

Drew University

College of Liberal Arts

A Case Study of ‘The Wolverine’:

How film represents comorbid mental disorders in the character “Wolverine” through a fantastical lens, and the impact of this representation on men

A Specialized Honors Thesis in Psychology

by

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Abstract:

A Case Study of 'The Wolverine' explores the film character Logan, portrayed by Hugh Jackman, and the expression of his psychological distress. Logan's adherence to traditional masculine norms results in the manifestation of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), major depressive disorder (MDD), and alcohol use disorder (AUD), which causes social and behavioral problems. In men and Logan in particular, these disorders contribute most frequently to a state of anger and irritability, as his inability to express his emotions otherwise is clear. Logan's life viewed comprehensively in the world of cinema begins with his introduction in *X-Men* (2000) and ends with *Logan* (2017). Altogether, he has nine on screen appearances which examine his psychological makeup, beginning from childhood in the year 1845, and ending with his death in 2029. Trauma is what informs many of Logan's actions and attitudes, ultimately leading to the development of PTSD, and subsequent MDD and AUD. Film techniques contribute to the understanding of Logan's mental makeup. His portrayal further notifies audiences of what the "appropriate" masculine response to trauma is. Additionally, Logan's mind and body are concurrently breaking down throughout the films, which suggests a certain brittleness of the traditional masculine experience. The portrayal of mental disorders in Logan's character serves as a model for continuing psychological and film analyses of other masculine characters in popular culture.

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"What they did to me, what I am, can't be undone." — 'The Wolverine'

“No matter how he tried, he could not break free / And the worms ate into his brain” - Roger

Waters

Introduction

James “Logan” “The Wolverine” Howlett is a fictional Marvel character born with a mutation in the world of the X-Men. This mutation comes in the form of three bone claws ripping through his skin, at will, between the knuckles on each hand and the ability to heal from any wound, making him practically immortal. Discovering these harrowing powers at the age of 13 and after the death of his father, Logan spends the rest of his life fighting wars, losing loves, and constantly, repeatedly, and in the most agonizing ways possible, getting physically and mentally traumatized. As such, Logan proscribes to a solitary lifestyle, angry at the world and himself, spending years in isolation toward the end of his days.

It is likely that Logan’s solitary lifestyle stems in part from his military experience and ideology. Being born prior to the American civil war, it is likely that Logan adhered to traditional, western views of masculinity, emphasized by his participation in every major war since. The restrictive views of masculinity that Logan confines himself to don’t allow him to properly express his emotions, thus resulting in instances of berserker-level violence and unbridled rage. Instead of therapy, he rips people's throats out. Obviously, this method of healing has its drawbacks, mainly Logan avoiding the issues tormenting him and externalizing them instead. One way to better understand Logan’s psyche is to examine toxic masculinity, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), major depressive disorder (MDD), and alcohol use disorder

(AUD) in male populations through existing literature and known data. Through a combined psychological and film analysis, I will examine and interpret Logan's representation in film and our understanding of typical masculine presentation of the disorders.

Literature Review

Masculinity and Toxic Masculinity

Traditional masculine ideology has impacted boys and men in a negative way regardless of the social presentation and potential benefits that it seemingly offers. These negative impacts can occur due to stress associated with upholding traditional masculine ideals or trauma as a result of not doing so (Courtenay, 2000). The stress and trauma exacerbate physical and mental health symptoms, and traditional masculine ideology does not offer men ways to deal with their mental health, as seeking out help could be seen as not masculine (Courtenay, 2000). Whether this results in men self-medicating through the use of substances such as alcohol, or emotional responses such as irritability, anger, or violence, masculine ideology continues to dominate the thought processes of men, in this study and specifically in western culture (Courtenay, 2000, Genuchi, 2015, Genuchi et al., 2015, McDermott et al, 2018, Neilson et al., 2020).

Additionally, masculine norms can lead to a toxic set of rules and expectations for life as a man. Competitiveness, dominance, and powerfulness all are factors of toxic masculine ideology. At times, these traits seem to lead to positive results such as obtaining a desired relationship status, but in reality, the traits will contribute to later relationship failure due to the unstable and demanding nature of the personality required to uphold the hyper-masculine image (McDermott et al, 2018). Hypermasculinity can be a coping mechanism following trauma, and at times, even hypersexuality and using sex as a way to avoid facing said trauma is used. Men

also use violence to cope and do not restrict anger as they would other emotions, as there is a fear of being labeled feminine or gay following their emotional reactions (Neilson et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the Western view of traditional masculine ideologies presents itself in the form of emotional stoicism and ultimate autonomy. This results in a do-it-yourself attitude that rejects anyone's offerings of help, leading to poorer mental health overall. The social construct of gender and traditional roles associated with masculinity and femininity can inhibit emotional expression, specifically for men, but this expression ultimately depends on the surrounding culture (Neilson et al., 2020, Genuchi, 2015). Hegemonic, American expressions of gender roles associated with men and masculinity have a greater impact on mental health than traditional masculinity more generally (Genuchi et al., 2015). This can be seen in Logan, who presents symptoms consistent with major depressive disorder, post traumatic stress disorder, and alcohol use disorder.

Masculinity and the Experience of Psychological Distress

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Traditional masculine ideology, particularly in the United States, impacts the way that men cope with mental health. It leads to higher rates of substance abuse and deaths by suicide (Jakšić et al., 2017). These rates are oftentimes influenced by the mental health of an individual.

Chronic, or consistently persistent, PTSD is often a function of childhood trauma and leads to higher rates of depression that stretch across the lifespan. Social and occupational impairment are often a result of chronic trauma, making it harder to find and keep jobs, as these individuals are more likely to push people away and avoid social interaction (Jakšić et al., 2017, Bedard-Gilligan et al., 2015). It is theorized that repeated exposure to a specific trauma or

different forms of trauma make every symptom of the mental disorders more intense and potentially harmful (Bedard-Gilligan et al., 2015). Comorbidity, or the existence of more than one mental disorder in a single person, leads to greater symptomatology for each disorder, resulting in social and occupational instability. It is estimated that 51-87% of people who suffer from PTSD have comorbid MDD (Bedard-Gilligan et al., 2015). When PTSD and MDD are comorbid, there are more reported severe symptoms of PTSD, more severe symptoms of MDD, worse occupational functioning, greater impairment for social and family functioning, and increased levels of dissociation (Bedard-Gilligan et al., 2015). Comorbid PTSD and depression show higher rates of anger than having either one of the conditions alone or none at all (Gonzalez et al., 2016).

Childhood trauma can result in additional long-lasting effects for the individual person, often taking the form of nightmares or other anxiety inducing symptoms. When nightmares are repetitive and frequent, they can lead to poor social and occupational functioning as a result of sleep deprivation. Interpersonal trauma, or trauma involving an interaction with another person, can result in more severe PTSD symptomatology than other types of trauma, such as surviving a flood (Jakšić et al., 2017; Hoffman et al., 2023). A history of interpersonal trauma, specifically physical or sexual abuse, is associated with higher rates of nightmares (Agargun et al., 2003). With regard to symptoms that occur long term after a traumatic event, sleep disturbances and disturbing dreams occur most frequently and consistently (Agargun et al., 2003). Childhood trauma is also a predictor of expression suppression, or the hiding of emotions on one's face in a way that doesn't match what they are feeling (Hoffman et al., 2023). Childhood and adult trauma

experiences are associated with higher risk of developing another mental disorder such as AUD (Onaemo et al., 2022).

Furthermore, mental health concerns may increase in complexity after the death of a parent. This is true of PTSD, especially if the trauma is the result of a close one's death, as general psychological distress increases after the death of a close one (Stikkelbroek et al, 2015). Additionally, low socioeconomic status is a predictor of worse internalized problems after the death of a parent or sibling (Stikkelbroek et al, 2015).

Beyond childhood and adolescent PTSD, the combination of depression, PTSD, and suicide ideation is a dangerous one, leading to greater likelihood of death by suicide. Neurocognitive deficits caused by MDD and PTSD may impact daily life and make it more difficult to accomplish basic tasks (Jakšić et al., 2017). Additionally, there is a higher risk of death by suicide, foretold by the personality traits of cooperation and impulsivity. This is because these two traits work together and against one another (Jakšić et al., 2017). For example, someone who scores high in cooperation is likely to listen to the impulsive thoughts they have.

Major Depressive Disorder

The DSM-5¹ defines major depressive disorder² unspecified in regards to sex and gender, yet there are differences that arise. For example, men are more likely to experience anger as a primary factor of depression. The expression of classic symptoms of depression in men is mildly influenced by the level to which they associate themselves with masculine gender roles and expectations in America (Genuchi et al., 2015). Depression in men is therefore difficult to

¹ Diagnostic Manual of Mental Disorders Fifth Edition

² Depressed mood and/or loss of interest/pleasure must be present. . . Depressed mood, loss of interest/pleasure, weight loss or gain, insomnia or hypersomnia, psychomotor agitation or retardation, fatigue, feeling worthless or excessive/inappropriate guilt, decreased concentration, and/or thoughts of death/suicide.

identify, as masculine ideology calls for a self-reliant, 'man-up' attitude that leads to the implication of mental disorder as weakness.

Although diagnosed with MDD at a rate 2-4 times lower than women, men die by suicide at a rate of four to five times more often (Rochlen et al., 2010). There is an inherent bias in the depression criteria toward women, largely in part due to sexist practices in diagnosis during the beginning of psychological work in history. It is probable that there is a "masked" or "male-type" depression which has different psychological manifestations than the DSM-5 criteria (Rochlen et al., 2010). This is largely due to the social "role" of the man as being too strong for depression, putting up a facade of stability and normalcy for their social lives. The facade style of coping with depression leads to a pattern of covering up one's emotions, often a result of male refusal to recognize depression in themselves (Rochlen et al., 2010). Men are a deeply in need demographic, as they are the least likely to seek out help for their mental health and may even refuse options to do so.

Role behavior acts as a contributing factor for men and women who have depression, as men are often told or it is implied that they should show little emotion. This results in a distinct difference between men and women when it comes to affect presentation, as women tend to have affective lability when depressed, characterized by unstable mood and rapid or intense emotions, whereas men display affective rigidity and a far more blunted affect (Winkler et al., 2006).

Men are more likely to display expressions of anger as compared to other genders, which increases the risk for depression and vice versa, creating a vicious cycle of anger and depression (Genuchi et al., 2015, Genuchi, 2015, Winkler et al., 2006, Athanasiadis et al., 2018). As Genuchi (2015) suggests "anger is likely a key feature of the overall depressive experience in

traditional men" (122). Irritability is unlikely to be significantly distinct in men and women, yet anger attacks are more common in men (Winkler et al., 2006). These anger attacks are due to suppressed, unresolved emotional issues which are compounded by societal measures of what a man should be and how they should act in American culture (Winkler et al., 2006). The expression of anger could be much subtler in some men than others (Genuchi, 2015). The role of anger in depression for men continues to change the way that symptomatology is viewed. Irritability is seen to be a greater indicator of serious depression than anger, as it is attributed more to attitudinal than situational, one time behavior (Genuchi et al., 2015, Genuchi, 2015). There is also a prior attitude of distrust and dislike toward people, which is more likely to develop into further symptoms of depression (Genuchi, 2015).

Additionally, men are more likely to be involved in accidents, which at first glance doesn't necessarily mean anything, yet what we perceive as an accident may have actually been a suicide attempt, such as driving while intoxicated. Also, men visit the doctor less often than women do in general, meaning they are less likely to be diagnosed with a mental disorder in the first place, with men mostly going to the doctor for physical, rather than mental, concerns (Athanasidis et al., 2018, Winkler et al., 2006). Furthermore, feelings of rejection and isolation can follow diagnoses of mental disorders for men in particular due to the stigma surrounding mental health and how it can be seen as a weakness (Athanasidis et al., 2018). Often, men participate in self management of depressive symptoms in harmful ways, such as self medication with alcohol in order to deal with their problems on their own terms (Athanasidis et al., 2018). Overall, there is a failure of the diagnostic process to understand symptomatology of depression that appears in men.

Alcohol Use Disorder

Alcohol use disorder (AUD) is defined as “a maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress” which is often accompanied by social and occupational consequences (5th ed.; DSM–5; American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Additionally, the continued excessive usage of alcohol can lead to social or interpersonal problems. Comorbidity of both AUD and MDD lead to more severe symptoms from both disorders individually and combined together, including anhedonia (McHugh et al., 2019, Onaemo et al., 2020). Major depressive disorder is the most common comorbid disorder with AUD. Men tend to show symptoms of AUD before depression, whereas for women it is the opposite. Overall, diagnosis of alcohol use disorder in comparison to MDD is difficult due to symptom similarity (McHugh et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the risk for recurrent or persistent depression is three times higher for those with AUD (Onaemo et al., 2022). The dangerous cycle of alcohol use disorder impacting depression symptoms and vice versa can lead to an added difficulty in terms of social functioning and the ability to regain agency (Onaemo et al., 2022).

Solitary drinking is a pervasive issue that has a greater risk than drinking in social settings due to the lack of protective factors when drinking alone. In general, there are higher levels of depression and suicide ideation associated with solitary drinking. People will use solitary drinking as a means to cope, which is likely to increase the risk of depression and suicide in comparison with drinking in a social setting (Gonzalez et al., 2021). Drinking context is important when it comes to diagnosis of alcohol use disorder and the extent to which an individual may need help, especially when it comes to comorbidity with depression.

Additionally, drinking excessively alone in order to cope may increase risk of suicide attempts and death by suicide (Gonzalez et al., 2021).

With regard to comorbid alcohol related problems, one out of every ten adults meet criteria annually with one third of adults meeting criteria at some point in their life (Gonzalez et al., 2021). When depressive symptoms are involved in cases of alcohol abuse, men and emerging adults tend to have more comorbidities with other mental disorders. Overall, men have higher rates of binge drinking and diagnoses of alcohol use disorder (Kelly et al., 2021).

Suicide Ideation

Suicide ideation is difficult to find the origin of, especially when someone is not diagnosed with a prior disorder. However, it is known that there can be frontal cortex damage due to lack of serotonin, which can lead to poorer decision-making and higher risk behaviors (Jollant et al., 2005). At times, suicidal ideation leads to more instances of solitary drinking and also more excess drinking in social contexts (Gonzalez et al., 2021). The comorbidity of the AUD and MDD is the strongest predictor of suicide ideation (Onaemo et al., 2020, Kelly et al., 2021, McHugh et al., 2019). There is also an executive function deficit when it comes to suicide attempters. People who are susceptible to suicidal behavior tend to suffer from poorer decision making than someone without. Impulsivity is also higher in individuals who attempt suicide (Jollant et al., 2005).

Masculinity, Psychological Distress, and Male Veterans

Military veterans adhering to traditional masculine ideology tend to see trauma symptomatology as a weakness. These attitudes of fear of being the *other* contributes to post service substance abuse issues and other risky behavior to compensate for feelings of “lost”

masculinity (Neilson et al, 2020). Combat-related PTSD is oftentimes followed by severe symptoms that become more intense with comorbid depression and subsequent presentations of intense anger (Gonzalez et al., 2016). When depression is comorbid in combat veterans who present with PTSD, there is an even higher rate of suicide ideation than the experience of either disorder alone (Gonzalez et al., 2016, Jakšić et al., 2017).

Veterans are more likely than the general population to develop mental disorders such as depression with sleep disturbances as the number one most common symptom. Almost half of treatment seeking veterans have the symptomatology for clinical sleep disturbances. Insomnia is one of the most complained about after effects of service in the military (Richardson et al., 2018). Nightmares are often part of the insomnia experience for veterans, and correlate with suicidal ideation, in turn causing more nightmares. When it comes to combat veterans who have PTSD, they at times suffer dreams that are almost like memories from their times in battle (Agargun et al., 2003). In instances of sleep deprivation where many symptoms of depression are present, the risk of suicidal behavior increases. Sleep is greatly beneficial when it comes to protective factors against suicide, especially in comorbidity with mental disorders such as insomnia and PTSD (Richardson et al., 2018).

Social support acts as a buffer and protective factor for combat veterans against suicidal behavior and the severity of other symptoms from their mental disorders. Combat veterans who rate themselves highly in self-assessments on a scale of harm risk to self and others are more likely to be diagnosed with PTSD and MDD. For example, if a combat veteran suffering from PTSD and MDD had high scores in cooperation and impulsivity, they are more likely to listen to

suicidal thoughts and impulsively act on them. These personality traits create a deadly combination in comorbid cases (Jakšić et al., 2017).

As mentioned prior, comorbidity of mental disorders exacerbates the effects of each individual disorder, creating complications for both client and practitioner (Bedard-Gilligan et al., 2015). This finding has been analyzed in television and film in the past few decades, more accurately with symptomatology as time goes on. The exploration of mental health in film has been seen in Hollywood more and more often in recent years with films such as *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022), *Da Five Bloods* (2020), and *Barbie* (2023). However, it is evident that through the X-Men series and the Logan/Wolverine character more specifically, much can be learned about the masculine experience with regards comorbid mental disorders.

Mental Disorders and Film

The cross section of mental health and film is common and relevant. As a method of storytelling, film is effective in creating meaningful messages, whether through composition of the shots, or behavior of characters within the scenes. As such, the depiction of male characters in film is influential when it comes to public perception of mental health and men. Whereas the lay public likely does not study psychology directly and review literature themselves, movies, television shows, and books are widely consumed by the general population. Film is particularly effective in promoting values and perspectives due to its typically shorter format in comparison with entire tv shows or books. As film scholar Noël Carroll says, “The power of movies resides in their easily graspable clarity for mass audiences”.

Movies are easily accessible because of the existence of streaming services and depict characters that people can relate to. Men in film who present with symptoms of mental disorders

are important when it comes to representation, as men who watch the content may relate with these characters. It is therefore important to study these representations and the degree, or lack, of accuracy they have when compared with literature on mental disorders in men. Here, I will focus on depictions of MDD, AUD, and PTSD.

Marvel Studios character The Wolverine, or James “Logan” Howlett, is an interesting case, as he has symptoms of all three disorders, emphasizing the importance of studying comorbidity in men. The depiction of this character has changed throughout the series of live-action films in which he is depicted, beginning with *X-Men* (2000) and ending with *Logan* (2017), culminating in nine on-screen appearances. The way this character's portrayal differs across the films is crucial to the case study, as his symptoms and behavior become more accurate and meaningful as time progresses. Logan’s traumatic experiences in childhood and war, the loss of many loves, and curse of immortality lead to feelings of hopelessness and depression that contribute to a continually declining mental state. He is a fully developed, multi-dimensional character in part due to the way in which his mental health becomes a component of the Wolverine’s story.

Case Study

Name: James Howlett II

Nicknames/aliases: Logan, Wolverine

Mother’s name: Elizabeth Howlett

Father’s name: James Howlett

Biological father’s name: Thomas Logan

Daughter: Laura

Date of Birth: October 12th, 1832

Year of Power Activation³: 1845

Powers: Bone Claws (Adamantium), super healing, super hearing, super smell

Life Span: 1832-2029

Age: 197 years old

Presenting Problems:

- Aggression
- Agitation
- Anger
- Anxiety (fear of flying in particular)
- Depressed mood
- Emotional defensiveness
- Heavy drinking
- Insomnia
- Nightmares
- Post-traumatic stress
- Suicidal thoughts and intentions

General behaviors:

Propensity for smoking cigars

³ Many mutants develop their powers by or around their 13th birthday

Heavy drinking behaviors

X-Men Origins: Wolverine - 1832-1945

Hood, G. (Director). (2009). *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* [Film]. 20th Century Studios.

Born in the northwest territories of Canada in the year 1832, James Howlett grew up on a farm with his mother and father, Elizabeth and James. In 1845, a commotion broke out in the living room and young James heard a gunshot, running in to see his father dying on the floor. James held his father in his arms, letting out a scream of rage into the air as bone claws rip in between his knuckles on each hand. His neighbor, Thomas Logan, had shot his father. James runs into him with his claws, killing him, revealing with his dying breath that he is James' biological father. James runs out of the house and into the woods alongside his friend Victor, newly proved to be his half brother. The two brothers fight in a variety of wars throughout history, first in the American civil war, then World War I, before getting separated in World War II. During the first war, James enlists under, and thereafter goes by, the name "Logan".

The Wolverine - 1945 - 1962

Mangold, J. (Director). (2013). *The Wolverine* [Film]. 20th Century Studios.

In 1945, Logan ended up as a prisoner of war in Nagasaki, Japan. He is placed in a special 'well' prison due to his dangerousness. Logan can see the atomic bomb drop from a distance and saves a Japanese general named Yashida by telling him to jump in the well. Logan

gets blasted by the power of the sun while covering the man with a thick metal door. When the smoke clears, his entire body has a layer of skin missing and he heals it back, screaming and gasping. After climbing from the well and upon seeing the destruction, Logan is shocked and horrified at what remains. Following World War II, Logan stayed affiliated with the United States military and Victor, yet spent time on his own.

X-Men: First Class - 1962 - 48:05

Vaughn, M. (Director). (2011). *X-Men: First Class* [Film]. 20th Century Studios.

Spotted in a bar in 1962 by mutants Charles Xavier (Professor X) and Eric Lehnsherr (Magneto), Logan is approached by the pair. After they introduced themselves, Logan says, without turning around “Go fuck yourself”. As they leave, he looks back for a moment out of curiosity, but goes back to drinking and smoking, nodding for another.

X-Men Origins: Wolverine - 1973

Hood, G. (Director). (2009). *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* [Film]. 20th Century Studios.

In 1973, Logan enlists to fight in the Vietnam war with Victor. However, this time Victor tries to kill one of their fellow soldiers and attempts to rape a woman, but Logan stops him and they end up facing a firing squad, which they survive. The two brothers are kept in isolation until they are met by Major William Stryker and enlisted to join his black ops mutant team to do

covert operations. The final mission Logan goes on is the first time he is seen on a plane, where he is incredibly uncomfortable and anxious. Upon completion of the mission, Stryker questions the people in the nearby village, ordering the team to kill them if they can't provide information. Logan refuses to kill these people, throwing down his dog tags at Stryker and Victor's feet and leaves into the forest.

X-Men Origins: Wolverine - 1979

Hood, G. (Director). (2009). *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* [Film]. 20th Century Studios.

Six years after the events of the Vietnam war and Stryker's team, Logan is living as a logger in the Canadian Rockies with his wife Kayla Silverfox. Major William Stryker shows up to where Logan works at the logging site, letting him know that someone is hunting the old team of mutants down. Logan ignores what Stryker says.

The next day, Logan finds Kayla's bloody body in the woods. Logan sees red and is offered a chance by Stryker of getting revenge against her killer by undergoing an incredibly painful procedure that will coat his bones in the strongest metal on Earth. They call it the Weapon X program. After being strapped in, Logan says that he will do everything from then on with no laws or code of conduct, just rage. Logan asks for new dog tags before being injected with the adamantium. They say "Wolverine". This is the first time Logan refers to himself by this nickname and the reason why it is used by others henceforth. The procedure is incredibly painful, and Logan comes out of the water irate, his new metal claws unleashed. Wolverine ruthlessly slashes several soldiers before escaping the facility.

Determined to find Victor, Logan checks in with his former teammates. They tell him that Victor and Stryker are working together on an island, experimenting on mutants. On the island, Kayla is revealed to be alive and a double agent; Logan is devastated. Logan sees the caged mutants and frees all of them with his claws, destroying the locks. Before they can escape, Logan must fight the ultimate mutant, termed Weapon XI by Stryker, a horrifying combination of existing mutants within the facility. As Logan is walking away, he is shot in the back, shoulder, and head twice by Stryker with adamantium bullets causing him to lose all memory. He doesn't even recognize the now dead Kayla on the ground as his former wife and shows anger as soon as he can't remember anything.

X-Men: Apocalypse - 1983 - 1:31:24

Singer, B. (Director). (2016). *X-Men: Apocalypse* [Film]. 20th Century Studios.

Wolverine is locked up and caged like an animal in a new facility created by Stryker in order to capture mutants and continue to experiment on them. Upon release by young captured mutants, Wolverine murders all of the workers inside of the facility who he encounters. A captured psychic named Jean Grey walks up to Wolverine before he can completely escape and helps to calm him down by holding his hands. She is able to connect with the "real" Logan, as opposed to the Wolverine who they are seeing and who he has been told he is. Logan runs into the woods shirtless taking one last look back at Jean, who freed him. A vial of Logan's blood with the label "Weapon X" is shown being taken from the prison in which they kept him after the

events of his escape. Essex Corporation, the parent company of Alkali, collected Logan's DNA for future use.

Logan from 1983-2003

From 1983 to 2003, Logan spends his time going from place to place working many different jobs. With no knowledge of who he is or where he comes from, Logan has lost direction in life.

X-Men - 2003

Singer, B. (Director). (2000). *X-Men* [Film]. 20th Century Studios.

In 2003, Rogue, a run-away teenage mutant, finds Logan cage-fighting for money. He is unstoppable and simply unbeatable, smoking a cigar after winning the night in fights. He is seen wearing the Wolverine-Logan dog tags, but his memory as to where they come from is blank. Logan is convinced by the young mutant to take her with him. Logan and Rogue get ambushed by another mutant, subsequently saved by the X-Men⁴. Logan is knocked unconscious, and he and Rogue are brought to Charles Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters⁵.

After waking up in the mansion, Logan almost strangles Jean Grey, escaping into the hallway looking confused and angry and scared. Professor X coaxes Logan to his office, where

⁴ A team of elite mutants dedicated to fighting injustice

⁵ A school for teaching mutants how to control their powers, created and operated by Professor Charles Xavier

he details what goes on at this school for the gifted. He promises to help Logan uncover his past if he stays at the mansion for a few days. The X-Men discover his adamantium “core”. Logan has nightmares at the mansion, grunting and moving fiercely in bed. He has flashbacks to the procedure and the people watching him as he is injected with hot metal. He wakes up and stabs Rogue who was trying to calm him down. Logan cries out for help as she bleeds, but she uses her powers (stealing other mutants abilities briefly when she makes skin to skin contact) and heals herself while sucking out Logan’s lifeforce for a moment, causing him to pass out.

When Logan wakes up, the first thing he asks is if Rogue is all right. After Rogue is taken by misguided mutant Magneto, Logan sets out to find Rogue and he is convinced to join the X-Men. Magneto uses his powers to trap the X-Men in metal, forcing Logan’s fist to point directly at his chest and heart. Upon Magneto’s departure to siphon Rogue’s powers for nefarious purposes, Logan shoots out his claws in order to escape the metal trap he is in, falling to the floor dead. He is able to heal himself. Then, he volunteers himself to save Rogue and possibly die, needing to push through Magneto’s powers in order to break the machine. With the dying Rogue in his arms, Logan touches her so she can use his healing powers. At first it doesn't work and then life gets sucked out of him and he saves her life by almost dying and sacrificing his.

Logan ends up unconscious in the X-Men Mansion, but is alive and well. When he wakes up in a discussion with Professor X, Logan is told about an abandoned facility at alkali lake near the Canadian Rockies where he might be able to find out more about his past.

X2 - 2003

Singer, B. (Director). (2003). *X2* [Film]. 20th Century Studios.

Logan arrives at Alkali Lake, smoking a cigar and finds what appears to be an abandoned and broken down facility. He returns to the school and is asked to watch over the students while the other adults are gone. That night, Logan is able to hear a group of intruders walking through the building, and he saves a group of students before they get hurt. Colonel William Stryker is leading the assault on X-Mansion, and Logan is intrigued by the man who calls him his creation.

After their escape, Logan takes on a father figure role for Rogue and a couple of other young mutants, heading toward Boston and the other X-Men. Logan and the teens get picked up in the jet, traveling back to Alkali Lake to face off against Stryker. While at a camp, Magneto tells Logan that the adamantium on his bones is because of Stryker. He stares at the Wolverine dog tag, finally understanding where it has come from, yet knowing his memory may never fully return.

The following day, the X-Men break into the base underneath Alkali Lake, where Stryker continues to experiment on mutants. Logan notices Stryker on one of the cameras, leaving the team behind and going after him alone. He finds a chamber, realizing it is the one that inflicted so much pain on him nearly twenty years ago and has flashbacks to the tank, remembering as the searing hot needles pierced his skin. He manages to catch up to Stryker outside, who tells Logan that he volunteered for the procedure, to his disbelief. Logan is given the choice to go with Stryker and learn everything, or save his friends from certain death. He chooses the latter, tying Stryker to a plane to die, throwing his dog tags down at his feet, freeing Logan and the Wolverine from Stryker's grasp forever. Logan saves the X-Men from the collapsing facility, and they all get on the plane except for Jean who sacrifices herself in order to save them.

X-Men: The Last Stand - 2006

Ratner, B. (Director). (2006). *X-Men: The Last Stand* [Film]. 20th Century Studios.

By 2006, Logan was passing by X-Mansion when he was asked to train some of the students in combat. Begrudgingly he took on the role, not taking it seriously. He is then told by Professor X that he had put things in Jean's brain in order to subdue her full power, which angers Logan. Nevertheless, he goes to Alkali lake in order to track down a missing X-man. There is no trace of the man but he discovers an unconscious Jean, who he takes back to the mansion.

After Jean wakes up, Logan is seduced by her but soon realizes that she is not the same person, knocking Logan out and escaping. Finding Jean at her old house, Logan and the X-Men mobilize, only to be beaten and Professor X obliterated by Jean. Logan breaks down sobbing. He decides to go after her.

Finding Jean, Logan returns to the mansion, rallying the remaining X-Men to stand together and fight. This leads to a final, epic confrontation between Logan and Jean. Logan has to fight against her trying to dissolve him as he climbs up a mountain of debris to get to her. He gets to the top where Jean is and tells her he would die for her which leads the real Jean to come back for a second, he says "I love you" before killing her and saving everyone else, sobbing and screaming over her dead body which he holds. For the time, Logan remains at the mansion, soon thereafter leaving and renouncing The Wolverine.

The Wolverine - 2013

Mangold, J. (Director). (2013). *The Wolverine* [Film]. 20th Century Studios.

Another seven years go by and Logan is living in complete solitude in the woods. His camp is littered with empty bottles. Upon seeing a bear in the wild, the two of them greet each other as equals of sorts. At night he hears gunshots and men screaming, finding the bear dying and heads to the bar to confront the men. There he is convinced by a woman named Yukio to spare them and return to Japan to say goodbye to the man he saved seventy years prior. He tells her that he is no longer The Wolverine.

After meeting Yashida again, he reveals that he sent for Logan to make a trade: Logan's powers for mortality. Logan doesn't deny wanting to die, but leaves without accepting the deal. Yashida dies that night and Logan decides to stay for the funeral. At the funeral, Logan and Yashida's granddaughter Mariko are attacked and Logan successfully helps her escape, but suffers wounds from which he is not healing effectively. The two make it to Nagasaki, where Logan becomes invested in what Mariko has to say, creating a genuine connection for the first time since Jean.

He has graphic nightmares during his time staying with Mariko. After she is kidnapped, Logan and Yukio chase the perpetrators to her house, where Logan cuts open his chest to pull out micro-bugs on his heart, which had been preventing his healing. Logan has an epic showdown with Mariko's father and reclaims the name Wolverine upon killing him. Logan goes to find Mariko facing off against a horde of ninjas before finally being taken down. He wakes up in an adamantium trap, hearing Kayla, Jean, and Mariko's voices all saying to save them. A giant silver samurai bears down upon Logan, nearly killing him by chopping off his metal claws and

siphoning his life force through them, but Logan prevails. Logan grows back bone claws to kill him. He passes out, seeing and hearing Jean, then he sees her in bed next to him in a white dress telling him he is here, but he knows he can't stay, and no longer wants to die. Jean tries to guilt him by saying he put her there, but Logan says that he had to and he loves her. She leaves through the door as though she will no longer haunt his thoughts.

Before he leaves Japan, he kisses Mariko, says he can't stay because he's a soldier and has been hiding for too long. At the airport he is stopped by Magneto and hears about an anti-mutant weapon, but then Xavier shows up too and he goes with the pair to gather as many mutants as possible.

X-Men: Days of Future Past - 2023

Singer, B. (Director). (2014). *X-Men: Days of Future Past* [Film]. 20th Century Studios.

Flash forward ten years in Logan's life to a dystopian 2023, where mutants and anyone carrying a mutant gene is targeted by constantly evolving killer robots called Sentinels. Logan seems lighter in terms of emotional weight. Despite all of the chaos happening in the world, he himself seems to be in a good place mentally. Logan volunteers himself to be sent into the past via consciousness projection into his past body. He is the only one who can make the trip because his body can heal as fast as it is being ripped apart. He is told that if he is successful in preventing the implementation of the Sentinels, he will be the only one to remember the war. Logan is sent back to 1973.

X-Men: Days of Future Past - 1973 (2023 for Logan)

Singer, B. (Director). (2014). *X-Men: Days of Future Past* [Film]. 20th Century Studios.

Logan travels to X-Mansion to recruit Charles Xavier. Logan tells him things that Charles had not told anyone yet. Logan convinces Charles to help break out Magneto from prison and find the mutant that will allow for the creation of monstrosities: Raven/Mystique. In order to convince Magneto to work with them, Logan says “you're like me, you're a fighter”, quoted back to him by Magneto years later. Logan drives the crew to the summit in order to prevent Raven from killing and therefore starting the war.

Logan notices Stryker in the room at the emptied out summit and he starts to have a panic attack, lashing out in 2023, injuring the mutant holding him in the past. He calms down in the present and returns to his past body, where they escape the summit building. Back at X-Mansion, Logan admits to being the wrong man sent back but was the only one physically capable of the trip, giving Charles a lesson on how he was the helpless student and gives him a calm and collected speech.

The group goes to Washington in order to find Raven and stop her. After Charles convinces her to not kill, Logan goes after Magneto, who uses his metal controlling powers to spike Logan with wire and throw his body into the harbor where he drowns. He was pulled up by fishermen later in 1973, still alive. Raven, in the form of Stryker, says “I'll take him from here”, essentially freeing him. Logan has stopped the war from ever happening and wakes up in 2023 in the mansion, where Professor X tells him he is a history teacher. He sees Jean for the first time in 20 years and she is not just a figment of his imagination.

Logan - 2029

Mangold, J. (Director). (2017). *Logan* [Film]. 20th Century Studios.

Six years pass and Logan is working as a private driver, looking 30 years older than the last time he was seen. He spends most of his time driving, and the rest of it taking care of a dying Professor X with a fellow mutant, Caliban, just across the Texas border. Logan is able to heal, but very slowly and much less effectively than in years prior. He has a limp and aches from his injuries. Driving for a funeral, he is approached by a woman with a girl who calls him The Wolverine, begging him for help, but he refuses. His goal is to make enough money driving to buy a boat for him and the professor to finally be free. At this point, the last mutant born was in 2004, 25 years prior. Logan sleeps with his dog tags. Caliban finds an adamantium bullet in Logan's clothes, also mentioning that he hears Logan at night, drinks too much, and can tell that he's sick. Logan also needs glasses because his vision is suffering too.

Logan remains a curious and caring man, even if he won't admit it, going to the address that the woman days prior had given him. He considers her 20,000 dollar offer to take them to North Dakota to escape people chasing them, but leaves the motel. Returning a couple of days after to return the money, the woman is dead and the girl that was with her is nowhere to be found. After Logan gets back to the place in Mexico, a group of men from the gene editing company Transigen demand to know where the girl is. Logan tells them he doesn't know what they're talking about, but then the girl shows up out of nowhere and begins to kill the intruders. She has the same powers as Logan, down to the adamantium bone claws. Logan escapes with Charles and the girl, whose name is Laura. Charles reveals that she is Logan's daughter.

The trio stop at a hotel in order to get some rest, where Logan helps himself to the shooters in the minifridge. A group of men looking for Laura attack the hotel, causing Charles to have a seizure and injure over 500 people while Logan kills the soldiers. After escaping and being run off the road by a truck, they are taken in by a family for the night. They go by the Howletts, Logan's given last name. Transigen finds the three of them at the farm, unleashing Weapon 24, which is a clone of Logan without a soul. Weapon 24 fights Logan and ultimately beats him, takes Laura, and kills Charles, before getting impaled by a truck. Logan is able to escape with Laura and Charles' body in the back, later burying his old mentor.

Waking up in a doctors office, Logan is confused as it is an unusual occurrence, and is told that something inside is poisoning him. On the road again, Logan nearly passed out and Laura drives the rest of the way to North Dakota. He takes many days to heal once they get there and see the other children mutants who were created in the lab. The friends remind him of the X-Men. The children leave Logan a vial of drugs to help him heal and head out. Logan spots drones and trucks ahead and runs after them, downing the entire vial, enacting his full powers once again and battling a horde of enemies. Weapon 24 spikes Logan on a downed tree, effectively killing him, before Laura kills Weapon 24 with the adamantium bullet. Logan, finally holding her hand says, "so this is what it feels like" as he dies (maybe in reference to having a family and/or dying). They bury him. Laura turns the cross over the grave into an X after everyone leaves.

Taken together, the totality of Logan's life revolves around traumatic moments and their aftermath, leading to the development of PTSD, MDD, and AUD. In his early years, Logan ran away from home and began a century-long career of war-time in the United States military,

resulting in nightmares from his experiences and violent, if unconscious, outbursts while he slept. Logan further displays symptoms of PTSD following the procedure to coat his bones in adamantium and subsequent memory loss, resulting in additional nightmares with snippets of the haunting experiment. His inability to discern what had happened in his own life results in feelings of anger and rage, indicative of masked type depression in men. Logan's PTSD compounds when he has to kill Jean in order to save everyone else, resulting in a seven year long depressive episode shown through his self isolation and life alone on the side of a mountain. His depression also manifests in uncleanliness. At this point in time, Logan develops AUD, shown through solitary drinking. He continues to be haunted by Jean, having nightmares and becoming more and more emotionally stoic. 15 years later, Logan's AUD, MDD, and AUD in particular have progressed to the point where he is drinking irregardless of time or place, and his refusal to acknowledge his trauma and depressive thoughts have resulted in feelings of suicide ideation.

Analysis

Throughout this chapter I will be examining two key scenes analyzing instances of significant trauma, along with eight scenes depicting Logan's psychological response to this trauma. The first scene focuses on the physically and mentally tormenting procedure that haunts Logan's nightmares for more than 25 years, moving into the psychological behavior following this. These two scenes focus on Logan's presentation of symptoms of PTSD in the form of nightmares, and MDD symptoms in emotional stoicism and anger, consistent with findings on major depression symptoms in men. Then, I move onto his second major instance of trauma as a result of killing Jean Grey. The six scenes following explore a different psychological response,

culminating in not only nightmares, emotional stoicism, and anger, but also social isolation, irritability, alcohol abuse, and suicide ideation. This progression shows the symptomatology of PTSD, ultimately contributing to the presence of MDD and AUD within Logan, and how it has relevance to the experience of comorbid mental disorders in men.

1. **Incidence of Physical Trauma** - *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* (2009) - 38:19-44:49

In this scene, Logan is given an operation during which he is restrained and submerged in water, then injected with hot needles full of the liquid form of adamantium, the strongest known metal in the X-Men universe. The scene begins with Logan lying down on a table, only his chest up seen from an angle directly above him, his face stern. The position of the camera locks Logan into a box and brings us with him. We too are being told to imagine ourselves within the confined space he is in. Logan is told to become “the animal” in order to survive the pain, implying that no human should be able to. The audience is given a glimpse into Logan’s psyche as he remains emotionally stoic, despite being told that the procedure will bring him pain like no other he has experienced. He doesn’t want to show his fear and appear as something less than he shows the world. This is likely a function of the 100+ year period he spent fighting wars and repeatedly being exposed to trauma, consistent with findings on PTSD in men.

The camera shows a wide shot of the entire operating room, Logan on the table in the center with everyone else standing on a balcony surrounding it. The inclusion of this shot adds to the grand nature of the event, reducing Logan to a spectacle and contributing to the haunting nature of this memory he eventually unlocks. The building tension adds to Logan’s fear. As they begin the procedure, the camera cuts quickly between the machine, Logan being submerged, and

the audience, as the music in the background intensifies. The whirring sound coming from the needles add to the fear throughout the scene, continuing as they are lowered into the water. The camera at this moment pans over to a view of Logan from behind the computer, distancing the audience briefly from the horror, allowing the audience to recognize that Logan is experiencing everything. As one of the technicians presses start, the camera shows Logan's immediate reaction of eyes wide in shock and terror, cutting to the view of his skeleton and the depth in which the needles go. It is altogether horrifying and disturbing to imagine the pain experienced in this moment.

The non-diegetic music continues its rise in intensity and Logan begins to have flashbacks to earlier moments of physical trauma at the hands of Victor. The quickness of the shots after this moment increase along with Logan's heart rate. The audience is made to feel as though we are part of the procedure. As the pain becomes more intense for Logan, the camera cuts to Logan finding Kayla's lifeless body, the non-diegetic music in the background continuing through each cut. As the procedure nears its close, the camera focuses on Logan's heart rate and a flash of memories that go by with the sound of a pounding heart growing louder in the background. This creates the feeling that Logan will certainly not make it through the procedure due to the pain and torture his body is being put through. In the final seconds, everything goes in slow motion as the camera cuts between Logan's memories and Kayla before he flatlines and all other sound is drowned out. Dissociation is a common symptom of trauma, especially in veteran populations who experience harrowing incidents. The way the scene portrays dissociation is chaotic and hard to follow, disorienting audience members, emphasizing how disruptive and scary this symptom of PTSD is for those who experience it, such as Logan.

Near the end of the scene, a wide shot of Logan's still body in the tank is haunting, showing a stark difference between the thrashing earlier and the stillness at the end. Logan is killed by the procedure. The gravity of this moment is equivalent and more to trauma that results from extreme pain. This procedure is what Logan will have nightmares about for the next twenty five years of his life.

2. Psychological Response to Procedure (Nightmares, dissociation, anger) - *X-Men* (2000) - 38:36-40:38

Beginning the scene, the camera slowly creeps toward Logan as he sleeps in his bed, grunting and moving. He is shrouded in darkness. Non-diegetic background music begins, a chorus of foreboding violins playing softly. This decision alerts the audience to the likelihood of something bad happening. As Rogue walks nearer to Logan, the music intensifies, the camera quickly moving closer to Logan from above as though trapping him into whatever nightmare he is having. When the camera is focused in on Logan's head and him saying "no", the camera cuts to a man in a suit holding a giant needle, loud aggressive noises, almost like screams split the soundtrack. The camera cuts quickly back to Logan and then immediately to his submerged body in the operating tank, surrounded by viewers. Again, the ear splitting scream-like noise is heard. The audience, like Logan, is unaware of the meaning behind these flashbacks, creating a sense of mystery and terror around this moment. The use of quick cuts serves as disorientation and heart-pumping fear.

As Rogue attempts to wake up Logan, the music increases in intensity and becomes loud, almost abrasive. We see again into Logan's mind, this time stuck for an extended period of time as though we too cannot escape this nightmare. The camera cuts between a rack of needles, fire, Logan's unmoving body in the water, silhouettes of people watching him, and champagne glasses being handed out. The fact that people are there watching as Logan gets operated on and celebrating it create a horrifying disjunction between their reality and his. The next few shots stay within the nightmare, this time from Logan's perspective in the tank, bubbles seen from his view. The audience is meant to empathize with Logan due to the inhumaneness of the entire moment. One brief shot shows Logan's head thrashing and screaming to escape and avoid the pain, as we and him relive his most traumatic event. The final shot in the nightmare sequence shows a person in a suit about to inject a giant needle into Logan's skin, in conjunction with the volume of the creepy violin background music growing louder and louder before stopping as his eyes pop open in the real world immediately. This immediate cut emphasizes the pain and terror that Logan was doubtlessly feeling in that moment.

He wakes up startled, gasping, his face a combination of confusion and fear, and upon feeling Rogue's body on top of his, it reminds him of the procedure. Thus, Logan unleashes his claws and stabs her in the stomach. This response is one of anger and rage, suggesting a state of dissociation due to no prior intense negative emotion directed at Rogue. Logan experiences anger more intensely than a normal person would, yet he exhibits symptoms consistent with findings on comorbid PTSD and depression in men. His dissociations are more intense along with his physical reactions from it, in this case specifically anger. The camera cuts between Logan's and Rogue's reactions, Rogue has a look of shock whereas Logan has a look of anger. The sweat and

anger upon Logan's face shows his dissociation with the moment, not understanding what he has just done. When the camera cuts back to Logan, it moves backward at the same time, showing the sweat coating Logan's face and the realization that he has just stabbed and potentially killed Rogue, his face horrified as he sees his claws ripping through Rogue's body. A lingering shot on Rogue's gasping and sputtering contrasts heavily with Logan's panic, as he is taken aback and looks powerless in the moment. Logan's eyes say it all, on the verge of tears and repeatedly saying "no", the sinister slow violin music picking back up just before Rogue touches Logan and his face becomes one of extreme pain as Rogue's powers suck out his life force. He is again meant to suffer pain unlike any other he has experienced.

Whether asleep or awake, Logan's nightmare cycle never seems to end. He is stuck in a constant loop of pain and terror that haunts him from the immateriality of his dreams to the reality of his life. Logan's psychological distress in this scene emphasizes how anger is a feature of depression and PTSD in men. The inability to figure out what is happening in his mind causes Logan to have severe experiences with dissociation, which lead to outbursts of anger, in this case injuring someone. His expression of depression follows the "masked type" that manifests in men in the form of moments of violence and irritability that exceed what is appropriate in the scenario. The dissociation and nightmares caused by PTSD are similarly violent and reflect themselves in the way that Logan behaves while awake. As a result of the "man-up" attitude Logan has, he doesn't address these nightmares until reaching the mansion, subsequently becoming worse and worse, contributing to blunted emotional affect. Exaggeration plays an important role in the depiction of Logan, as audience members watching see a version of PTSD that aligns with what they understand it to be, with the added fantastical element of metal claws

and superhuman healing. Logan provides an example, if exaggerated, of how nightmares from trauma can manifest themselves into dissociative and angry reactions in men with PTSD and subsequent depression.

3. Psychological Response to Procedure (Flashbacks, emotional stoicism, anger) - X2 (2003)

- 1:30:31-1:32:38

The scene begins with Logan entering a mysterious chamber with a machine that looks like the one from his flashbacks. Eerie and sinister non-diegetic music follows him, creating an overall tone of doom. A shot from behind the wall shows Logan walking, and three claw marks evenly distanced on said wall indicate his past presence in this place. Cut to a medium shot of Logan, his face enlightened from the glow of a tank. He looks confused but also as though he recognizes it in a way that suggests it holds a bad memory for him. The camera cuts to what Logan is looking at, which is the tank, and pans up to a bright wall full of X-Rays, cutting back to Logan's shocked and horrified face. This continues with another shot of the X-Rays as though from Logan's perspective to another shot of him with his eyes wide and mouth open, closing his eyes and immediately flashing back to him in the tank screaming underwater. We are therefore following Logan's train of thought at this moment, learning along with him that the place he is now is the place where his bones were coated with metal.

The camera then takes the perspective from behind the tank so that we see Logan through the glass, cutting to his point of view as he explores the mechanisms of the machine and the bubbling metal prepared for use. The camera follows his arm as he touches one of the needles

and he has another flashback to the moment when the needle went into his skull. The reaction shot of his face shows him understanding and remembering what had happened. He even begins to breathe heavier. Two wide shots place Logan within the context of the operation, looking small in comparison to the mini-amphitheater. As he notices scratch marks on the side of the machine, he reaches out toward it and the music in the background intensifies, becoming louder and deeper as he nears it. Immediately upon touching it, the flashback of him fighting off men and yelling as he gets out of the tank is triggered. This sequence cuts back and forth between flashbacks, denoted by a bronze tinted lens, and a closeup of Logan's eyes in the present as he remembers more and more. As he closes his eyes, the flashbacks continue. Specifically, he remembers running out of the operating room without clothes, looking at his bloodied knuckles and metal claws, screaming uncontrollably. Some of this sound transfers over into the next shots of Logan's eyes darting back and forth in the present. A scratching sound is heard as he removes his hand from the mark on the tank. Stryker arrives at this moment, giving a speech to Logan about how he isn't 'one of a kind', walking away as Logan sprints toward him, a look of rage on his face.

Throughout *X2* more generally, Logan displays symptomatology of depression and PTSD in men in the form of insomnia and repeated showings of anger. Specifically with the portrayal of Logan discovering the truth about the procedure in this scene, he exhibits symptoms of PTSD, dissociating through flashbacks upon seeing and touching items in the chamber. This shows that being around objects related to trauma can bring the event back to the forefront of someone's mind, forcing them to relive the situation all over again as Logan did. Despite Logan's largely emotionless reactions during the film as a whole, throughout the scene he shows horror on his

face. Being back in the environment in which the trauma occurred causes him to react in a way consistent with how he felt at the time. Additionally, upon seeing Stryker, Logan's response is one of intrigue at first, which soon becomes rage. The film is showing rage as an aspect of his emotional response, because Logan does not care that it is problematic. This is another familiar expression of PTSD in men, and specifically when comorbid with depression, can cause greater amounts of anger than either condition alone. Logan has no way to decompress after understanding where his trauma comes from and thus reacts with blood-lust. This inability or unwillingness to decompress or talk about his experience before acting is similarly consistent with findings on PTSD and depression in men due to them holding inside their emotions.

1. **Incidence of Trauma (Jean Grey's Death) - *The Last Stand* (2006) - 1:31:40 - 1:34:13**

Logan is the final hope against a seemingly unstoppable Jean Grey. As he looks up at the hill she rips the skin from his body as he climbs upward. Shot-reverse-shots between the two of them as Logan climbs and gets layers of skin and blood ripped off from her power. From a beautiful wide shot of the two staring at each other from opposite sides of the hill, to shots of him getting his skin ripped off, Logan knows what he must do. The music is epic and grand throughout this scene, eliciting images of a fight between gods. When Logan reaches the top of the hill, he says he would die for her. The real Jean comes back for a moment, he tears up, saying "I love you" before stabbing her with his claws to save everyone else. As he holds her lifeless body, he sobs over her, yelling into the sky as the camera pulls up and out, Logan rocking with her lifeless body.

2. **Psychological Response to Jean's Death (Nightmares, solitary drinking, social isolation, emotional stoicism) - *The Wolverine* (2013) - 5:03-6:44**

The scene starts with Logan waking up in bed next to Jean after hearing her voice during a nightmare of the atomic bomb in Nagasaki. A sound bridge of Jean's voice saying "wake up" repeatedly from the previous scene brings Logan onto a bed with her, his face showing relief as he sighs. As an audience, we know that Logan had killed Jean in *The Last Stand* (2006), therefore already putting her existence into question. One technique that stands out as we see her is the camera is moving slowly from a vertical view of the two of them in bed to a horizontal one. This is reminiscent of horror films' usage of the canted or dutch angle in order to show that something is wrong. Logan looks well groomed and put together. There are crickets chirping in the background, adding to the realism of the moment for both the audience and for Logan, as he doesn't realize that he is still sleeping. There is a small radio on the bedside table. As Logan sits up, his face is confused and almost happy at the same time, because he too remembers killing Jean as he says "you're here" and asks her with desperation to say. His face says it all, as he rapidly searches in his brain to find a way to make it so that Jean can stay with him.

The shot-reverse-shot sequence between Logan and Jean continues, contributing to the realness of the situation until Logan and Jean slowly look down together. At this moment, the music begins to swell, indicating a horror is about to unfold. Logan lets out a loud "NO!" as he notices his left hand claws have penetrated her stomach and she is bleeding. Jean wearing a white nightgown contributes to the disturbing contrast of blood red on white and emphasizes the

deadliness of Logan's claws. As Logan says "no" over and over, he pats the wound in an attempt to "save" Jean, the squelch of the blood adding a layer of horror. Jean's voice becomes deeper and sinister as she says "you can't hide" and the music in the background becomes a chorus of high pitched violins, another technique used in horror films. The scene ends with the camera returning to a vertical position as it had started, showing how the nightmare has come full circle. Another sound bridge, this time Logan screaming "NO!", brings him to the present moment, heavily bearded and ungroomed, gasping and grunting as he wakes up for real. His claws retract with the 'sching' of the metal, and the radio from his nightmare, along with an empty whiskey bottle, reside at his camp. He is completely isolated. Logan keeps a picture of Jean with him at all times as a reminder of his lost love and his vow to do no further harm to anyone or anything.

This scene overall is necessary in regards to the portrayal of Logan's PTSD and depression due to the fact that Jean's consistent appearance in Logan's dreams is a direct product of trauma. This is the first instance in the film in which Jean appears in Logan's mind, showing up a total of five times, eventually progressing to the point where he sees her while he's awake. This is an alarming change as his symptoms seem to progress from nightmares into dissociation from reality. He creates this version of Jean in order to feel more guilty and less guilty at the same time for killing her, as he hasn't accepted that he needed to in order to save countless lives. Logan has not yet forgiven himself. In doing so, he has isolated himself and let his upkeep fall to the wayside. These are both signs of depression consistent with the DSM-5 definition. Jean's existence in Logan's brain adds to his feelings of suicide ideation and wanting to be with her, both for the purpose that he loves her deeply, and that he doesn't believe he should still be living.

His camp provides further insight into his more problematic behavior, solitary drinking. This is a primary example of a precursor to alcohol use disorder and is also predictive of suicide ideation. Logan's personal upkeep is equally concerning, suggesting MDD. His beard is overgrown and his hair is longer than it has ever been. He keeps himself well groomed throughout the prior six films. Another aspect of his camp that is concerning is the fact that he lives on the side of a mountain with no barrier keeping him from falling off. This disregard for his own life is a hallmark of MDD. Viewers who may identify with some form of this behavior could see Logan as a relatable character, possibly recognizing themselves in the way he takes care of himself and his space. Male audiences may relate more to the blunted affect that Logan displays, as a result of his trauma. He largely suppresses emotional expression, besides anger and irritability. Logan being socially isolated for seven years at this point has suffered psychologically as his withdrawal from everything has not worked to his benefit, but has increased the extent and impact to which PTSD and depression have taken over his life.

3. **Psychological Response to Jean's Death (Emotional stoicism, suicide ideation, anger)**

- *The Wolverine* (2013) - 22:22-26:31

By this point in the film, Logan has been convinced to go to Japan to say goodbye to the terminally ill Ichiro Yashida, the man he saved from the well in Nagasaki, before he dies. The scene begins with Logan walking into the room, looking intrigued, the camera taking his perspective, as a shot reverse shot conversation occurs between the two men. Here Yashida reveals that he is offering Logan mortality as a reward for saving his life all those years ago. The

non-diegetic background music grows sinister, and as Yashida continues, Logan's reactions show that he is interested in the offer the man is giving him, yet knows that it cannot ever be due to his healing abilities. As Yashida says Logan's healing abilities can be passed along, Logan almost takes a sigh of relief in knowing that there is a way he can be reunited with Jean. His breathing has grown heavy and when Yashida says Logan is ready to die, Logan does not deny this, especially when Yashida offers the reality of an ordinary life. As Logan rejects his offer, the heart monitor beats faster as Yashida pleads with him to consider it. Before leaving the room and as the heart rate monitor beats faster and faster, Logan says sternly "you don't want what I've got", and leaves the room quickly and a bit pissed off.

Throughout the scene he is emotionally stoic for the most part, and showing anger when he shows any emotion at all. This is indicative of the depression that continues to haunt him. As mentioned earlier, coupled with PTSD, MDD exacerbates anger in men who have both disorders, and Logan in particular relies on that emotion almost exclusively throughout *The Wolverine* and *Logan*. His consideration of the offer to become a mortal man and not have to live forever, suggests that the part of him that does want to die, the part where Jean comes from, has not yet won, but is starting to make ground. This indecision and unsuredness about wanting to live contributes to the likelihood that Logan had previously been considering killing himself. Due to his healing factor, this is an impossibility, yet when faced with the opportunity, his facial reaction tells a different story than his response. Men may identify with this scene particularly due to Logan's expressive suppression, not revealing what he is feeling on the inside. His reactions contrast the way that he interacted with Jean in the previously analyzed scene and the way in which he continues to interact with Jean throughout the remainder of the film.

4. **Psychological Response to Further Physical and Mental Trauma (Aggression, irritability, problem drinking, suicide ideation) - *Logan* (2017) - 17:47-20:11**

For context, *Logan* takes place one year after Professor X has a seizure at the X-Mansion in Westchester, killing Jean Grey along with six other X-Men. The first scene from *Logan* that I am going to examine focuses on how Logan responds to Caliban's accusations of his concerning behavior. Logan limps into the room, pouring himself a cup of coffee and putting a generous helping of whiskey in it, as Caliban begins talking to him. His attitude is curt and short tempered, shaking his head whenever Caliban says something he doesn't agree with. The camera is slightly behind him so the head movements are barely noticeable, but it adds to the way in which Logan is constantly butting heads with people. Throughout the duration his head remains down and he doesn't make eye contact. Even with the light on in the background he decides to sit where there is almost none. The camera follows Caliban as he walks and cuts closer to him as he pulls an adamantium bullet out of his pocket, cutting back to Logan who looks angry and quickly snatches it out of his hands. Caliban then sits down and begins talking to Logan, neither looking at the other and says that he can't help if Logan doesn't talk to him. He mentions hearing Logan at night and the excessive alcohol he is consuming, as well as the pus from his knuckles and blood on his clothes, indicating he isn't recovering physically. As Caliban begins to take a drink from his mug, Logan smacks it out of his hand saying "stay out of my shit", and leaves with a look of rage on his face, aggressively picking up his stuff and slamming the door.

Logan displays an array of depressive symptomatology that is most often seen in men, specifically in regards to his aggressive behavior and attitude throughout. He is combative and unresponsive to notions that something might be wrong with him both physically and mentally. This is the first time in Logan's life in film that we see evidence of problem drinking that is a persistent issue. Whereas in *The Wolverine*, his drinking is limited to when he was socially isolated, in this case his drinking is happening regardless of whether or not there are people around him. This is the primary indication that Logan is suffering from alcohol use disorder. Men often exhibit symptoms of alcohol use disorder prior to depression symptoms, and through this lens the film is showing how Logan is also experiencing symptoms of depression and the two disorders are hand-in-hand in his case and may be for men watching. Alcohol use disorder is a tell-tale sign in many men that they are dealing with even deeper issues such as depression or PTSD. Because Logan has both of these mental disorders, they are compounding and interacting with one another to create a violent and rage-filled personality, of which he is unable or unwilling to recognize.

Another aspect of his behavior in the scene that sticks out is his refusal to comment on the adamantium bullet found in his pocket by Caliban. Adamantium is the only thing that can kill Logan due to his skeleton being made of the same material. This moment continues the thread of Logan considering killing himself. The death of Jean Grey for the second time in Logan's life has had an immeasurable toll on his mental health. Even after accepting her death for the first time, living through her death again caused memories to resurface along with the trauma itself. Therefore, Logan pushes away these feelings and subsequently gulps them down. While this is not a healthy response to trauma, it may resonate with male audiences due to the fact that men

are more likely to exhibit symptoms of alcohol use disorder. This can create a unique view into Logan from the perspective of someone else who has a drinking problem, alerting them to the negative impacts drinking has had on Logan's social life and psyche. Suicide ideation is something that was on Logan's mind already and is a particularly deadly combination with alcohol use disorder, as people are more likely to act on these impulses when intoxicated.

5. Psychological Response to Further Physical and Mental Trauma (Problem drinking)

- *Logan* (2017) - 54:49-55:06

A brief moment in a scene in which Logan, Laura, and Professor X are in a hotel, Logan is shown in the bathroom, tying his shoe on the table. Next to his shoe are seven empty alcohol shooters, an eighth next to the sink, three on the other side of the sink, and he downs one a moment later. That totals twelve drinks in the short time that Logan was in the bathroom.

This single 15 or so second moment in the film is the most telling in regards to Logan's alcohol use disorder. It is arguable that he is reverting to alcohol use because of his physical ailments, yet at the same time, as evidenced by the previously analyzed scene, he is still dealing with extreme amounts of trauma.

6. Psychological Response to Further Physical and Mental Trauma (Anger, irritability,

emotional stoicism, violent behavior) - *Logan* (2017) - 1:32:40 - 1:35:28

Slow piano music opens up the scene as Logan is driving with Laura. He is continually coughing and looks beaten down both physically and mentally. Cut to Logan digging a grave for Professor X and the piano music continuing slowly until Logan begins a “speech”. His voice is shaky and he can barely get out the words. Laura grabs onto his wrist in an effort to comfort him. The shot begins to slowly go closer to Logan’s face as he fights back tears, refusing to cry. Slamming down the shovel and pulling away from Laura. He tries to start the truck and it won’t start so he yells, says “fuck” a few times, looks at the engine and notices that it isn’t going to work. He uses the shovel to smash the car, yelling curse words rapid fire and then passes out on the road next to the truck.

This moment is the culmination of the psychological and physical damage that has been done to Logan. His body is quite literally failing him and he is unable to control his behavior, suggesting the ultimate brittleness of traditional masculinity. His inability to shed a tear for Professor X’s death is not because he doesn’t want to, but because of the innumerable amount of death in his life. All of this culminates in a refusal to fully accept the reality of Professor X’s death and instead respond with anger and violence. This physical reaction of damaging the car through the violent means of the shovel may resonate with male audiences as being part of the masculine experience of depression. Expressing anger may be easier than expressing other emotions due to the accessibility of it and the ability for it to help people feel good quickly, without emotions they may typically associate as being feminine. Of course, this is not a long term or healthy coping strategy and leads to longer term issues with emotional control.

Analytic Conclusions:

Taken together, these scenes suggest that Logan's trauma throughout his life has contributed to the way he composes himself and the eventual development of PTSD, depression, and alcohol use disorder. In his early life, the trauma came from constant and relentless battle in war, not to be outdone by the horrific procedure in 1979. After this moment and the loss of his memory, Logan struggles with his elusive past, traumatized by frequent nightmares and flashbacks to the procedure with no context behind any of it until he finally unlocks that memory and quite literally kills his demons in the form of Stryker. However, Logan's trauma is seemingly never-ending, as the death of Jean by his hands leads to a seven year long depressive episode and nightmares once more. Here Logan's problem drinking begins, but is interrupted by another call to action, as he must reluctantly uphold the warrior image. Resolving this trauma by eventually forgiving himself, Logan joins the fight against the anti-mutant machines. His calm heroism saves the lives of countless mutants, and changes the timeline, therefore changing the original fate of Jean. His psychological state is improving. However, six years later, Professor X has a seizure, resulting in Logan reliving the death of Jean and many other X-Men, causing his mental health to continually and utterly decline. This induces further problem drinking and social and behavioral issues as a result, seen in his overwhelmingly negative interactions with Caliban. The adamantium poisoning, death of Professor X, and necessity to care for his daughter Laura contribute to further complexity of his mental state. His expression of mental anguish throughout the films is largely reminiscent of the literature on how PTSD, depression, and alcohol use disorder manifest in the male population, specifically in regards to anger and irritability as primary emotional indicators.

Conclusion

As mentioned earlier, film is an accessible and effective medium by which people receive and understand information that they may not individually research. The topic being men's mental health, it is essential to have such representations for male characters in film, as it can inform public perception of 'appropriate' masculine responses to psychological distress. Logan displays the typical masculine presentation of PTSD, MDD, and AUD, resulting in a psychologically complex character that has mostly subtle nods to psychological disruption that may not be caught under an all encompassing definition of the disorders. However, when shown through a masculine lens, Logan checks off the boxes. The primary features of his PTSD comes in the form of nightmares, anger, and dissociation, which align with military veterans and hyper-masculine male experiences. Logan's exposure to these experiences and beliefs informs the way in which he responds to his trauma.

Additionally, Logan's MDD comes in the similar form of anger, irritability, and social isolation. This is arguably the most subtle of all of the comorbidities, which might make it the most noticeable for men who are going through a comparable psychological circumstance. Anger is the primary externalizing factor in men with depression, of which Logan has an excess of, thus making the characters existence immediately relatable for men who have intensely angry outbursts. It is a hidden faucet of depression that may come across simply as anger issues, but is ultimately a tell-tale symptom, indicative of larger and longer lasting problems. This is a direct result of western views of masculinity and the toxic environment surrounding the definition of a man and how they *should* behave emotionally. The social isolation Logan puts himself through on multiple occasions further emphasizes the experience of depression in men. Logan never

reached out when he was feeling down, certainly didn't discuss his emotions with anyone, and altogether kept an attitude that suggested he would figure things out on his own. For many men, this may seem a natural response, therefore identifying themselves in the character once again.

Furthermore, Logan's problem drinking comes as a result of his trauma, but more accurately as a function of emotional negligence. In many cases of AUD in men, it is common to see comorbid depression, but the difficulty arises when it comes to understanding which disorder came first. Chicken or the egg? In Logan's case, depression is what comes first as a result of his trauma and subsequent development of PTSD. Left untreated, his psychological behavior was further impacted, developing into MDD, which led to an increase of alcohol consumption and continually concerning drinking behaviors, including isolated, heavy drinking. Arguably, Logan's AUD is more noticeable than his depression, and his excessive drinking behavior informs audiences of the way in which men primarily deal with difficult emotions. While this isn't a healthy way of dealing with emotional turmoil, it is often one of the more well known responses to depression more generally, and specifically for men.

Logan and Wolverine wouldn't be the same without an emotionally complex psyche, as he offers a reflection for male audiences dealing with comparable (human) trauma. Trauma's connection to mental disorders is an essential understanding, and through Logan, this is made clear, shown by an interaction of PTSD, MDD, and AUD, which progresses as the character ages through time. Due to Logan's hyper-masculine personality, he often pushes his own emotions to the periphery to avoid thinking about them, ultimately causing them to fester and impede his ability to heal. The end result of Logan's mental toll is quite literally death, suggesting to men watching who present with similar symptoms to reach out in order to avoid his ultimate fate.

Through the medium of film, the psychological makeup of the Logan is accessible to millions of audience members, providing a comprehensive and complex character that serves as an example of the typical masculine presentation of comorbid PTSD, MDD, and AUD.

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