at these organisations aided in the recruitment by identifying participants who they believed had done remarkably well, thus being resilient in the aftermath of a traumatic childhood. All the young people who were invited to participate in the study were aged between 18 and 30, who were no longer supported by the NGOs and appeared to be doing well in their lives. By using the participant's subjective viewpoint, it can be determined what factors contributed to their recovery from trauma.

Meaning is a challenging concept because of its subjectivity and frequent use. But it is this concept that both summarises the theoretical perspective and its application to the analysis of participant experiences. In GT, theories are "grounded" in the data, acknowledging sociocultural context (Gibson & Hartman, 2014). Therefore, GT becomes a flexible method that does not dictate the data collection methods or techniques used in a study but provides alternate vantage points through a constructivist perspective (Chun Tie et al., 2019).

Additionally, 14 key informant interviews were undertaken with individuals working in the field of child protection. These consisted of managers, psychologists and social workers within the three main participating NGOs as well as leaders and mental health workers in additional international non-government organisations (INGOs). Nine of the 14 key informant interviews were conducted with experts from four INGOs. The key informant interviews with NGO/INGO staff were included to further situate the data collected from the resilient young people by gathering higher policy level and context-specific information about Cambodia and its child protection sector. This enabled a secondary perspective on the recovery from trauma to emerge and contribute a different lens to that of the young people who were supported by the NGOs.

Efforts were taken to ensure the credibility of the interview data collected by ensuring that all participants felt at ease. The most critical consideration was the wellbeing of participants during and after the interview process, as there was potential to re-traumatise participants when they were disclosing their story. As such, there were no direct questions that asked participants to recount their trauma. The researcher is a member of the Australian Association of Social

Workers and bound by an ethical code of conduct for research. This study applied for a high-risk ethics review, which was essential, given the sensitive nature of the topic and the vulnerability of the participants. Ethics approval was granted by Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee and the Cambodian Ministry of Health in 2019 (Wyatt, 2021b).

Through the individual narratives of the young people who participated in this study, we are able to see how their different types of behaviours, motivations and attitudes exist in specific contexts, which in turn influence their collective desire to be understood. To protect the identity of these young people who shared their stories and informed this study, the findings below will identify them as 'participant'. Similarly, for the key informants working in the child protection sector, they will be identified as 'informant' in the findings below. This will distinguish between the narratives of the two groups, whilst maintain anonymity of all who shared their stories.

Findings Snapshot: The Narratives of the Young People

All of the young people in this study were employed (even those who were full-time students) and had achieved a certain level of financial independence. Those with living parents were even able to contribute to their families' household incomes. Importantly, employment opportunities for the young people gave them more than just financial independence; it also gave them a sense of purpose. This sense of purpose from employment was reinforced by their working with others, as most were working directly with trauma survivors in different capacities, thus becoming wounded healers and enabling this sense of purpose to develop.

Many participants would often find meaning in their lives from working with others who had similar experiences to their own. One participant, who became pregnant at age 14 as a result of rape by an older man and now has a 10-year-old child. She is now employed at a boarding house for pregnant young women and has found meaning for her life there, as many of the women she supports are pregnant teenagers with histories of sexual abuse. The pregnant women at this boarding house are encouraged to share their experience with both the women boarding there and the workers. As this participant explains:

> *"We always encourage them [the beneficiaries at the boarding house], as they have a difficult life. Sometimes I feel very hard too because of my life. But we spend time; we motivate them to keep going; 'You are good, Mum,' not keeping them alone, encourage them to share their issue so that we can support each girl throughout the program. We need to know what they want to do in the future, it is easy for me to help them because they know I understand. If they keep secret [about the abuse], we could not help."*

A common theme for many of these young people was that most of them chose professions where they felt like they were giving back to society. Even the young people who were not directly employed helping others, did so as volunteers, in addition to their busy paid work and family commitments:

> *"I work at a restaurant, but I am a volunteer youth for helping poor families and orphans. I do volunteer work for Mercy Youth organisation."*

> *"I help the children who are parentless in my community to a house to get a care from an old person. We take care for them with food, bathing and bringing them to the kid school in the community."*

Some of the young people's paid work was with orphans; others were employed in a professional capacity as doctors, psychologists, teachers or midwives. Many expressed

concerns over their conflict between being a mentor for others and keeping their personal stories secret and safe from outside gossip and judgment. Even when working with young people who had similar trauma histories, many struggled to open up to the younger traumatised individuals, if they were able to open up at all, due to community stigma they had previously faced. One participant who was trafficked as a child for labour and who is now a qualified and experienced psychologist, described this type of conflict when he spoke of his work with a young male sexual abuse survivor:

> "...in Khmer culture, when the people know well about you, they will look you in another different way. As an example, I am a mentor for them if they know me well; they know my weakness; they might be, you know, have some ideas about me, not listen. You know like to have some idea about me. That is why you know we have some boundaries to protect ourselves also in this case."

Many were working directly with young trauma survivors, yet interestingly, none of them spoke of their work as triggering their personal early traumas. In fact, many spoke proudly about how through helping others they also would become strong themselves in the process:

> "The big dream that I made through strength, before I had thought about myself to be strong. I think about what and who has helped me to finish, I think like that. [The NGO] helped me, because I am poor. When I finished, I continue to help the poor, I think like this, so it makes me strong. I help others when I success, like this in my mind."

Finding meaning in life is a strong theme that emerged through the narratives of the young people across all groups. For many, finding resilience in their lives after trauma also meant constructing meaning and understanding of past traumatic events, relationships and struggles. As one participant illustrated this in his reflections on his life:

> "When I look back myself, I can see things, a lot of struggles that I have passed by. I'm not a rich one, but I can say I'm a satisfied person. I have no parents, but I have my parents-in-law who love me and treat me like a son. My foster parents, they treat me like the youngest son in the family. I have kids. I have what is called family. I know the word family well. I know who a father is and what father means because now I'm a father. So, I'm happy with that. I'm not too proud, but happy. Honestly. I'm happy. I want the others and the next generation to feel just like me."

At the heart of many participant accounts was their coming to terms with what had happened to them and understanding that their traumatic experiences helped them develop inner strength. These young people expressed a desire to help others and wanted to share their lived experiences of overcoming hardship with others in similar circumstances:

> "If I have money, or some fund, I want to run a helping center for orphans or old people. I want to share my happiness and my care with them."

Many survivors felt that it was through their lived experiences that they had something to contribute to Cambodian society. One participant described why she chose to study a Master's in Public Health with a scholarship offered to her by a university in China:

> "Now, I'm trying to work hard in my studies so one day, I can develop my country by creating a good policy. I don't know in what area, but because I have passed many situations like abusing, scared situation, I want to join in a place where I can help to develop my country."

Findings Snapshot: The Narrative of the NGO Key Informants

The role of the social worker was identified by some informants as another important relationship for building a sense of connection with trauma survivors in recovery. However, many spoke of qualified social workers opting to work in finance instead of pursuing a profession that is notoriously hard work and underpaid. This informant explained:

> *"The numbers of social work students have increased, but somehow in the job market when they graduate, they start work in finance for example. It is quite difficult, because people sometimes think of money … Because there are a lack of professionals and lack of accreditation, which is why we are working with the government to ensure that people will be recognise by the government."*

However, almost all key informants interviewed had an academic background of social work and/or psychology, which was evident from their language in the interviews. Additionally, a strong focus on human rights and helping others was present among both cohorts of participants and informants, as informants discussed what drew them to this field in the first place, as this social worker described:

> *"The best thing is that we can do is help people. My family said, 'Why you work with the people who are in jail because they are bad?' I disagree. Many people are thinking about white paper, a good paper, which has not had any pain or ink on it, and they can draw anything. But for this paper, clients sometimes has a lot of ink or pain; so it's messy. It is difficult to change or make it to other things. That is the reason why I work with them. I would like to change the people who make the bad actions, to good actions in the recent time."*

This desire to instigate change and advocate for their beneficiaries was a strong theme, as were the challenges of the social work profession as a whole:

> *"As we know that being a social worker is not easy, but we all are working from our heart. It needs more commitment to work with some clients that have aggressive behaviour because they have many abuses from the community, the family, from the abusers. But we want to have our community, being not abused in Cambodia. So this what we do in social work."*

Discussion

The long-lasting influence of the KR continues to impact the health and wellbeing of young Cambodians born well after the regime fell, which is evident in the accounts of the young people. Some spoke directly of their family's collective grief and the trauma which they experienced during the KR and afterwards. Although all the young people were one generation removed, their parent's generation are all survivors of this period of extreme societal unrest. Some participants shared that there was a sense of deep silence surrounding the trauma of their parent's generation, which they felt caused a disconnection within the family between the two generations. Furthermore, the narratives show that the transference of trauma and learned behaviour from one generation to the next continues to play out well into adulthood. Several of the young people made this connection between their behaviour and their family history.

Through the research process and interviewing the young people about their life stories, it became apparent that the sharing of one's story is an unmet need in their local communities. Many had commented that this was the first time they had shared their whole story. Recreating one's story through retelling or creating a new story may offer survivors transformational value

(Gagnon & Novotny, 2020). Deconstructing one's history may also help with the reconstruction of one's identity, as was evidenced by the number of young people who were wounded healers and working with other trauma survivors, actively sharing their stories with the young people with whom they were working. These stories are more than just trauma and abuse narratives: instead, they are stories of hope, love, courage and personal growth. Through this reconstruction, participants created meaning from their trauma and their journey in life.

Researchers have long identified meaning making as critical for trauma survivors in their recovery (Bettelheim, 1960; Frankl, 1971; Levi, 1987). Meaning making is the process of how individuals construct meaning and make sense of life events including trauma. This term is used widely in constructivist approaches to counselling and psychology, having been originally coined by Viktor Frankl (1971), a psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor. Since its conception, meaning making has always been a strong theme in accounts of survivors and their stories of recovery from trauma (Bettelheim, 1960; Frankl, 1971; Levi, 1987).

The data captured in this study through both participant and key informant interviews, indicated that recovery from trauma and resilience came from having a sense of belonging through social connectedness and community, helping to facilitate a sense of meaning in one's life. By creating survivor-led programs that empower other survivors to own their story, NGOs working in the child protection space may provide a sense of purpose through education and vocational training programs. The findings also pointed towards the significance of role model encouragement, which many of the young people found through the support of the staff working at the NGOs. This positive reinforcement by a trusted adult often resulted in pivotal turning points in the young people's recovery.

The young people's understanding of their own personal effectiveness was informed by their sense of belonging, wellbeing and accomplishments. This finding is supported by Carver et al's (1993) early hypothesis that trauma survivors may develop self-confidence through gratifying work, which thereby becomes a self-perpetuating resource of resilience and meaning making. These internal attributes were fostered by various factors. Their perspectives on life and how they created meaning was informed by cultural traditions, faith, beliefs and behaviours. Their sense of personal effectiveness was often further cultivated through giving back and working with others, thereby making them into wounded healers.

Central to Jung's interpretation is that people who have experienced trauma would transform to be enlightened by the experience in order to help others (Jung, 1961). For the young people interviewed that did not have strong family support post-trauma, the power to heal others provided them with the catalyst to change and overcome their own wounds. As it was largely the orphaned participants that were wounded healers, it could perhaps be seen as a solution in constructing a hybrid identity. Meshing the old with the new, an orphan once rejected by their community, becomes a healer in that same community many years later. Researchers have found that in surviving trauma and later helping others, a wounded healer essentially becomes the bridge between the "worlds of illness and wellness" (Miller et al., 1998, p. 125). Thus, by entering the helping professions, these young people who lacked family support, were able to create a means of healing themselves and others.

Also aligning with Jung's wounded healer interpretation, is that for many of the participants in this study, they may have developed the resilience useful for professional practice recognised by other researchers (Rajan-Rankin, 2014). A common theme among authors who present cultural interpretations of the wounded healer archetype is the drive to relieve the suffering of others (Benziman, et al., 2012; Christie & Jones, 2014), affording them transformative powers

(Jung, 1961). For the survivors in this study, the NGOs played a pivotal role in their recovery through providing advancement opportunities and social connectedness, that in some cases provided the very framework for working with other trauma survivors. This is consistent with the past 20 years of research into trauma, mental health and resilience, all pointing in one direction: that caring relationships may facilitate the creation of meaning and sense of purpose post-trauma that leads to resilient behaviours (Carver, et al, 2003; Linley, 2005; Rajan-Rankin, 2014; Miles, 2020; Wyatt, 2021a).

Conclusion

Cambodia is still challenged by high rates of poverty, marginalised groups, economic challenges and a range of cultural issues such as gender-based violence. Importantly, it appears that the country still struggles to emerge from the shadow of the KR, the effects of which are still felt in the country's youngest generation due to intergenerational trauma. The way the young people interpreted the meaning of their lived traumatic experiences could have given them understandings, interpretations and reasons for behaving in a particular way. Notably, many of them appeared to create meaning through their lives by recontextualising their trauma histories into stories of resilience and hope, which they used as motivation for their working with others, thereby becoming Jungian wounded healers.

Acknowledgements

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Mindful Partnering and Lesser Biological Stress

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Abstract

Mindful partnering is a newly conceptualized construct to measure interpersonal mindfulness in the relationship with one's intimate partner. Mindful partnering is characterized by mindful awareness toward one's partner as well as compassion and acceptance of one's partner. We hypothesized that higher levels of mindful partnering would be associated with lesser physiological reactivity to relationship conflict (i.e., less biological stress during relationship conflict). Seventeen couple pairs (N= 34) visited the laboratory to complete several tasks, including questionnaires and a conflict discussion in which they discussed the largest areas of conflict in their relationship. Participants had their Respiratory Sinus Arrythmia (RSA), a measure of nervous system activation, measured during the baseline period and conflict discussion. Participants completed the Mindful Partnering Measure (MPM) to measure the extent to which one demonstrates mindful partnering in their relationship with their romantic partner, including the subscales of MPM- Mindful Awareness and MPM-Acceptance/Compassion. Regression analyses suggested that MPM-Mindful Awareness significantly predicted partner's greater RSA, indicating that 9% of the variance in RSA was accounted for by partner's MPM- mindful awareness (a small effect), suggesting greater relaxation and a less pronounced stress response. These results suggest that when one's partner is fully present and attentive, it may relieve the potential stress of marital disagreement. Being present with full attention in this way may soothe a partner's nervous system by creating a feeling of being fully listened to and understood in the context of conflict.

Keywords: Mindfulness, Marriage, Marital Conflict, Respiratory Sinus Arrythmia, Physiological Reactivity

ROAD TO DAMASCUS: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY ON TRANSFORMATION STORIES OF FORMERLY CONVICTED NOTORIOUS CRIMINALS ADHERING TO CHRISTIAN FAITH

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ABSTRACT

Serial killers, rapists, terrorists, and other notorious criminals are often labeled "criminals forever." Recovery for this group is unusual, according to post-positivist studies. However, positive spiritual psychology says differently. In Christian theology, Saul, a notorious mass murderer, went to Damascus and became Paul, a righteous man. Hence, this study unraveled the breakthrough stories of real-life Pauls, or formerly convicted notorious criminals before, during, and after adhering to the Christian faith. Through narrative inquiry, ten purposively selected samples were assessed through Psychology's triad of affect, behavior, and cognitions (ABC). Thematic analysis revealed that participants were chronic malefactors with vile and remorseless compulsions for victimization before adhering to the Christian faith. Egotistical convictions drove their actions. Uniformly, a similar epiphany occurred through their spiritual encounters with the Divine. From then on, they insouciantly live with rectitude, compassion, and selfless credo, which is deemed undoable with their willpower but doable with God's might. The revolutionary study reveals that individuals repented, resisted compulsions, repaired harms, and recovered right after being changed, contrary to nonlinear relapses of recidivists. The study highlights the penumbra that "change can happen even to the worst of the wicked." No matter how notorious one can be, the power of spirituality can transcend beyond human understanding onward the inner workings of the mind, body, and spirit. Based on these results, the research suggests studying Quantum Change, an underutilized concept in psychology. Still, it has been linked to effective holistic transformations.

KEYWORDS: Transformation, Quantum change, epiphany, notorious criminals, divine, spirituality

1   INTRODUCTION

Former prisoners or ex-convicts are sometimes branded as "once a criminal, always a criminal" (Maruna et al., 2006). For those guilty of notorious crimes such as murder, felonious offenses, major robbery, and rape, expressions such as "Hopeless Sinner," "Evil," and "Rot in Hell" are intensified (Terry & Presser, 2002). These humiliations continue when they are freed. As a result of their horrible crimes, they are constantly subjected to judgment, discrimination, and rejection, earning them the moniker "hopeless cases of humanity" (Piquero et al., 2015).

Notorious criminals are renowned for being the most despicable and vile individuals society has ever seen (Slack, 2016). According to criminal psychology studies, 64% of ex-convicts frequently succumb to recidivism or backslide parolees during the post-sentencing period (National Institute of Justice, 2019). Supporting neuroimaging studies further abolishes ex-convicts' capacity for change. This is because criminality is deep-seated in the amygdala's imprint for impulsivity which is rampant among sociopaths (a term used to describe serial criminals) who have grown accustomed to chronic transgression. Throughout history, even films, literary works, and books depicting heinous criminals, psychopaths, and notorious offenders are unified by the idea that their kind is beyond redemption.

Contrary to most evidence, there are instances when criminals continue to live a reformed life after being released. There are special inquests when the most notorious offenders undergo metamorphosis, showing that even terrible criminals may undergo significant behavioral change.

Among all groups that provide rehabilitation for former criminals, spiritual institutions are the most frequently mentioned "home" for guiding the "lost" ones back to a respectable existence (Johnson, 2021). Many studies associate such "change" with spiritual "redemption." This has been studied in conjunction with a life of transformation centered on features such as repentance for one's sins, transforming one's old identity, and living a new and meaningful life (Garnefski et al., 2001; Magai and Haviland-Jones, 2002). According to studies conducted in spiritual settings, transgressed individuals have developed the capacity for transformation as a prosocial process. This entails reconstructing one's internalized life story to achieve future goals, resulting in a positive self-concept connected to a higher being-given purpose. More so, religion may operate as both a catalyst for and a means of maintaining change. Specifically, that transformation occurs when a person experiences a life-altering event and questions what they have done. At this point, reflection and self-evaluation become necessary for spiritual or personal development (Göbbels et al., 2012). This establishes how religious organization or spiritual belief system is often employed as a "key" in the process of desistance.

While several studies on transformation have been conducted, many of them fall short of explaining how a debauched and corrupted person might effortlessly transition into a principled, law-abiding, and ethical citizen. The following gaps are detected independently.

First, cognitive psychological theories justify criminal behavior by emphasizing individual peculiarities, inherited characteristics, and an inability to socialize. The conclusion is that crime is a psychiatric condition, and criminals are mentally ill individuals. However, studies such as Macions (2002) indicate that the most severe crimes are perpetrated by individuals with standard psychological profiles rather than those with aberrant psychological features. In particular, documentaries, case studies, inspiring anecdotes, and testimonials cannot discount instances in which criminally convicted ex-prisoners have been rehabilitated and gone on to become preachers upon their release, despite getting no medical care.

Second, despite the overwhelming evidence that religious membership and practice assist individuals jailed and living in the community, the present systematic analysis provides

little insight into the communal narrative of change among ex-prisoners of horrific crimes. More so, while empirical "evidence-based" policy continues to be popular in criminal psychology, the complexities of public debate on spirituality demonstrate their apparent flaws in an age of "punishment imperative." This frequently overlooks the sentiments of those concerned with social harm and social control, leaving a vacuum for multidimensional realities (Bounds, 2022). Because experiences are portrayed paradigmatically rather than introspectively, the capacity to stress moral issues is limited. While much research has concentrated on determining how criminal offenders can abstain from illegal activity and how they have transformed to do so (Laub & Sampson, 2001; Maruna, 2001; Matsueda & Heimer, 1997), understanding the factors that contribute to transformation is critical for developing treatments that prevent re-offending, and this is supposed to be delved deeply through narratives, which are rarely investigated.

Thirdly, despite the rapid growth of research on desistance and abstinence (as transformational elements), it remains a contentious subject. Thus, the importance of either individual characteristics (Maruna, 2001; Shover, 1996) or social processes (Laub & Sampson, 2001; Matsueda & Heimer, 1997) in the desistance process left room for psycho-spiritual operations. This is consistent with the view that spirituality as a cathartic intervention is occult or supernatural. However, there are claims that this is incorrect, and narratives may help reveal the change in how individuals traveled in their way. Finally, there has been little study on repentant criminals who have made extensive prosocial reforms instead.

This introduction asserts that current literature on criminal behavior does not incorporate spiritual faith into the remedial equation for the offender's behavior. More so, constructivism's strategy of focusing on life experiences can assist in identifying how former notorious criminals have successfully navigated their new existence. Given the existing literature vacuum, this research aims to analyze cases illustrating how Christian faith adherence might aid persons convicted of heinous crimes successfully reform. As psychosocial and environmental factors contribute to desistance (Göbbels et al., 2012), faith may be critical in interacting with psychological and social dynamics. This research demonstrates how involvement in faith groups transformed the horrifyingly wicked personality into something virtuous. Similarly to how a legendary mass murderer named Saul traveled the road to Damascus and was spiritually transformed into Paul, stories of reformed notorious criminals will serve as a contemporary ground for how transformed criminals took the spiritual highway less traveled to live a life of redemptive transformation with the presumptive coalescence of genuine transformation toward a holistic understanding of modern-day psycho-spiritual restoration.

1.1   Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the study was to generally explore the life stories of formerly convicted notorious criminals who credit their transformation within the bounds of the Christian faith. With this, the research aims to address the following specific questions,

1. What do the stories of formerly convicted notorious criminals reveal about their lives before adhering to the Christian faith?
2. What do the stories of formerly convicted notorious criminals say about the transformation that occurred when they adhered to the Christian faith?
3. What do the stories of formerly convicted notorious criminals convey after sustaining their Christian faith?

1.2   Theoretical Framework

The research is founded on humanistic theories of behavior transformation, such as the notion of guilt appeals and Congruence. Internal pressure, responsibility, and a distinction between the atrocity of a deed and the suffering psychological-emotional reaction to illegal activity are all part of the theory of guilt appeals. First, the theory of guilt appeals is intended to reduce pain by including regret aspects that assist individuals in abandoning their moral depravity. This emphasizes the concepts of accountability, guilt, penance, and regret since they are all integral parts of moral recovery. Second, Carl Rogers's theory of Congruence (1959) explains that people have a single underlying motivation. This is the drive to maximize their potential and achieve the maximum possible degree of 'human-beingness.' Carl Rogers thought that a person must be true to their values and ideas to reach self-actualization. The degree to which the self is consistent relies on (a) the motivations for one's identity commitments (i.e., pressure vs. choice) and (b) the substance of the identity-defining goals (i.e., extrinsic versus intrinsic). This also refers to an individual's belief in controlling their character, conduct, and strength (or environment control).

Additionally, it is fueled by the determination and tenacity of people seeking a stronger sense of self via character development. Both theories may illuminate the relationship between Christian faith adherence and adult criminal behavior, assuming that spirituality and human motivation are inextricably linked in synchronic and diachronic ways. Both also emphasize the relevance of individual viewpoint, thinking that individual choices contribute to character development and behavioral stability. The two theories may be combined to account for the participants' life stories of transformation in chronological order (before, during, and after) of Christian faith adherence.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1.   Research Design

This study uses narrative inquiry to obtain and assess descriptions of people's experiences and perceptions. These strategies generally focus on people's lives as told by themselves. The researcher purports this method is appropriate since it is about how people make sense of their experiences via chronicle encoding. Participants will help the researcher make sense of the past, present, and future in a fluid and dynamic condition. It situates the analytic framework in which the researcher evaluates anecdotes offered in the Christian faith shared by formerly convicted notorious criminals, allowing for varied readings and conclusions. These include the story's structure, goal, content, and production. Distinguishing themselves from endless relativism, first-person narratives and moral arguments show the rich textures of change (Shi, 2021). This follows the premise that individual transformation cannot only be defined by institutional violations and recidivism statistics, but introspective accounts of their testimony can explain it.

2.2.   Sampling Method

Purposive sampling is used to recruit participants. Participants are chosen based on their suitability as data sources for the research. The search is focalized on tracking former criminals' testimony of spiritual rehabilitation linked to charity organizations, religious affiliations, chaplain managements, testimonial films, and other publicized accounts of villain-turned-righteous persons. Ten participants are required under narrative inquiry literary criteria (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014); hence it is followed. Participant Qualification Assessment (PQA) is also conducted. This is a pre-interview conducted with prospective referrers consisting of closed-ended questions to evaluate the suggested eligibility of participants based on life transformation.

2.3.   Context and Participants

The sample should consist of 10 people who meet the following requirements: (1) Involved in a notorious crime (Operationally defined as horrible criminalities such as murder, violent and massive robberies, and rape, which may appear with other dangerously immoral impulses); (2) Criminal background dating back over five years; (3) Evident Adherence to Christian Faith; (4) Recommended by reputable sources (advocacy organizations, sectarian groups, charitable clusters, evangelical media coverage sites, etc.) and; (5) 5 years of righteous living and life transformation.

The five-year criminal history does not necessarily imply five years of total offenses. It pertains to the character of the person's illegal doings, which might manifest in different criminal behaviors other than the horrible acts they may have been accused of legally (Hagan & Daigle, 2018). This is categorized to ensure the participant is notorious. More so, studies show that the five-year period before decent living is when a constant desire to do "good" is established and exercised (LeBel & Maruna, 2012), which is why it is included in the criteria. Because the duration of incarceration is based on legislative procedure rather than psychological reasons, there is no set restriction on the years of jail. Participants were asked to show a copy of their Detention/Confinement certificate or any other evidence indicating they have been previously convicted. Participants' records will be thoroughly questioned from collective reports and recounts of referrers under the second, third, fourth, and fifth criteria (PQA).

2.4.   Research Tool Instrument

Because the researcher intends to analyze the participant's "entire narrative" (Cassell, 2021), the current study uses semi-structured in-depth interviews. It uses a life-story approach to get a deeper understanding of transformation experiences. This method will help comprehend the rehabilitated criminal's life history and crucial circumstances that impacted their route (Atkinson, 1998). This interview guide will help the researcher collect data and allow the participant to offer other subjects of discussion (Charmaz, 2006). The interview guide delves on the basic overview of their experience (e.g., how does your life transformation occur?) and specific chronological occurrences on how Christian faith changed their journey (e.g., can you describe what happened in detail? Was your behavior changed as a consequence of your conversion? What has changed since?). The tool consists of three major research questions with various follow-up questions across the three phases of before, during, and after. Interviews last 45-90 minutes but might be extended depending on the complexity of the question. This interview will elicit attendees' general observations, impressions, and life transformation stories. All interviews will be digitally recorded and verbatim transcribed by the researcher.

2.5.   Data Gathering

This section will detail the data collecting techniques, including preliminary inquiry, criteria sourcing, informed consent for critical participants, purposive sampling, data generation (including one-on-one interviews), and data evaluation. Data collection will begin after obtaining ethical clearance for the study topic and approach. Potential participants will be sourced via spiritual/evangelical/ministry/church foundations where ordinary rehabilitated offenders belong or are linked (Garvey, 2006; Lacey, 2013; Green, 2013). The preliminary inquiry asks these organizations whether they know the target participants who meet the first (incarceration), second (criminal background and conviction), and third (apparent life transformation) criteria. Document requests and informed consent will be delivered via email to interested participants after completing the questionnaire. Suppose the participant is recommended informally or the referrer is not a member of any formal organizations, the referrer will be asked to adjudicate formality.

2.5.1. Making Data: 1-1 interviews

Rehabilitated offenders will be interviewed individually and in phases. This step involves gathering stories, analyzing them for critical elements (e.g., time, place, and narrative), and recounting them chronologically (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). The gathering is a three-step process that combines the storyteller's narrative schema, prior knowledge and experience, and cognitive processes to generate a story that increases interpersonal understanding.

2.5.2. Data Mining

This section explains the six phases of data analysis, including utilizing tools and programs and analyzing data.

- Phase 1. Code narrative blocks - The researcher will code inductively the tale components obtained during interviews;
- Phase 2. Life Event Code - The researcher will gather transcriptions and classify them based on similarities and differences. Codes for each "life event" will be created and nested in chronological order from before, during, and post-phases.
- Phase 3. Story Structure - The researcher will now compare and contrast how diverse study participants constructed their accounts about transformation. Similarities and differences might be identified. Differentiations may be further coded for analysis.
- Phase 4. To compare stories, the researcher will read narrative blocks in their entirety while coding for each unique tale structure. The NVivo program was used to undertake cross-tabulation analysis among persons in codes, ideas, and notes (Hutchison, Johnston, & Breckon, 2010).
- Phase 5. Telling the Main Story - A core narrative incorporating participant commonalities for each life event will be constructed after thoroughly researching each story block. Findings from the study base may be incorporated into a single core narrative. This also includes a comparison of different narratives of a life event. Participants' perspectives were combined in a unified story of Christian faith transformation.

2.6.   Member Checking

Since reliable findings are the core of high-quality qualitative research, the researcher will engage in member checking to aid with data interpretation and formulation. Participants examined the data or results to verify they were correct and compatible with their personal experiences. Members of the checking group include 1) Narrative Inquiry Research Expert 2) An NVIVO Certified Expert; 3) The Respondents.

2.7.   Ethical Considerations

Informed permission, voluntary engagement, non-maleficence, and relevance were required. Informed consent entails the participant understanding the assessment's purpose, how the results will be used, any potential negative repercussions, and who will access the findings. The research ensures that identifying information is not exposed in reports or articles. Participants were allowed to quit at any time without compromising future participation in services or the current program or links with any of the participating researchers or research groups. Aside from that, the researcher only examine components pertinent to the study.

3. RESULTS

3.1.   Before: *Saul, stories of being lost:*

3.1.1. *Criminal Histories: The Making of a Notorious Criminal*

The criminal histories of the participants are elaborated per their affect, behavior, and cognitive reminiscence of their past self. These crimes are published in a newspaper, featured in national television, and documented by TV channels and documentaries. For instance, Ron, Jose, Contis, Bruno, and Norman are famed murderers and serial killers. They came

from varied socio-psychological and demographic backgrounds, and they treat their killings in varied nous. Contis, a serial killer, says his crimes are based on a lack of guidance which led him to massacre a family: *"My parents left me to live in the streets in the crimino, so one day, I massacred an entire family out of wrath and vengeance, a void I cannot fill."* Other crimes were also recorded, including kidnapping, abduction, terrorist involvement, and community violence. For instance, KC, Von, and Darwin are included in a gang and syndicate-related mass robberies and schemes. Before being part of the Christian Community, they were in gangs, hiding, and chased by national and international courts. Another two of the participants, Lem and Arthur, are known for rape cases. As Arthur narrated, *"I was a delinquent, and I was in conflict with a policeman; I trespassed in his house one night to kill him, but since he was not there, I raped his daughter."*

Their stories also reveal how participants gradually advance from minuscule offenses and lead to severe malefactions. The most often cited reason for committing a crime was substance use (including alcohol) and drugs and alcohol use. Peer pressure has been connected to criminal conduct; however, it is not the main reason most commit crimes. Their story also reveals how childhood maltreatment, trauma, and parental neglect have been linked to the increased likelihood of sociopathy, violence, and aggressive tendencies in adulthood. For instance, Lem's narrative highlights 'vengeance'. He believes that his repressed feelings should be compensated by another crime towards the same kind, particularly women since he was molested as a child by his aunt.

Most of the participants did not feel any remorse or fear. *"As long as I have the pleasure of the flesh, I was a slave to it with no remorse,"* Arthus said. *"I honestly did not feel anything then. I'm just like a lifeless person."* Said Bruno. *"Until the fun lasts, I'm still not satisfied,"* Von said. More so, Lem, the serial rapist, also uncovers from his perspective that behind the façade of a remorseless criminal lies a forlorn vulnerable man filled with agony. He said, *"My mind seemed to be heading for suicide. I tried to hang myself because I did not know what to do with my life."* Bruno also states how he was like a monster. *"After every rape, it was as if my self-esteem was rising, and I was being moved to rape women more and more."* Some of the participants' judgments are clouded due to an extreme desire for retribution. For example, KC reasoned that *"What I had in mind was their fault, and I am only an agent of justice."* Another participant added, *"I blame my sin on others. It is always the fault of others but for me."* Their behaviors were also objectively wicked and their thoughts are wired to villainous identities.

3.2.   During: *The Encounter at Damascus*
3.2.1.   *Epiphany Stories: "Miraculous, Swift and Life-changing encounters."*

It is a radical finding that quantum change or the sudden epiphanies that lead to awakening for transformation is present among participants. The stories of epiphany happen through varied sensational channels, including sight, touch, auditory and fortuitous convictions. The duration of the epiphany is seen as brief, despite the size and pervasiveness of the effect. He said, *"You know, I don't read the Bible. But there was a calling in my dream, and it said, 'do not conform' one week after, pastors came to preach about the bible verse that I had dreamed about. It is a miracle, and it cannot be a coincidence."* Another participant whom a fellow prisoner approached experienced the encounter through a surreal experience. He said *something happened inside me. I suddenly felt thirsty to read the Bible."* Ron also attests how he was miraculously halted to commit suicide. He said, *"For a while (in prison), it was as if I had lost all hope and wanted to commit suicide. I thought that when I died, all pain would disappear. When I was about to kill myself, there was a voice that stopped me."* Vincent said, *"I immediately came to realize how abominable my mistakes were and how erroneous my way of living was when the voice of God talked to me in a dream."*

Bruno describes the visible light as a "*consuming*" presence that brought him transcendence. Jose also recounts his story when he was initially reluctant because he believed that transformation comes with a change of religion. However, he was proven not because of a piece of coincidental advice.

Despite spiritual connections, Regie and Gal said that being in a Christian community does not guarantee that one will transform, as one can only identify with membership but not internalize the divine relationship. As KC suggests, the defining factor of transformation is when one accepts the Divine as no longer a savior alone, but as a Lord as well. Theologically, being a savior implies that one's service is directed toward the one in need of salvation. This results in taking the Divine for granted and squandering the grace bestowed. However, when the Lordship element has adhered, it takes a sense of responsibility for obedience.

Upon the epiphany moments, participants affirmed that they were convicted to repent then and there and pour stress and guilt in a cathartic manner. For me, this is the only thing that will help me get out of that place. According to KC, a person who sincerely accepts the Lord will never return to sin. Participants recognized the need to interpret their experience while noting that their emotions are at times inexplicable.

From another perspective, prison cannot be accounted as a factor for transformation. Arthur attests that transformation can happen even before incarceration. Ron, Bruno, Jose, and Norman emphasize that their capacity for transformation is not their own; it results from their encounters with God in various ways. When the participants are unable to find purpose in their lives, they enter a period of realization. They feel that epiphanies were not the labor of man but a miracle from God. Arthur exclaims, *"Then, while weeping and bawling, I heard a preaching that says 'you are my son, and I am your Father, my love is greater than your sins."* Attitudinally, Darwin's violent tendencies are tamed.

For the participants, having recognized the gravity of their transgressions, the next step is to humble themselves and surrender to grow. Regarding submitting, KC stressed that he refers to it in all aspects, as meaningful transformation occurs only when he unconditionally surrenders everything, including his jail life and the assignment to complete upon release. This complements all of their realizations as Von and Jose have learned to trust and depend on a higher being; Von no longer conforms to the horrendous acts he was accustomed to and compelled to do; Jose cannot understand how grace is shown to a ghastly unforgivable man like him and; Norman felt that God could change everything and was freed from the mental prison.

3.3.   After: *Paul, stories of being found.*
3.3.1.   Aftermath of Transformation

There is an evident long-lasting impression that participants have continued transformation in a display, externally and internally, even beyond spiritual realms and extending to nonspiritual pursuits. For instance, when KC was released, he immediately went back to church to testify; Ron regained the motivation to study again.; Jose gives honor to the Lord by serving his community; Von founded a worldwide ministry called "Toughguys" based on karate and self-defense; Moved by the love that he felt, Jose gives honor to the Lord by serving chaplains, and KC justified his continuous righteousness based on God's word since his security is no longer based on possessions but God's promises. Their affect is also empowered by humility, contentment and submission. As Ron, Von, and Darwin states: *"God is my only reason to continue because I would not be here without Him. He is the only one who can do the impossible."* Von: *"When I experienced peace in my heart, in the presence of the Lord, I would never ask for more."* Norman*: "Since I accepted him, God has put much*

hope in me." Finally, Lem thinks an anointing has occurred that has sanctified all of his choices to choose righteousness over crime.

The participants' thought processes or cognitive modes reflect an overflow of Love, Peace, Compassion, and Unconditional Regard. Arthur thinks with contentment and security, which he believed are bestowed by God. He says, *"I have peace in my mind. The previous criminal identity is gone because now I am full of hope."* Jose: *"There is love and unconditional regard. There are joyful thoughts. It's overflowing as if I want to channel it to others through actions based on kindness."* Von: *"I know that Christ has forgiven me. His arms of mercy are outstretched, I now have peace of mind."*

In terms of behaviors, there is a paradigm shift in the behavior processes of the participants. KC justifies his change of heart by noting that he has evolved from an easily offended guy to a forgiving one.   It is revolutionary for a serial murderer like Bruno to realize his desire to kill vanished. Industriousness becomes a habit for Von. As KC puts it, *"From being aggressive, I become more humble in my actions. God is good, and so shall I."* As Arthur puts it in his words, *"Everywhere I go, the works of my hand should be for him."* Additionally, Bruno does the same reparative behaviors as he recalls how he labored for the farm of his victims' surviving family members without their knowledge. Additionally, they apply it directly to their victims as Lem said, *"I pray for them all the time."*

Similarly, KC defines it as a perceptual transformation in which one's viewpoint completely changes for the better. Von reasons, "I think that God has accepted me despite everything, so I must not waver despite any trials that may come." His bravery reflects the prospect that his strength is no longer independent; it is rooted in something dependable, which is God. Bruno, Darwin, and Norman's hearts are bent on noble deeds and will bring the almighty glory.

Correspondingly, pursuits of benevolent advocacies are pursued by participants as they are now constantly thinking about what they can do more to help.

4. DISCUSSION

Imprisonment is not a defining transformative factor, although it is contextual.

Previously, the "criminal self" narrative was dominant. Other themes were antagonistic self, lawbreaker, and self-victimization. The "criminal self" narrative may be a prison environment product, as Petrillo (2021) states that being condemned to prison is one of the most devastating experiences one may have (Petrillo, 2021). Prison also stimulates thoughts and feelings about committing a crime as their most dissonant memory, showing that it is an event that defines their former identity and is crucial to them.

However, it is the insight, convictions, and decisions that bring about transformation, not jail. The members' spiritual beliefs overshadowed the jail cells. They argue that many people are imprisoned, but only those who undergo excruciating enlightened remorse, metanoia and reparative decisions to accept and submit to the divine will be set free.

4.1.   Total Package for Holistic Transformation
Religion vs. Spirituality

True Christianity is founded not on religion or rituals but the connection and bond formed through an epiphany of contact with the Divine. Although spiritual encounters may never be objectively validated or quantified, they have undeniable effective patterns. Although the participants share that Jesus Christ is their Savior, their faith systems, denominations, and religious affiliations vary from Baptists, Evangelists, Pentecostals, and Protestants. Beyond affiliation, it is observed that the story of transformation reveals a pattern among once

infamous criminals in three phases: (1) enlightening repentance, (2) metanoia, and (3) enthusiastic reparation leading to transformation.

4.1.1. Enlightening Repentance

Following the participants' sinful conduct, they experience negative sentiments of shame, guilt, and regret due to their actions which are all scoped by repentance. It is as though the conscience and feeling of humanity have been revived (Alex & Farisha, 2021). However, even recidivists demonstrate a range of superficial regret, commonly referred to as repentance or guilt in psychology (Lippke, 2021, but this is not effective because recidivists grow defensive about their mistakes, striving to rationalize or deny them outright, this cosmetic repentance is motivated by agonizing guilt. What happened to the participants is immensely different and can be compared to godly sorrow. Godly sorrow is a theological notion based on a sincere conviction to understand one's deeds that have caused offense, pain, and grief, resulting in shame, humiliation, and regret that drives people to a better path. This leads to a fundamental character trait of acceptance and submission without opposition. It is a complicated mental process in the inherent substructure of the personality known as "conscience," which assesses last activities concerning its own psyche's responses. In the end, it transforms behavior and life in general, leading to the acquisition of life's purpose.

Additionally, a person's conviction in their capacity to exercise control over their character, behavior, and strength is driven by a desire to establish a stronger sense of self-identity via character development. Hence, contrary to popular belief, this enlightened repentance is productive. This distinguishes between guilt and excessive "shame" and concentrates on the self rather than repairing chances. In these circumstances, guilt might lead to self-reparative activities rather than reparations to others, and with painful realization, some with too much guilt commit suicide (Zavaliy, 2021). Auspiciously, what happened to the participants is permanent and is vastly different from a pang of self-consuming guilt. This is because although repentance may atone for sins, the participants' mechanisms lead to positive action.

More so, the notion of guilt appeals states that guilt induces admissions, apologies, excuses, or inhibitions of future actions. The goal of these behaviors is to restore the pre-transgressive relationship with others. However, existing research does not fully relate guilt to healthy behavior. It lacks transformation because restorative acts are only viewed by authority figures, victims, or court officials. Thus, regret or remorse does not appear to be a universal trigger for restorative actions (Turner & Rains, 2021). However, as this study's results show, the transgressor will make amends regardless of the presence of victims, location, or observer when it comes to identity reformation. This is elicited in the metanoia phase represents where identity remodeling transpired.

4.1.2. Metanoia

Participants believe they are "Bagong nilalang" (new creation) which significantly influences their conduct and self-image. According to an earlier study (Comvalius-Goddard, 2021), people who self-identify as criminals are less likely to modify their ways to reduce criminal activity frequency, diversity, and severity (Farrington, 2007). Hence, applying the traits of their new identity or metanoia, which is a process marked by a mix of passion, melancholy, self-surrender, and a confrontation with the inner abyss (Ashokbhai, 2021) can condition the self in favor of a more responsive one (Vos & van Rijn, 2021). This also lead to a kind of self-reparation before social reparation (Maglione, 2022). In fact, to support people as they decide to break down and go through a momentary recovery, rather than deferring such attempts by reinforcing a person's extant personality defenses and thus perpetuating the underpinning discord (Sellers & Arrigo, 2021), is fundamental to therapeutic methods. It was described as "a permanent shift in gestalt."

In terms of identity, the individuals achieved desistance through changing their self-perceptions. They no longer identify as criminals. Because identity is developed over time, it may be changed to reflect life events such as criminal identity, stigma, personal growth, and healing (Maruna et al., 2004; Rowe, 2011; Stone, 2016). This study found that criminals who rebuilt their identity by accepting their accomplishments and comprehending their experience in prison had reduced recidivism rates and a prosocial mindset. They have also gotten an internal attribution of blame from past external attributions (Holder et al., 2021), absent from shallow repentances. To minimize confusion, while identity reformation is a crucial component of the transformation formula in significant research, it cannot stand alone. In the absence of genuine regret or reparation, a person may acquire egocentric and narcissistic tendencies. Hence, the reparation procedure should be suffced.

4.1.3. Enthusiastic Reparation

Positive socio-psychological personality change predicts an increased desire to accept punishment and show correction via actual productive conduct. Thus, the conviction's earnest conscious penance (structural-logical scheme) includes attitude toward oneself, others, life, future, society, crime, consequences of crime, punishment, and preparation for life under conditions of liberty and interpersonal interactions (Klishevich, N., & Sulitskyi, 2021). These "prosocial behaviors" benefit the whole community. It is not like the "unpleasant" component of guilt for reparation. While the other form entails how people feel guilty and fake bad feelings (such as sadness or disgust) to "get out" and recover a positive emotional state, this form of repair is joyous. The accomplishment of a "beneficial" deed restores this jubilant emotional state.

Additionally, an earlier study concluded that corrective action is necessary to promote conformance with the applicable standard. Recognizing mistakes and adopting a new identity encourages altruistic conduct and inhibits antisocial behavior, shame, and remorse, all of which promote transformation in offenders. This is also different from restitution because the idea of restitution as compensation for damages is incommensurate with the degree of anguish and loss of life. However, reparations may improve one's social standing. While reparation is a defining factor, still, it can be forfeited for self-promotional motives. It cannot last without a new identity and a true feeling of repentance.

Going back to the theory of guilt appeals, while the emotional components include humiliation and suffering, marked by the phase of repentance, it is possible to repent 11 times and yet make the same mistakes (just like one of the participants did). Moreover, whereas guilt appeals explain how unpleasant emotions encourage a person to participate in a reparative activity, *reactance* occurs when individuals believe their freedom of action is threatened. To restore one's freedom (or at least one's illusion of freedom), one must behave in a way that is contrary to the essential. Graton and colleagues found that guilt induction led to prosocial behavior when persuasive messages contained minimal reparation instructions. To demonstrate that guilt alone does not inspire human behavior, guilt's overt or explicit message resulted in reactance-like responses (i.e., behaviors opposed to the persuasive information request). This is shown on the case of the participants because despite years of direct preaching about transformation, participants perceived it as a threat to their freedoms, and no change happened. They were formerly only externally identified with the group, but not internally; or they may seemingly accept but deep inside, they reject. In the case of the participants, the reactance was abolished only when epiphanies connected with supernatural experiences or quantum change occurred, both of which are implicit and subjective. This event shows that epiphanies reduced reactance. Thus, true internalization occurs when an entity conducts a transaction internally rather than outsourcing it to another party.

Finally, the interplay of the triadic components (affect, behavior, and cognition) is hypothesized. This research carefully reveals how the interplay of affect, behavior, and cognition might be the missing link.

4.2.   *When sudden epiphanies lead to permanent transformation*

Adversity is considered an essential and significant piece of their life transformation. The individuals generally reported terrible life experiences, including alcohol/drug addiction, interpersonal and behavioral issues. Fearful interactions, feelings of loneliness, and confusion are considered equally concerning discovering courage, belonging, and a sense of meaning. This act of assigning meaning based on their own experiences seems to be at the heart of being found. This critical aspect of the participants' viewpoints also reveals a shift from egocentric self-conceptualization to developing connections with others. Additionally, participants' sense of self became broader and more pleased as they sought compassion with others and the more benevolent world. Their worldview and sense of self are intertwined with harmony, which tends to bolster their optimism. On that note, epiphanic moments tend to signify a shift toward self-fulfillment. Theoretically, the participants' self-descriptions matched Rogers' (1974) fully functioning person and Maslow's (1970) self-actualization.

Revolutionary analysis shows how participants indicate that they have never returned to their offenses since the divine intervention. As Chilton (2015) and Taylor (2015) described, the narratives imply quantum change. Fundamentally, this may be because psychological anguish was often mentioned as a catalyst for an awakening experience, and consolidating the participants' new identities was a constant process, aided by their clarity of purpose and direction change. The spiritual encounters also appeared to generate a sense that something higher than themselves would guide and affect their lives after. Instead of being shaped by experience, the self has developed from inside the body. In fact, it is supported by psycho-therapeutic claims as McGovern and colleagues (2021) discovered that 'some internal truth' surfaced in epiphany experiences (p.52).

The participants in this study also had the psychological flexibility to use the meaning-making process in whatever way they wanted. Often, this was closely linked to a connection with their spiritual self, which appeared to give them meaning and vitality (Taylor, 2020). Themes of "natauhan" (awakening) abound. More importantly, their epiphanies have had a visible and immediate consequence. *"From the day God spoke to me, I turned away from wickedness and murder,"* said Bruno, a former terrorist who murdered a family. *"I never wanted to murder again."* He added. Participants have shown complete adherence to what is ethically correct. *"If today I was ingrained to sexually assault; from tomorrow till now, no more, all lusts are gone,"* says Lem. *"I can't even talk or think about it. I don't want any of it anymore."* Arthur also recounted, demonstrating the same promise. *"I humbled myself and pledged never to repeat my misdeeds. Since then, I have never committed a crime."* Von also states that he does not just weep, apologize, and go back to doing wrong. *"It was as if I had lost my hunger for my prior sins,"* he says. *"This is me. Since then, I have never returned to my previous life."* He added. The experience of Noel was also echoed: *"It is a miracle!" Temptations vanished. I give up everything. Someone had touched my hand. He said: 'Do not let go from then on; I remained devoted, which is impossible for a ruthless criminal like me."* he said.

History of cognitive and neurological psychology findings indicates discontinuous transition patterns as key treatment strategies which rejected linear healing. In fact, religion is frequently referred to as a "shared hallucination." Nevertheless, discernible patterns like these with psychological concepts cannot be ignored. For example, in humanistic and transpersonal perspectives, epiphany (Chilton, 2015) or critical moments (Berglund, 2014) and tipping point encounters have been described extensively (Bhattacharya et al., 2018). Miller and C'de Baca (2001) describe these interactions with 'quantum change.' These are vital aspects of

awakening, increasing awareness, connection, and knowledge. The participants' accounts indicate how *"an unexpected, sudden, and unanticipated occurrence"* led to a successful and total unbending transformation.

5. CONCLUSION

Most people transform very incrementally, little by little, step by step. However, it is possible and does sometimes occur for individuals to be altered abruptly and irreversibly by a profoundly memorable event. Such frequent remarkable spiritual experiences occur in real life, as documented in the biographies and autobiographies of prominent individuals, including infamous criminals. Spirituality is often left out of discussions of psychological rehabilitation due to its inability to be quantified. Even though William James and other advocates, testimonials, and evidence supported this occurrence for almost a century, there remained an odd silence about it - not even a term for it. Although philosophers and psychologists have sometimes referred to it as "conversion," transformational change is not restricted to formal religious situations or noble individuals. This research sought to elucidate the narratives behind what society considered to be the anathema of humanity and determined that quantum change is genuine and not all that rare. From an examination of what occurred before, during, and after these encounters, the subjective processes of the participants reveal that they have comparable experiences. They recalled the event, describing it as similar to walking through a one-way door. None of them professed to have done it; their steady-state was one of subservience as if they were being acted upon externally. These were known criminals with disparate sociodemographic characteristics, criminal histories, and walks of life, but significantly more alike after the encounter than ever before. Before converting to Christianity, participants were chronic criminals with loathsome and remorseless compulsions for victimization, motivated by egocentric beliefs. Across the board, their spiritual experiences with the Divine resulted in a similar revelation. The significant convictions led participants' to follow inexplicable callings that caused them to surrender, fight urges, repair harm, and recuperate right away from the moment they were changed. This shows how spirituality can be a powerful tool to help criminals undergo the process of transformation from acknowledging the offense, aversion to wrongdoing, sympathy for the victim, discomfiture for the crime and its consequences, candor in their thoughts, and a desire to atone for moral injury. The study also acknowledges that unlike the concept of relapse, a change in moral purpose can transpire with recognition of the mistakes and the pursuit of a new direction in a quick continuous shift that leads to substantial, positive, and enduring transformation revelation, as a moment of self-awareness or psychological awakening. Although subjective, this act of contrition that is observed can provide hope for similar cases of the population, particularly in breaking the cycle of criminality through reintegrative and disintegrative processes. Finally, the research demonstrates transformation may occur even to the most heinous of the wicked and that regardless of one's notoriety, the force of spirituality can transcend human comprehension and into the inner workings of the mind, body, and spirit.

Recommendations and Implications

- For Psychological Institutions. There is a theoretical possibility that moral emotions are "here-and-now" elements that may be intervened upon. The same way that a variety of social-cognitive, cognitive-behavioral, and interpersonal therapies are beneficial in combating criminal tendencies, spiritual positive psychology strategies can be plausible methods to modify offender registries' moral affective characteristics – specifically, to demonstrate their ability for interactive guilt and mitigate their

potential to perceive guilt – in the same way, that they are effective in Compassion-Focused Therapy (CFT) systems.

- For Correctional Institutions. Pre, actual, and post aftercare should be provided for offenders. Just as how the Philippines is a Christian country with phrases of "Implore the aid of Almighty God" in the preamble and "So help me God" in court and legislature, each step should be established with a spiritual touch from plugging them in chaplains, intervention inside prisons, and reintegration in society through intricate spiritual incorporation. The correctional facility may also adapt into reformation programs that are flexible and enriching to the spiritual encounters of prisoners.

- For Personal Interventions. An introspective examination of criminal culpability can be encouraged only after a crime has been committed and an attributional process linked with the criminal self has been established. In the case of convicts who regret committing a crime, they may see jail time as a period of personal development and thereby alter their perception of criminality; especially how spiritual aspects can deliberate and self-initiate interpretations of a transpersonal experience, in which the self is acted upon by an Other that appears to be greater than oneself, which provides an alternative to the majority of accounts of psychological change.

- For Future Research. With these results, the research suggests further investigation of the potential of Quantum Change, a concept in psychology that is seldom used or recognized but is associated with the covert spiritual world and effective holistic changes; especially how the sudden and deep epiphany has mostly focused on the antecedent and facilitative variables with repentance, identity reformation, and reparation.

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Self-Compassion and Post-Traumatic Growth for Post-Traumatic Stress

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Abstract

Self-compassion and Post-Traumatic Growth seem to be inextricably linked. An exploration of the relationship between the two might lend to strategies that potentially could maximize rapid Post-Traumatic Growth after trauma. Consequently, Post-Traumatic Stress, as it is a transitive and transitionary state of the psyche in which the self exists in fragmentation, may benefit from Compassion Focused Therapy as an effective form of early therapy after traumatic experiences. Most centrally, this paper investigates self-compassion's role in Post-Traumatic Growth focusing on ongoing favorable inner dialogue and self-talk—prospective personal extensions of Compassion Focused Therapy—with habituation likely an important outcome for those who are affected by Post-Traumatic Stress. The discussion encompasses how to utilize self-compassion in one's personal life and professional practice. Limitations, implications for individuals and professionals, and future research directions are broached.

Keywords: Self-compassion, post-traumatic growth, post-traumatic stress

Shedding Light on a Forbidden Topic: The Need for Mental Health Professionals to Accommodate the Faith-Based Practices of Immigrant Clients

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Abstract

There is much to learn about how immigrants describe their experiences of faith in the counselling context while negotiating meaningful relationships with mental health professionals (MHPs). Here, *MHPs* refer to individuals in the helping profession who provide services to immigrant clients such as social workers, psychologists, clinicians, practitioners, and counsellors. For the purpose of this presentation, *immigrants* are viewed as persons relocating to a host country for the purpose of resettlement for a better life (Perruchoud & Redpath-Cross, 2011). In this context, *faith* describes one's committed spiritual and religious belief system. Although, it is important to the wellbeing of many immigrant clients, some MHPs struggle to integrate religious faith into the counselling process. According to Plumb (2011), these challenges might be a result of limited training in the area of faith as well as lack of confidence, competence, and comfort related to faith-based practices (Plumb, 2011). These professionals also appear to lack the knowledge and skill set needed to adapt culturally appropriate faith-based interventions in their work with immigrant clients (Dixon, 2015). Many immigrants rely on such faith-based interventions as a source of internal strength and comfort to manage social inequities like racism and discrimination. As such, MHPs have a responsibility to accommodate, recognize, and consider the importance of faith-based practices and interventions when providing counselling services to diverse immigrant client populations.

Therefore, the aim of this live virtual presentation session is to engage in reflective discussions with attendees that highlight the role of faith within the therapeutic relationship. The co-presenters will provide useful faith-based interventions for attendees to consider when working with immigrant clients. We will also create a culturally safe environment for attendees to discuss practical ways that they have incorporated faith-based interventions in their counselling practices.

Key words: Immigrants, Faith, Faith-Based Interventions, Mental Health Professionals

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Spirituality, Illness Beliefs and Illness Suffering: Clinical Ideas for Loving and Healing Conversations

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ABSTRACT

Health care has become influenced by societal beliefs that overly values happiness and is unable to acknowledge and witness illness suffering. This has led our language with patients and families to change from inquiring and empathizing about suffering to adopting more upbeat language like 'coping', 'adapting', and 'adjusting'.   Even harsher expectations of dealing with illness suffering such as "it is what it is"; and "you need to accept your illness" have crept into our conversations when caring for patients/families. Language can inadvertently trigger spiritual suffering. Language changes have been coupled with unhelpful interventions in our caring of patients/families. This change in our professional language does not reflect our patients/families experience with illness suffering and particularly their spiritual suffering.   It also interferes with potential healing conversations.

This presentation will encourage us to reflect and consider (re)embracing conversations of illness suffering with our patients/families that will open space to spiritual healing. From research and clinical practice, it has been determined that when suffering is softened, spiritual healing can most often occur.   Healing conversations need to include: illness suffering being acknowledged, social support is available, constraining beliefs are challenged; being in the present moment is encouraged; offering curious compassion and hope. Specific relational practices will be suggested that enable patients/families to move from a place of illness suffering to spiritual healing. Specifically, love needs to be the foundation of all therapeutic conversations with individuals, couples, and families in our care.

Keywords: Spirituality, healing conversations, illness suffering, illness beliefs

The Need for Ethical and Multiculturally Competent Practice of Psychology in Myanmar

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ABSTRACT

Myanmar's mental health system is in dire need of improvement. The importance of mental health care has generally been overlooked and undervalued in the country. The negligence seems to stem from a lack of policies, training, infrastructure, funding, stigmatization, and a suitable ethical code of conduct. Due to six decades of international isolation, the small discipline of psychology, which already faced social disdain due to stigmatization, was further degraded as an academic discipline. Coupled with the recent ongoing violence that likely contributed to trauma amongst some of the population, this highlights the importance of well-established multiculturally competent ethical guidelines for psychology to gain a respectable reputation as a viable mental health treatment and as a scientific study of human behavior. This paper is an autoethnography exploring Myanmar's barriers to effective mental health care while emphasizing establishing an empirically backed culturally competent ethical code of conduct for Myanmar's field of psychology. As an individual born and raised in Myanmar, the first author hopes to shed some light on the mental health crisis in Myanmar by sharing her personal experiences. The authors also reviewed and analyzed the American Psychological Association's (APA) Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct and explored the multiculturally competent adaptability and applicability of the APA Ethical Code of Conduct to Myanmar culture. Recommendations and implications for practitioners and future research were offered.

KEYWORDS: Ethical Code of Conduct, mental health care, multicultural competence, Myanmar, psychology

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Introduction

Myanmar, also known as Burma, is a Southeast Asian nation bordering Bangladesh, India, China, Laos, and Thailand. Myanmar, a country overflowing with beauty and natural resources, unfortunately is also the location of the longest-running civil war in the world (1948- present) and severe human rights violations and abuses following the military coup d'état of nearly 50 years (Guyon, 1992; Watson et al., 2015). Ten years of democratic progress came to a halt when the country underwent another military coup in February 2021 (Kipgen, 2021). The coup riled up protests and civil disobedience from the citizens, which the military handled brutally, resulting in many deaths, injuries, and arrests (Lee et al., 2021). The casualties are not limited to any age, ethnic and religious background, or social class.

A study conducted one year before the most recent military coup showed that the prevalence of mental health distress in Burmese adults was 18% (Aye et al., 2020). Being directly or indirectly exposed to violence, Burmese people are at higher risk of developing debilitating mental health conditions than many other people. According to a meta-analysis conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO), the prevalence of mental health disorders in conflict-afflicted populations is 22.1% (Charlson et al., 2019). This translates to one out of five people afflicted by mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, etc.

The country's already fragile mental healthcare system is in no position to withstand the unprecedented mental health crisis of a larger scale. There are three critical issues in regards to Myanmar's mental health landscape: lack of legislative support, lack of funding, and heavy stigma against mental health conditions (Artingstoll, 2021). Myanmar's mental health policy is still legislated by "The Lunacy Act" implemented more than a century ago. The outdated notion of labeling individuals who suffer from mental health illness as "lunatics" promoted the long-standing stigma of mental health conditions. Similar to other Asian countries (Zhang et al., 2020), in Myanmar, people who suffer from mental illnesses, particularly schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, are seen as aggressive and dangerous, while other mental illnesses are reduced to weakness of character. These deep-rooted negative connotations attached to mental health prevents individuals from seeking help, leading to social isolation.

In addition, the latest WHO-AIMS (World Health Organization Assessment Instrument for Mental Health Systems) reported that only 0.3% of the healthcare expenditure is spent on mental healthcare in Myanmar (World Health Organization, 2006). Hence, there is a severe lack of infrastructure and adequately trained staff. There are only two specialist mental health hospitals, 22 psychiatric wards in the general hospitals, 35 outpatient facilities, and 0.016 psychiatrists per 100,000 people in the country (World Health Organization, 2006).

Due to the above circumstances, mental healthcare in Myanmar urgently needs improvement. Well-trained mental health professionals are required. This highlights the importance of academic research and practicum placement and training for aspiring mental health professionals. Hence, a robust, empirically backed, and culturally competent ethical code of conduct is essential for advancing Myanmar's field of psychology.

When Myanmar underwent the most recent military coup, the first author took a "Psychology and Ethics" course taught by the second author at an American Institution. This course explored the American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct in-depth. As part of the course, the first author wrote weekly journal entries exploring the applicability of the APA Ethical Code of Conduct (American Psychological Association, 2017) to the Myanmar context. The current paper is a form of autoethnography based in part on those journals with some additional references added to help provide background and context. As an individual born and raised in Myanmar,

the first author, Maung, hopes to shed some light on the mental health crisis in Myanmar by providing a personal account (see below).

Experience of an Aspiring Mental Health Professional from Myanmar

Maung paused and stared at her university application form, torn between picking "B.A. in Psychology" and "B.S. in Business Administration." In truth, she had already made up her mind to study psychology. She had the aspiration of helping individuals suffering from mental health concerns who find themselves in the dark due to the limited options of receiving adequate help in Myanmar. However, she also had to consider the possible career prospects of being a psychologist in Myanmar and the associated social stigma.

She recalled her mother's reaction when she expressed her desire to major in psychology. Her mother strongly urged her to reconsider. Even though psychology is a popular discipline internationally, in Myanmar it is one of the least privileged fields of study. In Myanmar, the scores from the university admission exam, also known as the matriculation exam, determine a student's eligibility for their choice of study. Liberal Arts majors, including psychology, has the lowest score required for admission. On top of that, the field is extremely misunderstood. People often believe that the only career prospect is working at mental health hospitals, often referred to as "*A Yuu Htaung;*" the literal translation is "*jail for lunatics.*" Therefore, people tend to associate working as a mental health professional with bad and bizarre working conditions and shun away from studying psychology. Her mother's concern stemmed from her fear of judgement from their relatives and community. Nonetheless, she decided to pursue her passion.

While she was pursuing her bachelor's degree in psychology, she realized that psychology and mental health has become popularized online, especially on social media platforms such as Facebook. Educational videos and posts about the importance of mental health are widely shared. While the youth in Myanmar have become more accepting, the majority of the older generation remain indifferent about the topic.

Buddhism is deeply ingrained in Burmese culture; approximately 90% of the Burmese population are Buddhists. One of the five precepts within the Buddhism doctrine is to abstain from taking lives, including ending one's own life (Keown, 1996). Life and death go on in a cycle; death results in the beginning of a new cycle. Suicide is also viewed as an attempt to escape from life's "*dukkha*" (suffering), which results in a premature ending of one's cycle, triggering another cycle of life with more "*dukkha*" (Kelly, 2011). Suicide is regarded as a sin in Burmese culture. Suicidal ideation is often seen as wanting to escape from the "*dukkha*" of mundane life, discounting the mental illness an individual might be suffering from. Hence, people are advised to "toughen up" or "snap out of it." Society prevents people from seeking help, conditioning individuals to suffer behind closed doors rather than be labelled "a lunatic" or seen as dangerous by family or neighbors. Treatment for mental health conditions is also misunderstood and the only options are seen are hospitalization at a psychiatric ward or medication. Talk therapy is not common in Myanmar. However, a few private counseling services have opened in the country by a young entrepreneur who pursued a higher education degree in psychology abroad.

In Maung's final semester of university, her country went under a military coup. While the world struggles with the global COVID-19 pandemic, Myanmar faces double-jeopardy: both the COVID-19 pandemic and the military coup. Despite COVID infections, millions of people went out to protest and faced military brutality (Ratcliffe, 2021). Many lives were lost, people were forcefully detained, threatened, and abused. People sleep to the sound of firearms and wake up to the news of fellow citizens' houses raided, arrested, or

murdered. Maung's family is one of the psychological victims of military brutality; they have lived in constant anxiety for months.

People of all ages including children have become desensitized to seeing violent images or videos on social media every day. These events impose heavy emotional and psychological trauma. The country's third wave of COVID-19 occurred after the military coup. The fatality was massive due to the scarcity of medical supplies since the military hoarded the available resources and closed hospitals (The Irrawady, 2021). The citizens of Myanmar experience intense emotions of fear, anger, sadness, and helplessness. Death from military brutality and COVID-19 also led to depression and anxiety among the survivors (Mendelson, 2021). With limited resources, the civilians turned to help each other. Private psychological services and non-profit organizations offered free counseling services for the affected (Mendelson, 2021). Volunteers were accepted from the public and given training. Even though there are services provided, most of the population remains unfamiliar with mental healthcare and ways to seek help.

When Maung studied the APA Ethical Code as a requirement for a course in her final semester, she had two reactions—delight and astonishment. As an individual from a country where psychology as a field of study is regarded as lacking in rigidity, the ethical code disproved such notions, which delighted her. She was astonished when she noticed the gap and shortcomings between how psychology is practiced in her country and the aspirational way it should be practiced. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in psychology, she had a calling to improve the mental healthcare system in her country. There is an urgent need for an intervention in the field of psychology in Myanmar. The country needs well-trained mental health professionals to alleviate the mental health crisis. This is only possible with a strong ethical code of conduct that pushes for standardized psychology training, education, research, and intervention (Hman, 2019).

Exploring the APA Ethical Code of Conduct in the Myanmar Context

Ethics, defined as principles that distinguish right and wrong, serves as a guideline for decision making that contributes to the common good. Ethical standards are integrated into many disciplines for various reasons, one of the main motivations being to uphold the public's trust in the discipline (Resnik, 2020). The psychology discipline relates to therapy and research, which involves working with clients and conducting scientific research with human participants. It also involves teaching and service. Psychologists often work with malleable and vulnerable populations. Therefore, it is essential to have a strong ethical code for professionals to abide by which serves as sound guidance for psychology practitioners when they encounter moral dilemmas so as to protect the rights and dignity of the people they work with.

The APA Ethics Codes includes a Preamble, five General Principles, and specific Ethical Standards. The preamble and general principles represent aspirational goals for psychologists, while the ethical standards are enforceable rules. This section will cover specific sub-sections of the Ethical Standards: Competence, Human Relations, Confidentiality, Record Keeping and Fees, and Research and Publication.

Competence

The APA Ethics Code discusses Competency. It states that psychologists should only practice in their area of expertise, based on their education, supervised experience, training, or consultation (APA, 2017, 2.01). Most of the psychologists in Myanmar are likely not adequately competent since psychology degrees in Burmese universities are not as

academically rigorous as other degrees such as medicine, engineering, or business. There are no mandatory practicum hours to prepare a psychologist for practice. Due to the low number of psychologists in the country, psychologists are also required to provide services outside of their expertise. For instance, child and adolescent counselors will provide marriage counseling when there is a demand.

The APA Ethics Code allows psychologists to provide limited services outside of their competence during emergency situations and if there are no mental health services available (APA, 2017, 2.02). With the recent military coup, there has been a surge in mental health issues and cases. Therefore, it is likely appropriate for psychologists to provide services outside their area of competence in this situation. For example, since the recent coup, a few non-profit organizations offer mental health support by using counseling volunteers from the public who are provided with a brief training before conducting counseling sessions. Even in such situations, it is important that practitioners "take reasonable steps to ensure the competence of their work and to protect [people]… from harm" (APA, 2017, 2.02, p. 5).

Human Relations

The APA Ethics Code discusses Human Relations when dealing with clients or other mental health professionals. Psychologists should not engage in sexual harassment, which includes a single severe or multiple pervasive acts of sexual solicitations, physical advances or verbal/non-verbal conduct that is sexual (APA, 2017, 3.02). Myanmar tends to be a culture where physical contact is uncommon, where a smile or a nod is the norm for greetings rather than handshakes or hugs. Therefore, the psychologist must be aware of the physical boundaries of the client. Otherwise, clients may feel that their boundaries are over-stepped by a handshake or a hug. This highlights the importance of cultural competency in practicing psychology in Myanmar. Hence, it is important for Myanmar's ethical code to include culturally appropriate consideration of Burmese people's physical boundaries.

Confidentiality

The Ethical Code next discusses Confidentiality. Psychologists are required to take reasonable precautions to protect the confidentiality of the clients (APA, 2017, 4.02). It is encouraging to discover that one of the top psychological agencies in Myanmar has confidentiality as the company's core value (Marble, n.d.). Their website states that confidentiality is taken very seriously, and a confidentiality agreement is signed during the first session with a provider. A sub-section of the Ethical Code also states that a psychologist should not disclose personal information with their colleague that could potentially lead to the client's identification (APA, 2017, 4.06). This aspect is ever more important in Myanmar as it is likely easy to identify a client due to the small nature of the counseling community. Hence, to avoid identification of the client, extra precautions should be taken by psychologists. For instance, psychologists should only talk to a supervisor or colleague when in need of consultation and only disclose the minimal amount of personal information necessary.

Record Keeping and Fees

The APA Ethical Code discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records, whether in research or when working with clients (APA, 2017, 6.01). In Myanmar, it is possible that record-keeping is not up to APA ethical standards. Due to the lack of funding in

public-owned mental health hospitals, administrative tasks such as record-keeping are traditionally done with hardcopy files thus increasing the likelihood of records being mixed up or lost. There are likely further issues surrounding possible breaches in client confidentiality due to poor record-keeping.

Sub-section 6.05 also states that bartering, the acceptance of nonmonetary remuneration for psychological services, is permitted (APA, 2017, 6.05). This informal method of remuneration could potentially affect the relationship between the client and the psychologist, particularly the objectivity of the psychologist. Moreover, the value of the goods or services might not be equal to how the psychologist prices their services, so either party may feel indebted to compensate more. On the other hand, bartering may also be appropriate in this culture as it is a traditional method used for ages to exchange goods and services in Myanmar (Lieberman, 1987). Furthermore, due to the poor economic conditions some of the population find themselves in, many may not be able to afford a psychologist's fees but may have other items or services that they can offer in exchange. Hence, remuneration may be a suitable form of compensation for psychological services in Burmese culture once it is mutually consented by both parties and the psychologist takes measures to ensure that no exploitation nor problematic multiple relationships occur.

Research and Publication

The APA Ethical Code further discusses Research and Publication, an integral part of being a psychologist. Psychologists should conduct research based on a research protocol that has undergone institutional approval (APA, 2017, 8.01). Historically, in 1962 the military overtook power and restricted freedom of speech. Hence, Myanmar's academic research suffered greatly (Oo et al., 2003). However, after the political transition towards democracy in 2011, there has been a positive advancement in research. The Minister of Health recently made health research one of the main objectives of Myanmar Health Vision 2030 (Young, 2019). Myanmar's Research Ethics Committee (REC) was established in the 1980s (Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP), 2015). Postgraduate students enrolled in diploma, master's, or doctoral programs must obtain approval from the REC before beginning their research to ensure that the research to be conducted does not harm the participants (Oo et al., 2018). This shows that there is a positive outlook for ethics concerning research in Myanmar.

Psychologists are obligated to present information about the purpose of the study and information regarding the potential risks of taking part in the research to the study participants (APA, 2017, 8.02). Unfortunately, due to the previous culture that tolerated corruption and unfair treatment, the importance of informed consent in research has been undermined. A semi-structured interview conducted on potential research participants showed that they were not aware of the need to receive informed consent and about their general rights as participants (Oo et al., 2017). Furthermore, another study showed that 15% of the investigators studied refuted the importance of providing complete information about their study to participants (Than et al., 2018). Therefore, while the establishment of the REC is a step in the right direction, there is still room for improvement. Educational programs should be improved, or new ones developed to ensure researchers and the REC are well versed in conducting ethical research.

Limitations, Implications, and Future Research

This paper has some limitations. First, there is a limit to the generalizability of the first author's experience since she is a person of the middle class who pursued a higher education abroad. This paper is a form of autoethnography, which includes subjective

thoughts and the reflection from a single perspective, further limiting its generalizability. Her experiences may not fully reflect the Burmese people currently living in Myanmar. Second, the literature review was not comprehensive and only included readily accessible online references in the English language.

Despite these limitations, given the paucity of information about the ethical practice of multiculturally competent psychology in Myanmar, this paper is a good start to act as a springboard for both practitioners and researchers and has important implications for both. Mental health practitioners can use this paper to gain a basic understanding of the importance of ethical, multiculturally competent practice in Myanmar. They are then encouraged to further their knowledge and competence through increasing self-awareness, knowledge, and skills and to find ways to appropriately adapt Western psychology's ethical standards to the local cultural context (Sue et al., 2021).

Researchers are also encouraged to conduct a broad range of studies including using many different methodologies to gain more accurate knowledge about how psychology ethics are being practiced in Myanmar, what the indigenous strengths are already in terms of the ethical practice of human healing that has been around for thousands of years, and how to improve the ethical practice of psychology. The APA Code of ethics should be adapted to the Myanmar context and then researchers need to investigate whether it is adequately and appropriately helping to provide multiculturally competent, ethical practice of psychology.

Discussion and Further Recommendations

Each day, more people become victims of the psychological and emotional trauma created by the unending turmoil in Myanmar. More people are suffering from mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety, and, worst of all, their struggles are going unnoticed and untreated, potentially escalating to dire individual, community, and societal consequences such as suicide and homicide. Dismantling the country's stigma concerning mental health issues is a pressing need. Understanding the historical and cultural context which fostered the unchecked growth of the stigma is critical. Myanmar has an outdated mental health policy which is legislated by "The Lunacy Act"—the name itself instills negative beliefs about mental healthcare and treatment. Mental health issues are depicted as "lunacy" and mental disorders especially such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder are associated with danger and violence. Buddhism's view of suicide feeds the stigma. Burmese society sees depression and suicide as cowardice. Destigmatizing society's view of mental health issues in Myanmar may be challenging but not impossible. Other countries such as Singapore have succeeded (Staglin, 2021).

Culturally sensitive and competent ethical guidelines for the practice of psychology is needed for the discipline of psychology to gain a respectable reputation as a viable mental health treatment and as a scientific study of human behavior. The review of five Ethical Standards of the APA Ethical Code of Conduct indicates that it is necessary to provide some accommodation of foreign ethical codes such as the APA's to the Myanmar context. It should be a priority to attend to the mental health needs of the people, especially where there is a mental health catastrophe. Given the urgency of the situation, local providers who lack competency can still provide services in such cases but would still be recommended to be provided with appropriate training and preparation. Confidentiality of clients must be taken more seriously. In practices that require human interaction, such as counseling, cultural factors such as the high-context culture and collectivism have to be taken into consideration. Regarding research and publication, the ethical guidelines for conducting research and publishing must be improved while developing educational programs or seminars to support research students, investigators, and the Research Ethics Committee.

Implementing such suggestions will likely have positive ramifications for the ethical and multiculturally competent practice of psychology in Myanmar. There are likely to be mental health and other benefits on the micro (individual), meso, (community) and macro (societal) levels that are direly needed in a population that is currently suffering tremendously.

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Trust, Mystery, Love and The Search for Wholeness
Stories of Transference and Countertransference in The Gospels

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this presentation is to contribute to the archetypal aspects of the transference and the countertransference through an exploration of the Christian imagery, strengthening the relationship between religion and analytical psychology.

C.G. Jung thought that the transference had a key role in the healing process, allowing the doctor to take over the patient's suffering, so it can be shared, explored creatively, and integrated into consciousness. He believed that this type of relationship could also have archetypal aspects beside personal ones, triggering projections such as the saviour complex on the side of the patient and identifications with the wounded-healer on the side of the therapist.

Building on Jung's and the post-Jungians' insightful remarks, this presentation will investigate the transference dynamics in the stories of the Gospel, drawing parallels between the analytic couple on the one hand and Christ and his community on the other. In particular, it will focus on aspects such as trust and mystery, love that heals and the endless search for wholeness, considering both episodes of healing and spiritual rebirth, like *The Bleeding Woman*, and of preaching and revelation, like *The Road to Emmaus*.

KEYWORDS: gospel, transference, analytical psychology