

Can Holistic Psychotherapies Be Brief?

by

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Abstract

Can holistic therapies be brief? This project aims to offer a few therapeutic, philosophical, sociological and social justice rationales to illustrate that a holistic approach (like the one proposed here) and brief psychotherapy have fundamental differences, making it impossible to merge into one therapeutic modality without causing potential harm to users.

The question of whether a holistic therapy could be brief arises from the increased demand for brief therapies, the growing acceptance of a holistic approach to psychotherapy, and the prevailing capitalist narrative that has filtered into intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships in a variety of ways.

Brief therapies are growing in demand because they represent an affordable alternative to open-ended therapies. However, brief therapies may respond not only to economic pressures but also to the internalization of capitalist core values that seek faster results while diminishing human complexity and overlooking the needs and rhythms of the body and psyche.

Currently, no holistic brief therapy (HBT) is on the horizon; however, the growing acceptance of holistic therapies and the permanent pressure to achieve faster results in almost all areas of human life might incubate the idea that HBT is not only possible but necessary.

keywords: holistic therapy, brief therapy, psyche, rhythms, relationships, capitalism, social justice

Dedication

I believe that we never achieve our goals by our own efforts only. I have received much more than I am aware of to conclude this project. With that in mind, I sincerely thank my daughter Camila and husband Gerardo, who supported me unconditionally on good and bad days and have taught me that being part of this family is the most wonderful experience. I thank my friends who always offered me words of truth and encouragement, reminding me that I am so lucky to have them. I want to express my most profound gratitude to my wise mentor, Lucía, who has walked next to me for many years and taught me the power of love, respect and congruence. I also want to express my appreciation to all the faculty members of the university who have guided me during this trip. Finally, I deeply thank all the teachings and teachers whose paths intersected with mine at some point in life and who have nurtured my soul, uplifted my spirit and fostered my curiosity about the mysteries of life and human beings.

Table of Contents

Abstract..... 2

Dedication..... 3

Chapter One: Introduction.....6

 Overview.....6

 Purpose Statement.....10

 Contributions to the Field.....11

 Reflectivity and Positionality Statement.....11

 Conceptual Framework.....13

 Definition of Terms.....14

 Outline of Capstone Chapters.....20

Chapter Two: Literature Review.....22

 Holistic Psychotherapy.....22

 Definitions of Holistic Psychology.....22

 Psychology and Psychotherapy. Old and Current Meanings.....23

 My Working Concept of Holistic Psychotherapy.....26

 Philosophy.....26

 Definitions.....28

 Brief Therapy.....29

 Rationales that Explain Why Holistic Therapy is Impossible in a Brief Format.....32

 Therapeutic Rationale.....32

 Complex32

 Rhythm, Silence, and Trust.....35

CAN HOLISTIC PSYCHOTHERAPIES BE BRIEF?

	5
Social Justice Rationale.....	38
Capitalism. A Social Construction and Imagined Order.....	38
Capitalist Values.....	39
Accelerating Time. Faster Is Not Always Better.....	42
Compacting Human Temporality to Increase Productivity.....	44
Productivity in Intrapersonal Relationships. Burnout.....	45
Productivity in Interpersonal Relationships.....	47
Language and Silence.....	47
Therapeutic Trust.....	48
Medical Model Approach to Mental Health.....	51
Diagnosis and Knowledge.....	52
Treatment and Interventions.....	54
Summary.....	55
Gaps and Limitations.....	57
Future Directions.....	57
Chapter Three: Holistic Exercise for Psychotherapists.....	59
The Journey the Map and the Territory.....	59
Self-Experimental Exercise with the Breath and the Body.....	60
Preparation.....	60
Procedure.....	61
Cautions and Alternatives.....	64
Conclusions.....	64
References.....	66

Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview

Can holistic therapies be brief? The question about whether a HBT is possible or not arises from the increased demand for brief therapies, the growing acceptance of a holistic approach to psychotherapy, and the prevailing capitalist narrative that has permeated intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships dominating the medical model approach to mental health.

Capitalism is the economic system that rules the world in many aspects. Its central thesis posits that the free market, individual interest, wealth accumulation, and other core capitalist values create social well-being. Thus, the free market bets that only economic growth, through creating more companies, will promote development, resulting in more jobs and a better quality of life for society. This perspective, which has been placed at the center of our understanding of development, equates development with maximizing profits at the expense of everything else, including nature and human beings.

However, capitalism per se is not the problem; the problem is the lack of a healthy balance between this economic system and the institutions of society that better protect life and human rights (Alexander, 2010). Tracing the birth and evolution of capitalism to illustrate how its essence does not favor life, and individuals' well-being (Dussel, 2017; Paizzani, 2014) would require an extensive explanation; nonetheless, we can focus on some of its effects that will allow us to question its thesis.

When the free market is at the center of development and not life, the welfare achieved cannot be sustainable for the long term. To a certain extent, this would explain why companies prioritize individual interests over human rights, natural resources and social interests (Dussel, 2016, 2017). For instance, according to the Human Development Report 2023/2024 of the United Nations, about one-third of the world's fishing zones in the ocean are overexploited. (United Nations Development Programme, 2024). Consequently, fishing, as an economic activity, exceeds the limits of a sustainable

activity. The fishing industry has generated many jobs and has given employees a stable income. Still, the sum of individual interests of fishing companies affects marine ecology, which negatively impacts marine life. This example calls into question the thesis of capitalism because individual interests benefit the owners to the detriment of something of common interest: the equilibrium of the ocean ecosystem. Moreover, capitalism promotes creating any product, service, or experience that satisfies demand quickly, frequently ignoring long-term costs and consequences.

Psychotherapy has become a highly demanded service due to the crisis of mental health worldwide. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2022), in 2019, one in eight people were living with a mental disorder, with anxiety (31%) and depression (28.9%) being the most common ones. Furthermore, high-income countries are somewhat more prone to mental disorders (15.1%) than low-income countries (11.6%) (WHO, 2022). Between 2000 and 2019, the same report estimates that 13% more people were living with mental disorders; yet, in all countries, mental health conditions are prevalent and undertreated, and the services and resources to address this problem are insufficient (WHO, 2022).

Suicide is another parameter to measure the need for psychological support. In 2019, WHO (2021) estimated that 9 persons per 100,000 population lost their lives due to suicide. In Canada, the suicide rate is estimated at 11.8 per 100,000 people (WHO, 2021), which means that Canada's average is slightly above the world average. From 2000 to 2019, the global suicide rate decreased, ranging from 17% in the Eastern Mediterranean Region to 47% in the European Region (WHO, 2021). The only increase in suicide rates was in America, reaching 17% (WHO, 2021). Also, suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among young people in the world between 15 and 19 years old in both sexes, males and females (WHO, 2021).

However, how can we understand the statistics reported by the WHO, which include developed and undeveloped countries, in the context of Canadian reality? Let us look at some additional data.

According to Statistics Canada (2019), almost one in five (17.8%) Canadians aged 12 and older needed mental health care during 2018. In 2020, around 18.1% of Canadians in the same demographic indicated they required assistance with their mental health (Statistics Canada, 2021). This variance between 2018 and 2020 does not represent a significant difference. Still, another report suggests that depression and anxiety disorders increased in the past ten years among Canadians 15 years and older (from 2.6% to 5.2% and from 4.7% to 7.6%, respectively), which was particularly exacerbated during the Covid-19 Pandemic (Stephenson, 2023, para. 5). From these data, we can conclude that although the Canadian average for mental disorders (one in five) is below the world average (one in eight) and that there is no substantial difference between 2018 and 2020, a long-term analysis (10 years) allows us to observe an upward trend in mental disorders in Canada. In this upward trend, depression and anxiety disorders have been the most critical concerns that worsened with the pandemic. This long-term analysis concurs with the rise in the mental disorder crisis reported by the WHO in 2019 (2022). The increasingly prevalent demand for psychotherapy services reflected in the previous statistics agrees with several mental health provider's testimonies. For instance, psychiatrist Hinz noted that even if the current waitlist for psychotherapy were completely cleared in his clinic, the clinic would soon fall behind again due to the ongoing demand (Becken, 2023).

Demand surpasses available public mental health providers (Gratzer & Goldbloom, 2016), causing patients to face long waiting lists. This situation causes the public health service to look for ways to speed up the service and serve more patients in less time. For instance, a single-session study for a same-day counselling program has been implemented across Canada to increase the accessibility and availability of mental health services (Ewen et al., 2016). On the one hand, this program demonstrates that brief therapies attempt to be even briefer, letting aside the minimum time required to establish a reasonable therapeutic alliance. On the other hand, this effort to attend to more people does not necessarily translate into good services to address patient's needs.

Besides, educational institutions also promote the spread of brief therapy. According to Levenson & Evans (2000), accredited graduate and internship programs should include brief therapy training in their curricula so the students can deliver brief therapies when they finish their educational programs.

The promotion of brief therapy from different institutions might explain that many therapeutic currents have been adapted to the brief therapy approach. These adaptations arise because, from a brief therapy perspective, it is possible to shorten, if not all, many therapeutic modalities without considering their complexity.

To justify the idea of the growing acceptance of a holistic approach to psychotherapies, we will briefly address the resurgence of interest in psychedelics and psychedelic-assisted therapy.

Research on psychedelics has rapidly accelerated (Williams et al., 2021) due to increasing openness among Western people to alternative therapies. Research's emergence on psychedelics is driven by the quest for better solutions to mental disorders and patient's unmet needs in psychotherapy (Statistics Canada, 2019).

Nonetheless, the use of psychedelics is not new among some cultures. Diverse cultures across the world have been using psychedelics for centuries as a means of spiritual growth, self-knowledge, and transcendent experiences (Korchinsky, 2024). Evidence of this human need for mystical and spiritual experiences can be found at Göbekli Tepe in Southeast Turkey, dating back to 9,500 BCE. All available evidence indicates that this place was a religious site built by hunter-gatherers from different groups who cooperated over a long period to construct what seems to be a religious construction (Harari, 2014). Thus, this archaeological site in Turkey and the use of psychedelics mainly in South and Central America suggest that humans have made diverse conscious efforts to satisfy spiritual needs, illustrating the central role of spirituality among people since ancient times.

The trend of psychedelic-assisted therapy obeys to more people looking for better results and also to the need to address deep-rooted spiritual needs. Thus, this increasing demand for psychedelic-assisted therapy could be read as conscious and unconscious people's efforts to experience spirituality in a therapeutic context.

Capitalism demands that individuals succeed in all aspects of their lives through strategic planning that requires careful manufacturing and effective self-control (Alexander, 2010). This approach to human beings and life leaves little room to address real spiritual needs that give a sense of depth and unity to human existence. Capitalism traps, uses, and exploits everything that can be translated into economic benefits. Even concepts such as spirituality or holism can be exploited to achieve economic success.

This context justifies the reasons to talk about a HBT that, even though it does not exist, can emerge in the context of the capitalist economic model and the growing demand for mental health services.

Finally, it is essential to clarify that this project's holistic psychotherapeutic approach involves the three aspects of the individual: mind, body, and spirit. The spiritual aspect of the working concept of holistic therapy offered here will refer to the process of self-knowledge. Therefore, *spirituality* should be understood as the compassionate process of self-knowledge of the psyche (see the definition of psyche in the Definition of Terms section) and body processes to unveil the divine essence within all individuals.

Purpose Statement

This project aims to offer some therapeutic and social justice rationale to illustrate that a holistic approach like the one proposed here and brief therapy have fundamental differences, making it impossible to merge into one therapeutic modality without causing potential harm to users. Although there is no HBT on the horizon, the growing acceptance of a holistic approach to psychotherapy and the

permanent pressure to achieve faster results in almost all areas of human beings might incubate the idea that HBT is possible while overlooking the long-term consequences for individuals.

Contribution to the Field

This project aims to anticipate the possible creation of a HBT to protect users and prevent them from harming. Secondly, this capstone aims to contribute to the field with an alternative definition of holistic psychotherapy grounded in caring life and diversity. Thirdly, exploring the question of whether holistic therapy can be brief was done from the intersection of some sociology, philosophy, social justice and a few therapeutic concepts. Therefore, this work aims to contribute to the field with a multidisciplinary perspective to answer the question.

Reflectivity and Positionality Statement

The present section discloses my positionality and my relationship to the topic so that readers have more information about my background, motivations, perspective, and bias.

The topic I explore in this capstone responds to a desire to expand my understanding of the complexity of human beings in their current context of time and history. My curiosity for human beings and life was sown by my father when I was a little girl with topics related to metaphysics. Although I did not understand what my father explained to me about such a complicated topic, he opened up my interest in the mystery of life, human beings and Eastern cultures. The thoughts and reflections arising from that curiosity frequently went beyond my ability to land them in something concrete. Still, these earlier experiences set a fertile land for the forthcoming events that shaped my worldview.

I am a middle-class Mexican woman. As a Mexican, there are some important things to mention. Mexico was a Spanish colony for almost 300 years. Colonization, as in many other places in the world, was accompanied by an aggressive process of evangelization. Both colonization and evangelization processes led to the genocide of native people, which already had its own political, economic, cultural, and social structure. Despite the historical evidence of the number of deaths recorded during and after

the colonial period in México, today, many historians still do not recognize such genocide, including Spain itself.

The wounds left by this part of history on the Mexicans are wounds that, in many ways, have yet to heal. Some of these wounds can be seen in certain aspects of our current culture. For example, the native peoples of Mexico, until recently, were subjected to shame and contempt by the middle and upper classes of society, reflecting a painful wound, namely classism. Only a few years ago we began to respect and rescue the traditions, customs and dignity of our native peoples. That is, it was only a few years ago that we began to rescue our Indigenous identity, which had been not only forgotten but ignored and undervalued by society.

Another expression of our collective wound derived from the disdain for our Indigenous identity still resonates in the Mexican collective unconscious. There is a generalized tendency to believe that everything from the outside, represented by the foreigner, is better than what we have inside.

This brief historical description intends to illustrate one aspect of the intergenerational trauma of the group I belong to and the efforts to restore my Mexican-indigenous identity. These efforts aim to protect the needs and rhythms of my body, mind, and spirit as an individual living in a collective, which requires time, the opposite of brevity and acceleration (a central topic in this capstone). These backgrounds and efforts have led me to critically examine my immediate surroundings and the environment in which human beings and society develop today with social justice and psychotherapeutic perspectives.

On the other hand, as a middle-class woman, I have had many privileges that, in one way or another, are reflected in this work. My socioeconomic position allowed me to attend holistic psychotherapy for many years in México. This process makes me feel confident that holistic therapy goes beyond overcoming trauma, depression, and anxiety. It offers the possibility to heal old wounds, hear our own voice, face life challenges with more flexibility, and live a more fulfilling life while coping with

life challenges. I am also privileged to have had a mentor who has guided and accompanied me in the process of becoming a psychotherapist while in México. Throughout this mentoring, I was able to experience and learn the importance of respecting and trusting patients' rhythms.

Another privilege that significantly influenced my way of seeing human beings and their environment was my training in some Chinese martial arts and my study of the Japanese Tea Ceremony (Chado). The former allowed me to experience the power of the body and movement on different levels of the self. This experience fostered my comprehension of the mind-body connection of my training program to become a Bioenergetic Analysis therapist when I lived in México. The Japanese Tea Ceremony practice has taught me invaluable things. However, two lessons that apply to my personal and professional life stand out. The first lesson was that one must observe to learn and understand. The second lesson was that to truly listen to yourself or another person, one must be in silence. This information about the influence of the martial arts and the Japanese culture in my life will help the reader understand the value I place on silence, self-observation, body, and rhythm in the therapeutic process.

Conceptual Framework

The theoretical approaches used in this research are Jungian and bioenergetic therapies. Jungian therapy is characterized by its work with the unconscious and its manifestations.

Bioenergetic Analysis Therapy (BAT) is a lesser-known therapy that deserves a brief explanation to introduce the reader to its central idea. BAT can be considered a form of evolution in the field of Psychoanalysis. Wilhelm Reich, a student of Freud (Reich, 2013), developed his therapeutic modality, Reichian therapy or character analysis therapy. This approach focuses on the relationship between the body and the mind, emphasizing the role of blocked physical energy in psychological and emotional issues (Reich, 2013). Reich (2013) argued that physical blockages depend on the developmental stage at which the conflict occurred. Alexander Lowen, the creator of BAT, was Reich's student (Lowen, 1990).

Lowen built upon Reich's body-oriented therapeutic techniques and argued that energy manifests in body structure, physical posture, and chronic muscle contractures (Lowen, 1990, 1994, 2005). He developed specific body movements to mobilize the stagnant energy in the body. In this way, body and movement would affect emotional and mental states.

Thus, Jung's therapy uses the unconscious to obtain information to solve current conflicts, and BAT uses the body and movement to address what is in the present moment by reaching unconscious information stored in the body.

These psychotherapeutic approaches use conversation as the primary form of communication between patients and therapists. However, both therapies do not focus their efforts on the conscious narrative only. Instead, they work with what the patients bring to the session in the present moment with their bodies and through the diverse manifestations of the unconscious (like dreams, acting out, free association, failed acts).

Definition of Terms

Acceleration of time

It is the pressure capitalism exerts to compress and fragment time to maximize efficiency and performance and achieve maximum productivity even in human processes (Han, 2021; Rosa, 2013).

Basic Trust

Refers to the trust that emerges in early childhood through attachment relationships with caregivers. It involves the belief that those close to the individual will be responsive and caring in times of need, leading to feelings of safety and security (Fonagy et al., 2014).

Burnout

It is a syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed (WHO, 2019).

Burnout refers to the process of self-exploitation due to desensitization and disconnection of people from themselves derived from the introjected capitalist fiction that one has to be productive and competitive in all areas of personal life (Han, 2015).

Capitalism

It is a production, distribution and consumption model of goods and services that corresponds to the economic field. The capitalist principles relevant to this capstone are productivity, competence, individualism and growth.

Conscious

According to Jung (1970), the conscious refers to everything one is aware of and includes thoughts, beliefs, memories, feelings, body sensations and perceptions.

Competition

According to Smith (1776/n.d.) it is the vital force that drives efficiency, productivity, innovation through which the market is self-regulated.

Complex

According to Jung's definition, "a complex is a constellation of psychic elements grouped round feeling-tone contents ... It consists of a nuclear element and a large number of secondarily constellated associations..." (Jung, 1970, p. 11).

Crisis of Temporality

It refers to the lack of time to experience inner human processes (psyche's and corporal processes) due to the pressure of the acceleration of time.

It also refers to the lack of time to experience how time goes by because everything is getting faster to achieve productivity, turning the experience of time (past, present and future) disjointed and life into a series of disconnected events (Han, 2015, 2021).

Depoliticization of suffering

It refers to the effort to conceptualize the current economic system in ways that protect capitalism from criticism, encouraging self over social reform (Davies, 2023, para. 12).

Diagnosis

Refers to the process of recognizing and determining the nature of a disease or disorder based on its signs and symptoms, using assessment techniques and other evidence. It also involves classifying individuals based on a disease, disorder, abnormality, or specific characteristics, and includes the decision or conclusion reached through this classification process (American Psychological Association [APA], n.d., Definition 1; Definition 2; Definition 3).

Enantiodromia

It is the psychological movement to the opposite pole that regulates the opposites' functions (Jung, 2016, p. 43).

Epistemic Trust

Refers to the ability to trust the information communicated by others, particularly in social contexts. It involves a willingness to accept knowledge as reliable and relevant. In the context of psychotherapy, epistemic trust refers to the ability to trust in the psychotherapist's competence and knowledge (Fonagy et al., 2014).

Fiction (imagined reality or social construction)

It is a sociological concept that refers to the stories, beliefs, ideologies, concepts and myths humans create and share that build up imagined realities (Harari, 2014). In other words, it is an intersubjective phenomenon formed through language, creating a complex network of co-constructed narratives everyone believes in (Harari, 2014, pp. 45-47).

Imagined order

It is a sociological concept that attempts to explain societal phenomena (Harari, 2014). It is an intersubjective phenomenon that arises from the fiction or imagined reality (Harari, 2014, p. 157).

Internalize

It is a psychological concept that refers to making an attitude or behavior part of one's nature by learning or unconscious assimilation (Oxford Dictionary of English, 2010, p. 913).

Intervention

An intervention refers to any action aimed at disrupting, stopping, or changing a process, such as a treatment designed to prevent, control, or modify the progression of a disease or disorder (APA, n.d., Definition 1).

Means-end rationale

It is the logic that focuses on results and evaluates the means in terms of the efficiency and effectiveness with which the end is achieved, excluding those variables that do not contribute to the desired end (Mora, 2024).

Medical Model

The APA defines the medical model as the idea that mental and emotional issues are comparable to biological problems, meaning they have identifiable physiological causes, such as an abnormal gene or damaged cell, and can be treated or improved through targeted interventions (n.d., Definition 1).

Numinous

Numinous refers to the subjective experience of the transcendent function that eventually leads to transpersonal consciousness and feelings of connectedness and which cannot be understood only through rational concepts but causes a specific shift in consciousness (Jung, 2016, pp. 12, 13).

Refers to the knowledge that remains unreachable from human experience or reason (APA, n.d.).

Phenomenon

Phenomenon refers to an observable event that the senses can perceive (APA, n.d., Definition 1, Definition 2).

Productivity

Refers to the effectiveness of productive effort, especially in industry, as measured in terms of the rate of output (Oxford Dictionary of English, 2010, p. 1417).

From a philosophical perspective, it refers to the internalized value that make people push themselves to constant self-improvement and self-efficacy beyond their limits in pursuit of success (Han, 2105, 2021).

From the intersection of philosophical and economic approach, it refers to an economic output and profit maximization, often and the expense of human dignity, well-being and ethical considerations (Dussel, 2008, 2016).

Psyche

It is the totality of all psychological processes, comprehended by psychic energy, the conscious, the unconscious (personal and collective), and the transcendent function (Jung, 1970; Sharp, 2013)

Psychology (current meaning)

APA defines psychology as the scientific study of the mind and behavior, investigating the biological, personal, and social processes that influence human behavior and the presumed set of behaviors, traits, and attitudes that distinguish an individual. Additionally, the practice of psychology involves diagnosing and addressing dysfunctions to enhance behavior (n.d., Definition 1; Definition 2).

Psychology (etymological meaning)

The etymological root of psychology comes from the Greek *psykhē*, which refers to breath, spirit, or soul, and *logia*, which means ‘the study of.’ In summary, the etymological meaning of psychology would be better suited to ‘the study of the soul’ (Harper, n.d.).

Psychotherapy (current meaning)

According to the APA, psychotherapy refers to any psychological service that uses dialogue as a primary way to interact with and get to know the user of the psychotherapeutic service to assess, diagnose, and treat dysfunctional emotional reactions, ways of thinking, and behavior patterns (APA, n.d.).

Psychotherapy (etymological meaning)

The etymological root of psychotherapy comes from the Greek *psykhē*, which refers to breath, spirit, or soul, and *therapeuein*, which means care for, attend or alleviate. Therefore, the etymological meaning of psychotherapy would better correspond to the idea of 'taking care of the soul' (Anders, n.d.).

Spirituality

Refers to the compassionate process of self-knowledge of the psyche (see the definition of psyche) and body processes to unveil the divine essence within all individuals.

Temporality

Temporality refers to the time human processes take to develop organically and to connect with other internal and external processes that are not under consciousness or rational control.

Transcendent function

According to Jung (2016), "it is a psyche activity inherent to humans and constitutes a union of conscious and unconscious contents to overcome the separation between the conscious and the unconscious" (p. 14).

Treatment

Involves the use of suitable interventions, such as medication, surgery, or psychotherapy, aimed at alleviating a pathological condition (n.d., Definition 1).

Unconscious

The unconscious is the totality of all psychic phenomena that lack the quality of consciousness. It also contains psyche functions that are not capable of consciousness and of which we only have indirect knowledge (Sharp, 2013).

Outline of the Capstone Project Chapters

The goal of chapter one is to introduce the reader to the topic by giving some statistics and contextual information. Additionally, this chapter explains the aims of the contribution to the field. Furthermore, in order to better understand how the research was analyzed and approached, I disclose some aspects of my positionality. Next, to complete the overview of my approach, I briefly mention what therapeutic modalities influence my perception of psychotherapy. Finally, this chapter covers key terms related to my research to provide the reader with a relevant glossary of terms.

Chapter two covers a literature review divided into three main sections. The first section elaborates on old and current meanings of psychology and psychotherapy to illustrate why holistic psychotherapy, which comprehends mind-body and spirit as a whole, encounters fundamental challenges in the mental health field. Next, there are some definitions of holistic psychology to appreciate that there are several approaches to the holistic concept. The previous explanations help explain my working concept of holistic psychotherapy, which includes my philosophy and definitions. This section addresses the means-end rationale, a philosophical concept that illustrates why holistic and brief therapy pursue different goals and have fundamental differences. The second section of this chapter addresses key aspects of the Brief Therapy theory, such as values, expectations, and general procedures, to provide specific information that can be contrasted with holistic therapy. The third section answers the question of why holistic therapy cannot be brief. The answers are divided into two groups: therapeutic and social justice rationale. Therapeutic rationale addresses three fundamental Jungian concepts (complex, phenomenon, and noumena) and the role of rhythm, silence and trust in the therapeutic process. The social justice rationale starts by providing capitalist core concepts and how they

became social constructions. Next, from a philosophical and sociological perspective, it will be explained how those capitalist core concepts have been internalized by human beings and filtered into society and the medical model approach to mental health. The last section of chapter two offers an overview of the gaps, limitations and future directions of this work.

Finally, chapter three offers a self-experimental exercise aimed at psychotherapists in their process of self-knowledge who desire to improve their professional skills and a conclusion.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Holistic Psychotherapy

Definitions of Holistic Psychology

A holistic approach to mental health has become more accepted and even appreciated in the counselling field, although there is no single definition of it. For example, according to Phan et al. (2021), holistic psychology involves viewing experiences as part of a continuous spectrum without distinguishing between positive and negative experiences. For Dougherty, (2010), holistic means incorporating breathing techniques into clinical practice, while for Seow et al. (2021), the term holistic refers to addressing and integrating 'pre-therapy,' 'during-therapy' and 'post-therapy' services to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the experience of psychotherapy users. In contrast to La Torre (2000), the term holistic combines complementary therapeutic modalities to support individuals in terms of body, mind, and spirit integration. Similarly, for Korn (2012), holistic therapy implies recovering body rhythms interrupted by trauma and recognizing that human rhythms flow with natural world rhythms. Finally, Edwards (2013) proposes that the term holistic should encompass a multicultural perspective, given that developing countries have significantly influenced psychology. In his definition, he considers that the term holistic should include the study of body, mind and spirit (understanding spirit as breath, soul, Self and energy), dual and non-dual realities, conscious, unconscious, harmony and healing.

The ideas in common among all these definitions suggest that a holistic approach to psychology attempts to be more inclusive in contemplating other aspects of the human being that often fall outside the scope of science. The differences reside in what aspects each author considers in their holistic definition. While some authors suggest incorporating concepts such as soul, others consider incorporating breathing techniques as therapeutic interventions. These variations in holistic concepts

necessarily give rise to multiple meanings of holistic psychology. For this reason, this paper will offer a working concept of holistic psychotherapy after briefly exploring the original and current meanings of psychology and its related branch, psychotherapy. This brief exploration aims to illustrate why some of the above mentioned concepts might be excluded by contemporary psychology.

Psychology and Psychotherapy. Old and Current Meanings

The science of psychology currently informs the field of psychotherapy as it is considered a branch of applied psychology. However, modern psychology has focused on the biological bases of the symptoms, leaving aside the philosophical questions about human existence and its worldview (Alexander, 2010). The original meaning of *psychology* and *psychotherapy* comes from the Greek roots *psykhē* and *logia* and *psykhē* and *therapeuein* (Harper, n.d.; Anders, n.d.), respectively. Both have similar meanings, which refer to the knowledge or the care of the soul. Conversely, the APA defines *psychology* as the scientific study of the mind and behavior, investigating the biological, personal, and social processes that influence human behavior and the presumed set of behaviors, traits, and attitudes that distinguish an individual. Additionally, the practice of psychology involves diagnosing and addressing dysfunctions to enhance behavior (n.d., Definition 1; Definition 2).

The APA defines *psychotherapy* as a service provided by a trained professional who assesses, diagnoses, and treats dysfunctionalities through interactions and specific forms of communication (n.d.). This means that the current approach of psychology and psychotherapy, as defined by the APA, focuses on the observable dysfunctionalities the senses can perceive, assess, diagnose and treat by experts who use specific forms of communication to enhance behavior.

In contrast, old meanings of psychology and psychotherapy attempted to study the phenomenon, as modern science does, and also what lies beyond it that can be encapsulated under the term *psyche*.

According to Jung, the *psyche* is the totality of all psychological processes, comprehended by psychic energy, the conscious, the unconscious (personal and collective), and the transcendent function (Jung, 1970; Sharp, 2013). The psychic energy is what Freud used to call libido or sexual energy (Jung, 1970). Nonetheless, Jung (1970) argued that psychic energy includes sexual energy, but it is not limited to that manifestation. Psychic energy manifests in different forms or phenomena that fall out of one's control. For example, when a particular thought is present in a recurrent manner despite not wishing to have it and knowing that it is unfounded or irrational. Jung (2019) indicated that recurrent thoughts or behaviors must be driven by some energy that sustains them despite the efforts to eradicate them. This psychic energy that sustains recurrent thoughts is the same psychic energy that sustains the complex, a concept that will be addressed further. Therefore, while the *psyche* is a characteristic of the living body, psychic energy refers to how the *psyche*'s elements or characteristics interact among them and how they manifest (Jung, 2019).

Individuals' memories and experiences that were repressed or forgotten belong to the personal unconscious, while collective memories, which reside at a deeper level of the *psyche*, belong to the collective unconscious (Jung, 1970). Nonetheless, the unconscious not only contains personal and collective information that is not reachable through rational or mental efforts. The unconscious encompasses all psychological phenomena that do not possess conscious awareness. It also includes *psyche* functions incapable of becoming conscious, of which we only have indirect knowledge "such as the relationship between living matter [body] and spirit" (Sharp, 2013, Jung lexicon section). Therefore, according to Jung's perspective, the unconscious is not static information; the unconscious has its processes and dynamics, whose manifestations indicate the existence of something that cannot be grasped directly. For example, despite advances in science and technology, scientists still do not know what life is; nonetheless, we experience life. So, we indirectly know what life is because we see its manifestations.

In contrast, the *conscious* is everything one is aware of and includes thoughts, beliefs, memories, feelings, and perceptions (Jung 1970). Nevertheless, the conscious is not independent of the unconscious; instead, the conscious continually emerges from the unconscious manifested in a diverse variety of spontaneous thoughts, ideas and mental images (Jung, 2019).

Finally, "the *transcendent function* constitutes a union of conscious and unconscious contents to overcome the disconnection between the conscious and the unconscious" (Jung, 2016, p. 14). The transcendent function is a nonfinite psyche process inherent to humans, where unconscious content reaches the threshold between the conscious and the unconscious (Jung, 2016). Through this psyche activity, the unconscious constantly informs the conscious. The interaction between the dynamic functions of the conscious and unconscious is where the process of self-knowledge occurs, resulting in better mental health as there is a better balance between different aspects of the psyche (Jung, 1970).

The psyche's process described above "represents a dynamic attribute of the individual" (Jung, 2016, p. 74). This dynamic attribute manifests through the individual's subjective experience, which cannot be classified and understood only through logic or rational concepts; nonetheless, it causes a specific shift in consciousness (Jung, 2016). Jung called this dynamic process *numinous* (Jung, 2016).

In contrast, according to the APA, a numinous experience or noumenon refers to the knowledge that remains unreachable from human experience or reason (n.d.) and beyond human comprehension. Therefore, modern psychology's definition focuses more on behaviors, brain functioning, and biological explanations, that is, observable phenomena and excludes those aspects of the individual, such as the numinous, as they are considered unobtainable for individuals.

Etymological meanings of psychology and psychotherapy and Jungian therapy embrace observable phenomena as well as intangible phenomena like transcendent function and *numinous* process that cannot be measured or diagnosed through scientific procedures; however, they constitute

characteristics of the human being that would cause serious harm to the individual —and society at large— if it is removing from the study of the humans (Jung, 2016, p. 94).

Thus, the difference between Jungian therapy and etymological meanings and modern definitions of psychology and psychotherapy could explain why the term holistic, which involves non-observable phenomena, faces substantial barriers to finding a place in modern psychology.

This brief analysis of the current and old meanings of psychology and psychotherapy forms the foundation for explaining the working concept of holistic psychotherapy proposed in this project. The concept proposed here embraces psychotherapy in its original meaning ‘the care of the soul’ and the concepts of phenomenon, numinous, conscious, unconscious, and transcendent function.

My Working Concept of Holistic Psychotherapy

Philosophy. The philosophy of holistic therapy proposed here aims to support the process of people’s self-knowledge and respecting the natural rhythms of the body and psyche to unveil the divine essence within all individuals that results in a solid mental, emotional and physical well-being. Nurturing life, embracing diversity, and protecting human dignity are the ethical duties that guide this holistic therapy.

The philosophy has two ethical principles: life and diversity. These principles are judgments of facts that anyone can prove; thus, they are not social constructions, a concept that will be explained further. Life perspective considers that all human experiences exist and occur within the absolute reality that starts with life and ends with death. Within this time frame, all life manifestations deserve to be seen. Diversity refers to all life manifestations inherent to life existing within the spectrum between life and death. In a therapeutic context, diversity refers to recognizing individuality and the unique way each person experiences the subjective interpretation of the so-called objective reality. Thus, the life and diversity approach implicitly recognizes that no fixed strategic interventions apply to everyone.

Furthermore, preserving life involves causing no harm, as harm reduces vitality and life by disrupting the natural rhythms of the psyche and body. The ethical principles of the proposed working concept differ radically from the means-end rationality behind the brief therapy.

The means-end rationale concept, a product of the intersection of economic and philosophical fields, is crucial in understanding the capitalist mindset that determines what society considers desirable. *The means-end rationale* mindset focuses on results and evaluates the means in terms of the efficiency and effectiveness with which the end is achieved, excluding those variables that do not contribute to the desired end (Mora, 2024). This rationality could be explained by the famous phrase 'the end justifies the means,' illustrating why all questions and judgments concerning the ends are discarded and treated as value judgments or judgments of preference with a subjective value (Mora, 2024). Brief therapy will be addressed in more detail later, but for now, and only to illustrate the means-end concept, we will say that one of the characteristics of brief therapy is focusing on results.

By focusing on obtaining specific results in a certain time frame, brief therapy ignores other variables that do not contribute to the desired end, even when the variables are inherent characteristics of the human being, such as the transcendent function and the numinous process.

In pursuing the outcome, the means-end mindset ignores short and long-term collateral costs. In the case of brief therapy, means-end rationale ignores the series of internal maneuvers individuals have to make in order to align their internal reality with the established goal. This rationality would be similar to believing that a grief process or the maturing process of a problem that may have taken years to shape can be accelerated and manipulated according to people's desires. The cost that these internal maneuvers have for individuals in the medium and long term is difficult to calculate; however, it is known that grief processes that were not processed consciously often have diverse repercussions on mental health.

Means-end reasoning, a mindset fostered by the capitalist system, has shaped the narrative that individuals must achieve their goals regardless of the potential medium and long-term costs to themselves and society.

Therefore, whereas brief therapy places the result as the end and the means as the effective adaptation of the inner reality to the goals, the holistic therapy proposed here places self-knowledge, life, and diversity as the end and the means as the process of integrating mind-body through the transcendent function.

These fundamental differences illustrate why a holistic therapy like the one proposed is unfeasible in a brief therapy modality.

Establishing the ultimate goal and values of the holistic approach to therapy gives the readers solid and concrete criteria to contrast between a philosophy favoring the efficacy by which the goals are achieved and a philosophy favoring human processes, life and diversity. This critical evaluation attempts to encourage critical thinking about the prevailing narrative constructed upon dubious grounds that have offered several rationalizations to justify irrational actions (Mora, 2024, section II), like prioritizing productivity over human needs and rhythms.

Definitions. The definitions of the working concept of holistic psychotherapy proposed here are addressed from three angles: as a paid job, as a therapeutic process for the user of therapeutic service, and what the patients can expect from this therapy in its practical dimension.

Definition 1. Holistic psychotherapy, as a paid service to the community, is the act of accompanying patients' subjective reality through careful treatment, expressed through radical acceptance and active listening.

Definition 2. Holistic psychotherapy, as a therapeutic process, is the work of supporting patients' subjective experience, and their unique learning process of gaining conscious awareness of their transcendent function, and mind-body connection.

Definition 3. In its pragmatic approach, holistic therapy supports patients' efforts to respond more responsibly and flexibly to their circumstances. Holistic therapy provides a space of containment where individuals learn to distinguish the pain from rigid learned patterns and the discomfort that arises from the fear of abandoning those patterns. Additionally, holistic therapy supports increasing patients' capacity to tolerate the discomfort associated with leaving old patterns behind and transitioning to new ways of being, thinking, feeling, and behaving.

Finally, as neuroscience increasingly explores the mind-body connection for its application in counselling, it is crucial to differentiate this from the holistic approach to psychotherapy. While mind-body interventions focus on biological bases to understand the mind-body connection to change specific symptoms, the holistic approach encompasses the mind-body-spirit connection, which views symptoms as opportunities to learn more about themselves.

Moreover, the holistic approach posits that healing does not come from external techniques but from the inherent power within individuals. Mind-body research, while crucial to offer professional therapeutic services that are also grounded in evidence-based information, should not be confused with the holistic perspective on human beings and psychotherapy.

Brief Therapy

Some characteristics of brief therapy will be highlighted to illustrate why brief and holistic therapy have fundamental differences that make them incompatible.

Brief therapy was developed in the early 1960s. However, it took off until the 1980s in the United States due to the sociopolitical environment, the growing demand for mental health services, the shortage of psychotherapeutic services, and the significant participation of insurance companies in the mental health field which set the limit on contributing to mental health costs (Budman & Gurman, 1988). Psychology has been monopolized by developing countries such as the United States (Edwards, 2013), partly explaining why brief therapies have become a trend in some Western countries highly influenced

by the United States. These environmental factors led more people to seek more efficient and effective therapies (Budman & Gurman, 1988; Dewan et al., 2018). Therefore, brief therapies responded to economic and political conditions rather than human needs.

As a result, various therapeutic modalities have been adapted into more compact treatments for faster results. This adaptation focuses on intensifying therapeutic interventions (Dewan et al., 2018) and concentrating them on 5 to 8 sessions, the standard period a brief therapy endures (Taibbi, 2024). In other words, the brief therapy approach considers that they can identify the key factor of each therapeutic modality to promote change in all individuals equally.

While the intensification of therapeutic interventions varies among brief therapies, they share the idea of accelerating the change process to achieve faster results (Budman & Gurman, 1988; Dewan et al., 2018). For example, Time-Limited Dynamic Psychotherapy (TLDP) attempts to accelerate the process of change through corrective emotional experience (Alexander & French, 1947), which states that change can occur by replacing old experiences with new ones. It also considers that understanding where thoughts or behaviors come from is not necessary to achieve goals (Dewan et al., 2018, p. 266). This TLDP's strategy to accelerate the process of change, targets and elicits dysfunctional patterns to bring them to the surface through interactive countertransference (Levenson, 1995). This intervention pretends to intensify and reveal patients' dysfunctional style of relationship, giving the patient the opportunity to interact differently. Thus, to offer a corrective experience, TLDP's therapist paired the opportunity to learn with a painful (conscious or unconscious) experience in therapy to the patient. This intervention reveals that the TLDP brief therapists' approach considers that even unpleasant and painful experiences provoked by 'strategic interventions' allow patients to learn faster and feel more open to new ways of thinking and behaving.

Another brief therapeutic modality that has become popular in the last decade is solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT). SFBT is characterized by identifying the exceptions to the

presenting problem, focusing on patients' strengths and the positive outcomes already occurring in patients' lives to build upon those changes (Dewan et al., 2018). SFBT therapists help individuals reframe problems and explore solutions without delving into the origins of psychological issues, as this modality believes that there is no necessity to recall past events to overcome present problems or achieve desired goals.

Although an SFBT meta-analysis reported positive but minor effects for specific problems (Kim, 2008), it disregards a vast body of research indicating the impact of the unconscious on conscious decisions, including goals, behaviors, and decision-making (Fingelkurts & Fingelkurts, 2023). SFBT focuses on the patient's goals without considering the unconscious motivations to achieve the goal and the potential reinforcement of defense mechanisms and fossilized beliefs. For instance, individuals looking for support to improve their job results could be motivated by inner drives that cause problems in other areas of their lives. Therefore, focusing on achieving the result would only empower fossilized beliefs and hinder the transcendent function. On the other hand, when individuals only focus on what works in their lives, purposely ignoring what is causing distress, they receive the implicit message that one must ignore what causes discomfort and attend only to the agreeable parts of oneself.

Taking TLDP and SFBT as examples of brief therapies, let us summarize why brief and holistic therapies are incompatible. Firstly, while holistic therapy attempts to respect individuals' learning rhythms, brief therapy intends to accelerate the learning process by intensifying therapeutic techniques to achieve faster results. Secondly, brief therapy does not believe in healing and holds a practical approach to human beings where goals and results are at the center. In contrast, holistic therapy considers that healing is a power within the patients (Moshe, 2016) that allows individuals to have a more fulfilling life. Thirdly, while holistic therapy considers all possible factors and variables contributing to the healing process, brief therapy ignores those variables that are not aligned with the goals, even though they are an intrinsic part of the human being (like the unconscious and relevant past events in

individuals' lives). Finally, holistic and brief therapy are incompatible because the former tries to integrate the different aspects of the individual. In contrast, brief therapy encourages disconnection by ignoring the 'weaks' aspects of the individual that require careful attention and focusing only on what is already healthy, which could potentially harm the individual as it contributes to an unbalanced psyche.

Further research is crucial to assess the potential side effects of SFBT and TLDP, particularly with delicate issues like dysfunctional relationship patterns. Longitudinal research employing alternative methodologies that involve other fields like sociology, philosophy, and anthropology would be ideal for evaluating the results and side effects of TLDP and SFBT therapies.

Having established an overview of holistic and brief therapy and contrasting specific characteristics, we will explore two more perspectives to explain why holistic therapy is impossible in a brief format: a therapeutic and a social justice approach. The therapeutic view intends to illustrate part of human complexity by addressing the Jungian concept of complex and the impact of the body's and psyche's rhythms on trust. The social justice approach seeks to illustrate how capitalist core values, implicitly inserted in a brief therapy approach, have permeated the most intimate fibers of interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships and the effects of this on mental health.

Rationales that Explain Why Holistic Therapy Is Impossible in a Brief Format

Therapeutic Rationale

Complex. The Jungian approach offers many concepts to explain why separating the conscious and unconscious material by focusing only on rational thinking contributes to the detriment of mental health. The complex concept is one of many that illustrate this.

[A complex] ... is a constellation of psychic elements grouped round feeling-tone contents. ... the complex consists of a nuclear element and a large number of secondarily constellated associations.

The nuclear element has a constellating power corresponding to its energetic value. It produces a specific constellation of psychic contents, thus giving rise to the complex... The constellating power of the nuclear element corresponds to its value intensity, i.e., to its energy.

[Moreover]... an active complex puts us momentarily under a state of duress, of compulsive thinking and acting, for which under certain conditions the only appropriate term would be the judicial concept of diminished responsibility. ...The complex ... in terms of energy...possesses a value that sometimes exceeds that of our conscious intentions, otherwise such disruptions of the conscious order would not be possible at all.

Fear of complexes [fear of unconscious material that is somehow considered dangerous] is a bad signpost ... because it always points away from the unconscious and back into consciousness (Jung, 1970, pp. 11,12, 96, 101).

The complex concept illustrates human's complexity, which brief therapy disregards. The complex explains how a central problem (core element or fossilized belief) manifests itself in diverse and different behaviors. In Jung's definition, a complex suggests that the behaviors observed (phenomenon) are not the central problem but an expression of it. The complex could be understood as a semi-closed coded system that sustains a psychic equilibrium. This equilibrium protects the individual from pain as long as the elements that compose the constellation do not change abruptly. When only one element of the constellation changes or tries to change radically without being sustained by a gradual change of the rest of the elements, the psychic equilibrium is threatened, and the feeling of protection (defense mechanisms) arises.

From a complex perspective, the internal maneuvers the psyche has to develop to solve only one problem of the constellation, like in brief therapy, adds layers of rationalizations over the nuclear element and its constellation. As a result, the network of the complex and its elements, that resides in the unconscious, cannot reach the threshold between the unconscious and the conscious.

Moreover, isolated 'solutions' to the expressions of the core element or the secondarily constellated associations require an enormous effort (energy) to sustain because it demands individuals to control the manifestations (symptoms or behaviors) rather than solving them. When the manifestation of the complex is controlled through disconnected and superficial solutions, individuals can expect the problem to return because the behavior (the expression of the complex) is fueled by the nuclear element and sustained by the force of the constellation. Isolated and superficial solutions require massive conscious efforts to maintain the motivation for the goal through rational thinking (which characterizes the work in brief therapy). Furthermore, the results achieved through controlling the manifestation of the complex are unsustainable in the long term as the power of the constellation exceeds the power of the conscious intentions. However, suppose individuals achieve control of the behavior fueled by the complex. In that case, they may experience an inner battle between the conscious intentions to achieve their goal and the problematic behavior they try to eradicate. This inner battle can be intensified when trying to accelerate the change process because the complex protects itself against the threat of a conscious action that could break the psychic equilibrium of the constellation. Therefore, accelerating the change process through rational efforts and isolated solutions to individual problems can intensify the constellation's strength, causing the constellation to close further.

The difference between controlling and solving the expression of the complex holistically can be seen in how much that particular expression (behavior or problem) was 'solved' while other aspects of the individual's life remain the same or even worsen. When the complex is approached holistically and the material that has reached the threshold of the consciousness is addressed, the strength of the complex diminishes. This relaxation of the complex allows the patient to explore with more confidence the elements of the constellation as well as their connections.

For instance, anxiety can be a form of control over complex manifestations. According to Lemon et al. (2013) “anxiety is the tension between the repressed emotions that are trying to emerge in our consciousness and the unconscious efforts we expend to keep these emotions down, away from our awareness” (p. 5). Thus, unconscious efforts to avoid uncomfortable emotions manifest as conscious decisions aimed at specific goals. Anxiety represents the inner battle between the conscious intentions to control behaviors to eradicate problems and the power of the complex that resides in the unconscious. Therefore, efforts to solve only one problem of the complex through conscious efforts could provoke anxiety in patients in the long term.

From the complex perspective, it is clear that holistic therapy is not feasible in a brief format. Brief therapy focuses on solving the manifestations of the complex expressed in one problematic situation rather than addressing the different elements of the constellation that need to be understood and integrated into a more comprehensive map of the patient's complexes. Holistic therapy can be seen as a therapeutic modality that mainly addresses spiritual and abstract aspects of the individual and does not attend to daily and practical problems. This appreciation is incorrect because holistic therapy, at least the one proposed here, starts where the patient is in the present moment (mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually) with all its present circumstances, as it is in the present moment where we find the hints and facts that guide holistic therapy. This comprehensive understanding also involves past experiences, body symptoms and sensations, recurrent thoughts, and other 'problematic' behaviors. However, navigating the patient's internal constellation map requires time, pauses, and many therapeutic silences, an intervention that is limited in brief therapy.

Rhythm, Silence and Trust. According to Korn (2012), the term holistic refers to recovering body rhythms interrupted by trauma. The interruption of body and psychic rhythms is another way to explain the manifestation of the complex.

Life is rhythm and movement, manifesting itself in the body differently. Breathing has a rhythm reflected in inhalation and exhalation. The heartbeat has a rhythm derived from the contraction and expansion movements of the heart. Even sleep occurs in coordination with the waking and sleeping cycles and according to the world's rhythm related to day and night. When the body's rhythms are interrupted, the individual experiences discomfort (Lowen, 2005). One suffers arrhythmia when the heart is out of rhythm; when the breathing rhythm is interrupted, one experiences stress. And when sleep rhythms are disturbed, one suffers from a sleep disorder. Rhythm and movement are then two phenomena that usually go hand in hand and reflect individuals' health. Body rhythms occur between two poles thanks to opposite movements. For example, inhalation is the expansion of the lungs, which finishes in the boundary where inhalation yields exhalation. In contrast, exhalation is the contraction of the lungs, which finishes in the boundary where exhalation yields inhalation. Jung (2016) called the movements towards the opposite pole, which regulates the opposites *enantiodromia* (p. 43).

In a therapeutic context, there are several extremes over which the process occurs, like the movement between conscious and unconscious, as well as control and release. However, the focus will be placed on the extremes of speech and silence to illustrate why respecting this process makes it impossible for holistic therapy to be brief.

Psychotherapy, often referred to as talking therapy, is a process in which word and silence play contrasting roles. The word communicates the message, while silence is the absence of words, and both are connected through prosody, the speaking rhythm (Valle, 2019).

Silence is a powerful and transformative experience that has been an implicit part of human rhythms and existence (Valle, 2019). When patients' needs for words and silence are respected, they usually experience an internal movement of openness and feel more accepted by the therapist (Valle, 2019), a key factor of successful therapy. In a therapeutic setting, silence allows patients to listen, get to know, tune in and explore their unconscious processes that occur simultaneously at different layers of

the self (Valle, 2019). Also, therapeutic silence allows patients to navigate their unique map of the complex to gain knowledge of their problems and connections, turning the silence into healing silence.

We should also notice that “silence in therapy is crucial because it facilitates change by allowing inner mobility and fluidity to shift moods” (Dénomme-Welch & Rowsell, 2017, p. 23) gaining conscious experience of the enantiadromia swings without the delay of translating the complexity of the subjective experience into words.

Finally, “healing silence invites patients to consider concepts such as a higher self and make room for feelings of union, which represent transpersonal dimensions of existence” (Macandonatau, 1988, p. 318). Although for many people, silence is an uncomfortable experience, therapeutic silence, with the proper clarifications to nurture intersubjectivity, is experienced by patients as a powerful intervention (Valle, 2019). In fact, higher amounts of therapeutic silence were perceived as ‘very high’ in rapport by the patients, particularly the silence initiated by counsellors and terminated by patients (Sharpley et al., 2005). Therefore, depriving patients of the experience of therapeutic silence to save time interferes with inner fluidity, self-knowledge process and a better understanding of their problems.

Nevertheless, how are rhythm and silence related to trust, and how do all these factors explain that holistic therapy is impossible in a brief format? Returning to Korn (2012), holistic healing involves the restoration of the body's rhythm. This restoration includes the experiences of enantiadromia, the inner movement that goes through all the scales and nuances that separate the poles. This experience allows patients to learn how to observe, listen and validate their psyche and body processes. Besides, during enantiadromia swings, the possibility of change is fostered through the convergence of new discoveries alongside fossilized beliefs. The more people get to know themselves in the enantiadromia process, the more prone they will be to trust themselves. In Moshe's (2016) words, holistic therapists only accompany individuals to “have an epiphany about themselves” (p. 7) and the issues they are working on. This is because holistic counsellors sincerely believe that individuals are able to heal

themselves (Moshe, 2016). Therefore, the trust we refer to in this section is not related to basic or epistemic trust. Nor is it about the trust individuals feel towards the therapist, (which is essential for the success of the therapeutic process); rather it is about helping people to rely on themselves, their body processes, their wisdom, and intuition. This emphasis on self-trust is a cornerstone of holistic therapy, instilling a sense of reassurance and deep self-confidence in the patient.

Time is necessary however for these therapeutic processes to occur. When time is such a crucial and limited resource, the body cannot recover its natural rhythms and the strengthening of confidence in bodily processes cannot happen. Subjecting body rhythms to brief therapy diminishes human complexity and imposes capitalist parameters, like productivity, over human processes. The analysis and the consequences of this imposition that have resulted in the internalization of such capitalist parameters will be explained in the next section.

Social Justice Rationale

Capitalism. A Social Construction and Imagined Order. Capitalist parameters are internalized thanks to the language, narratives, shared concepts and beliefs among humans, also known as fiction. (Harari, 2014). The way that the capitalist system pressurizes and compresses time naively suggests that HBT is a viable alternative to face the increasing demand for mental health care. These ideas relating to time management have taken root in the population's minds because capitalist parameters and expectations have been internalized and now permeate intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships. And to the extent that these capitalist practices relating to time management have been broadly adopted it is worthwhile our investigation touching on some concepts that have combined to create an imagined order around capitalist values.

An *imagined order*, that arises from fiction, is a sociological concept that explains social phenomena (Harari, 2014). According to the sociologist Harari (2014), *fiction or social construction* is an intersubjective phenomenon formed through language, creating a complex network of co-constructed

narratives everyone believes in (p. 45). A typical example to illustrate the concepts of fiction and imagined order is the borders between countries. No physical or natural division is visible when crossing from one territory to another, and there is no clear dividing line as depicted on maps. Therefore, the borders between countries result from shared beliefs and concepts that end up in an imagined reality. Today, we all agree that various requirements and formalities should be followed to cross those imagined lines between countries, creating an imagined order (Harari, 2014).

Social constructions and imagined orders are shaped by language and narratives (Harari, 2014) that highlight aspects of reality, providing patterns of observation, perception, and relation. For instance, Japanese has eight words for rain, while Spanish in Mexico has only four. Japanese has a specific word for fine, dense rain (*kirisame*) and another for fine, scattered rain (*shúu*). This differentiation indicates that Japanese speakers have ways of seeing, perceiving, and relating to rain that Mexicans do not. Thus, words allow us to appreciate different realities, shaping the narratives that construct the stories we share and live by. In other words, social constructions and the imagined order create their language, and language, in turn, shapes reality.

The narrative of brief therapy fosters the fiction that acceleration of the human process is possible. This narrative of acceleration and productivity has permeated interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, *internalized* by individuals, and reinforced by the capitalist environment.

From a philosophical perspective, the following section will analyze how capitalist values have been internalized, offering another reason to explain the potential misconception that HBT is possible.

Capitalist Values. Some core values that support the imagined order of the capitalist economic system are productivity, growth, competence and individualism.

Let us deal first with productivity. Capitalism pursues productivity as the primary measure of human worth, societal progress, and economic growth (Dussel, 2008, 2016; Han, 2015, 2021).

Productivity means obtaining the maximum benefit in the shortest possible time, as less time means less

costs. When we invest less and earn a lot, it is considered a successful transaction. In addition, the result must be measurable and quantifiable, meaning that subjective gains have no market value because they cannot be measured, used, or exchanged in the market. In this context, subjective gain is a positive reward individuals achieve as a result of their efforts to transform something in them they consider good for their well-being. Subjective gains only have value for the subject directly involved. In other words, subjective gains possess a subjective value. In contrast, objective gains are those that are somehow measurable, quantifiable and visible for others. Objective gains allows the individual to return to their productive functions and social roles (Totton, 2000). Although subjective gains can eventually be translated into objective gains, subjective gains seem to have no value if they do not result in an objective gain. For instance, when individuals feel better due to diminishing the power of the complex, that circumstance has less social value than achieving a specific goal or getting a concrete result, like earning 15% more money or losing 10 pounds in one month.

The short-term perspective and emphasis on outcomes in brief therapy provide an objective gain that allows the patient to return to their social roles while giving less importance (if not ignore) to the subjective gains that possess a more abstract value for others, but that could represent a significant difference for the patient.

Another key concept in capitalism is economic growth. Economic growth is the idea that increasing production (in quantity and quality), infrastructure, and technology eventually results in a better quality of life (Smith, 1776/n.d.). The relationship between economic growth and a better life is one of the core ideas of capitalism. Economic growth is represented by the accumulation of capital, driven by competition and individual interest (Dussel, 2016). Growth is typically achieved through the accumulation of wealth, which could be anything people can own and claim as private property, such as money, and knowledge (Dussel, 2016). According to this perspective, more money suggests a better

quality of life, increases the capacity to satisfy desires and needs, provides more means to pursue 'happiness' and eliminates discomfort through the acquisition of things and experiences.

The growth mindset has been extrapolated to almost all aspects of human life, even though the "capitalist conception of growth mimics a 'cancerous proliferation'" (Han, 2021, p. 1) that focuses only on production and productivity (end) while ignoring the collateral costs, and variables that do not contribute to that goal (Mora, 2024). From a philosophical perspective, Han (2021) compares the growth driven by capitalism to the death drive, arguing that, for capitalism, growth must be achieved at any cost despite going against the world and nature that sustains human life.

And then, there is *competition*, which is a means to drive efficiency and achieve productivity, ruling the field where economic growth occurs (Piazzani, 2014; Han, 2015, 2021). Competition should be understood here as the act of competing rather than the result or function in the market established by the theory of capitalism. Under a free market perspective, competition is expected to generate innovation, technological advances, and efficient production processes, all in the name of productivity. Therefore, free market ideology believes that competition benefits consumers because it creates a tendency to produce more outcomes at a lower cost. However, a competitive mentality pushes people to see the other as different and distant, someone to be defeated. This value makes people put individual interests above the collective's, causing many societal dysfunctionalities.

Finally, we have *individualism*. "free market society subjects people to unrelenting pressures toward individualism, competition, and rapid change dislocating them from social life" (Alexander, 2010, p. 3). Dislocation theory refers to the experience of being disconnected from meaningful relationships with culture and people that provide a sense of identity and belonging (Alexander, 2010). According to Chomsky, individualism and competition hinder cooperation, solidarity and a sense of community (Chomsky, 2020). Competition, driven by individualism, erodes traditional forms of social connections

and increases people's feelings of disconnectedness, which could contribute to the current epidemic of loneliness and isolation reported by the WHO (2023).

Capitalist theory proposes that individualism, through the pursuit of private selfishness, can paradoxically lead to the willingness to service and regard for others (Foley, 2006). According to this perspective, through self-regarding, society somehow benefits (Foley, 2006). However, evidence contradicts this theory. According to *the Multilateralism in an Era of Global Oligarchy* report, 1% of the global population now controls more wealth than 95% of humanity (Gandour et al., 2024). This extreme wealth concentration obstructs international efforts to address critical global issues such as the climate crisis, as the wealthiest few wield disproportionate influence over global rules and political decisions that protect their private interests (Gandour et al., 2024).

The dominant narrative we have co-constructed around these capitalist values has created patterns of observation and perception, resulting in a powerful fiction that keeps shaping our reality. These patterns invite society to think about human processes in terms of means-end rationale, overlooking the effect of the imposition of capitalist values over the psyche and body's natural rhythms. This imposition explains the attempts to abbreviate and accelerate therapeutic processes by adapting many therapeutic modalities into the brief therapy model.

Accelerating Time. Faster Is Not Always Better. We said that productivity is obtaining the maximum benefit in the shortest possible time. Less time means less cost, and less cost means more efficiency. The pursuit of productivity to get faster results by accelerating the process of change is one way in which means-end rationale affects the psyche and body's natural rhythms, contributing to society's tendency to speed up.

Time and money are variables of the productivity equation. The well-known phrase 'time is money' suggests that time is a valuable economic resource that should be used efficiently to maximize profits. Probably, the search for productivity and the idea of time as a resource with economic value has

sown the myth of the value of speed, which ended up becoming a social construction, although we should keep in mind that some social constructions can be dangerously deceptive (Harari, 2014).

Whether the importance of speed existed before capitalism or not would be difficult to determine because the importance of it may have served different functions in the past. For example, survival depended on hunter-gatherers' knowledge of the animals they hunted and the plants they gathered (Harari, 2014). The faster they acquired that knowledge, the more likely they were to survive. From this perspective, the need to accelerate could be wiring our nervous system, just as fight, flight, and freeze responses. One possible hypothesis is that speeding up could represent a psychological defense mechanism that keeps and holds individuals on the 'safe' surface of the present moment, and that the tendency to speed up could be a traumatic response to the threat of living permanently in competition for survival. In other words, speeding up could be an adaptive human response to the capitalist system that demands productivity.

Whatever the reasons are in relation to the value society currently places on speed, we can clearly see that they have been reinforced by the current environment. For instance, self-help books offer rapid happiness by applying simple techniques, like the book *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: Simple Techniques to Instantly Be Happier, Find Inner Peace and Improve Your Life*, which is one of the best sellers on Amazon under the category of pragmatist philosophy. The monetary value society places on time that intersects with the idea: the faster, the better, and the belief that human processes can be accelerated, like any other economic process, may contribute to the misconception that HBT is viable.

Accelerating the therapeutic process would go against restoring the psyche and body's natural rhythms, thereby hindering the healing process. Moreover, attempts to accelerate human processes in therapy could reinforce patients' tendency to overvalue speed, exacerbating the possible traumatic response of living on the 'safe' surface of the present moment in response to the demands of capitalism.

Compacting Human Temporality to Increase Productivity. The expectation of productivity might overvalue speed, pushing the market and society to reduce, compact and accelerate all possible processes to obtain faster results. Han (2021) and Rosa (2013) have agreed on the term *acceleration of time* which is the pressure capitalism exerts to compress and fragment time to maximize efficiency and performance and achieve maximum productivity in human processes. Society's tendency to accelerate time has led to a crisis of temporality. *Temporality* refers to the time human processes take to develop organically and to connect with other internal and external processes that are not under consciousness or rational control. Therefore, *the crisis of temporality* refers to the lack of time to experience inner human processes (psyche and corporal processes) due to the pressure of the acceleration of time. It also refers to the lack of time to experience how time goes by because everything is getting faster to achieve productivity, turning the experience of time (past, present and future) and life into a series of disconnected events (Han, 2021).

However, not all processes can be accelerated. Individuals are temporal beings that contain processes, inside processes, intersected with other processes running simultaneously.

Let us imagine a student woman in her twenties who just broke up with her boyfriend and whose parents are considering divorce. Also, she has gained some weight because she has been eating more lately and has stopped exercising due to a minor injury. This life could be the life of anyone in their 20's, which, at first glance, seems to have any relevant complications. However, if we look closely, every described situation is a process. The breakup with the boyfriend is a grieving process, and grief has its stages, which usually do not happen quickly or in a strict order. Frequently, current losses can connect people to past ambiguous or nonfinite losses. In this case, the student could connect the current loss of her romantic relationship with other losses from her life that she has not incorporated into her conscious experience. The expectation of her parents' divorce is another process that involves uncertainty. These situations could challenge how she sees the institution of marriage and long-term relationships and raise

questions that connect with the recent breakup. Finally, her weight gain might activate another process related to her body, self-image, ideas about health, and other related beliefs. Each process mentioned has its rhythm and can not be accelerated or compacted to get faster results.

Productivity in Intrapersonal Relationships. Burnout. Burnout is widespread across the globe (Broewer, 2022). In 2020, a study found that 70% of people experienced burnout across seven countries (Asana, n.d., as cited by Broewer, 2022). Generation Zs reported more burnout than other generations (84% of Gen Zs, 74% of Millennials, and 47% of Baby Boomers), and women reported higher numbers than men (67% of women and 59% of men) (Asana, n.d., as cited by Broewer, 2022). In 2023, 78% percent of Canadian employees admitted to feeling burnout at some point, and 35% said they were experiencing burnout when the survey occurred (Benefits Canada, 2023). These numbers reflect the size of this problem in society.

Burnout is a syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed (WHO, 2019). From this approach, burnout is a phenomenon provoked by external conditions directly involved with the job, such as a poor work environment, unclear job expectations, excessive workloads, job insecurity, inflexible hours, and the inability of individuals to handle the challenge. Nonetheless, the job environment is not the only cause of burnout.

From a more critical perspective, capitalism is the environment in which companies and people are immersed. The message society receives from this environment conveys that one has to be productive, efficient, and effective in personal and professional dimensions, affecting people's relationships with themselves in many ways. For instance, one can read and hear messages everywhere, such as how fast people achieve their dreams or overcome a problem. These messages are only some examples of the expectation of productivity in all dimensions of life. Nonetheless, the free market environment constantly demands productivity and competition, not only with others but also with oneself.

The fiction that one has to be productive and competitive even in overcoming a problem or achieving dreams has desensitized and disconnected people from their transcendent function and numinous process; this is, the idea of productivity has desensitized people of themselves (Han, 2015). This disconnection of oneself has led people to self-exploitation. In this state, individuals push themselves beyond their limits in the pursuit of productivity, which has ended up in mental, physical, and emotional breakdowns (i.e., burnout) (Han, 2015). Therefore, burnout is not a crisis of excessive work but an introjected self-demand to be productive and efficient (Han, 2015). Thus, the burnout phenomenon reveals how individuals have internalized capitalist core concepts, making them part of their identity and self-expectations.

Environmental conditions have a powerful impact on an individual's inner reality. Lipton's interview about his epigenetics research concluded that the environment determines individual function more than their genes (Greaterness Coaching, 2018, 2:15). He multiplied one cell, grouped the resulting cells, which were identical, and exposed the groups to different environments. Lipton found that the same cell could become a muscle, fat, or bone cell depending on its environment. From these results, Lipton was able to conclude that although there is a genetic component, "It is the environment that determines how you function" (Greaterness Coaching, 2018, 2:00). Even though this experiment does not prove how the capitalist environment has been introjected into intrapersonal relationships, it illustrates the weight the environment has on human cells and takes us back to the classical question between nature (genetic predispositions) and nurture (environmental influences).

The environment, represented by the free market philosophy, has normalized the pressure people put on themselves to achieve all their goals and desires. This mindset could promote the idea that HBT is not only possible but necessary because the market demands it, overlooking the long-term consequences on mental health.

Productivity in Interpersonal Relationships. The idea of productivity has filtered slowly into interpersonal relationships through different ways without being aware of it. One example is the expectation of building a quick and solid therapeutic alliance in a few sessions, like brief therapy demands. However, the value of productivity has gone further and got into the finest veins that make up and sustain personal relationships, such as language and silence.

Language and Silence. As we explained earlier in this paper, language is how we transmit thoughts and ideas across people. Unfortunately, capitalism has also taken over the language, turning words into the principal means to transfer and accelerate the circulation of the information (Han, 2021). If productivity has taken over the language, it has also taken over silence because language is made of sound and silence.

Silence, from a capitalist perspective, is perceived as a waste of time because nothing happens. Silence is perceived as unproductive and represents an impediment to accelerate the distribution of the information (Han, 2021). Nevertheless, language, like music, needs sound, silence, pauses and rhythm to make sense and achieve its objective, which is not only to transmit information but to communicate, connect, and bring people together through words (and silence).

Accelerating information is sensitive and often expected in certain situations, such as when an Amber Alert is activated for a kidnapped minor. We expect this system to spread the information quickly and effectively because time is crucial to proceeding accordingly, and silence would be terrible for addressing the emergency. However, when it comes to interpersonal relationships, the acceleration of communication and the lack of healing silence destroys the possibility to connect at deeper levels because communication remains in the rational, conscious and executive part of the brain, where subjectivity and intersubjectivity does not occur (Schoore, 2014).

The Tao Te Ching (Lao Tzu, 6th century BCE/2014) illustrates the importance of silence and emptiness as follows:

Thirty spokes converge on a single hub; it is the hole in the center that makes the wheel useful. We shape clay into a vessel; it is the empty space inside that makes it useful. We build doors and windows for a room, but the empty space makes it habitable. Thus, while the tangible has advantages, it is the intangible that provides utility (p. 9)

The lack of time for therapeutic silence prevents patients from perceiving their subjective experience in the presence of the therapist who helps them to co-regulate their nervous system (Schoore, 2014). This experience enables the learning process to attune to the different aspects of themselves. Therefore, silence is a powerful therapeutic intervention used to support patients in knowing themselves. The wise use of therapeutic silence offers patients that useful empty space where they can find their answers and allow inner mobility and fluidity to shift moods” (Dénomme-Welch & Rowsell, 2017, p. 23) as explained in the previous section.

Therefore, from a productivity approach, language can be used efficiently to convey the information that needs to be addressed; nonetheless, efficiency in communication can be easily misled with excessive argumentations to promote rapid change, leaving no room for enough therapeutic silence.

Thus, a BHT could appear as a viable alternative because language can efficiently convey information between therapist and patient by suppressing or minimizing silence.

Therapeutic trust. Trust is essential for successful therapy because it is the bridge that allows connection between patient and therapist. Trust can be understood in different forms. Allen (2021) distinguishes between basic and epistemic trust. Basic trust, linked to attachment style, emphasizes safety, security, and caring. It involves a personal relationship in which one trusts the trusted person to be responsive in all relevant matters within the relationship. Conversely, epistemic trust entails confidence in a specific action rather than the person performing it, which is crucial for social functioning as it focuses on competence and knowledge. Furthermore, epistemic trust implicitly assumes that the

therapist's knowledge and information are what the patient needs. This situation places the therapist as the patient's subjectivity expert and the patients as ignorant of themselves.

Trust is a subjective experience where past and present conscious and unconscious experiences interact. This intricate interaction between conscious and unconscious material that shapes subjectivity, along with the quality of the presence of therapists manifested in their behaviour, allows patients to determine how trustworthy the therapist is in acknowledging others' pain respectfully. Levine (2023) emphasizes that holistic psychotherapy is a space for healing, where building basic trust is essential, as healing necessitates openness to acknowledging one's pain. Building a solid therapeutic trust to unveil those vulnerable places where wounds reside can take years to reach because a variety of defense mechanisms to protect self-image and complex equilibrium emerge when elements of the complex are put under the light of consciousness.

The medical approach to psychology suggests that epistemic trust can be motivated by understanding patients' mental states, known as mentalizing. This rational understanding of patient subjectivity aims to encourage patients to open up emotionally (Fonagy et al., 2014). Nonetheless, from neuroscience, Shore (200x) supported the idea that the feeling of connection to open up emotionally with others requires more than a professional who possesses competence and knowledge. The feeling of connection requires that the right brains, where subjectivity happens, tune each other to build a moment of shared reality, namely intersubjectivity. Shore's approach is strongly associated with Van der Kolk (2014) view, which establishes that individuals need a sense of safety and security for trust and connection.

Holistic therapy recognizes that human beings possess unique rhythms for developing trust and connecting with others at deeper levels. Although holistic therapy also acknowledges that epistemic trust is necessary, it is insufficient for deep connection. In other words, basic trust is a prerequisite for any strategic relationship, as we are unlikely to trust others with anything unless we first trust them

(Lagerpetz, 2015, pp. 41, 51). Holistic therapy also respects patients' rhythms in developing trust because this approach does not label individuals through diagnoses because of the rhythm of their processes to trust.

Brief therapy requires patients to be efficient in developing trust towards the therapist and to open up emotionally based on epistemic trust. The expectation of brief therapy for patients to quickly trust the therapist adds more unconscious pressure on patients and interferes with an authentic therapeutic relationship and patient's healing process because when people feel the pressure of time, they cannot heal (Levine, 2023). Besides, the expectation placed on patients to build a rapid therapeutic relationship can touch sensitive fibers of trauma, which are frequently related to negative experiences around trust with principal caregivers (Bowlby, 1988). Expecting the patient to build a rapid therapeutic alliance based mainly on epistemic trust would go against Roger's theory because it places more relevance on the psychotherapist's knowledge and not so much on the therapist as a human being, making it more challenging to build a deep therapeutic alliance. This implicit demand places patients in a difficult position because it forces them to trust the therapist quickly without having experiential evidence or much opportunity to observe therapist congruence.

According to Rogers (1961/1995), therapists' congruence means that their outward behaviors and expressions align with their inner feelings and experiences—that is, the therapist's words match their feelings. This alignment reflects authenticity, consistency, and self-awareness, which are fundamental to building trust and fostering a meaningful and deeper therapeutic relationship. Thus, from a client-centered therapy perspective, therapists' congruence is fundamental for patients to build basic trust. However, patients need time to observe therapists' congruence and consistency, precisely what brief therapy lacks.

Medical Model Approach to Mental Health. The other reason to believe that a HBT could emerge as a therapeutic modality is due to the fiction about the medical model approach to mental health.

While the medical model approach, shaped mainly by developed countries, has made significant strides in understanding the biological causes of diseases, it has also been restrictive. It has set standards for how mental health difficulties should be seen and treated, often at the expense of denying the validity of other mental health approaches that have evolved within different cultures over the years (Edwards, 2013), thereby impeding diversity and limiting options for healing.

Capitalism conceives human beings as brain-body entities, expected to sustain the economic system and not the other way around, the system fulfilling human needs and rights. The medical model reflects the capitalist value of productivity, which explains why humans are deemed 'human capital,' whose brains can be fixed with medications, and behaviors can be modified following strategies to have bodies that keep producing and consuming (Davies, 2011).

The APA defines the medical model as the idea that mental and emotional issues are comparable to biological problems, meaning they have identifiable physiological causes, such as an abnormal gene or damaged cell, and can be treated or improved through targeted interventions (n.d., Definition 1). Many critical authors agree that the medical model sees human phenomena, called symptoms, as pathologies or some sort of defectiveness if individuals' functions do not match APA's standards of normality (Levine, 2022, 2023; Maté & Maté, 2022; Moshe, 2016; Totton, 2000). Furthermore, to correct that flaw and help individuals return to their roles, it is necessary to eradicate the problem through external interventions. Capitalism and the medical model emphasize individuals' agency and self-responsibility to achieve their own wellness while ignoring the effects of the current economic system on individuals. This total shift in responsibility is the depoliticization of suffering. According to Davies (2023, para. 12), the *depoliticization of suffering* is the effort to conceptualize the current economic system in ways that protect capitalism

from criticism, encouraging self over social reform. In this context, self-reform refers to the process of self-adjustment to fit in the standards of normality established by the system through the values and practices of the free market. Davies' approach to human suffering invites us to rethink all mental illness definitions that are taken as valid explanations and question the measures to address and 'overcome' them suggested by established institutions. Furthermore, Davie's (2011) perspective also offers a refreshing perspective that, along with the means-end rationale, emphasizes productivity, work and consumption, which contributes to "the regulation of the political economy of unhappiness, aiming to ensure that individuals find partial fulfillment in work, productivity, and consumption" (Davies, 2011, Thinking Pleasure section).

The medical model is aligned with brief therapy in that both attempt to accelerate human processes to achieve faster results and to produce individuals who are sufficiently functional and self-aware to consume and work but not sufficiently conscious to question the current effect of the economic system on themselves.

In common practice, the medical model consists of diagnosis, treatment, and interventions, which are procedures that contribute to the social construction of how mental health should be addressed. The following section will analyze the effects of medical diagnosis and treatment on patients.

Diagnosis and Knowledge. The social construction closely related to how mental health should be seen and treated is the patients' diagnosis. According to the APA, diagnosis refers to the process of recognizing and determining the nature of a disease or disorder based on its signs and symptoms, using assessment techniques and other evidence. It also involves classifying individuals based on a disease, disorder, abnormality, or specific characteristics, and includes the decision or conclusion reached through this classification process (n.d., Definition 1; Definition 2; Definition 3).

These APA definitions imply two things. Firstly, that knowledge to achieve healing or to relieve a pathological condition (following APA language) must come from the doctors or, better still, from the experts; namely physicians, specialists, and researchers, because people are constantly told that they must seek an expert to fix their brains, bodies and problems (Levine, 2023, para. 38). Secondly, this knowledge and information implies the capacity to diagnose, which means the expert's capacity to understand a phenomenon and to classify the individual according to the nature of their pathological defect, imposing objective over subjective reality. Thus, diagnosis leaves individuals in a position of ignorance about themselves and the expert as the person who potentially has the answers to their problems. This state of not knowing about oneself or knowing less than the expert about one subjective experience could create feelings of anxiety and fear in the individuals, provoking more suffering in them. Moreover, patients can easily shift the responsibility to the experts because they have the information and, therefore, the responsibility to heal them. Furthermore, diagnosis also traumatizes or retraumatizes individuals because whatever the symptoms are, they are unconscious strategies to face past traumatic events (Levine, 2022).

Individuals seek counselling services for a variety of reasons, but they usually do so when situations become problematic in their lives, not because they want more pleasure. When patients' life gets complicated, they become more vulnerable to the effects of a diagnosis. Additionally, the information individuals receive about themselves is continually confirmed by the environment and by other mental health providers who usually overuse concepts for the sake of clarity. The diagnosis, however, frequently ends up being introjected and becoming part of the individual's identity (Levine, 2022).

The social construction of diagnosis places individuals in a vulnerable position of ignorance about themselves and implicitly takes away from them the responsibility and the power to believe in themselves. Additionally, a diagnosis would go in the opposite direction to holistic therapy. While holistic

therapy supports patients in gaining conscious awareness of the intertwined conscious and unconscious mind-body connection, diagnosis informs the patient what they have, what they should be doing, and how to treat that problem. This approach to mental health is far from helping patients have an epiphany about themselves.

Treatment and Interventions. The other social construction about how mental health should be treated is the idea of treatment and interventions. According to the APA, *treatment* involves the use of suitable interventions, such as medication, surgery, or psychotherapy, aimed at alleviating a pathological condition (n.d., Definition 1). These measures, also called *interventions*, are any action aimed at disrupting, stopping, or changing a process, such as a treatment designed to prevent, control, or modify the progression of a disease or disorder (APA, n.d., Definition 1).

Finally, pathology refers to any deviation from what is considered healthy or adaptive (APA, nd., Definition 2).

Thus, if the diagnosis classifies individuals based on a disease or a set of abnormal symptoms, intervention is the active action of experts on the individual to eradicate the symptom or disease based on what is considered healthy. It is worth highlighting that this standard of healthiness and normality is determined by a group of people representing psychology science in the United States (APA). This information is particularly relevant when psychotherapists work with people from other countries and cultures.

While treatment may provide temporary relief from the fear of not knowing how to feel better, it can also act as a barrier, preventing patients from exploring and confronting the darkest aspects of themselves that are ready to be seen and healed. For instance, a patient may be prescribed medication to manage symptoms, but this may discourage them from engaging in therapy that could address the root causes of their condition.

This expert-patient relationship in the context of the medical model is a significant factor that reinforces the fiction that individuals are passive beings whose problems must be solved by the experts. This understanding should prompt us to urgently and critically evaluate the long-term effects of the medical model approach to mental health on the holistic well-being of society.

Summary

Although HBT does not exist, the question of whether it can arise or not in the near future arises from the intersection of three circumstances: The increasing demand for brief therapies, the growing acceptance of a holistic approach to psychotherapy, and the prevailing capitalist narrative that has permeated intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships.

Holistic therapy does not have one single definition. The commonalities among all the holistic therapy definitions found suggest that a holistic approach attempts to be more inclusive in contemplating other aspects of the human being that often fall outside the scope of science. The differences among holistic definitions reside in what aspects each author considers in their conceptualization. Due to the variety of definitions of holistic psychotherapy, this project offered a working concept that focuses on the process of individuals' self-knowledge.

This working concept embraces psychotherapy in its original meaning, 'the care of the soul' and focuses on the work with subjective experience, which comprehends the concepts of phenomenon, numinous, conscious, unconscious, and transcendent function. The philosophy of this working concept is grounded and guided by the principles of life, diversity, and respect for psyche and body rhythms.

On the other hand, brief therapy, a modality born in the United States, arose due to economic and political pressures that pushed people to look for therapies that give faster results. Many therapeutic modalities have been adapted to fit in a brief therapy format. Therefore, there are different ways in which they intensify therapeutic interventions to accelerate the learning process. However, the commonality among all brief therapies is accelerating the change process.

Thus far, the critical distinction between holistic therapy, as proposed here, and brief therapy lies in their respective focuses. Brief therapy is primarily concerned with achieving results and accelerating the process of learning and change. In contrast, holistic therapy places a unique emphasis on the process itself and the respect for the rhythms of the psyche and body.

The Jungian concept of the complex is a humanist perspective to illustrate the inherent incompatibility between holistic and brief therapy. This incompatibility demonstrates that the complexity of the psyche function cannot be split off to fulfill tight agendas without affecting the balance of the psyche.

The social justice analysis explained that capitalist values like productivity have filtered into intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships. Burnout and the attempts to accelerate and compact human processes are examples of how capitalist values have permeated relationships. From a capitalist approach to human beings, the free market might suggest that a HBT is not only possible but necessary without considering the potential harm to the integrity of individuals.

Finally, the medical model represents a Western approach to mental health, which dominates the narrative about standards of normality and abnormality. The medical model, through diagnosis, treatment and interventions, denies the validity of other forms of conceiving and achieving mental health and holistic wellness. The prevailing medical model narrative takes away from individuals the responsibility and the power to believe in themselves and achieve healing as a natural consequence. The medical model and the capitalist narrative depoliticize human suffering, which is the active action of protecting the current economic model from any form of criticism and places all the responsibility of change on individuals, favoring self over social reform.

Capitalism and brief therapy demonstrate a means-end rationale because they place efficiency and productivity to achieve results as the ultimate goal and the human processes as the means that can be adapted and compacted to achieve faster results.

Gaps and Limitations

The science of psychology has specific methodologies to understand the phenomenon to be studied; nonetheless, these methodologies have advantages and disadvantages. Numerous investigations published yearly demonstrate the benefits of scientific methodology because strict procedures enable researchers to conduct several investigations simultaneously. However, quantifying reality through standardized scientific procedures is disadvantageous when the phenomenon to be studied is subjective and highly dynamic, like inner experience. Part of the difficulty in researching inner experience is that we cannot fully know the variables involved as they are in the unconscious realm.

Science possesses valuable tools to reveal the relationships between known variables that make up the phenomenon; however, the phenomenon and variables must meet specific characteristics that allow science to translate the observations into measurable and quantifiable data.

While science is an excellent resource for studying more or less fixed phenomena and variables, philosophy, sociology and other human and social sciences offer a broader perspective of the human being and their interconnectedness with nature. For instance, Lou Marinoff (2005), in his book *More Plato and Less Prozac*, considers philosophy as a resource for understanding and navigating the difficulties that life demands.

Perhaps the limits where science and philosophy intersect can be the most fertile soil for science to keep expanding its limits.

Future Directions

The increase in anxiety, depression, loneliness and isolation in the population, among many other mental health problems, reflects a society in crisis. Capitalism has matched modernity, productivity, and growth with success, well-being and happiness. Although many Western countries have reached modernity and productivity in many fields, societal wellness and happiness seem even more distant.

Changing the course one degree is the difference between reaching the destination or being shipwrecked on the high seas. Moving from means-end rationality to rationality that protects life and diversity can be that one degree of difference that takes us to a better place as humanity. Asking new questions and questioning old answers, as well as known societal patterns from different fields and perspectives, could indicate the pathway to a different direction.

Although it seems complicated today to prioritize human wellness over economic interests, as mental health providers, we must care for human rights; this is respecting subjectivity and body and psyche rhythms.

Just as in therapy, the question is the vehicle that opens the door to new answers and pathways that lead to unseen inner places; this work concludes with one question aspiring to contribute to the change the world needs.

Does society possess an economic system and a medical model that cares about human needs and rights —or does the economic system possess human beings and mechanisms like the medical model that exclude all variables that question the fixed goals of productivity, efficiency, effectiveness, modernity (and so on)?

The following chapter presents a self-experimental exercise for psychotherapists inspired by the primary source science has to gather knowledge; this is observation. This exercise aims to contribute to new or even experienced psychotherapists in their self-knowledge and radical acceptance process, considering that many holistic authors of psychotherapy agree that making their own process of self-knowledge is vital to accompanying and guiding holistic psychotherapeutic processes.

Chapter 3: A Holistic Exercise for Psychotherapists

The increasing societal interest in a holistic approach to mental health reflects a shift in how people view well-being. However, there is also a growing societal willingness to obtain anything that promises quick-fix results. This combination has shortened many therapeutic modalities into a brief therapy format, which has impacted the climbing demand for brief therapies. Furthermore, the capitalist environment promotes the idea that the free market must satisfy all market demands. These factors might invite some people to consider HBT as a possibility.

The following exercise aims to contribute to the process of self-knowledge of therapists so that they can reach their conclusions about whether holistic therapy, such as the one explained here, is possible or not, in a brief format. This exercise also aims to invite reflection upon the ethical principles that guide psychotherapists' practice as it allows them to embody the praxis that cares for life, diversity and subjectivity and contrast their experience with their theoretical values.

The Journey, the Map and the Territory

Self-knowledge is akin to getting to know the territory while making the journey. Although psychology science provides plenty of information about the map of human processes, the map is never the territory. Therefore, walking the path is the only way to know the territory.

The process of self-knowledge is the pathway to our spirituality. This journey includes making conscious the unconscious through our minds and bodies. If readers have a pragmatic view of human beings and disagree with the idea of spirit, they are invited to substitute for the idea of the willingness to have a more fulfilling life.

People possess conscious knowledge and experience awareness about themselves and their inner experiences in different forms; however, some unconscious manifestations are still present in those moments of consciousness. For instance, when conversing, one may not be fully aware of body

language, like those subtle facial expressions people do without noticing them. Also, there are unconscious manifestations when people say some words without full awareness. For example, when the individual is highly focused on explaining something, they might use words they cannot recall saying when they were explaining.

Although people ignore what they do not know about themselves, one way to expand conscious awareness of oneself is to attune to bodily processes rather than thinking or analyzing them. However, time and silence are fundamental for this to happen.

Let us look now at a way to become aware of the continuum spectrum of the conscious and unconscious guided by how breath and body sensations are in the present moment.

Self-Experimental Exercise with the Breath and the Body

This activity is aimed at psychotherapists who are on their own journey of self-knowledge, seeking to deepen their experience of their body-mind connection, and, at the same time improving their professional skills.

The objective of this activity is to offer counsellors an idea of how they can become more conscious of their internal experience.

Likewise, the exercise aims to illustrate that the process of awareness (at more bodily and less rational levels) does not occur by simple conscious will. However, will and intention are fundamental elements that help counsellors get into the experience. Crucially, this exercise intends to focus on the process, rather than the outcome, since there is no result to pursue. Readers are therefore invited to rest in the simplicity of the steps that make up the exercise.

Preparation

Before you do the exercise, read it so you have an overview. Ideally, the exercise should be done in the company of a person you trust and with whom you feel comfortable. Ask your trusted person to support you by reading the steps and instructions slowly and gently so you can relax while being guided.

Another alternative is to record the exercise on an audio system and play it when you are ready to do the exercise. Look for a place that feels safe, comfortable, quiet, and suitable for performing this exercise.

You will only need comfortable clothes, a large towel or yoga mat, preferably a chair with a firm seat. If you are a person who finds it hard to relax, you can add incense or candles to the procedure that might inspire you to relax. Be sure to take any necessary precautions when using candles.

The exercise can last between 13 and 20 minutes, but if you find it worthwhile, you can extend it for as long as you decide. Before you begin, see if you are willing to tune to yourself. Express this willingness only to yourself using your own words and then release the idea. This is only an idea, not a goal to be achieved.

Procedure

Step 1. Relaxation and Grounding (3 to 5 minutes). Sit on the edge of the chair to keep your spine straight. During the exercise, various thoughts and ideas may come to mind. When this happens, be aware of them, then try to return your attention to the part of the body being explored in the most gentle and loving possible way to yourself. Consciously place your feet on the floor, sensing its texture and temperature. Notice the contact of your feet with the floor.

Bring your attention to your legs and notice their position. Try to perceive whether your legs are tense or relaxed. Notice if there is any sensation in them, even if the sensation is subtle and you cannot describe it in words. You do not need to describe or explain your sensations to anyone, not even to yourself. Allow yourself this experience. Keep your hips and lower back relaxed, but not so much that the upright posture collapses.

Release and relax the abdomen (it is common for people to permanently have a slightly contracted abdomen for aesthetic and cultural reasons, so releasing the abdomen can be a challenge in itself). Allow yourself to relax your abdominal muscles and observe how you feel. Notice if your

breathing produces any movement in your abdomen. If you don't notice your breathing in the movement of your abdomen, do not worry. There is nothing wrong with it. Just keep breathing normally.

Now, bring your attention to your chest and see if you notice any sensation. Notice if the rhythm of your breathing causes any movement in your chest. Just observe, don't try to change anything. Notice how you feel.

Now, focus on your shoulders and arms. The shoulders are an area of the body that often accumulates tension. Notice if your arms hang from your shoulders in a relaxed manner or if you are somehow carrying your arms with your shoulders.

Now, slide your attention to your hands. Notice their position. Notice how relaxed or tense they are. Make a mental note of any sensations, even if you can't describe them in words. Just become aware of how you feel. There is nothing to change. There is nothing that needs to be different.

Now, move your attention to your neck and throat. Perceive your muscles. Rest your attention gently on this area of your body. Notice this area while breathing normally. Take this moment to notice the sensations in your neck and throat. Even if there are no relevant sensations of comfort or discomfort, even if you do not perceive any sensations, let your attention remain in this area for a few more seconds. Notice how you feel.

Finally, shift your attention to your face. Observe, feel or perceive your jaw, the position of your tongue, your lips, your eyes, your forehead and between your eyebrows. Breathe at your own rhythm as you explore the different areas of your face. Take a couple of breaths and open your eyes gently.

Step 2. Breathing Standing (3 - 5 minutes). Once your eyes are open, stand up gently. While standing, close your eyes if it is possible for you. You can lean on the back of the chair for balance if you need to. Now, observe, feel and sense the rhythm of your breathing in this position. Become aware of your inner experience. Take a moment to tune into yourself. Gently, imagine that your consciousness is like an umbrella. What aspects of your present experience are under the umbrella of your

consciousness? Observe what happens within you as you hear the following questions. Are all the parts of your body under the umbrella of your awareness? Are there some parts of your body that feel more present than others? Are there some parts that are out of the umbrella? How present do you feel in your own body? Can you be aware of your body and perceive your breath? Do you perceive your inner experience? Allow yourself to go into your inner experience for a few minutes (leave one more minute in silence). Open your eyes and maintain your attention on your breath for a few more seconds. See if you notice any difference in the perception of your inner experience as you follow the rhythm of your breath with your eyes open. Just observe, feel and allow. You don't need to explain anything you are experiencing right now, but if the need to make rational explanations arises, notice it.

Step 3. Breathing While Lying Down (3 - 5 minutes). With your eyes open and moving slowly, lie on the towel or yoga mat. Bend your knees so your feet are in contact with the floor. Relax your abdominal muscles. Get comfortable and relaxed but present, and close your eyes. Bring your attention back to your breath. Notice what it is like to be in this other position. Feel the weight of your body. Feel how your body is supported by the floor and all the contact points of your body with the floor. Just observe and be aware of your inner experience as you perceive the rhythm of your breath.

Again, imagine that your consciousness is like an umbrella. What aspects of your present experience are under the umbrella of your consciousness? How present do you feel in your own body right now? Notice how it is for you to be in this position while observing how conscious you feel in your body. Breathe at your own rhythm while allowing the present moment of this brief experience. Whatever arises from this experiment will enable you to discover something new about yourself (leave 2 more minutes of silence).

Step 4. Closing the Exercise (2 minutes). Open your eyes if you wish, and keep lying for a few minutes. Experience the transition from being conscious with your eyes closed to being conscious with your eyes open. Take as much time as you need to return and integrate this brief experience into your

physical, mental and emotional awareness. Although you think you don't know the steps to do that, remember, the map is not the territory, and right now you are exploring the territory.

Step 5 - Three Questions (2 minutes). Now, we will move to the rational part of this self-experiment so you can ground this experience in the context of the question that has guided this capstone. (1) Were you able to relax and connect with your body and your breath at any point during the exercise? (2) Could you notice any difference between the experience of bodily and sensory awareness and the experience of rational awareness? (3) Would you have experienced this exercise in the same way as if you had set a specific time and objective?

Cautions and Alternatives

Although this exercise represents a low risk due to its simplicity, you must see if the intention to tune into your body is present before starting. If the idea of performing the exercise is a source of stress or anxiety, consider performing it using only your imagination by listening to the steps of the exercise. If even this idea feels threatened, do not force yourself to do the exercise. Be gentle and respectful of yourself and your body limits. Even if you do not do the exercise physically or using your imagination because it provokes some uncomfortable emotions, this is positive because it provides you with information that can contribute to your self-knowledge process. If this is your case and you are currently in therapy, you could consider bringing this experience into your therapy process.

Conclusions

The journey to arrive at this conclusion was long but fascinating. This research allowed me to analyze the intersection of different fields like philosophy, sociology, economy, and Jungian psychology to gain a more critical view of the role of the institutions that domain the narrative about mental health. This analysis helped me rethink what we thought were normal and conclude that capitalism, brief therapy, and the medical model pursue similar goals: to have functional individuals who sustain the economic system and not vice versa. Furthermore, this analysis also helped to answer the central

question of this capstone. Can holistic psychotherapy be brief? According to the concepts taken from different fields, I conclude that a BHT could arise due to economic pressures and the internalization of capitalist values into intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships. In other words, from a capitalist mindset, human processes can be compacted and accelerated to achieve faster results with no collateral costs. However, from Jungian and body therapies as well as from other fields, the acceleration of the learning and change process is not only impossible; rather, it represents more stress and pressure for the individuals who usually look for psychotherapeutic services when they are in vulnerable situations. Therefore, a BHT would cause more pain, confusion and harm to individuals.

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