

2019

Reviewing the Heroic Experience: A Humanistic and Existential Counselling Perspective

Peter Bray

University of Auckland, p.bray@auckland.ac.nz

Peter James

University of Auckland, pjam985@aucklanduni.ac.nz

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.richmond.edu/heroism-science>



Part of the [Counseling Psychology Commons](#), and the [Developmental Psychology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Bray, Peter and James, Peter (2019) "Reviewing the Heroic Experience: A Humanistic and Existential Counselling Perspective," *Heroism Science*: Vol. 4 : Iss. 1 , Article 6.

DOI: 10.26736/hs.2019.01.06

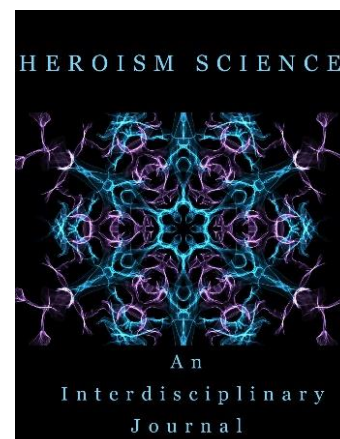
Available at: <https://scholarship.richmond.edu/heroism-science/vol4/iss1/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Heroism Science by an authorized editor of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact scholarshipprepository@richmond.edu.

Heroism Science: An Interdisciplinary Journal (ISSN 2573-7120) <https://scholarship.richmond.edu/heroism-science/>

Vol. 4 No. 1 (2019) pp. 1-34

Reviewing the Heroic Experience: A Humanistic and Existential Counselling Perspective



PETER BRAY¹

University of Auckland

p.bray@aucklanduni.ac.nz

PETER JAMES

University of Auckland

pjam985@aucklanduni.ac.nz

ABSTRACT: Taking a humanistic and existential counselling stance, this brief review of heroism and the heroic experience begins by discussing the utility and structure of Joseph Campbell's (1949) monomythic narrative of the hero's journey, whilst considering the Jungian conceptualisation of the archetype and the collective unconscious. With their shared assumptions about transformation and growth, modern psychology and the therapeutic practice of counselling and psychotherapy are reviewed in terms of their utilisation of the hero-journey as a developmental metaphor for clients, particularly in trauma recovery. It is also suggested that, as a metaphor for transformation, Campbell's hero-narrative may also have the potential to assist practitioners and clients to gain a clearer understanding of the inherently chaotic process and journey through psychosis. The article concludes with an overview of heroism science which includes a discussion on this emerging field's claim, as a 'deviant interdisciplinary', to have the capacity to bring together disparate areas of academic endeavour. The division between humanistic and positive psychologies is given as an example of such disparity, and the potential for heroism science to play a role in bridging this particular gap is examined.

KEYWORDS: *archetype, Joseph Campbell, counselling, existential, humanistic, positive, and transpersonal psychologies, hero, heroism science, interdisciplinarity, C.G. Jung, narrative, metaphor, psychotherapy, psychosis, therapy, transformation, trauma*

Article history

Received: November 28, 2018

Received in revised form: August 10, 2019

Accepted: August 18, 2019

Available online: September 1, 2019

¹ Copyright 2019 Heroism Science ISSN: 2573-7120 | Licensed under the Creative Commons, Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs (CC By-NC-ND)

1 INTRODUCTION

Heroism science is positioning itself as an emerging scientific and interdisciplinary field that empirically examines and discusses heroism in terms of heroic action and behaviour, experience and social perception (Franco et al., 2018). By doing so, heroism science advances its potential to reveal philosophical and practical commonalities that might effectively bridge the historically divided academic realms of the humanities and the hard sciences (Efthimiou, 2016). Ideas of heroic transformation were popularised by the hero-journey ‘monomyth’ championed by 20th century mythologist Joseph Campbell (1949). His landmark work, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, described the hero-journey as a perennial structural element of mythological storytelling, which can be found across history and in cultures throughout the world.

Campbell’s ‘neo-Jungian’ explanation of the archetypal hero and hero-journey, as images emanating from humankind’s collective unconscious, has popularised Jungian psychology (Rensma, 2009), and his portrayal of humanity’s shared inner-psyche and the importance he ascribed to myth found their way into the flourishing fields of humanistic and existential psychology in the 1950s and 60s (Franco et al., 2018). As an aspect of ‘third force’ psychology, the monomyth of the hero aligns itself with Abraham Maslow’s (1968) concepts of ‘peak experience’ (Warmoth, 1965) and ‘self-actualisation’ (Rossi, 1968). Subsequently, as a metaphor for transformative growth, the hero-journey has been recognised by many in humanistic counselling and complementary therapies to be an important adjunct to the healing process (Bray, 2017; Hartley, 2010; Keck, Compton, Schoeneberg, & Compton, 2017; Lawson, 2005; Williams, 2017; Wilson & Lindy, 2013).

Prominent in the mid-20th century, it has been argued that humanistic psychology has subsequently lost its status as a dominant force in American psychology (Elkins, 2009). At the

turn of the millennium, the field's philosophically-grounded phenomenological approach became the subject of negative stereotyping by proponents of a new field of 'positive' psychology, who criticised humanistic psychology for lacking in scientific rigour (Elkins, 2009; Linley et al., 2009; Robbins, 2008; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). In turn, humanistic academics have critiqued positive psychology for being philosophically unreliable in its application of a value-free logical positivist approach to the investigation of value-laden concepts such as 'resilience' and 'happiness' (Friedman & Robbins, 2012). Whilst positive psychology comprehensively draws upon much the same ideas and asserts similar aims to those found in humanistic psychologies (Linley et al., 2009) - the fulfilment of human well-being and potential - the differences that appear to exist in their philosophical application suggest a break in relationships that may be difficult to reconcile (Waterman, 2013). Likewise, whilst some of the key empirical pursuits of heroism science to define and develop taxonomies of heroes and heroic acts (Franco et al., 2018) may for some humanistic psychologists be uncomfortably reminiscent of positive psychology's logical positivist approach to 'virtues' like resilience, heroism science's focus on Campbell's (1949) narrative of heroic transformation and academic inclusivity (Allison, 2015; Efthimiou, 2016), could provide a common ground for apparently irreconcilable positions to meet.

Observed from a humanistic and existential counselling perspective, this review examines Campbell's (1949) narrative structure of the hero-journey referenced in the Jungian conceptualisation of the archetype and the collective unconscious, and discusses the role the hero-journey plays in different schools of psychotherapeutic practice, such as trauma recovery (Bray, 2017; Keck et al., 2017) and developmental counselling (Lawson, 2005). By establishing the significance of the hero-journey myth to counselling and psychotherapeutic practices, this review goes on to highlight the interdisciplinary potential of heroism science (Efthimiou & Allison, 2017). Given that the intentions of heroism science are to produce

academic work which will transcend disciplinary boundaries (Allison, 2015), the differences between humanistic and positive psychology are then presented and briefly discussed, with some questions posed as to how heroism science might be seen to interrelate with these two separate disciplines. Finally, after presenting recent efforts to define and operationalise heroism in terms of personality traits and types of behaviour, the authors discuss the possibility of a more experientially-focused phenomenological approach to heroism.

2 PART I: THE HERO-JOURNEY

Joseph Campbell's (1949) comparative work on the hero-journey in world mythology is considered by heroism science to be the singularly key interdisciplinary moment in the study of heroism, closely followed by an uptake of Campbell's ideas in the fields of the humanities and psychology (Efthimiou & Allison, 2017). Although Campbell was a mythologist rather than a psychologist, he understood the hero-journey as being deeply rooted in human psychology (Allison & Goethals, 2017). To Campbell (1949), the initial work of the hero involves his or her discovery and assimilation of 'archetypes' which "have inspired, throughout the annals of human culture, the basic images of ritual, mythology, and vision" (p.17). Using the term 'archetype' Campbell references Jung's (1958) concept of an innate 'irrepresentable' psychological structure that allows human beings to unconsciously inherit the potential to have similar thoughts and feelings, and thus display similar behaviours to their forebears (Rensma, 2009).

In Jungian psychology there are two modes of thought: *directed-thinking* and *phantasy-thinking* - the former being rational cognitive processes associated with modern thought, and the latter the archaic mode of the unconscious where archetypes are generated in myth and through dreams (Rensma, 2009). To illustrate his interpretation of the archetype in the realm of religious mythology, Jung (1958) uses the Christian holy trinity as an example of

humankind's unconscious disposition to formulate and organise concepts of divinity into triads, a tendency also found earlier in the representations of gods in ancient Egyptian theology.

Jung's (1958) work on the archetype and the unconscious in mythology was also taken up by his student, the psychologist and philosopher Erich Neumann (1954), who presented the hero myth as depicting the individual's development through different stages of ego consciousness. To Neumann (1954), the archaic unconscious state was represented by the ancient symbols of the 'Great Mother' and the 'ouroboros' - the snake consuming its own tail - with the role of the aggressive egoic hero archetype to "champion the position of consciousness against the dragon of the unconscious" (p. 300). Thus, a major task of Neumann's hero was individuation from the collective unconscious.

In his contemporary discussion of the work of Jung (1958) and Neumann (1954), Peterson (2017) delineates two hero-journey stories based on Greek mythology which were fundamental to 20th century understanding of human psychological development: first, the Freudian Oedipal journey, which is conceptualised as a *failed* hero's journey, in that Oedipus was symbolically unable to break free from his attachment to his mother, thus leaving his journey incomplete; the second being the *successful* Jungian hero-journey, where the protagonist not only individuates from his or her parental figures but also ventures into the darkest areas of his or her psyche, confronts chaos, and triumphs.

Like Neumann (1954) and Peterson (2017), Campbell (1949) also portrays the hero-journey as archetypally Jungian (Rensma, 2009), giving a vivid demonstration of how his version of the journey's innate structure can be seen consistently in mythology, rituals, and the visionary traditions of cultures around the world and throughout history - from the story of the Buddha's enlightenment and the Polynesian myth of Maui (Campbell, 1949) to the vision quests undertaken by apprentice-shaman in pre-industrial societies (Campbell, 1949; Walsh, 1994).

Thus, according to Campbell and Moyers (1988), the hero is an individual who acts beyond the usual realms of human accomplishment or experience and, in doing so, becomes something bigger or other than him or herself.

At a deeper level, the heroic individual is one who traverses the unconscious mind, experiences the struggles of psychological death and rebirth, then returns to communicate these experiences for the betterment of his or her society (Campbell & Moyers, 1988). In this sense, the mythic inner world of the heroic individual influences the outer world, in much the same way that the character of the heroic individual is influenced by his or her own inner world (Pinkola Estes, 2004). Thus, the core of Campbell's (1949) transformational narrative structure of the hero-journey is that,

A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man. (Campbell, 1949, p.28)

To consider the potential psychological and philosophical reach of the hero-journey, this review now turns to consider the different ways in which the hero myth has been applied to the specialist fields of humanistic counselling and psychotherapy.

3 PART II: THE HERO-JOURNEY IN COUNSELLING

Campbell (1949) states that the symbolism seen in the myth of the hero-journey has key significance to modern psychology, in that its further analysis will lead to a better understanding of the profound and complex forces which have shaped humankind. Psychology

and its related fields, counselling and psychotherapy, place great emphasis on transformation and growth. Thus, the practical role of the counsellor is to guide and support personal change in clients (Williams, 2017). For some the world can often appear too chaotic to fully comprehend (Peterson, 2007), requiring a *radical functional simplification* of worldview - a meaning-making process that allows individuals to simplify and manage the vast complexity of existence. Consequently, when experiences render an individual's determinate world invalid, mythology, religion, and ritual enable a more coherent sense of it (Feinstein & Krippner, 1994; Peterson, 2007). Adapting the hero-journey monomyth to a therapeutic context can, therefore, assist clients to take new positions on chaotic and unasked-for events, and use this newfound perspective to acknowledge their own heroism and engage in positive life changes (Williams, 2017). The hero-journey is therefore a *conceptual metaphor* (Lawson, 2005), which links abstract, complex ideas to well-known concepts and realities of existence in order to make them more concrete, meaningful and relatable, and less threatening. As an intervention, therefore, the hero-journey is recognised as a useful metaphor for prompting transformational change in developmental counselling (Lawson, 2005; Halstead, 2000) and trauma recovery (Bray, 2017; Keck et al., 2017; Williams, 2017; Wilson & Lindy, 2013) and, by utilising transpersonal perspectives, it may also serve to reframe psychopathology (Lukoff & Everest, 1985; Hartley, 2010). The following paragraphs discuss the ways in which the narrative of the hero-journey has been used by clinicians to prompt and promote positive client change.

3.1 THE HERO-JOURNEY AS A DEVELOPMENTAL METAPHOR

As noted above, Campbell's (1949) work is deeply influenced by Jungian psychoanalysis (Rensma, 2009) and its typology of archetypes is particularly emphasised in Pearson's (1989) work on self-help psychology. Describing the hero from five archetypal perspectives - the orphan, the wanderer, the warrior, the martyr, and the magician - she suggests that these can be

activated and drawn upon as individuals develop in an outwards spiral of growth towards holistic self-understanding. Pearson (1989) claims that a personal understanding of one's inner archetypes can enable a more adept response to the problems and challenges of life.

Acknowledging the insightfulness of archetypal exploration, Lawson (2005), however, suggests that an approach focused solely on an individual's internal resources neglects the importance of the client's relationship with the environment. Thus, rather than using the hero-journey myth with static personality structures, Lawson (2005) has adopted Halstead's (2000) interpersonal approach. Responding to Catford and Ray's (1991) call to "overcome our human reluctance to be empowered and assume our true identity as heroes" (p. xi), Halstead's (2000) approach acknowledges the counsellor's role not as a 'travel guide' but rather as a non-directive 'companion' who is also engaged in his or her own hero-journey. He reimagines Campbell's (1949) *call to adventure* as a 'call to learning', which incorporates experiences, events, or incidents which, by challenging the client's pre-existing view of reality, thrusts him or her into the unknown. Similarly, the *road of trials* is conceived as a series of tests and challenges that require the client to develop new resources. *The ultimate boon* is concerned with 'empowerment', and *the return* involves the 'emergence' of new learning and the 'celebration of clarity', which emphasises the use of learning for the benefit of self and others (Halstead, 2000).

While Halstead's (2000) reworking and companioning of the hero-journey perceptively demonstrates how metaphor can be applied to developmental counselling, Lawson's (2005) use of the hero-journey as an adjunct to developmental counselling practice is strongly influenced by Wickman, Daniels, White, and Fesmire's (1999) work on counselling and conceptual metaphor. Wickman et al. (1999) name three areas where counsellors can intentionally pay attention to the conceptual metaphors clients use to make meaning in their lives: *mnemonic analysis*, which identifies the thematic content of a client's metaphorical language; *cross-*

domain mapping, which links the ‘source domain’ – the client’s use of metaphor – with the ‘target domain’, which are the issues the counsellor identifies as needing to be worked through; and finally, the *everyday language* expressed in the client’s evocative use of common metaphorical expressions. Wickman et al. (1999) give an example of a client mnemonic: ‘love relationship is a journey’ - the source domain is the ‘journey’, the target domain the ‘love relationship’, and the important everyday language used by the client might include ‘at a dead end’ or ‘turning the corner’. Lawson (2005) suggests that the hero-journey is a useful metaphor to introduce to the counselling process, and specifically references bibliotherapy (Myers, 1998) as a means of doing so. The client is asked to name a narrative from popular culture, religion, or mythology, which is meaningful, and the counsellor elicits as much information as possible about the story whilst also listening for comparisons with the hero-journey. Subsequently, the counsellor and client settle on this story as a metaphor for the client’s life struggles. Thus, the client’s independently chosen hero-journey narrative becomes the source domain and the target domain becomes the presenting issues he or she wishes to work through.

Across an individual’s life-span experiences occur that do not correspond with their worldview, and assimilation occurs when new experience is either filtered or distorted to fit in with pre-existing schema; accommodation, on the other hand, occurs when the worldview of the individual is altered to integrate the data. By incorporating Piaget’s (1983; Lawson, 2005) concept of meaning-making and cognitive development as a process of adaptation, Lawson (2005) uses a developmental counselling and therapy (DCT) framework to track the conceptual metaphor across a continuum “from very concrete ... to more abstract and contextual ways of seeing the world” (p.138).

Feinstein and Krippner (1994) have also applied Piaget’s process of *adaptation* and *assimilation* to explain the development of an individual’s *personal mythology*, which they define as the personal worldview that guides development and social interaction and addresses

existential and spiritual matters. When new experience exceeds an individual's personal myth's capacity for accommodating its incongruent input, an alternative opportunity to perceive reality occurs (Feinstein & Krippner, 1994). However, when experiences get distorted, filtered or ignored due to their incompatibility with a prevailing myth, they become unconsciously stored and form the core of a subsystem which Feinstein and Krippner (1994) call a *counter-myth*. As the personal mythology of the individual evolves, a dialectic process emerges between the prevailing myth - the thesis - and the new counter-myth - the antithesis - which eventually leads to the development of a 'higher order' personal mythology (Feinstein & Krippner, 1994).

In either case, developmental change is not automatic. It requires interaction between the environment and the individual, plus the impetus of important events to push the person to higher levels of development (Lawson, 2005). Thus, the role of the counsellor is to assist their clients' growth "as they try to resolve the discrepancies within the current worldview or by assisting them in accommodating the lessons from the challenges into a new, more complex way of seeing the world" (Lawson, 2005, p.138). According to DCT, there are four stages on the developmental spectrum: *sensorimotor*, where the client exists *as* his or her thoughts and emotions; *concrete*, where the client starts to become operational in his or her environment; *formal operational*, where the client can identify his or her thoughts and emotions, and reflect upon them; and *dialectic*, where the client is able to describe his or her experiences in terms that are increasingly abstract, and thereby acquire tonal self-knowledge through reflection on the meaning of these experiences (Ivey & Goncalves, 1988; Lawson, 2005). The aim of DCT is not necessarily to encourage the client's *vertical* development to advanced self-understanding; it can also be *horizontal*, which happens when the client's pre-existing meaning-making framework is used to help him or her interpret problems in a way that is consistent with his or her current level of development (Lawson, 2005).

The hero-journey myth is therefore viewed by Lawson (2005) as being metaphorically parallel to the client's developmental and/or therapeutic process. 'Supernatural events' are framed as problematic life events. The 'call to adventure' is the choice to address and/or confront the issues which surround the events. Thus, if the client answers the call, the counsellor will assist in the learning of new ways of viewing and being in the world. Finally, when the client has reached the 'belly of the whale', and has no way to retreat from the issue and no skills to cope with it, the counsellor helps him or her acquire them so that he or she may deal with the given issues, retrieve the 'ultimate boon' and become 'master of two worlds'. Throughout the journey, the counsellor aids the client by offering support whilst acting as 'pacer'. Thus, the counsellor, as a 'fellow journeyer', simultaneously holds the client whilst offering novel and provocative alternative perspectives that inevitably challenge and stimulate his or her worldview and encourage further psychological development (Lawson, 2005).

3.2 THE HERO-JOURNEY IN TRAUMA RECOVERY

While the above suggests the usefulness of the hero-journey metaphor to developmental growth-oriented counselling, recent work has also conceptualised the monomyth as being applicable to therapeutic work with survivors of trauma. Here, recent conceptualisations of trauma are presented, followed by a discussion on how the hero-journey relates to the therapeutic process of trauma-work. Reactions to trauma are often presented on a spectrum: with *acute stress disorder* at one end, progressing in seriousness to *acute post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD]*, then *chronic PTSD*, and finally, *chronic complex PTSD with comorbid conditions*; the 'comorbid conditions' being depression, substance abuse, dissociation, and personality disorders (Vivekananda, 2002). Commonly occurring with individuals suffering from the more severe reactions to trauma is the experience of *peritraumatic dissociation*, where the central nervous system begins to rely on strategies such as emotional numbing,

derealisation, and dissociative amnesia to cope with the pain and fear generated by overwhelming tragic events (Thompson-Hollands, Jun, & Sloan, 2017). Research has shown that reactions such as dissociation tend to be more severe when they stem from multiple experiences of interpersonal trauma, such as chronic childhood abuse (Vivekananda, 2002). The effects of chronic trauma can be contrasted to those of single-event acute trauma. While individuals traumatised by one event might experience intrusive symptoms for weeks or months after the event, sufferers of chronic trauma can have their sense of self completely and irrevocably altered, and their trauma reactions may last years after the experiences themselves (Herman, 1997).

Although the American Psychiatric Association (2013) defines the typical constellation of trauma reactions as symptomatic of a ‘disorder’, there have been calls to redefine it as an ‘injury’ (Keck et al., 2017). When psychological phenomena such as trauma reactions are treated as symptomatic of a concrete disease, posit Keck et al. (2017), little regard is then given to the contribution of contextual, familial, cultural, and environmental factors. Furthermore, in many cases of trauma, the ‘symptoms’ are the cognitive, affective and behavioural reactions that were the individual’s initial, and sometimes only, coping strategies, which have subsequently become maladaptive (Keck et al., 2017). In therapeutic work with trauma survivors Keck et al. (2017) stress the importance of understanding the context in which trauma reactions arise, and counsellors’ awareness of the life-saving relationships that may have existed between symptoms and traumatic experiences. From the perspective of the hero-journey, the client’s sustained use of avoidant behaviour and other maladaptive coping mechanisms may be regarded as a ‘refusal of the call’ to trauma recovery (Keck et al., 2017) that condemns him or her to being perpetual victims of past events (Lawson, 2005). According to Williams (2017), although this “Separation is characterized by grief and anxiety” (p.7) it is the normal and inevitable reaction to an unintentional ‘call to adventure’, as the problem at this

stage is too overwhelming and beyond the client's capacity to change. On a cautionary note, Vivekananda (2002) stresses the care that must be taken when exploring traumatic material. Looking at the history of trauma work, in which therapeutic practice emphasised the abreaction and catharsis of traumatic events, it is now clear that painful exposure results in regression, intensification of symptoms, and potential re-traumatisation. Fortunately, trauma work has become increasingly nuanced with its consideration of evaluative factors, such as client coping and affect regulation skills, symptom severity, sum and frequency of traumatic events, pre-trauma functioning and family of origin, before exploration of traumatic material occurs (Vivekananda, 2002).

Interestingly, the metaphor of the hero-journey aligns with Herman's (1997) triphasic model of trauma recovery, which aims to ultimately restore *power* and *control* to the psychological functioning of the trauma survivor. The first phase of Herman's model prioritises the *establishment of safety* and an effective therapeutic relationship which focuses on psychoeducation that might incorporate self-regulation techniques, like breathing exercises introduced to address somatic manifestations, reduce anxiety, and enable clients to regain control over their bodies. This might be considered as a significant embarkation point on the heroic, post-trauma journey, in which the counsellor, or other survivors returned from their own journeys, take the roles of mentor, helper, spiritual guide or 'supernatural aid'. They all have a responsibility to provide information, resources, and encouragement to cross the threshold to unknown territory, where shame, fear and pain must be confronted (Keck et al., 2017; Williams, 2017). The 'initiation' of the hero-journey enables the client to enter the second phase of Herman's model, which employs processes of *reconstruction*. Here a willing client may incrementally construct a narrative of the traumatic events, with the counsellor as a 'witness' or 'ally', modifying and cognitively restructuring the experience until it becomes a more meaningful and beneficial aspect of their life story (Herman, 1997). Here client-heroes

can experience a journey of intrapsychic rebirth (Bray, 2017) and subsequently access new insights, skills and wisdom – a ‘boon’ that enables them to renounce their avoidant coping mechanisms and begin to healthily regulate their intense emotions (Keck et al., 2017). The final phase of Herman’s (1997) model is *reconnection*, where survivors finally make meaning from their experiences of trauma and construct a resilient new identity.

As the trauma survivor rebuilds their life, they are able to progressively re-engage in normal activities and relationships, but with a deepened understanding of themselves and the world. As in the hero’s journey, they are now a “master of two worlds,” understanding the path of deep grief and pain as well as renewed joy and peace. The hero has learned the value of pressing into fear and pain. (Keck et al., 2017, p.4)

Similar conceptualisations of trauma recovery have been posited by Paulson (2003) and Wilson and Lindy (2013), who emphasise the relevance of the hero-journey to cross-cultural therapeutic work. Paulson (2003) suggests reframing the experience of war trauma in civilians and refugees as a heroic ‘rite of passage’ - an intervention introduced in the latter stages of the recovery process. Wilson and Lindy (2013) emphasise the potential role of the counsellor as a ‘nurturing guide’, someone who “has learned, by life experience and ritual, some of the mysteries necessary to perform rites of passage, healing rituals, those that demarcate the transitions of the life-cycle, from the womb to life” (p.113-115). Although the Western counsellor’s culturally-prescribed role differs in many ways to that of a traditional nurturing guide, such as a shaman, Wilson and Lindy (2013) suggest that both can assist the trauma

survivor in the journey back from the ‘abyss experience’ of trauma, and the feelings of existential horror that accompany it.

Coming from the perspective of humanistic counselling, Bray (2017) combines the positive ideas of *posttraumatic growth* (PTG) (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004) and the transpersonal psychology of Grof (1975) with Campbell’s (1949) hero-journey. PTG is viewed as the next potential phase of Herman’s (1997) trauma recovery model in which the individual reconnects with society and experiences the benefits of positive psychological change, such as greater resilience, enjoyment of life, more meaningful relationships, and a deeper spiritual worldview. PTG is therefore analogous to the final ‘return’ stage of the hero-journey, where the hero becomes the master of two worlds, and can bestow his or her boon upon society (Campbell, 1949).

Grof and Grof (1989) propose that experiences of trauma have the potential to trigger in the individual a psychospiritual crisis - a *spiritual emergency* - which can eventually lead to psychospiritual growth. Parting ways with orthodox psychiatry Grof (1975), mapping the human unconscious, suggests it consists of three overlapping dimensions of experience: the Freudian *psychodynamic*, which is formed by experiences of a biographical nature; the *biological perinatal*, which holds unconscious experiences of the individual’s birth process; and the *transpersonal*, where archetypal experiences of the collective unconscious exist. The perinatal domain is of particular interest to Bray (2017). It is divided by Grof (1975) into four *basic perinatal matrices* (BPM), representing different stages of the birth process. These unconscious constellated memory systems may be triggered by traumatic events in the biographical domain and re-experienced in ways that merge these memories and experiences with themes arising from the transpersonal domain. Bray (2017) presents Grof’s BPM alongside Campbell’s hero’s journey and the processes of PTG (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004):

BPM I - *primal union with the mother*: Mother and child exist in an oceanic pre-birth symbiotic state. Here, the potential hero lives undisturbed, in a comfortable world. This may be the everyday pre-trauma functioning of an individual who has not yet received a 'call to adventure'.

BPM II - *'no exit' and cosmic engulfment/oppression*. The first stage of the birth process. Uncomfortable contractions disorientate the individual, who experiences entrapment in an archetypal 'hell realm' with no immediate escape route. This is the 'departure' or 'separation' stage of the hero-journey and, like Tedeschi and Calhoun's (2004) 'seismic event', the individual's assumptive reality can be severely challenged.

BPM III - *the death-rebirth struggle*. Propulsion through the birth canal, which is accompanied by experiences of crushing, suffocation, and driving energy at a physical level, and archetypal visions of war, struggle and adventure. The hero has reached the 'initiation' phase of the journey. The trauma survivor confronts the death of his or her old self and struggles to break free and make new meaning of experiences.

BPM IV - *rebirth and separation from the mother*. The infant has been propelled out of the birth canal, and there are overwhelming feelings of relief, relaxation, and transcendent 'ego-death'. The hero has crossed the return threshold and become a 'master of two worlds'. As a heroic trauma survivor, the individual now has wisdom that surpasses his or her pre-trauma functioning, and PTG has occurred.

This review has presented the ways in which the hero-journey can be seen as a metaphor for therapeutic processes which exist in developmental counselling, trauma recovery, and post-traumatic growth. What follows is a brief discussion of the hero-journey as a means to therapeutically re-conceptualise the experience of psychosis.

3.3 THE HERO-JOURNEY AND PSYCHOSIS

Madness need not be all *breakdown*. It is also *breakthrough*. It is potentially liberation and renewal, as well as enslavement and existential death. (Laing, 1989, p. 54)

As the hero-journey is used in counselling as a tool for reframing traumatic experiences and their aftermaths (Bray, 2017; Keck et al., 2017; Williams, 2017; Wilson & Lindy, 2013), so it can also be used to help individuals make sense of experiences which are considered cases of ‘psychosis’ (Lukoff & Everest, 1985; Hartley, 2010). In a lecture recorded at an Esalen Institute event in 1968, Campbell (2003) was asked to compare his own conceptualisation of hero-journey myth with the less structured and more chaotic images produced by individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia. From the discussion that followed it was generally accepted that, since myth and psychosis are both recognised as journeys deep into the human psyche (Campbell 2003; Jung, 1963; Lukoff & Everest, 1985), the metaphor of the hero-journey myth might usefully serve to better understand the processes of psychosis (Lukoff & Everest, 1985; Hartley, 2010).

In an autoethnographic account of her own ‘madness’, transpersonal psychotherapist Hartley (2010), inspired by the work of Lukoff and Everest (1985), provides a perfect example of this partnership. She describes her own difficult experiences as fitting the structure of the hero-journey: beginning with the seismic event of her husband’s stroke and the breakdown of their relationship as, literally, the ‘separation’ or ‘departure’ stage, followed by transcendent experiences full of archetypal symbolism, and increasing disengagement from consensus reality. This ‘initiation’ phase included terrifying states of boundary dissolution, paranormal events, telepathy and communication with her dead grandmother, and confrontation with conflicting divine and demonic archetypes. Her ‘return’ signalled a readjustment to consensus

reality, reappraisal of relationships, acceptance of inner-experience, and the discovery of her own unique personal mythology. As psychotic experiences can be fragmented and disorganised (Campbell, 2003; Lukoff & Everest, 1985), full integration may take years to occur (Hartley, 2010). Consequently, the final act of the journey, only completed when it can be verbalised and shared (Lukoff & Everest, 1985), is extremely challenging.

Despite the fact that contemporary neuroscience has so far failed to demonstrate that “the causes and consequences of psychological distress can be understood wholly in neural terms” (Cromby, 2016, p. 608), psychosis still carries a stigmatising label as a ‘disease of the mind’ (Lukoff & Everest, 1985) that isolates and demonises its sufferers. Hartley (2010) suggests two ways the hero-journey may be applied to therapeutic work with individuals experiencing different stages of psychosis. First, the hero myth can be used to *reconceptualise* the experience as an inner ordeal that can be framed as a temporary but inevitable ‘initiation’, or invitation, to personal growth. Unsurprisingly, this growth-oriented perspective is not uncommon, particularly in pre-industrial societies where shaman-initiates go on a quest which closely resembles the hero-journey from a mythic perspective but is traditionally seen as psychotic by Western psychiatry (Walsh, 1994). Thus, Hartley (2010) suggests, psychotic episodes, or problems that arise in the ‘return’ phase, can be reframed as further trials for the hero to face before the journey is complete. Finally, whilst she concurs that the hero-journey is an effective tool for therapists to chart their clients’ work, Hartley (2010) is particularly impressed with the hero-myth’s versatility in conceptualising spiritual experience in a non-religious way that can transcend spiritual divides and make it equally applicable to non-spiritual and non-religious client populations.

With the emergence of heroism science and the growing utility and establishment of the hero-journey myth in experientially-focused humanistic counselling and psychotherapy, it is

timely to discuss the possibilities and challenges which could arise in its implementation across the related fields of humanistic and positive psychologies.

4 PART III: HEROISM SCIENCE

According to its progenitors, heroism science is a “nascent multiple disciplinary field which seeks to reconceptualize heroism and its correlates (the hero’s journey, heroic leadership, everyday heroism, resilience, courage, altruism, etc.) through a close examination of the origins, types, and processes of these interrelated phenomena” (Efthimiou & Allison, 2017). Reaching the ‘initiation’ stage of its own hero-journey as an academic field (Allison, 2015), heroism science claims to apply a combination of traditional and innovative methodical and epistemological frameworks to a range of settings, including psychology and psychotherapy, as part of a wider movement which seeks to foster holistic wellness, promote ‘heroic consciousness’, and develop resilient communities and individuals (Efthimiou & Allison, 2017).

4.1 HEROISM SCIENCE AS AN INTERDISCIPLINARITY

Defining this emerging field as *heroism science*, Efthimiou and Allison (2017) take the Greek translation of the word ‘science’, or ‘episteme’, to be the pursuit of *all* forms of intellectual and experiential knowledge across the divides of academia, positioning heroism science as an *interdisciplinarity*. In addition, Efthimiou and Allison (2017) suggest that heroism science has potential to be a *deviant* interdisciplinarity. According to Fuller (2013) there are two forms of interdisciplinary inquiry: *normal* interdisciplinarity, which he compares to the collection of fruit, or knowledge, from a variety of branches, or academic disciplines, to create a dish whose value is based entirely on the quality of the fruits gathered – suggesting that interdisciplinary inquiry is fundamentally secondary and subordinate to single-discipline

inquiry. However, the second and less common form is *deviant* interdisciplinarity, which views the ‘division of labour’ implied by single-discipline approaches as a ‘dispersion of effort’, resulting in an overall loss of a sense of purpose to the inquiry itself, especially regarding how different disciplines can contribute to humankind’s further self-realisation. Championing the latter form of inquiry, Fuller (2013) designates the role of the deviant interdisciplinarian as one whose mission is to recover this sense of purpose to academic inquiry.

The deviant interdisciplinary nature of heroism science, states Allison (2015), gives this new field the potential to produce academic work that will transcend the knowledge of any singular discipline. Campbell’s (1949) conceptualisation of the hero-journey was the first occasion that ideas concerning heroism were successfully able to cross academic divides, and his work on comparative mythology profoundly influenced fields of psychology, especially in the areas of existential, humanistic, and transpersonal counselling and psychotherapy (Efthimiou & Allison, 2017). As already detailed in Part II of this review, the template of the hero-journey has been utilised in several therapeutic contexts: in developmental counselling, for the healing of trauma, and the reconceptualization of psychosis. Indeed, the simplicity and ubiquitous nature of the hero-journey means that it is applicable across a wide range of models pertaining to psychological change (Williams, 2017), and Campbell’s (1949) work to transcend the sub-disciplines of counselling and psychotherapy.

To illustrate that both the humanistic and ‘hard’ sciences might be interpreted as transformational narratives that speak to an understanding of heroism, Efthimiou (2016) conducted in-depth interviews with experts from different areas, such as positive psychology, digital humanities, education, leadership, integral studies, workforce studies, evolutionary biology, and genomics, where studies on heroism are currently being undertaken. When asked to reflect on the commonalities between these disciplines, researchers from both backgrounds stated the importance of metaphor in the communication and interpretation of their findings,

not only to experts in other areas of academia, but also to the general public (Efthimiou, 2016). Furthermore, the researchers of heroism who participated in the study verified that they “borrow metaphors and language from each other’s knowledge cultures, and from broader collective knowledge about what it is to be human” (Efthimiou, 2016, p. 28).

4.2 HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY, POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY, AND HEROISM SCIENCE

Identifying itself as deviant interdisciplinarity, heroism science uses Campbell’s (1949) myth of the hero-journey as part of a much larger narrative to share common ground between two conceptually different positions in the academia: the ‘humanities’, broadly defined as disciplines that rely on narrative-based qualitative research; and the ‘hard sciences’, that mainly use quantitative research based on observation and measurement (Efthimiou, 2016). An example of this divide can be seen within the academic world and practice of psychology: ‘humanistic psychology’ and ‘positive psychology’ are two separate fields of psychology with very similar pursuits and goals (Linley et al., 2009) - to understand and promote human potential and well-being - but with different philosophical groundings and practical applications (Waterman, 2013). Looking through the lens of humanistic counselling, the objective here is to examine the perceived lack of accord between these two fields and consider what role heroism science might take in narrowing the divide, or conversely, in pushing the two fields further apart.

Humanistic psychology, pioneered by the work of preeminent psychologists Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, rose to prominence in the 1950s and 60s partly in reaction to mainstream post-World War II psychology’s adherence to the mechanistic perspectives of behaviourism, and the tendency of Freudian psychology towards determinism and diagnosis of pathology (Elkins, 2009). Opposing the dominant psychological discourse of the time, Rogers (1950), whose work was grounded in the research methodology of the natural sciences

(Robbins, 2008), developed a ‘client-centred psychotherapy’ that championed the ‘therapeutic alliance’ between counsellor and client (Elkins, 2009) and emphasised respect for, and acceptance of, the client ‘as he is’. Similarly, in contrast to the prevailing worldview of psychiatric orthodoxy, Maslow’s (1968) work explored existentialism, personal growth, ‘peak experiences’ and the individual’s quest toward ‘self-actualisation’. Both Rogers and Maslow served as president-elect for the American Psychological Association at different times during humanistic psychology’s zenith, and this new movement had a profound impact on American society, popularising therapy not only as a healing process, but also as a means toward positive personal growth (Elkins, 2009). The growth-oriented nature of Campbell’s (1949) hero-journey narrative was naturally recognised by various humanistic psychologists and psychotherapists as relevant to therapeutic client work, and ‘growth’ and ‘transformation’ are thematic threads running through the therapeutic applications of Campbell’s myth - detailed in Part II of this review.

Positive psychology announced its arrival to the wider field of psychology at the turn of the millennium in a special edition of *American Psychologist*, where positive psychologists Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, in deploring the ‘disease model’ of psychology, stated their field’s aim “to catalyze a change in the focus of psychology from preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5). A vision of ‘the good life’, proposed Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), could be articulated by the social and behavioural sciences. In claiming the potential of their new field, they took aim at humanistic psychology, a field which they said once held ‘enormous promise’, but lacked an empirical research base, and was ultimately responsible for the spread of narcissistic self-help movements, and a proliferation of crystal-healing and aromatherapy books in the psychology sections of bookstores (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). In defence of humanistic psychology, Elkins (2009) argues that these

unreferenced comments were part of what he saw as a greater systemic problem: humanistic psychology was being undermined by mainstream psychology through both the perpetuation of negative stereotypes, and, by the minimisation, or lack of recognition, of the significant scholarly contributions it had thus far made to the field.

The mainstream acceptance of positive psychology, its subsequent growth as a field, and the comments made by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), have been followed by criticism – that has included: McDonald and O’Callaghan (2008); Friedman and Robbins (2012); and Robbins (2008) - and also attempts at rapprochement from academics and clinicians in the humanistic camp – specifically, Medlock (2012) and Schneider (2011).

In attempting an objective stance, Waterman (2013) points to a deep and potentially irrevocable philosophical divide between the two psychologies. According to Waterman (2013), there are three levels of philosophical divergence between humanistic and positive psychologies: (1) *ontological* – humanistic psychology is rooted in existentialism and phenomenology, whilst positive psychology is largely essentialist; (2) *epistemological* – humanistic psychologists are likely to design rigorous small-sample qualitative studies in order to understand individual psychological functioning, whereas positive psychology tends to take a positivist approach, using large-sample quantitative methodologies to understand broad generalisable patterns of human behaviour; (3) *practical* – humanistic clinicians focus on moment-by-moment experience and meaning-making processes of a client within a therapeutic alliance, while positive psychology generally takes a strengths-based approach, focussing on making immediate and incremental improvements to an individual's quality of life.

While humanistic psychology’s approach has been denigrated by positive psychology for not being sufficiently scientific (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), humanistic

psychologists Friedman and Robbins (2012) argue that the most problematic aspects of positive psychology are its “claims to be able to approach its subject matter in a value-free way, congruent with philosophical positivism but incongruent with more recent developments in the philosophy of science that reveal the impossibility of ever separating values from science” (p.88). For example, by claiming value-neutral scientific objectivity in the inevitably value-laden process of attempting to classify personality traits, such as ‘resiliency’, ‘perseverance’, and ‘industriousness’, as stand-alone and decontextualized ‘virtues’ (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), positive psychology appears to face a philosophical and ethical conundrum (Friedman & Robbins, 2012). Lacking the holistic self-critical reflexivity of the humanistic approach, Friedman and Robbins (2012) argue that, by ignoring its inherent biases, positive psychology simply becomes a normative or *prescriptive* science, thus invalidating its claims to scientific objectivity.

Whilst Waterman’s appraisal suggests that these points of philosophical and methodological difference are likely to be irreconcilable, Rich (2018) in his examination of both the developments and challenges that have emerged since positive psychology’s inception, questions whether such differences are “inherently incompatible points of view”, or simply “differences in emphasis” (p.275). He suggests that, while some relationships between positive psychology and humanistic psychology are likely to remain problematic, it is important for both disciplines to continue focussing on what they do best and to look for ways to engage respectfully through collaborative research partnerships with each other. By way of example he argues that “building bridges between humanistic and positive psychology can certainly include increased attention to multiple and mixed-methods work by each discipline” (p.277).

Returning to heroism science, Allison (2015), has argued that this emerging field is a part of a larger social movement that focusses on holistic well-being, and the promotion of heroic action and awareness. As such, it appears that heroism science could be a movement that

positions itself alongside humanistic and positive psychologies and shares the interests of both, thus being exemplary of a solid bridge between the two fields. However, with the construction of this bridge, there may arise questions and concerns from humanistic researchers and clinicians about the foundations on which such a structure is built, and the approaches taken by its engineers and architects.

Goethals and Allison (2012) define two key characteristics of ‘heroes’: first, they are people who commit ‘moral’ acts; second, they have high levels of competence. Like positive psychology, heroism science takes an interest in personality traits: in a study to measure the public’s implicit theories of heroism, for example, Allison and Goethals (2011) asked 75 US college students to make a list of traits which they felt characterised heroism - a further 50 students were asked to group the traits according to their similarities and differences. The study resulted in the proposal of eight typical traits of a hero, the ‘great eight’: *caring, charismatic, inspiring, reliable, resilient, selfless, smart, and strong* (Goethals & Allison, 2012).

Whilst heroism science’s immediate concerns as a relatively new interdisciplinary field excuse it for needing to identify and define heroism in all its forms and explore the parameters of its discipline and potential purview, challenging questions may be raised regarding the murky philosophical waters that the field might be entering. First, if heroism science includes aspects of logical positivist ‘hard science’ (Efthimiou, 2016), then is it possible for it to be associated with the seemingly value-laden promotion of heroism? If a major aim of heroism science is the promotion of heroism, including the great eight traits, can it still claim to be a purveyor of objective science? Friedman and Robbins (2012) criticise positive psychology for neglecting to engage in the rigorous self-reflection that is inherent to the phenomenological philosophical grounding of humanistic psychology. Might the same criticism be made of heroism science? Or, as a deviant interdisciplinarity (Fuller, 2013), is heroism science able to transcend this sticky philosophical quagmire, and bring the opposing fields closer together?

Certainly a question that the humanistic field, who were the first to recognise the interdisciplinary potential of Campbell's hero-journey (Franco et al., 2018), might want to consider is: will heroism science become another example of what Elkins (2009) and Friedman and Robbins (2012) have identified as a continuing tendency for mainstream psychology to marginalise the already undervalued contribution of the humanistic field?

4.3 TOWARD A HEROIC EXPERIENCE

As the great eight heroic traits suggest, a major concern of heroism science has been the definition and operationalisation of the term 'heroism' (Franco et al., 2018). Allison and Goethals (2011) have focussed on the public's implicit and subjective theories of heroism and heroic traits, while Franco, Blau and Zimbardo (2011) have sought precise objective definitions, dividing heroism into subtypes - military and duty-bound physical risk heroes, civil heroes etc. - and attempting to delineate heroism from similar concepts such as 'altruism'. These two distinct approaches have led to a marked contrast in how heroism may be conceptualised. According to Allison and Goethals (2011), the term 'hero' can be applied to a wide variety of fictional and non-fictional actors, from family members to historical figures such as Anne Frank, to film characters like Indiana Jones. Alternatively, Franco et al. (2011) apply strict criteria to heroism, which they define as being: (a) in the service of a person, group or community in need, or in the defence of 'socially sanctioned ideals', or emerging social standards; (b) committed on a voluntary basis; (c) with the acknowledgement of possible risks or costs; (d) where the heroic actor is prepared to undertake possible and anticipated sacrifice; and (e) in absence of expectation of external gain at the given time of the act.

However, Curry (2017) notes that both these 'subjective' (Allison & Goethals, 2011) and 'objective' (Franco et al., 2011) approaches to defining heroism are inadequate, arguing that the former would include such disparate heroes as Miley Cyrus, populist politicians or fascist

dictators, and the latter might exclude classic heroic types like Anne Frank and Amelia Earhart. Thus, Curry (2017) suggests that Allison and Goethals (2011) are defining heroic *persons*, and Franco et al. (2011) are defining heroic *behaviour*, or action. Taking an etymological approach, Curry (2017) explains that the noun ‘hero’ is a loan word from Latin ‘heros’, which is derived from ancient Greek ‘ἦρως’, and that there is in fact no abstract noun for the concept of ‘heroism’ in either language – making the delineation of ‘heroism’, as a type of conduct, from the idea of the ‘hero’, as a kind of person, a relatively recent occurrence (Curry, 2017). Furthermore, according to Curry (2017), the Greek adjective ‘heroikos’ translates not to ‘heroic’ as a description of action comparable to moral conduct but was used by the ancient Greeks to describe an individual who behaved in a way that was similar to heroes such as Achilles or Aeneas.

Unsurprisingly, the framing of the hero as male has been criticised, but Campbell’s (2013), posthumous work provides a concise rebuttal to such criticisms, explaining patriarchal society’s role in skewing the balance between the masculine and feminine and evidencing a regeneration of the spiritual and symbolic archetypal aspects of the feminine divine. Significantly, Kinsella, Ritchie and Igou (2017) have suggested that future heroism science research might benefit from clarifying “the extent that gender bias impacts upon how researchers perceive hero concepts, methodology and measurement, and applications” (p. 10). In addition, Curry (2017) suggests that exploring the archetypes that existed in the classical use of the word ‘hero’ will help explain its designation in modern times. According to Curry (2017), in Greek hero mythology there are four commonalities seen also in modern usage of the term, some representing a dark side of the hero largely unexplored by heroism science - these are: the morally devious villain-hero; the explorer; the suffering victim; and, the athlete. First, Curry (2017) describes the atrocities committed by such classical heroes as Cleomedes and Achilles, stating that “Greek heroes are indisputably great but not obviously good” (p.6)

and that “transgression, destruction and brutality are organic to the heroic tradition” (p.7). Of more importance here, however, is the archetypal Greek hero as a traveller who always experiences suffering, and almost always encounters, and sometimes succumbs to, his or her own mortality - from the challenges of ‘long-suffering’ Odysseus to the agonising pre-death ordeal of Herakles (Curry, 2017). This key thematic element of hero mythology is also recognised by Campbell’s (1949) hero-journey, where it is symbolised by ‘the belly of the whale’ experience and the ‘road of trials’ - stages that must be completed before the hero retrieves the ‘boon’, crosses the ‘return threshold’ and becomes ‘master of two worlds’. According to Curry (2017), the tendency for modern society to ascribe hero status to survivors of cancer, for instance, comes from a profound recognition that these individuals have, like the mythological hero, made experiential contact with the ‘great ordeal’: i.e. the confrontation with death.

...the fact that existential psychotherapy places emphasis on...tragic aspects of life does not at all imply it is pessimistic. Quite the contrary. The confronting of genuine tragedy is a highly cathartic experience psychically, as Aristotle and others through history have reminded us. Tragedy is inseparably connected with man's dignity and grandeur, and is the accompaniment, as illustrated in the dramas of Oedipus and Orestes ad infinitum, of the human being's moments of greatest insight. (May, 1960, p. 695)

In their defence of humanistic psychology, Friedman and Robbins (2012) argue that the field of positive psychology over-emphasises the positive aspects of the human condition and ignores its shadow side. The role of humanistic psychology, however, with its roots in

existentialism, has been to “promote a rebalancing of competing perspectives within psychology by counterbalancing existing imbalances toward the negative through using a holistic orientation that embraces both positive and negative aspects of the human condition as parts of a larger harmonious whole” (Friedman & Robbins, 2012, p. 88). Indeed, humanistic psychology regards the use of the logical positivist medical model to study psychological phenomena, like ‘meaning’ and relationships, with some scepticism, preferring a phenomenological approach based on subjective experience (Elkins, 2009). Thus, by considering how experiential humanistic approaches to Campbell’s (1949) hero-journey are used in therapy to understand traumatised and psychotic clients’ experiences and by defining heroic people (Franco et al., 2011) and heroic behaviours (Allison & Goethals, 2011), this review proposes that as an interdisciplinarity heroism science might further, through the utilisation of in-depth qualitative research, its examination of the heroic *experience*.

5 CONCLUSION

With its roots deep in the archetypes of Jungian psychology, Campbell’s hero-journey is a key area of study in the emerging field of heroism science. Through the disciplines of humanistic counselling and psychotherapy, the hero-journey has been used for half a century as a practical and effective conceptual metaphor to reframe difficult life experiences. By positioning itself as an interdisciplinarity, heroism science is not only concerned with the hero-journey but is also interested in delineating ‘heroism’ and transcending the divide between the humanities and ‘hard sciences’.

In using the disputed area between humanistic and positive psychology as an example, this review has signalled some of the philosophical difficulties that heroism science may encounter in the above pursuit. Furthermore, by looking at current attempts to define different facets of heroism, and the etymology of the term ‘hero’, it is suggested here that humanistic counselling

could play an important role in the qualitative exploration of heroism as an experiential phenomenon.

6 REFERENCES

- Allison, S. T. (2015). The initiation of heroism science. *Heroism Science, 1, 1-8*.
- Allison, S. T., & Goethals, G. R. (2011). *Heroes: What they do and why we need them*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Allison, S. T., & Goethals, G. R. (2017). The hero's transformation. In Allison, S. T., Goethals, G. R., & Kramer, R. M. (Eds.). *Handbook of heroism and heroic leadership*, (pp. 379-400). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Arendt, H. (1963). Eichmann in Jerusalem—I. 'Reporter at large'. *The New Yorker*, 16 February, 1993. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1963/02/16/eichmann-in-jerusalem-i>
- Bray, P. (2017). The hero-Journey, Hamlet and positive psychological transformation. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 31pp. doi: 10.1177/0022167816689357.
- Campbell, J. (1949). *The hero with a thousand faces*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Campbell, J. (2013). *Goddesses: Mysteries of the feminine divine*. Novato, CA: New World Library.
- Campbell, J., & Moyers, B. (1988). Ep. 1: Joseph Campbell and the power of myth – “The Hero's adventure”, <https://billmoyers.com/content/ep-1-joseph-campbell-and-the-power-of-myth-the-hero%E2%80%99s-adventure-audio/>
- Campbell, J., Weir Perry, J., with Murphy, M. (2003). *Perspective on creative mythology, vol. 2. Lecture II.2.3 – Psychosis and the hero's journey* (audio). <https://www.jcf.org/works/download/lecture-ii-2-3-psychosis-and-the-heros-journey/>
- Catford, L., & M. Ray (1991). *The path of the everyday hero: drawing on the power of myth for solving life's most important challenges*. Los Angeles, LA: J. P. Tarcher.

- Cromby, J. (2016). Developing schizophrenia. *Theory & Psychology*, 26(5), 607-619. doi: 10.1177/0959354316661430.
- Curry, R. M. (2017). Achilles and the astronaut: What heroism humanities can teach heroism science. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 14pp. doi: 10.1177/0022167817697797.
- Efthimiou, O., & Allison, S. T. (2017). Heroism science: Frameworks for an emerging field. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*. doi: 10.1177/0022167817708063.
- Efthimiou, O. (2016). Breaking disciplinary boundaries: Heroism studies and contemporary research practices. *Limina: A Journal of Historical and Cultural Studies*, 22(1), 19-33.
- Elkins, D. N. (2009). Why humanistic psychology lost its power and influence in American psychology: Implications for advancing humanistic psychology. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 49(3), 267-291.
- Feinstein, D., & Krippner, S. (1994). Reconciling transcendent experiences with the individual's evolving mythology. *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 22(2), 203-227.
- Franco, Z. E., Blau, K., & Zimbardo, P. G. (2011). Heroism: A conceptual analysis and differentiation between heroic action and altruism. *Review of General Psychology*, 15(2), 99-113. doi: 10.1037/a022672
- Franco, Z. E., Allison, S. T., Kinsella, E. L., Kohen, A., Langdon, M., & Zimbardo, P. G. (2018). Heroism research: A review of theories, methods, challenges, and trends. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 15pp. doi: 10.1177/0022167816681232.
- Friedman, H. L., & Robbins, B. D. (2012). The negative shadow cast by positive psychology: Contrasting views and implications of humanistic and positive psychology on resiliency. *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 40(1), 87-102.
- Fuller, S. (2013). Deviant interdisciplinarity as philosophical practice: prolegomena to deep intellectual history. *Synthese*, 190(11), 1899-1916.
- Goethals, G. R., & Allison, S. T. (2012). Making heroes: The construction of courage, competence and virtue. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 46, 183-235. doi: 10.1016/B978-0-12-394281-4.00004-0.
- Grof, S. (1975). *Realms of the human unconscious: Observations from LSD psychotherapy*. New York, NY: The Viking Press.

- Grof, S., & Grof, C. (Eds.) (1989). *Spiritual emergency: When personal transformation becomes a crisis*. New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- Halstead, R. W. (2000). From tragedy to triumph: Counselor as companion on the hero's journey. *Counseling and Values, 44*(2), 100-106.
- Hartley, J. (2010). Mapping our madness: The hero's journey as a therapeutic approach. In Clarke, I. (Ed.), *Psychosis and spirituality: Consolidating the new paradigm*, (2nd ed. pp. 227-238). West Sussex, England: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
- Herman, J. L. (1997). *Trauma and recovery: The aftermath of violence - from domestic abuse to political terror*. New York, NY: Basic.
- Ivey, A. E., & Goncalves, O. F. (1988). Developmental therapy: Integrating developmental processes into the clinical practice. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 66*(9), 406-413.
- Jung, C. G. (1958). *Psychology and religion: West and east*. New York, NY: Pantheon.
- Jung, C. G. (1963). *Memories, dreams, reflections*. New York, NY: Pantheon.
- Keck, B., Compton, L., Schoeneberg, C., & Compton, T. (2017). Trauma recovery: A heroic journey. *Heroism Science, 2*(1), 1-17.
- Kinsella, E. L., Ritchie, T. D., & Igou, E. R. (2017). On the bravery and courage of heroes: Considering Gender. *Heroism Science: An Interdisciplinary Journal, 2*(1), 15pp.: <https://scholarship.richmond.edu/heroism-science/vol2/iss1/4>
- Laing, R. D. (1989). Transcendental experience in relation to religion and psychosis. In Grof, S., & Grof, C. (Eds.), *Spiritual emergency: When personal transformation becomes a crisis*. New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- Lawson, G. (2005). The hero's journey as a developmental metaphor in counseling. *The Journal of Humanistic Counseling, 44*(2), 134-144.
- Linley, P. A., Joseph S., Maltby J., Harrington S., & Wood, A. M. (2009). Positive psychology applications. In S. Lopez [Ed], *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (pp. 35-49). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Lukoff, D., & Everest, H. C. (1985). The myths in mental illness. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 17*(2), 123.

- McDonald, M., & O’Callaghan, J. (2008). Positive psychology: A Foucauldian critique. *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 36(2), 127-142.
- Maslow, A. H. (1968). *Toward a psychology of being*. New York, NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- May, R. (1960). Existential bases of psychotherapy. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 30(4), 685-695.
- Medlock, G. (2012). The evolving ethic of authenticity: From humanistic to positive psychology. *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 40(1), 38-57.
- Myers, J. E. (1998). Bibliotherapy and DCT: Co-constructing the therapeutic metaphor. *Journal of Counselling & Development*, 76, 243-250.
- Neumann, E. (1954). *The origins and history of consciousness* (Vol. 2). New York, NY: Pantheon.
- Paulson, D. S. (2003). War and refugee suffering. In Krippner, S., & McIntyre, T. M. (Eds.), *The psychological impact of war trauma on civilians: An international perspective*, (pp.111-122) Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Pearson, C. S. (1989). *The hero within: Six archetypes we live by*. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row.
- Peterson, J. B. (2007). The meaning of meaning. *International Journal of Existential Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 1(2), 1-13.
- Peterson, J. B. (2017). The psychological significance of the biblical stories. Lecture 8: The Phenomenology of the Divine. Lecture series, YouTube video and transcript). <https://jordanbpeterson.com/transcripts/biblical-series-viii/>
- Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification* (Vol. 1). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Piaget, P. (1983) Piaget’s theory. In P. H. Mussen, (Ed.) *Handbook of child psychology*, vol. 1. (pp. 103-126). New York, NY: Wiley.
- Pinkola Estes, C. (2004). Introduction: What does the soul want? In Campbell, J. (Ed.), *The hero with a thousand faces* (pp. xxiii-lxv). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Rensma, R. (2009). *The innateness of myth: A new interpretation of Joseph Campbell's reception of CG Jung*. London, England: Bloomsbury Publishing.

- Rich, G. J. (2018). Positive psychology and humanistic psychology: Evil twins, sibling rivals, distant cousins, or something else? *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 58*(3), 262–283
- Robbins, B. D. (2008). What is the good life? Positive psychology and the renaissance of humanistic psychology. *The Humanistic Psychologist, 36*(2), 96-112.
- Rogers, C. R. (1950). A current formulation of client-centered therapy. *Social Service Review, 24*(4), 442-450.
- Rossi, E. L. (1968). The breakout heuristic: A phenomenology of growth therapy with college students. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 8*(1), 16-28.
- Schneider, K. (2011). Toward a humanistic positive psychology: Why can't we just get along. *Existential Analysis, 22*(1), 32-38.
- Seligman, M. E., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist, 55*(1), 5-14.
- Tedeschi, R. G., & Calhoun, L. G. (2004). Posttraumatic growth: Conceptual foundations and empirical evidence. *Psychological Inquiry, 15*(1), 1-18.
- Thompson-Hollands, J., Jun, J. J., & Sloan, D. M. (2017). The association between peritraumatic dissociation and PTSD symptoms: The mediating role of negative beliefs about the self. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 30*(2), 190-194.
- Vivekananda, K., (2002). Profound simplicity: Integrating frameworks for working with trauma. *Psychotherapy in Australia, 9*(1), 14-24.
- Walsh, R. (1994). The making of a shaman: Calling, training, and culmination. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 34*(3), 7-30.
- Warmoth, A. (1965). A note on the peak experience as a personal myth. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 5*(1), 18-21.
- Waterman, A. S. (2013). The humanistic psychology–positive psychology divide: Contrasts in philosophical foundations. *American Psychologist, 68*(3), 124-133.
- Wickman, S. A., Daniels, M. H., White, L. J., & Fesmire, S. A. (1999). A “primer” in conceptual metaphor for counselors. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 77*(4), 389-394.

Williams, C. (2017). The hero's journey: A mudmap for change. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 18pp. doi: 10.1177/0022167817705499.

Wilson, J. P., & Lindy, J. D. (2013). *Trauma, culture, and metaphor: Pathways of transformation and integration*. New York, NY: Routledge.

7 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.