

Ethics Application for The Warrior and the Disabled: Archetypes and Metaphor in Treating Trauma

Abstract

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is increasing among veterans because of an increasing number of enlistees seeking refuge in the military system for relief from complex trauma. Childhood dissociative defenses generate a search for control and predictability while also leading to elevated risk taking, making military service attractive and increasing the likelihood of retraumatization and complex PTSD. A phenomenological methodology is used to explore war-related archetypes and investigate their usefulness in explaining what experts call characterological faults caused by trauma to a warrior. Current approaches focused on symptom elimination do not fully explain the variety of psychosocial defenses that are employed by veterans with complex PTSD. This study investigates the metaphoric capacity of archetypes associated with complex trauma as they appear in mythology to identify types of psychological defenses and states in complex war-related trauma. The research further seeks to understand the relationship between the archetypal energies of the anima or animus that arise in complex trauma and early attachment wounding. Metaphor is considered as a valid method to see through to the underlying mythopoetic motif of the trauma sufferer's experience, including foundational aspects of the underlying attachment style structure. This research investigates whether or not archetypal, mythological motifs illuminate the psychological defenses against ego annihilation in complex PTSD. Also considered is the use of archetypal or metaphorical themes to help illuminate and explain the dissociative process of complex trauma. The study proposes the use of a depth-psychological technique to shed light on the factors that aid in healing of those who suffer from complex trauma and the dissociative symptoms that create relational difficulties.

Methodology

This study will use a phenomenological approach to understand what it means to be a military veteran who has endured childhood trauma and subsequently experienced trauma during military service.

In line with a philosophical line of thinking called hermeneutic phenomenology, the researcher in this phenomenological work will not bracket out all previous experience and assumptions, but rather will identify and explicitly claim the ways in which the researcher's biases and assumptions are embedded in the interpretive process. Five to 10 participants will respond to a few broad, open-ended questions about their experience of childhood trauma and their subsequent experienced trauma during military service, as well as their experience as a veteran. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. A systematic phenomenological data analysis will be performed beginning with coding the data and identifying themes, significant statements, quotes, or affects that capture the participants' experiences of trauma, military service and their experience as a veteran with complex-trauma. From the significant statements and themes, I will identify textural and structural descriptions of participants' experiences and the contexts in which they were experienced. Through this analysis, this investigation explores the hypothesis that it is the interaction with the feminine from birth and its impact on attachment, psychological development and subsequent encounters with trauma that, expressed mythologically, yields a metaphoric insight into the power of feminine energy in one's lifelong struggle with one's complexes.

Participants

Eligibility Requirements

The interviewees will be selected on the basis of being a current U. S. Military Veteran (not on active duty or an active reservist) with a history of complex trauma, or chronic trauma combined with a service-connected physical or psychological trauma as a result of military service during any declared war or undeclared conflict. The researcher will select candidates in order to obtain a life history homogeneity aiming to balance gender, race and military status. Maintaining a balance between enlisted and officer in turn balance economic and educational variables.

Screening

A brief screening interview will be conducted either by telephone or in person at the researcher's office. The screening will ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria and are not currently suicidal or homicidal by answering a short patient health questionnaire (PHQ-9).

Recruitment

A pre-approved flyer will be used to advertise for participants in this study. The flyer will be posted in Local Veteran's Centers, at Veteran's gatherings and in therapist's waiting rooms. It also will be emailed to local marriage and family practitioners, other mental health practitioners, county and local veterans centers, and, with prior permission from facilitators, flyers will be distributed at local veteran groups and veterans' group meetings. The flyer will inform the interested individuals that their participation in the study is entirely voluntary and will have no adverse

effects on any prior relationship to therapists, or support groups where they found or saw the flyer. Information will also be available on <https://www.janusresearch.com>

Procedures

Participants will be asked if they have a preference for an interview site. If possible that preference will be accommodated, and if not possible, an alternative site will be agreed upon. If the participant has no preference about the interview site, the interview will take place at the location indicated in the ethics application: Janus Counseling Center, 301 East Carrillo Street, Suite A, Santa Barbara, California.

Participants will agree to the use of their interview material collected throughout the interview period and to its inclusion in this dissertation research after they have reviewed and approved the content selected for inclusion.

I will assign pseudonyms to participants and will also endeavor to eliminate and minimize any language that will divulge the identity of others who may be described in participants' narratives. Changes to names, familial connection, locations, or events will be made to maintain privacy. To address this, participants will be asked for written permission to release material that cannot be disguised, changed, or omitted to protect their privacy and identity. If permission cannot be obtained, then the information will be omitted, or a composite picture rather than an individual picture will be used to represent the individual. In the event major redactions need to be made they will be identified, or the interview material will be excluded from consideration. The interview transcripts and details of interview material to be included in the analysis will be viewed and approved by the participant prior to being included. Participants may present artwork or other supporting material beyond the material collected during the semi-structured interview. Should they choose to do so, and the material presented is deemed to be relevant to the

study, special permission will be obtained as needed for its inclusion in the dissertation in order to maintain privacy and address any copyright concerns.

This information will also be part of the informed consent form distributed to participants in the next step.

The second step is the initial meeting in person; participants will be interviewed using the following prompts:

1. Could you start by telling me the story of your military experience?

A. What inspired or motivated you to join the military?

B. Before you enlisted, what did you expect the military to be like?

C. What was it like to serve in the military?

D. Can you describe some of your experiences?

a. Did you experience combat missions?

b. Did you experience simulated combat?

2. Tell me about your childhood.

What was your family life like?

Tell me about the quality of your significant relationships prior to the military.

Tell me the story of your childhood trauma experiences.

In what ways, if any, do you think these experiences may have affected your decision to join the military?

Tell me about the quality of your significant relationships prior to the military?

3. Can you tell me about any previous childhood trauma experiences?

How did your childhood-trauma influence the decision to join the military?

How did your childhood trauma effect your experience of in the military?

4. How did your military trauma affect the experience of transitioning from the military

back to civilian life?

What is it like to be a veteran with childhood and military trauma?

As a military veteran, do you feel your medical or psychological wounds are being tended?

How have your relationships with family changed after your military duty?

How were you discharged from the service?

- a. Administratively?
- b. Honorably?
- c. Disability Retirement?

How did you feel you were received back into the community?

Are your physical, financial, housing, subsistence or medical needs being met?

How do you feel about the time you spent in the service?

5. Were there any dreams, images, recurring thoughts, or anything else unusual that arose during that time that you can recall? If so, please describe them.

At the end of the interview, each participant will be given the following information and invited to do the following:

“After thinking about your time here today, and your experience of complex-trauma, find an image of what you would like people to know about what the experience of being a veteran with complex-trauma has been like for you. Also, pay attention to your dreams, and if there is one that you remember and would like to share, be sure and write it down. You can share any or all of these with me when we meet next time to discuss the transcription of today's interview.”

All interviews will be recorded, transcribed, and coded by the researcher. A thematic analysis will be performed on the data, and results and conclusions will be drawn from the data and analysis.

In the third step, participants will be given a copy of their interview transcriptions for their review. Within a few weeks, a follow-up interview will be conducted with each participant so that they may have an opportunity to comment upon, clarify, edit, or add any additional information. This interview will also be recorded.

Risks and Safeguards

The American Psychological Association's policies and procedures for conducting human research will be followed. Two primary areas of risk have been identified for participants in this study: risks due to participation in the study and risk related to the study's publication.

First, participating in psychological research can be psychologically activating. Psychological stress is a factor in this research that needs to be clearly addressed in the promotional material. Probing questions of a semi-structured nature will be asked and may cause embarrassment or discomfort or reactivate psychological issues or painful memories. The promotional materials and release documents will reflect this possibility. Second, the use of the researcher's current patients for purposes of research constitutes a dual relationship and will be avoided. Third, coercion of any type will be prohibited and will be avoided by fully explaining the process, as well as the purpose of the research. Fourth, in order to be fully transparent, the interviewer will disclose his previous military experience, including

branch of service, all designations, length of service, and rank in order to eliminate any power differential that would cause undue influence on the participant or to participate. In the event that the participant detects undue influence, he or she will have the right to terminate participation. Moreover, he or she may opt out of the study for any other reason at any time. During the interviews, participants may refuse to answer any question and stop the interview with no consequences. Three referral sources to local mental health practitioners for therapeutic support will be provided for any participant deciding to opt out, as well as for any participant who requests additional support. The Informed Consent Form notifies participants of these inherent risks of participation.

The second major area of risk for participants in this study is inadvertent breach of confidentiality. The researcher will make every effort to ensure participants cannot be identified in the published dissertation, and that their confidentiality is protected. The names and any other information that could potentially be used to identify a participant will be changed or omitted. The confidentiality of family members, extended family members, spouse(s), and children mentioned during interviews will also be protected in a similar manner. Recordings will be stored digitally on a password protected device. All devices and written records will be stored in a secure location. If analyzed on a computer, all data will remain password protected on a local non-network computer. Finally, all recorded materials and identifying data will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

Benefits

Participants may find some personal benefit from an in-depth reflection and discussion of their military and complex trauma experiences. Benefits might include

some relief from psychological suffering, easing of tensions, the gleaning of new insights, and/or some somatic relief. Further, participation may provide additional insight into both childhood and later trauma experiences involved in complex war-related PTSD. In the broadest sense, it is hoped that participating in this study serves the community at large.

Informed Consent for Participation in a Psychological Study on Veterans with Complex Trauma

I understand that I will be participating in a psychological study performed by Michael A. Vogel in partial fulfillment of requirements for a doctoral degree at Pacifica Graduate Institute. This study is concerned with their experience of childhood trauma and a physical or psychological injury during military service, as well as their experience as veteran. I understand that this study will consist of two parts: (a) a 60 to 90-minute recorded interview, (b) review of transcript material, and (c) a follow-up 60-minute review meeting.

Participation

I understand that in order to participate, I must (a) be a veteran of the U.S. Armed Services, (b) have experienced childhood abuse or neglect, (c) suffered physical or psychological trauma such as, simulated or combat related trauma, military sexual trauma, or other types of trauma encountered during military service, or (d) have a diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder while on active duty. I agree to meet in person for one 60 to 90-minute interview regarding my childhood, military and veteran life, and my experiences of trauma. I agree to have the interview audio recorded. This meeting will take place at the researcher's office located at 301 E. Carrillo St, Suite A, Santa Barbara, CA 93101, or some other mutually agreed upon private location. I understand that I will be asked to reflect upon and answer approximately five (5) questions about my childhood and military experience of trauma. Additionally, I understand that the interviewer was a Naval Officer, as well as a military combat pilot and is now a licensed psychotherapist. I am comfortable with his experience and I agree that there is no undue influence to participate. In the event that I feel undue influence I

will have the right to terminate participation at any time.

The researcher will transcribe the interview and provide me with a copy of the transcription afterward for my review. I agree to meet again at a mutually agreed upon time for a follow-up 60- minute discussion. At that time, I will have the opportunity to further comment upon, correct, edit, or add any additional information to the transcript of the first interview. Further, if I so choose, I may share a poem, image, or a dream that may have arisen after the interview process or the recollection of my experience of trauma. If my poem, image, or dream is included in the dissertation, I will have an opportunity to review it before publication. I understand that the dissertation will be published by Pacifica Graduate Institute and will be publicly available.

Risks

I understand that my participation in this study may be psychologically activating. As with any psychological study, or any exploration of psychological material, difficult or confusing feelings, thoughts, or somatic symptoms may arise, not only about trauma but also about earlier or other life events. I understand that my participation in this study may produce a range of thoughts, feelings, and emotions of varying intensity and/or duration.

Safeguards

At any time before, during, or after the completion of this study, if I become uncomfortable, I can (a) decline to answer an interview question; (b) choose to opt out of the study; and/or (c) ask the researcher for referrals to therapy or counseling resources to process material arising from participation. I understand that my participation in this study precludes the researcher from acting as a therapist. This would create a dual relationship and is prohibited. Thus, the researcher will provide at least three referrals in the event that I need therapeutic support, but I will be

responsible for paying any counseling fees.

I understand that every effort will be made to ensure that my confidentiality will be protected at all times. My name and any other information that could potentially be used to identify me will be changed or omitted. These same protections will be extended to my family, extended family, friends, and former military member(s) who may be mentioned during the interviews. All recorded materials will be stored on password-protected devices, and/or devices that are stored in locked containers. At no time will any recorded material be uploaded to cloud-based servers, be made available on the Internet, or placed in a situation where confidentiality could be compromised in any way. All written records will be stored in a secure location. If analyzed on a computer, all data will remain password protected on a local non-networked laptop. At the conclusion of the study, all recorded materials will be destroyed. All identifying data will be destroyed as per protocol at the appropriate time.

Benefits

By agreeing to participate in this study, I may find some benefit in an in-depth reflection and discussion of the impact of trauma. These benefits might include some relief from psychological suffering, easing of tensions, the gleaning of new insights, and/or some somatic relief. Further, my participation may provide additional insight into the nature of the suffering that many military members experience with regard to trauma and military service. My participation, in the broadest sense, may serve the community at large in their understanding of early childhood attachment, childhood trauma, the experience military related trauma and the experience of being a veteran with complex-trauma.

I have read and understood this Informed Consent notice, and with my signature below, hereby give my informed consent to be a willing participant in this psychological study under the terms and conditions listed above. Further, if I share a poem, image, or dream from this experience, I grant Michael A. Vogel permission to include a portion or all of that material in the final doctoral dissertation after my review. I understand my confidentiality will be protected in the use of any and all materials.

The information about this study has been provided to me by the researcher, Michael A. Vogel. If I have further questions or concerns, I may contact the researcher via email at michael@januscounseling.com or by calling (805) 680-6292. I may also contact the faculty member at Pacifica Graduate Institute who is supervising this research study, Dr. Sabine Oishi, at smoishi2010@gmail.com.

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: _____ Michael A. Vogel _____

Contact Information: 301 E. Carrillo St, Ste A, Santa Barbara, CA 93101; (805) 680-6292

Supervisor's Name: _____ Sabine Oishi, PhD _____

Contact Information: Pacifica Graduate Institute, 249 Lambert Rd. Carpinteria, CA 93103

Research Instrument
for Participation in a Psychological Study on Military Veterans and Treating
Complex-Trauma.

This qualitative phenomenological study will be carried out in three steps with a group of five to 10 veterans of any gender, with childhood and military trauma will be selected for participation in this study.

The first step is a screening interview, via phone, in which I will determine if the interested person is eligible to participate. If eligible, the participant will be given following information verbally:

"You will be participating in a study on what it means to be a military veteran who has endured childhood trauma and subsequently experienced trauma during military service. Your confidentiality will be protected, and you will be given an opportunity to review and edit any material that you share. When we meet, you will be asked to tell me the story of what it means to be a military veteran who has endured childhood trauma and subsequently experienced trauma during military service. You will be asked to share your thoughts and feelings as you went through trauma, as well as anything about your beliefs or your set of circumstances that influenced the process."

This information will also be part of the informed consent form distributed to participants in the next step.

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 - A. What inspired or motivated you to join the military?
 - B. Before you enlisted, what did you expect the military to be like?

C. What was it like to serve in the military?

D. Can you describe some of your experiences?

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