

CULTURA ANIMI, HUMAN RIGHTS AND MENTAL HEALTH: A HUMANISTIC SYNTHESIS

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SUMMARY

This paper describes the multifaceted realm of culture of mind, human rights and mental health and essential link between them. Culture plays an important part in modulating our personalities and how we view self and world we live in, how we interact with others, and how we understand, define and promote mental health and human rights as well as how we cope with mental illness. The intellectual legacy of Ciceron's concept of cultura animi (culture of mind/soul) is today more relevant than ever. Narcissism, paranoidism, maniaism, depressiveness and nihilism today are more than individual mindsets and behavioral patterns. They are toxic cultural conditions and mindsets, modes of perception and mental orientations in the world, self-perception and interpersonal relationships. Toxic psycho-cultures refer to collective psychological and emotional climates in which harmful values, behaviors, and mental states are normalized, celebrated, or weaponized within a culture – particularly in family, political, institutional, or social environments. These psychocultures lead to alienation from oneself and others, erode mental health, civic trust, ethical norms, and human dignity/rights, often producing long-term damage across all layers of society, from family systems to global politics. Common dynamics of toxic psychocultures involves harmful behavior to be culturally acceptable (normalization), toxic emotions and beliefs spread through media and public discourse (contagion), toxic patterns are embedded in law, education, or policy (institutionalization), critical and holistic thinking and self-awareness are discouraged (suppression of reflection) and complex emotions are replaced by entitlement, admiration, suspiciousness, distrust, rage, cynicism, or numbness (emotional flattening). Empathic culture of mind involving human rights respect provides a powerful transformative vision of mental health promotion, protection and restoration.

Key words: culture of mind - empathization - human rights - mental health

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INTRODUCTION

“If you keep silent, keep silent by love; if you speak, speak by love, if you correct, correct by love, if you pardon, pardon by love; let love be rooted in you, and from the root nothing but good can grow. Love and do what you will”

Saint Augustine

As all things in the world follow a certain order and pattern, they should be handled accordingly. These particularly concern the more vital issues such as mental health, culture of mind, and human rights. Popular proverb says “health is greatest wealth” and the World Health Organization stresses “there is no health without mental health”. We’ve all read and heard this homily again and again, but do we really understand what it means and know to practice it. Mental health is extremely important, both from an individual and social perspective, because “a healthy society consists of healthy people, that is, healthy families and healthy institutions”. Therefore, just as there is no health without mental health, there is no mental health without a culture of empathization and respect for universal human rights, both in the family and in society. We live in a highly competitive and uncertain and increasingly networked world of rapid changes, technological miracles, diverse coalitions and deep divisions and contradictions, war conflicts, large migrations, global economic crisis, debt slavery, catastrophic climate change and natural pollution, terrifying

diseases and incipient conflict civilization... The deepening crisis of humanism, moral values and authority is worrying when the definitions of good and evil, normal and abnormal, healthy and sick, desirable and disturbed are changing. An extremely important question is how to deal with the growing rates of mental disorders, divorce, broken families, crime, violence, corruption, dyspathy, various abuses and violations of human rights, kleptocracy, kakistocracy, plutocracy...

Mental health protection, promotion and restoration necessarily involve consideration of culture of mind and human rights issues. Culture of mind promotion refers to the three essential questions: 1. What kind of person should we become? 2. How can we live with integrity, courage, and wisdom? 3. How can we be calm and centered in our volatile, uncertain, complex/competitive, ambiguous (VUCA) world? A healthy culture of mind is essential for our overall well-being and quality of life. The intellectual legacy of Ciceron's concept of cultura animi (culture of mind/soul) is today more relevant than ever. It seems that necessary and vital interplay between cultivation of mind/soul, human rights and mental health at all: personal, family, community, and global level, will make far-reaching, lasting and crucial impact on the future generations and preserving mankind. In the spirit of mind-body medicine just as body needs care, nourishment, and activities, so too does the mind needs care, cultivation, and support. Unfortunately, the triad cultura animi (cultivation of the soul” or “nurturing

of the mind”), human rights, and mental health are often overlooked. Culture affects how people treat one another, design policies, educate children, resolve conflicts and care for the vulnerable. Our culture can modulate how we see and experience ourselves and the world we live in, how we learn, think, feel, behave, and work, how we realize our potentials and contribute to our communities, how we cope with stress, life problems and challenges, and how and when we seek help for mental health problems. Cultural factors can significantly affect the prevalence and clinical manifestations of mental disorders as well as how mental disorders are diagnosed and treated.

Universal human rights are very important issue within the culture of mind and mental health promotion, prevention and restoration. Human rights to life, dignity, education, health, freedom of expression, prosperity and protection from discrimination are fundamental rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, nationality, religion, or economic status. Human rights have a vital role in cultivating a just and healthy community that maintains the dignity, autonomy and well-being of every individual in family, education systems, working places, public life and human society in general. Healthy community means that all individuals have a responsibility to respect and ensure the rights of others as their own rights fulfilling life for themselves and those around them. The concept of human rights is based on empathization, it is regulated by international laws implemented by state, regional and global institutions, so that human rights represent an obligation for everyone, without exception, to respect the rights of others and others. The foundation of modern human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was adopted in 1989. Promoting the empathic culture of human rights and preventing human rights violations could be the driving and transforming force behind public mental health promoting programs.

The relationship between culture, human rights and mental health is complex and multidirectional. Mental health is closely related to, and dependent upon culture of mind/soul and human rights promotion. However, human rights promotion and mental health needs are not always integrated in family life, education systems and society in general. The mental health problems result from human rights violations and toxic cultures of mind. Human rights violations significantly affect mental health and wellness and, vice versa, respecting and promoting human rights improve mental health. Human rights are universal, but toxic psychocultures often systematically erode them, especially the right to dignity and autonomy, freedom of thought and belief, freedom of expression, freedom from degrading treatment, right to health, particularly mental health. Human rights

violations significantly affect mental health and wellness, while mental illness affects the enjoyment of human rights. Psychiatric patients have frequently experienced their human rights violations, both in premorbid period and after their mental illness manifested.

MENTAL HEALTH, CULTURE IN MIND AND CULTURE OF MIND

“As fields must be cultivated to yield harvest, so must the mind be cultivated to yield virtue”

Cicero, Tusculan Disputations.

“For a good tree does not bear bad fruits, nor does a bad tree bear good fruits. For every tree is known by its own fruit”

Luke 6, 43-44.

Culture (from Latin *colere* – cultivate, foster, nourish) represents an integrated system of attitudes, beliefs and behavioral patterns typical of the members of certain community, which does come as a social and spiritual product created, transferred and maintained through communication channels and learning organization processes. Culture is a collective phenomenon which involves processes of both trans- and generationally shared and transmitted meanings such as ideas, beliefs and values and linked cultural scripts or scripted behavioral models, called practices, tasks and conventions (see Kitayama & Iskul, 2011). Roman philosopher Cicero introduced the concept “*cultura animi philosophia est*” in the sense that philosophy (love of wisdom) is the cultivation of soul/mind/spirit and a specific form of self-care and an art of living. According to Cicero, the mind is not a simple repository of perception, information, emotions, thoughts and knowledge, but a garden to be cultivated with care, intention, and virtue. Just like garden should be cultivated to grow fruits, the human mind/soul should be trained, refined, and disciplined to achieve wisdom, love, peace, power, purpose, and moral strength. So, our mental health depends on cultivation of our mind with seeds of virtue and seeds of knowledge and there is a big difference between healthy culture of mind and toxic cultures of mind (Jakovljevic, 2024a,b).

“*Cultura animi*” (the cultivation of the soul” or “cultivation of the mind/spirit”) as an intentional development and refinement of the human mind, character, and the soul through education, philosophy, religion, ethical practice, and arts can be translated as culture of mind, culture in mind and psycho-culture. While culture can be described as a some kind of “collective mind”, the mind can be conceptualized as “culture in the brain”, “personalized culture” or “psycho-culture”. Human mind creates and transforms culture, but also it is shaped, modulated and transformed through and by culture. “Our mind is like a garden which can be cultivated or neglected, and we are its master gardeners. We can cultivate this garden, or we

can ignore it and let it develop whatever way it will. But make no mistake: we will reap the harvest of our work or our neglect” (John Kehoe: *Mind Power Into the 21st Century*. <https://cdn.oujdalibrary.com>). Human mind has capacity for common sense, love, wisdom, self-cultivation and creation of the better world. However, in different cultures mind is defined and described in different ways. In Western cultures, the mind is explained as purely neurological, mental health is commonly viewed through a biomedical lens, with a focus on individual responsibility, prevention, and scientific treatment, while in Non-Western cultures, the mind is inseparable from the spirit, mental health understanding is more integrative and holistic, involving mind-body-spirit unity, community, and environmental balance. From spiritual perspective cultivation of soul refers to the transcendental path towards God.

As human beings we perceive world through the lens of our own minds. Our inner worlds are nourished by specific mental functions that guide and modulate the way we are being and behave in reality and recognize or create another reality. Culture in the mind refers to the fact that our mental models and mental processes are shaped by cultural contexts in which we live. Culture in mind is internalized mental content consisting of schemas, scripts, metaphors, values, and meanings while culture of mind is cultural conceptualization, and cultivation of the mind/soul. Culture of mind reflects how people conceptualize thinking, emotion, intention, behavior, consciousness, life styles, and the self. It refers to the shared cultural understanding of what mind is, how it works, and how mental states are interpreted in a given society (see Aival-Namech et al. 2019). Culture of mind is about how people see and construct the world, the truth, the self and others, identity, mental health and mental illness, etc. It can be defined as a system of assumptions, beliefs and values that defines what is important and norms that define appropriate life philosophy, attitudes and behaviors, how to think, feel and behave. Culture of mind or psychoculture is the dynamic interaction between a society’s cultural values, beliefs, and practices and the psychological functioning of individuals within that society.

Mental health, at both individual and collective level, embodies the integration of culture of mind, human rights, resilience and stress coping, life satisfaction, quality of life and general well-being, and sense of purpose. Mental health involves cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions and refers to the capacity to: 1. satisfy our authentic needs, realize our abilities, live a life with purpose and meaning, and make positive contributions to communities; 2. cope effectively with life’s challenges and stresses developing resilience and antifragility 3. establish and maintain positive and empathizing relationships with others feeling connected and supported; 4. experience peace of mind, contentment, happiness and joy; and 5. take responsibility for

oneself and others as appropriate while respecting universal human rights (Jakovljevic, 2016). Culture and related family background can be important factors in mental health protection, promotion and restoration as well as in the prevalence and manifestation of mental disorders. We live in parallel worlds of different cultures. Culture can have both positive and negative effects on mental health: it can be a source of support, strength and resilience or a source of fragility, conflict and distress.

Narcissism, paranoidism, maniaism, depressiveness and nihilism today are more than individual mindsets and behavioral patterns. They are toxic cultural conditions and mindsets, modes of perception and mental orientations in the world, self-perception and interpersonal relationships. Toxic psycho-cultures refer to collective psychological and emotional climates in which harmful values, behaviors, and mental states are normalized, celebrated, or weaponized within a culture – particularly in political, institutional, or social environments (Jakovljević 2014). These psychocultures lead to alienation from oneself and others, erode mental health, civic trust, ethical norms, and human dignity/rights, often producing long-term damage. Toxic psycho-cultures thrive where reflection dies, where cynicism replaces conscience, and where power is pursued without wisdom. These cultures may exist in religious cults, high-control communities, authoritarian regimes, abusive families and institutions, workplaces with narcissistic leadership, online communities or ideologically extreme movements. Common dynamics of toxic psychocultures involves harmful behavior to be culturally acceptable (normalization), toxic emotions and beliefs spread through media and public discourse (contagion), toxic patterns are embedded in law, education, or policy (institutionalization), critical and holistic thinking and self-awareness are discouraged (suppression of reflection) and complex emotions are replaced by entitlement, admiration, suspiciousness, distrust, rage, cynicism, or numbness (emotional flattening). When media replaces truth with endless spectacle, the political space collapses into entertainment, and when citizens normalize cynicism, mock idealism, and refuse responsibility, the culture begins to be toxic and rot.

There are six major cultures of mind that exist in our VUCA world today which follow different values.. Each of these cultures has its own narrative (see table 1).

Toxic cultures of mind are characterized by disregard of human rights for others, justification of inequality, prioritization of own rights over well-being of others, and distortion of human rights for selfish gain. *Culture of narcissism* is the culturally reinforced system in which narcissistic psychological traits, such as grandiosity, entitlement, attention seeking, image obsession and self-importance, lack of empathy, and a need for admiration, lack of concern for the collective good and

Table 1. Cultures of mind between normality and toxicity

Culture of empathy: “Empathy is the medicine that world needs” (Judith Orloff), way of the being in the world where empathization is highly valued, practiced, and integrated into daily interactions and decision-making processes, I/we am/are OK, you/they are OK, win-win, mutual respect, trust, solidarity and unity.

Culture of narcissism: “me/we first” mentality, sense of superiority, grandiosity, entitlement and self-importance, excessive self-focus and self-obsession, lack of empathy and over-competitiveness are prevalent and even encouraged, I/we am/are OK, you/they are not OK; win-lose.

Culture of paranoidism: others are out to get them, outsiders are dangerous, they are plotting against us, suspicion and distrust (authentic trust is impossible), conspiracy thinking, sense of threat, fear of hidden plots or malevolent forces are prevalent, concept of enemy, scapegoating and victim blaming, I/we am/are OK, you/they are not OK.

Manic culture: “More is always better, even when it costs your health, relationships, or peace”, “You must hustle. If you fail, it’s because you didn’t try hard enough”; cult of happiness, hedonism and a pursuit of pleasure and excitement, grandiosity, dominance, hiperactivity to the point of exhaustion, emotional overreactions, intense ambition, drive for social dominance, hype, instant gratification, performance-based worth, ”hero-mode” leadership.

Culture of depressiveness/Inferiority: “I see everything, but I can’t change anything”, a collective lack of energy, hope, and direction; emotional disconnection or chronic isolation, cringe, inferiority, sense of inadequacy, colonial mentality, I/we am/are not OK, You/they are OK.

Culture of nihilism: “Nihilism is the belief that everything deserves to perish” (Nietzsche), “nothing matters” attitudes, disbelief in ideals, ironic detachment, pervasive skepticism towards traditional values, and institutions, meaninglessness, absurdity, fatalism, rejection of traditional authority; invites collapse, I/we am/are not OK, you/they are not OK.

manipulation of human rights for self-promotion and selfish gain are normalized or rewarded within political institutions, leadership styles, media, and public behavior. This culture can be recognized in celebrity politics, performative leadership and “image over substance” approach. Due to the narcissism (Twenge, 2009) culture of narcissism (Lasch, 1979) has become more prevalent in Western society due to parenting styles that overemphasize self-interest, educational systems that reward performance over collaboration, and cultural shifts that individual gratification is the highest good while collective well-being is sidelined. Paranoia, as psychiatric disorder was defined as an irrational and unfounded suspicion of others, but in our century it has taken on new dimension. The boundaries between healthy vigilance and pathological distrust have become increasingly blurred. *Culture of paranoidism* is a collective psychological condition characterized with constant “us vs. them” narratives and enemy-centric worldview (malevolent forces: internal - traitors, saboteurs and external - foreign powers), authoritarian drift (expanding executive power of leaders, curtailed civil liberties in the name of security and loyalty), scapegoating and witch hunts and collapse of public trust (“alternative facts” flourish where truth is a suspect), where fear of betrayal, hidden enemies, conspiracies, and subversion becomes normal, encouraged, or instrumentalized and fuel violence and – affecting leadership behavior, public trust, policy decisions, and civic life and fueling surveillance and violence. The rise of culture of paranoidism and paranoia based leadership is associated with a rise of wars in our world. *Culture of depressiveness* refers to a collective psychological and cultural atmosphere in which feelings of inferiority and sense of being less-

than (less worthy, less smart, less attractive, less important), hopelessness (“nothing will ever change”), helplessness/powerlessness (“my voice doesn’t matter”), loss of meaning or vision (managerial and technocratic politics, lacking inspiring narratives or collective purpose, citizens lose a sense of shared future), disengagement (voter apathy, civic withdrawal, political cynism), disillusionment (repeated experiences of unkept promises, systemic inequality, or elite impunity lead to collective emotional burnout), and emotional exhaustion (burnout from endless crises, scandals, or ineffective governance) dominate community life. It reflects a state where individuals and societies feel powerless to effect change, leading to apathy, withdrawal, and loss of psycho-political vitality. Depressiveness (“I see everything, but I can’t change anything”) in culture of mind involves the triad of inferiority, helplessness/powerlessness and hopelessness/ resignation associated with sense of being less-than (less worthy, less smart, less attractive, less important), collective lack of energy and emotional disconnection. This culture refers to system that denies people a true sense of agency, belonging, and dignity.

Culture of maniaism is characterized by hyperactivity (constant campaigning, non-stop media cycles, policy churn), impulsivity (sudden decisions without deliberation or planning), grandiosity (overconfidence, overblown promises, messianic leaders, “We will fix everything overnight” rhetoric), euphoria (exaggerated optimism, even amid crisis), flight of ideas (flood of contradictory policies or slogans), distractibility (frequent shifts in focus, shallow attention span, “issue of the week” politics), denial of limits (ignoring ecological, social, financial, or ethical constraints), risk-taking (reckless economic or foreign policy moves, and

emotional volatility. In this mode, community becomes a space of constant stimulation, sensationalism, exaggerated promises, and restless energy – often masking underlying instability, anxiety, or emptiness. It is a collective psychological state in which community discourse, behavior, and public life are dominated by excessive energy, spectacle, unrealistic optimism, impulsive, decision-making, and a refusal to slow down, reflect, or confront complexity. It mirrors the psychological features of mania on a cultural community scale. *Culture of nihilism* refers to a condition in which people in community loses faith in sense, moral ideals, values, institutions, and even the possibility of meaningful public action itself. Nihilism can arise from disillusionment, trauma, injustice, or rapid social change – and it often leaves people disconnected, demotivated, or emotionally numb. People often feel 1. that nothing matters, so why care? 2. values and morals are illusions, 3. have a deep sense of emptiness, despair, or apathy, 4. show cynism toward institutions, relationships, or goals. It can manifest at both the elite and mass levels, undermining democratic norms, ethical governance, and collective responsibility. Culture of nihilism is a form of spiritual and civic decay – where the desire for meaning dies, and with it, the will to act collectively. It is both a danger and a signal: a sign that old forms have collapsed, and that something new – more effective, ethical, and grounded – must take their place.

HUMAN RIGHTS AS A CRITICAL ISSUE IN MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION AND RESTORATION

“Human rights education is much more than a lesson in schools or a theme for a day; it is a process to equip people with the tools they need to live lives of security and dignity”
Kofi Annan

Relationship between mental health and human rights is an intricate issue because social and legal rights are fundamental aspect of human beings’ moral world and people in various cultures value human rights in different ways. Mental health as a global public good is a fundamental human right, but in practice it is not respected enough and in a proper way. Human rights are bi-directionally associated with mental health and cultures of mind. Promoting human rights at individual, family, community and global levels is essential for promoting mental health and preventing mental disorders. Mental health should not to be defined only by adjustment to a particular socio-cultural order, but also by the extent to which that sociocultural order satisfies authentic human needs and human rights (Jakovljevic, 2016). Violation of human rights through violence, stigmatization, isolation, blaming, imposition of wrong attitudes, belittling and devaluing in family and society results in numerous psychological problems

and mental disorders. When a child’s basic rights are violated, they often internalize implicit messages about their worth, safety, and identity – which become injunctions/prohibitions. Injunctions are limiting beliefs and part of self-sabotaging scripts which later in life lead to various psychological problems and mental disorders.

Transactional analysis (TA) developed by Eric Berne in the 1950s is a powerful framework for understanding relationship between culture of mind, human behavior, communication, and human rights. According to TA concepts about life script, injunctions (prohibitions) or stoppers are negative and traumatic, internalized, commonly unconscious, messages received during childhood, which are linked with human rights violations in the context of family dynamics. These negative messages received from parents or authorities are not directly spoken, but implied through behavior, voice tone, emotional withdrawal, or pressure. They shape individual’s life script and can contribute to development of mental disorders by restricting their potential for personal growth because they interfere with children’s natural inclination to explore, learn, and express themselves freely, diminish their sense of autonomy and self-determination and disrupt resilience. Injunctions or prohibitions, sent explicitly or implicitly by powerful others, parents or care-givers are messages that tell a child what they must not do, be, think, or feel and usually start with “Don’t”, for example “Don’t grow”, “Don’t be close”, “Don’t be happy”, “Don’t be normal”, etc. (By internalizing these injunctions, individuals may develop a limited sense of their own human rights, capabilities and worth, hindering their ability to make independent choices and pursue their goals. This can be seen as a violation of their right to self-determination, life, autonomy, and happiness, known as core human rights.

Violation of children’s human rights within families results in pathological injunctions within life-script such as “don’t be” (You are not wanted), don’t be close” (Avoid emotional intimacy), “don’t belong”, don’t be happy’, “don’t think” (you are not to think, you are to be obedient), “don’t feel” (Emotions are dangerous or weak), “don’t trust”, “don’t” grow up” (Stay dependent; being an adult is bad), don’t succeed” (Success is not safe or acceptable, You are destined to fail), “don’t be the sex you are”, etc., which lead to mental health problems and disorders. A culture of empathy stresses the importance of cooperation and collectivism and places universal human rights principles and standards at the core of mental health promotion and treatment of mental disorders (Jakovljevic 2025).

Injunctions are hidden roots beneath the surface of many mental disorders. By helping patients identify, understand, and challenge these unconscious messages, may open a path to deeper healing and lasting change (see table 2).

Table 2. Injunctions/prohibitions: hidden roots of mental problems

“Don’t be” – You shouldn’t exist, You’re not wanted, You are a burden Effect: deep shame, existential guilt, suicidal ideation Disorders: major depression, bipolar disorder, suicidal behaviors, dissociative disorders, alcoholism
“Don’t be who you are” – Who you are is wrong; You are not acceptable as you are Effect: identity confusion, self-alienation, chronic shame, schizophrenia Disorders: avoidant personality disorder, gender dysphoria (if related to identity invalidation), eating disorders, social anxiety disorder
“Don’t grow up” – Stay dependent; Stay small; Effect: dependency, fear of responsibility or maturity, preventing from taking responsibilities Disorders: dependent personality disorder, avoidant coping styles, failure schema
“Don’t be a child” – Don’t be vulnerable or playful; Grow up fast Effect: suppression of spontaneity, enjoying and creativity Disorders: anxiety disorders, depression
“Don’t think” – You are not capable of reasoning Effect: self-doubt, learned helplessness, cognitive distortions, lack of confidence in own thoughts and ideas Disorders: depressive and anxiety disorders dependent personality disorder,
“Don’t feel” – Emotions are bad, dangerous or wrong Effect: emotional numbness, suppression, outbursts, alexithymia, schizoidia Disorders: PTSD, substance abuse disorders, somatization disorders
“Don’t be important” – You don’t matter; your needs don’t matter Effect: people-pleasing, self-neglect, low self-esteem, difficulties in setting boundaries Disorders: depression, codependency, subjugation schema, chronic fatigue
“Don’t belong” – You are not part of the group; You are an outsider; You don’t fit in Effect: emotional trauma, feeling of isolation, alienation, social anxiety, Disorders: paranoid disorders, social anxiety disorder, avoidant personality disorder, schizoid personality disorder, autism spectrum-related,
“Don’t succeed” – Success is bad or dangerous/threatening; You’ll make others look bad Effect: self-sabotage, fear of visibility, underachievement Disorders: impostor syndrome, depression, procrastination and perfectionism, failure schema
“Don’t do anything” – You’ll fail if you try, You’re incompetent, You’ll mess it up Effect: passivity, procrastination, under-functioning Disorders: apathy, amotivational syndrome, depressive disorders, executive dysfunction (ADHD)
“Don’t make mistakes” – Perfection is required, Be perfect or be punished Effect: anxiety, indecision, intense self-criticism Disorders: obsessive personality disorder, Perfectionism-related anxiety, burn-out or high-functioning depression
“Don’t be close” – People will hurt you, Intimacy is dangerous Effect: fear of intimacy, avoidance of relationships or difficulties in establishing trust and healthy connections Disorders: avoidant personality disorder, PTSD, attachment disorders, sexual dysfunction (psychogenic)

Individuals with destructive and numerous injunctions are more likely to develop mental disorders. Typical injunctions for depressive disorders involve “don’t be you”, don’t grow up, don’t think, don’t feel, don’t be a child, while paranoid disorders are characterized by injunctions like don’t be a child, don’t be close, don’t feel (fear, sadness, guilt), don’t belong, don’t trust anybody (Budiša, et al. 2012).

Families, as a regulating and safety system for its members, especially children, have enormous power to shape mental health trajectories, either to well-being or harm. By nurturing connection, safety, and authenticity, families can become the first and most enduring source of mental wellness.

Families can be source of love and safety, but they can also become systems of control, fear, and harm.

Recognizing human rights violations in the family in the family is the first step to breaking cycles of abuse and creating cultures of dignity and freedom, starting at home. The family can be a site of serious systemic, and ongoing human rights abuses, especially when power dynamics, cultural norms, or economic dependency are used to justify harm. Toxic families are characterized with consistent manipulation, emotional abuse, criticism, blaming, boundary violations, control, and lack of respect, leading to consistent distress, anxiety, and low self-esteem in other family members

Toxic families are characterized by lack of empathy, poor communication, unhealthy boundaries or lack of boundaries, control and manipulation, abuse, disrespect and blame and denial.

Empathy and human rights are deeply intertwined. Empathy is not only a mental capacity but also a moral foundation for recognizing, affirming, and protecting the dignity and human rights of others. Empathy is our ability to: feel with others (emotional empathy), understand others' perspectives (cognitive empathy) and care about others' well-being (moral empathy). It is the cognitive, emotional, behavioral and moral bridge that allows us to recognize others as fully human, regardless of differences.

CULTURE OF EMPHATIZATION AS A CORNERSTONE OF MENTAL HEALTH

"Watch your thoughts, they become your words; watch your words, they become your actions, watch your actions, they become you're your habits; watch your habits, they become your character; watch your character, it becomes your destiny"

Lao Tzu

"Empathy is medicine that the world need"

Judith Orloff

Empathology - a new mental health discipline of mutual wellbeing and understanding - may be of utmost importance in psychiatry and mental health sciences and in promoting and restoring mental health through a culture of empathy. Empathy refers to the capacity or ability to understand and share the feelings and mental state of other people. Empathization is nominalization of the verb empathize, the noun form that refers to a concept or phenomenon which represent putting empathy into practice through the process of empathizing. Empathizing is the verb form which describes the active process of engaging and living with and in empathy. When we are empathizing we are actively understanding and connecting with another person's mental or emotional state. So, empathy is what we have (capacity, ability, trait) and empathizing is what we think, feel and do. Empathy incorporates three elements: honoring another's perspective, sitting with the person and their feelings, and finally, taking supportive action. Empathy focuses on the tactical ways we connect with others. Empathization is ability to understand others' as well as one's own internal mental states (ways of thinking, feelings, intentions) and related behaviors from creative, positive, and win-win perspective and being moved to help or responding to it in helpful way. Emphatization is overlapping with mentalization and theory of mind, but additionally giving altruistic, biophilic and philanthropic component. Emphatizing culture of mind is, or refer to mental frameworks or mind modules that direct how people perceive, think, interpret, experience, and interact with the world to solve individual and collective problems. Mental frameworks or mental models involve our cognitive processes, learning, emotional experiences and life expectations and values, communication styles.

Empathy is a powerful force that helps maintain social order and cooperation, which is what makes it such a powerful force in relationships (Krzynarić 2014). It is the mechanism that allows people to understand and relate to others. Empathy is a necessary precursor to intimacy, trust, and belonging. It is also the feeling that makes it difficult to turn a blind eye to the suffering of others. Emphatizing with each other through the culture of empathy we bridge the divide, give each other attention, bring out the positive, practice compassion, walk together in the good and the evil, practice patience and work on our flaws. Culture of empathy is not only crucial for individual growth, it is also crucial for the social wellbeing, economic strength, and health of society through trust, altruism, collaboration, love, charity to name a few. Failure to empathize is a key part of most social problems - crime, violence, war, racism, child abuse, and inequity, etc. Culture of empathy represents a cornerstone of the concept of human rights which are regulated by international laws implemented by state, regional and global institutions (UDHR, CRC), so that human rights represent an obligation for everyone, without exception, to respect the rights of others and others. Respect for human rights is a reflection and expression of global, universal ethics and represents the common moral language of the humanistic self. Life is learning through communication, and communication based on empathy, love and respect for human rights is the basis of healthy relationships in the family and society. Healthy relationships help us realize our potential to be the best we can be, to live in love and with love, to recognize the true meaning of our existence and creatively achieve our life goals. Healthy relationships fill us with vital energy. Life is closely related to spending and renewing energy, and the quality and richness of our life depends on the energy we have. The meaning of healthy relationships based on respect for human rights is giving and receiving, working for mutual benefit and well-being, and realizing a common vision of a better world in and around us.

Emphatizing culture of mind includes positive cognition (core belief: "we are OK, but others are OK, as well"; "together we are more capable and stronger"; "the world is a lovely place, and we can keep it that way only if we join our efforts"; "life is magnificent"), positive affectedness (empathy, love, forgiveness), altruistic motivation ("it's good to do good", "good deeds are rewarded *per se*", "we are better and worthier if we help and give to others) and cooperative behavior ("some kind of bonds exist between all of us", "win-win" behavioral strategy, avoidance of playing blaming games and the roles of victim, savior and persecutor). Emphatizing culture promotes positive messages or counterinjunctions in family such as "you are worthy and deserving of love and acceptance, embrace your true self and celebrate your uniqueness, nurture your inner child and embrace the joy of play, embrace growth and embrace the opportunities that come with adulthood,

believe in yourself and your ability to achieve success, take action and make decisions that align with your values, your voice matters, and your opinions are valuable, you belong and have place in this world, open yourself up to intimacy and we are all vulnerable, practice self-care and your well-being, your thoughts and ideas are valuable and worthy of consideration, acknowledge and embrace your emotions as a valuable part of your experience. Empathy is vital for the health and longevity of relationships. Empathic people often enjoy stronger relationships, greater happiness, and better subjective well-being. Empathization can improve human relationships by encouraging pro-social and altruistic behavior, increasing kindness, boosting cooperation and forgiveness, decreasing conflicts, aggression and judgment, fostering creative communication and so improving mental and physical health.

Culture of empathization represents a societal or organizational climate where people are encouraged and expected to practice empathy, emotional and psychological attunement to others is seen as valuable, communication and relationship are built on understanding, compassion, and mutual respect. It can reduce conflict and misunderstanding, improve mental health and well-being, foster diversity and inclusion, strengthen community bonds, promote ethical decision-making.

Bringing empathizing culture of mind, human rights, global mental health and ideas of empathic civilization together gives us a powerful framework for global enlightenment 2.0 and sustainability. Culture of empathy fosters resilience, mutual understanding, respect, trust, dialogue, joint learning, which can alleviate interpersonal, local and global conflicts and promote well-being for all (Jakovljevic 2018). Building an empathizing culture of mind means creating an environment in family, school, workplace, society and global world that values empathy over narcissism, paranoidism, depressiveness, and nihilism, authenticity over appearance, and connection/collectivism over individualism, creativity over destructivity, connection over isolation, hope with action over despair, curiosity and compassion over cynicism, agency and responsibility over fatalism. The way to challenge toxic cultures of mind is not to argue against them, but to live in a way that disproves it, to create empathizing culture of mind.

Culture of empathy promotes healthy, creative, flourishing, and well-functioning families, communities, nations, societies, and civilizations. Lack of empathy, misperception of the others or dysempathy causes problems in communication, education, personal growth and psychosocial development, private, social and business relationships, so it is a key component of many psychosocial problems such as child abuse, divorces, violation of human rights, crime, violence, war, etc., as well as of some mental disorders like schizophrenia, antisocial personality disorders, depression, autism, etc. Toxic and trauma-genic (narcissistic, paranoid, nihilistic)

cultures of mind are responsible for alarming increase of mental disorders. Culture of empathy drives universal human rights, our common values, trust, cooperation, resilience, coherence, and humanistic self, and so bridges individual, family, public and global mental health for the better world in peace and global security.

It is bluntly obvious that we live in a narcissistic- manic mental culture of spectacle, hedonism and consumerism, pervaded by paranoid and nihilistic culture of terrorism and wars, so that the question what to do pops in its own right. Instead of answer, I hereby offer a quotation from the book "Healthy society" authored by E. From (1963): "We do not need new ideals and new spiritual goals. The great masters of mankind have set standards for a healthy life... Given that mankind has made a huge and resolute step forward in terms of declining from rooting in nature and animal-like existence and trying to find a new home in conscious and fraternal solidarity once the idea of the unity of mankind and the destiny to be fully born was apprehended – the ideas and ideals have remained the same... Nowadays, we need no novel knowledge on how to live normally, since the above ideas are easy to reach and given that we are the direct successors of a great humanistic doctrine. What we must do, is to take seriously what we believe in, what we preach and what we learn. The revolution of our hearts does not require novel wisdom, but rather novel seriousness and loyalty".

Emphasizing culture drives our common values, ethics, trust, cooperation, resilience, coherence, human rights, and humanistic self, and so bridges individual, public and global mental health. It involve invisible forces that hold humans together and lead to healthy, creative, flourishing, and well-functioning families, communities, nations, societies, and civilizations.

CONCLUSIONS

There is a growing recognition of the essential link between culture, human rights and mental health. Having in mind the ethos of *cultura animi* shows us a deeper, long-term path to mental, social and spiritual well-being, striving for personal growth, meaning, and flourishing and healthy and coherent self. Mental health within the concept of *cultura animi* is associated with self-cultivation, valuing wisdom, ethics, and character as cornerstones of well-being and building resilience and inner strength through reflective, reasoned living and moral and existential growth.

Transformative education for empathizing culture is in resonance with the classic humanistic concept that education was not defined as only vocational training but as a transformative journey toward wisdom, moral maturity and civic responsibility. Culture of mind implies that true well-being, flourishing and mental health arise not only from external conditions but also from the inner cultivation of thought, emotion, and character.

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