

Modern Horror Thrillers: A Traumatic and Linguistic Study of the Movies *The Little Stranger* and *The Boy*

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Received: June 24, 2023

Accepted: August 4, 2023

Online Published: September 4, 2023

doi:10.5430/wjel.v13n8p76

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v13n8p76>

Abstract

Emerging as an exhilarating genre in the current film industry, horror thrillers are a new genre alongside science fiction. These genre forms captivate the audience because they offer a brief but exhilarating break from daily life and serve as an escape from reality. In these films, William Brent Bell and Lenny Abrahamson, directors of *The Boy* and *The Little Stranger*, respectively, demonstrated the modern horror thriller technique. This research intends to demonstrate how splendidly traumatic events are utilised in contemporary films, along with the ideal discourse change in those people who are suffering from mental trauma, which has inspired the current interest in horror thrillers. This study was based on two perspectives: the first was the destructive power of trauma and its impact on one's language, which can ruin or bring about disaster in one's life, and the second was how the film industry makes use of this trauma for the commercial success of horror films. In both of these films, horror is portrayed through unusual settings and occurrences. Through discourse analysis and descriptive methods, this study can conclude with the idea that conventional belief in spirits and other supernatural beings was irreparably damaged in today's films. These films may be compelled to depict the reality that each individual's suffering induces fear, resulting in the emergence of fantastical, eerie concepts and a change in their language.

Keywords: broken language, horror thrillers, paranormal creatures, silence, traumatic discourse, trauma studies

1. Introduction

Playwright and screenwriter Lucinda Coxon was born in Derby in 1962, yet she rose to popularity more as a screenwriter than a playwright. *The Danish Girl*, a film adaptation of David Ebershoff's novel, is her most famous achievement. She is also adept at adapting books into films, as evidenced by *The Crimson Petal and the White* and *The Little Stranger*, adaptations of Michel Faber's and Sarah Waters' respective novels. She was always able to maintain the literary integrity of the novels she adapted for the big screen. An example of this is the 2018 movie *The Little Stranger*, in which the tension and open-ended manner of the book that author Sarah Waters maintained throughout her writing is depicted clearly until the film's conclusion. The audiences and readers of the book and the film may receive the same message from the two distinct forms of storytelling. The combination of Lucinda's adaptation and Leonard Ian Abrahamson's direction displayed the modern horror style expertly, causing the audience to contemplate the on-screen story and exclaim at its conclusion. Abrahamson received Irish Film and Television Awards for his contributions to the films *Adam and Paul*, *Garage*, *What Richard Did*, *Frank*, and *Room*. *The Little Stranger*, a movie in which a fictional Ayres family, who had previously shown social elegance, was introduced by Lucinda Coxon. Aside from the Ayres family, Dr. Faraday is another significant character who aspires to join this line of royalty because of the elegance of this family that he remembers from his childhood. This movie shows the rising pain that a young boy experiences as a result of his own development and societal prejudice between the affluent and the poor. When all of the family members unexpectedly passed away, except Roderick, who fled the castle because he was terrified of the things that happened there, Dr Faraday's plan to acquire Hundred Hall as his own became a reality. The tale leaves readers with an open-ended question: Is Dr. Faraday's trauma the actual enemy, or is it Susan's ghost? Each of them in this family began to deal with their life's pain when Faraday joined the family. Their time at the castle was cut short when they rebelled against Faraday, which ultimately brought them to their demise. Readers could find the presence of Faraday to be more enigmatic than the existence of ghosts. He doesn't even express sadness for Caroline's passing, whom he pretended to love to get an opportunity with the family. All of them turn Dr. Faraday become the antagonist in this tale.

Screenwriter Stacey Menear is renowned for her work on the films *The Boy* (2016), *Brahms: The Boy II* (2020), and *Mixtape*(2021). Through these films, he demonstrated his ability to transport the spectator not just into a terrifying environment but also into a comical one. *Mixtape* describes the agony of a single parent and a daughter's attempt to figure out her parents' past, in contrast to *The Boy*, which produced a horror thriller that terrified the audience and made them consider the tale behind the screen. To begin his screenwriting career, Stacey attempted to branch out rather than focus on a specific genre. William Brent Bell's directing expertly conveys the notion of a developing writer on the screen. William Brent Bell is not a newcomer to the world of horror-thriller films; his work on the films *Stay*

Alive (2006), *The Devil Inside* (2012), and *Wer* (2013) has previously demonstrated his talent. The success of *The Boy* can be attributed to the skilled direction of William Brent Bell and the aspiration of the young writer to create something of remarkable quality. By removing the conventional paranormal components in horror films, Stacey Menear's *The Boy* demonstrates the new trend in horror thrillers. In this case, the Heelshire family tries to shield their kid from society by concealing his existence from the time he becomes eight. When young Brahm murders a friend in the past, the mystery of the tale begins. This may be due to his trauma, which prevents him from sharing his parents' love with anybody else. Grace's introduction into Brahm's current life frees Mr. and Mrs. Heelshire from their years of house imprisonment, but it also sets Grace up for a trap. This film is also a suspense thriller because the dead doll that stands in for the real Brahm creates a ghostly presence up to the movie's finale.

Modern literature now focuses more on social, political, and psychological themes than it does on simply depicting supernatural or paranormal entities. In these films, the screenwriters focus on the trauma or mental illness of the characters while shedding light on how one's love for someone or societal expectations affects people's daily lives in general. Communication is a part of daily living that can reflect a person's anxiety and fear, and a character's language is a reflection of their inner self. In both of these films, the distinguishing feature of the characters is their propensity to conceal their emotions, but their language and delivery reveal their dread. Although the ideas for the two films came from two separate writers, the subject matter is somewhat similar. In the end, the movies demolish the idea of ghost and reveal human mental anguish as the reason for their haunting existence, while first leading the spectator to believe in the reality of some ethereal people in a mansion. This paper aims to show the resemblance between these modern horror thrillers through a descriptive analysis of these two films and a comparison of the characters' mental suffering through their dialogue delivery.

2. Review of Previous Studies

Trauma studies are a growing trend in humanities now, this concept of trauma expanded its territory from the field of psychiatry to literature and films. The analysis of fictional work time nonfictional literary works is common today like the book chapter *Theorizing Trauma: Romantic and Postmodern Perspectives on Mental Wounds*, in which Christa Schonfelder make a study of Romantic and postmodern trauma novels to illustrate that the psychiatric discourses of these two different periods can reciprocally irradiate each other. James Berger tries to explore the connection between disability studies and trauma studies through his article *Trauma Without Disability, Disability Without Trauma: A Disciplinary Divide* and concluded by explaining the similarity of these two new fields of humanity. *The Little Stranger* is an apt one for describing this similarity, while considering the character Roderick, it is his disability to protect his family as a man that is the real trauma that destroyed his connection with the family. James Berger concludes his article: "We could propose, facetiously, that disability studies are marked by an inability to mourn, and trauma studies by an inability to stop mourning; but each discipline's particular attitudes toward loss are only part of their stories." (Berger, 2004, p.577). Judith Herman who is one of the pioneering clinicians as well as a theoretic in the field of traumatic study, uses her idea Susan Rubin Suleiman explains the contemporary trauma theory in the article *Judith Herman and Contemporary Trauma Theory*, according to Susan Rubin trauma is not only an act resulted from the past events but also an act for survival in the present. It is not just the past catastrophe leading to mental trauma; the anxiety and fear about the future and present make them more malformed. In the case of these movies, this anxiety about the future or present is visible through all characters. Brahm's fear of losing his parents' love, Mr and Mrs Heelshire's fear of losing their child or the heir of Heelshire, Dr Faraday's fear of losing Hundred Hall, Roderick's fear of his role as a man of the family and Ayres' anxiety to live a life without her first daughter all are the cause of their destroyed life. This fear and anxiety are common in humans but when these cross the boundary it leads to the clinical world of trauma.

"Traumatic events generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity or a close personal encounter with violence and death" (Herman, 1992-1997, p.33). In these words, Herman indicates the dangerous nature of humans confronting the trauma stage, these threat and bodily integrity not only disturb the one who care about the person in trauma but also distresses the person who is suffering the stress. Through the contemporary horror thrillers, *The Boy* and *The Little Stranger* several characters and their traumatic situations are explored along with the influence of this trauma in their language. The majority of the characters in these films are not directly affected by any psychological upset but they were influenced by the one who are in mental volatility in their life.

The essay by Steve Choe, *Love Your Enemies: retribution and Forgiveness in Park Chan-Wook's Films*, discusses the three main films of Park Chan-Wook and the logic of retribution and forgiveness. In this world of jealousy and rage, individuals must learn to forgive since revenge might arise from pain in one's life, but forgiveness is the eradication of this trauma. *The Traumatic Paradox: Documentary Films, Historical Fictions, and Cataclysmic Past Events* by Janet Walker describes the traumatic paradox as the rebellious reality that external trauma itself may generate variations in recalled information that societal traditions ignore when making judgements about the truth. This illustrates how a distressing circumstance may transform a typical discourse into a convoluted one where the true meaning is hidden. Mentally retarded suspects' free will and fabrication of confessions are discussed in the article *Words without Meaning: The Constitution, Confessions, and Mentally Retarded Suspects*. Even while persons who experience trauma and those who are intellectually retarded are different, they both have certain distinctive characteristics. If the incapacity of the mentally challenged group to interact or communicate with society causes them suffering, then this is the loosed capacity of those who are experiencing trauma to interact with their environment, makes their misery worse.

3. Content

Even though the public has relatively little knowledge regarding trauma theory, it is regularly mentioned in the humanities. Deconstruction, post-structuralism, and psychoanalysis are major influences on the trauma theory that Caruth, Felman, and Laub created in their publications. However, professional work with people who have survived traumatic situations also influences it. The contents of

Caruth's *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, which include the contributions of Felman and Laub as well as the scientist Van der Kolk and Van der Hart and some literary contributions made by Georges Bataille and Harold Bloom, can be used to trace this convergence of influences. According to one definition, trauma theory encompasses both theorising about Holocaust survivors' experiences and other traumatic individual and collective events, as well as theoretical and methodological advancements that might be drawn from this research and applied more broadly to film and literary studies. Today's research on the relationship between trauma and language is known as trauma discourse. Speech therapy is utilised for the early stage of trauma in a way that goes beyond science since it allows the expert to grasp the patient's thoughts just by the way they speak and uses that language to treat the trauma in a peaceful conversation.

The research employs a methodology that examines both the films from the standpoint of trauma and the language effects of this trauma. The research makes extensive use of the plot, story, and pacing of the films. This research connects with modern themes like class prejudice via sociological analysis of the films. These characters' personalities became extremely evident, which helps to grasp the trauma they are experiencing, via the descriptive study of the character's physical appearance, inner thoughts, responses to the conditions they are facing, and conversation delivery. It becomes clearer how this trauma affects people's lives and language by analysing the current characters and occurrences from their prior lives. In *The Boy*, Malcolm's account of the life of young Brahms to Grace and in *The Little Stranger*, Dr. Faraday's description of his past, which give the present context meaning, are two examples of how some of the movie's major characters narrated the background information for the current story. This research is made more meaningful by examining the emotional effect of each scene and its characters as well as the uniqueness of current horror thrillers in comparison to earlier ones.

The Boy is a 2016 film of horror thriller with a new idea of horror which mingles real life with mystery. Along with the screenplay of Stacey Menear, the direction done by William Brent Bell make it more attractive to contemporary viewers. It is not just in literature but in horror films also castles are inevitable, which is presented in this film with the amazing castle named Diana Hardcastle. Greta Evans, the heroin, fantasised about the figure of this mansion and says "It's like something out of a storybook" (Brent Bell, 2016), the storybook which always creates fantasy through words. She exclaimed as soon as she stepped inside the castle, revealing her interest in the entire property. The mystery of this tale is concealed inside this castle, much like in other horror films. The loneliness the residents of this house have experienced may be reflected in the seclusion of the home. Since Brahms, the couple Mr. and Mrs. Heelshire's son perished in a fire disaster on his seventh birthday, his parents haven't left the castle for twenty years. The boy's toy that Mr. and Mrs. Heelshire regarded Brahms after his death gave rise to the notion of ghosts.

From the beginning of the movie, William Brent made several allusions to the existence of a mystifying object in the castle. The settings place additional emphasis on the animal faces that are visible in various areas of the house, particularly their eyes, which show Greta's movement and may indicate that she is being observed. Even though Mr. and Mrs. Heelshire hint at their son's presence in the text, the reader's anticipation of the horror prompts the notion of Brahms' ghost at the castle. While assisting Greta in doing her duties as Diana Hardcastle's nanny, Mrs. Heelshire instructed her to read loudly and play loud music so the voice would be audible throughout the entire castle, hinting at a hidden presence who enjoys hearing all of these things from another part of the castle. Mr. Heelshire frequently depicts his son's presence in this castle in various settings "Whatever it might look like on the outside, our son is here, He's very much with us" (Brent Bell, 2016,14:53-14:59), Mr. Heelshire tells Greta. Just before leaving the castle with Mrs. Heelshire, he reiterates the danger that awaits her there by saying, "Be good to him and he'll be good to you. Be bad to him..." (Brent Bell, 2016,19:19-19:23).

A call from Greta's buddy in the middle of the movie reveals the prior anguish she endured as a result of her love affair and the unplanned pregnancy. This hidden pain inside Greta makes her ignore the mysterious nature of Heelshires and became sympathetic to them, she acted in front of them that it is Brahms for her also and she cares about the toy. They turned to Greta as a scapegoat due to the similar anguish they had experienced about their son and the solitude they had endured for 20 years. "Brahms has rejected them all though they weren't nearly as young or as pretty as you" (Brent Bell, 2016,11:06-11:13), these words of Mrs. Heelshire to Greta indicate that Brahms doesn't want a nanny all he wants is a pretty girl in his age of thirties even if he is represented as a boy through the toy. After Mr. and Mrs. Heelshire left and Greta used the toy boy like any other toy, the mysteries of the castle slowly began to come to light. She doesn't like the toy or the restrictions set by Heelshires, but uncertainty about reality still looms over her. Greta and Malcolm's interaction begins to reveal Brahms' existence, but in this particular instance, Greta also accepts the existence of the eight-year-old Brahms' ghost. She starts to consider the toy as a boy as a result of her trauma over her lost kid and the care and compassion shown to her by this unknown person, such as when it made dinner for her and gave back her boots. Greta was startled by Cole's entrance, her former boyfriend, and this prompted her to seek help from the spirit of Brahms. In the last scene, Cole destroyed the toy, provoking the real Brahms who was concealed within the castle's secret side. Here, the screenwriter challenges the ideas about ghosts that the vast majority of horror films have upheld for years. Due to the movie's reputation as a horror thriller, every audience must expect a ghostly presence from the very beginning. However, this anticipation was dispelled in the end.

In the movie's finale, Brahms, who had been shielded by his parents for more than 20 years, is revealed to be the true antagonist. Malcolm explains the past of this family to Greta including the past of Brahms that he heard from the public, he tells her that there is polite as well as pub talk and this climax proved that the pub talk is real. Every week, Emily Cribbs, a young child, would travel from the town to this castle to play with Brahms. However, on Brahms' eighth birthday, Emily came from the town but didn't go home. The girl's head was smashed when her body was found, and throughout the course of the inquiry, police made it to the castle, which was burning and where everyone thought Brahms had perished. The truth is that the Heelshires fabricated the fire to shield their only son from the crime, and they have been keeping this a secret from the public for years. This seclusion for years leads them to suicide and put Greta's life to

Brahms in exchange for their's which is mentioned in their last letter to Brahms, "We will not be back, the girl is yours now. She is yours to love and care for." (Brent Bell, 2016, 1:20:36- 1:20:39)

Parents believe and act strangely due to their enduring love for their kids and the agony of losing them. *The Little Stranger* is a 2018 movie that is based on the same-titled novel by Welsh author Sarah Waters, who mostly writes about lesbian characters. Her perspective in this book is a little different, though. Through his one-hundred-and-eleven-minute picture, Lenny Abrahamson and Lucinda Coxon's script retained the novel's uniqueness. The audience placed more significance or focus on the castle Hundred Hall in this instance than any of the characters. The core of the developing mystery in the novel is Dr. Faraday's entrance into the castle; the black vintage automobile and his all-black attire may be a representation of the darkness in him that developed throughout his formative years. The spectator senses a dead end in trying to identify the true killer or destructor of this family since the villain of this film remains a mystery from the start to the very end. The spectator is not confronted with a ghostly presence in this horror movie; instead, Dr. Faraday and Caroline's final words before she dies serve as the sole suspects. The word "You" (Abrahamson, 2018,1:39:40) uttered by Caroline specifies that the stranger killer is no more an unfamiliar person to her, she knows him/her very well which is displayed through her exclaimed eyes, which increases the chance of suspecting Dr Faraday as the villain or the stranger of this movie. Even if he was hired as a doctor, the class prejudice he has experienced since he was a child would persist. In the first half of the movie, the method of going back and forth between the past and now is used to show how fascinated Faraday was by Hundred Hall's structure and beauty. It was on an Empire Day fete that Faraday, a ten-year-old child first saw the mansion, his longing towards this mansion and his powerlessness to be a part of this house is clear through his descriptions on that festive day "never imagining they would open to me a common village boy" "But it was the house itself still in its glory, which somehow impressed me terribly" (Abrahamson, 2018,7:25-7:30). Faraday even confesses the same admiration about the castle to Caroline "A long time ago as a grubby kneed boy, I snuck up and stole something from this house... One of your plaster acorns. I was overwhelmed by admiration, like a man stealing a lock of hair from the girl he is fallen blindly in love with" (Abrahamson, 2018,15:22-15:53).

When Dr. Faraday is given the chance to cure Betty the castle maid, he sets out to fulfil his ambition of joining the Hundred Hall. Faraday was more interested in the old castle than the people who lived there; the building captured his attention even in its dilapidated state. His desire to explore new sections of the large home and his passionate, lover-like touch on the building are indications that he is curious about the castle's architectural details. Even though he proposed to Caroline Ayres, who has an odd sense of style and is more interested in kitchen labour, as a first step into the Hundred Hall family, this desire or passion was missing in his eyes. When Faraday decided to treat Roderick, Mrs. Ayres' son, for his fire damage, which resulted in his unemployment and trauma and caused him to believe himself to be hopeless for the family, the Ayres family began to take him into account. However, the course of treatment offered Faraday an accurate image of Roderick and the internal anguish that is pulling him apart, "There's a thing in that house. It hates me. It always has" (Abrahamson, 2018,33:53-34:05). Roderick's trauma of his futility in the mansion as a man of the house leads him to think that nothing in this house needs him. Studies have been done on how military experiences can cause trauma, and they relate to the character Roderick. In his paper, Joshua Pederson stated that

It is easy to recognize the characteristics of trauma as McNally describes it in both historical and contemporary war memoirs; therefore, I begin the test of my three dicta by engaging the nonfiction accounts told by veterans of World War I, the Vietnam War, and the recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. As many authors have previously pointed out, World War I gave rise to one of the first rough efforts to name what we now call post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). (Pederson,2014, p.340)

As a doctor, Faraday began to exploit each individual's concealed suffering to manipulate them, and his discussion with Seeley demonstrates how well he understands it.

DR FARADAY. We all subscribe to the general principle of a conscious personality with a sort of dream self-attached.

SEELEY. You're suggesting this subconscious self could somehow...?

DR FARADAY. Detach under sufficient pressure to become mischievous or malign

SEELEY. Acting out all the nasty impulses the conscious mind wants to be hidden? (Abrahamson, 2018,1:17:35-1:17:58)

The subconscious drive or pressure will manifest itself to undermine the fundamental ideas of a conscious personality. This exchange also reveals Faraday's attraction to the castle and its prestigious status in his subconscious. "You ought not to worry Doctor. You are from Pirate Stock... Who the fucking hell are you? This is my house and I'll do as like with the down place! And it isn't any business of yours! What are you doing here you are not part of this family. You are no one" (Abrahamson, 2018,37:14-38:07), Roderick was the one to leave the house rather than Dr. Faraday as a result of their inhumane conversation. The fire in Roderick's room heightened his unsettling suspicion that a hidden force in the house despised him and desired for him to leave the castle. When Mrs. Ayres began to think of him as an outsider, his subconscious psyche was harmed. The person who was plagued after Roderick left Hundred Hall was Mrs. Ayres, whose unresolved anguish over her dead daughter Susan began to lead her into madness. Faraday consistently acts as though he doesn't believe in ghosts and constantly criticises Susan's spirit which enraged Mrs Ayres and leads her to tell Faraday that "And you must remember whose house this is" (Abrahamson, 2018,1:15:59). Following this exchange, a strange death of Mrs. Ayres in the nursery room occurs in the scene. Here, the audience learned that each character's demise is followed by a change in how they feel about Dr. Faraday. This is true for Roderick and Mr. Ayres whenever they inquire about his position in the mansion on their final day there. The same thing occurred in Caroline's life when she declined Faraday's marriage proposal, which ended his final opportunity to join Hundred Hall.

CAROLINE. I'm sorry. I like you very much and I'm so grateful but I...

DR FARADAY. Darling, you are confused.

CAROLINE. No, I'm seeing very clearly

DR FARADAY. Please you... you are tired.

CAROLINE. Stop saying that, sometimes I think you want me to be tired. (Abrahamson, 2018,1:30:34-1:30:52)

This dialogue between Faraday and Caroline proves the early statement of Granger, the higher doctor under whom Faraday works, about Caroline as a brainy girl. She can think ingeniously in the lonesome aftermath of losing every member of her family, which raises suspicions about Faraday's shrewd character. The fact that he has Hundred Hall's keys in his possession after the passing of every member of this family shows that Faraday has fulfilled his ambition of joining Hundred Hall. It is up to the spectator to judge whether Susan's spirit or Faraday's psychological anguish is the villain in this open-ended conclusion. In contrast, *The Boy*, this film does not give a direct answer about the existence of ghosts to the audience but by raising a question regarding the villain *The Little Stranger* tortuously enquiring about the ghostly creature.

The *Little Stranger* and *The Boy* are two films that sprang from the ideas of two very different writers, Sarah Waters and Stacey Menear, yet they are strangely linked by the distinctive ways in which they each presented a gothic narrative. Both of these tales centre on two little boys named Brahms and Faraday and the trauma they were both carrying. Mr. Heelshire uses the word "Odd" to specify the behaviour of Brahms in *The Boy*, and *The Little Stranger* depicts the trauma of a child growing up in a society of class discrimination that leads to the hatred towards his parents that is indicated through the conversation about Faraday's family with Caroline, "All I learned was to be ashamed of them." (Abrahamson, 2018,48:33-48:35). In the movie *The Boy*, the spectator is perplexed by Brahms' actions as both a playful kid and a sexual man because the film does not specify the origin of his trauma. Similar to the Ayres family's passing in *The Little Stranger*, the spectator must be left wondering what happened to Emily Cribbs even throughout the film's finale. The rules that Mr. Heelshire drafted for Brahms' nanny show that he doesn't like visitors in the home, as shown by rule number one, **No Guest**, and that he always wants someone to love and take care of him, as shown by rule twelve, **Kiss and Good Night**. The increasing difficulty Brahms was experiencing may have been brought on by the fact that his parents had begun to accept and treat a new kid in the castle. Heelshire's experience the same anguish as a result of shielding the youngster from the public and the police; the solitude and worry for their son's future have carved a hole in their minds for more than 20 years, leading them to blame someone else instead of themselves and to commit suicide in the hopes of finding everlasting peace. The movie serves as an example of how mental confusion may result from the anguish of losing the one you love the most.

The Little Stranger is a movie that depicts the various angles from which a terrible event might enter a person's consciousness, including class, race, and caste prejudice in society, parents losing their children, unemployment, and physical limits. Here, Dr. Faraday stands in for a group of people who desire to be well-known in society; he was astonished by the reputation the Ayres family received. As a young child, he might not be aware of the peculiar social hierarchy and believed that the castle and wealth of the Ayres give them dignity in the eyes of the public. He might even feel embarrassed of his parents for being poor. Faraday's current life, though, demonstrates how dedicated he is to achieving his goals; despite coming from a low-income home, he became a doctor, but his hopes of being well-known in society were in vain. He has been working hard for a long time, but it hasn't gotten him what he wants. The Ayres family's ignorance triggers his subconscious, which drives him to do whatever to be a part of Hundred Hall. The struggles of the bulk of the characters in this movie as well as Faraday's mental issues paved the path for the Ayres' downfall. Mrs. Ayres, who had been grieving Susan's death for years, began to think irrationally and began to suspect that Susan's ghost is the cause of all the strange things happening in the castle. Roderick's trauma started with the loss of his work and his disabled body; as the man of the home, he is constantly reminded of his limitations. His terrible lesson that someone in the castle wants him to leave the castle has been brought on by this sense of helplessness.

By individual trauma I mean a blow to the psyche that breaks through one's defences so suddenly and with such brutal force that one cannot react to it effectively. (...) By collective trauma, on the other hand, I mean a blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching to people and impairs the prevailing sense of communality. The collective trauma works its way slowly and even insidiously into the awareness of those who suffer from it, so it does not have the quality of suddenness normally associated with "trauma". But it is a form of shock all the same, a gradual realization that the community no longer exists as an effective source of support and that an important part of the self has disappeared. (Erikson, 1976:153, 154)

Erikson explains both individual and societal trauma in this instance. By describing the unique trauma in each of these two films, the plot may be intended to make these circumstances seem more commonplace. For instance, Mr. and Mrs. Heelshire are experiencing a painful circumstance as a result of losing their only child, which illustrates their trauma. However, communal trauma is also at play as readers recognise this as a common concern for all parents. Although it addresses the communal trauma that the class system and the suppression it causes can put everyone into a troubled state of life, Dr. Faraday's trauma is represented through the class struggle he has been involved in since he was a child.

Apart from the psychological coordinates of traumatic events that can be analysed to discover the hidden mechanisms of such painful experiences, the discourse of trauma is another facet of which analysis may offer valuable insight into how individuals situate themselves about the events that they narrate. (Matei, 2013, p.518)

Language serves as a means for people to express their thoughts and feelings, allowing for the projection of one's inner feelings through speech. Language is a challenge for trauma theory. Leading trauma theorists like Cathy Caruth contend that the absence of words is the essence of a traumatic experience. This is the main attraction of Bessel van der Kolk's work and neuroscience in general for Caruth and others. According to Van der Kolk, a traumatic experience is too rapid and overwhelming to be described. The challenges that people who have experienced trauma have in putting their experiences into words are amplified versions of the problems that everyone has with language. It is still unremarkable how little direct experience language can comprehend till a trauma occurs. Typical narratives used to explain trauma invariably fall short. The fact that the past as it happened and how it is described are often extremely different is due to the language's inability to adequately describe overpowering events, especially given how they might remain for a very long time after the terrible incident in the past.

When a person says "I just don't have the words to explain what happened," he or she might just as well be saying "the language I am familiar with, the language I share with others like me, does not have the words and phrases to describe What I went through." And he or she would be right. Even the best and most subtle language is only a rough approximation of experience. (*Trauma*, 2016)

In the movie, *The Boy* MrHeelshire's conversation with Greta at the time of Mr and MrsHeelshire's departure for a trip explain how nervous is he.

"I only wish we had an opportunity to, uh...To explain to you the vicissitudes of a child as unique as our Brahms. But uh... you... you'll pick it up. I'm sure. Oh, I've got something to um... help you along... I'm sorry. I'm... I'm a bit off today" (Brent Bell, 2016, 18:17-19:10)

The narration's linguistic devices serve a variety of purposes at the discourse level as discourse markers. Here, the phrases uh... and you...and I'm...are employed to link thought units in the narrative and to denote the unfolding of events and the plot. MrHeelshire's stammering is the result of his life which is sunk in trauma. The words downright strange and odd are used to describe the nature of Brahms by Malcolm and MrHeelshirerespectively, these two discourses indicate the features of trauma which can make a person odd out of others through their strange and unpleasant behaviour. *The Little Stranger* mostly concentrate on class pride throughout the story, the first-time conversation of Dr. Faraday with Mrs Ayres pictures the same when she came to know that Faraday's mother was a maid in their castle once and she said, "Well... I do hope she enjoyed her time." (Abrahamson, 2018, 06:30-06:31), here well... is used as a prefacing for her dialogue that indicates her losing interest to continue the conversation with Dr. Faraday. One who has experienced some emotional turmoil Most frequently, people communicate in fragments and rely on certain sounds or words to connect their ideas, such uh... or repeating a word out of strain. Words and phrases are frequently broken while people are mindful of what they are saying, but when people are under stress, they frequently break sentences because they lack the right words to describe the circumstance they are facing.

Silence is one of the most significant discursive indicators of numerous phenomena in the narration of trauma discourse. Silence should be seen as a linguistic mechanism even though it does not entail wording because, as Saville-Troike says, it has been equipped with meaning described as "silent communicative acts which are entirely dependent on adjacent vocalisations for interpretation, and which carry their illocutionary force" (Saville-Troike, 1985:6). The time when the narrator is nearer to the traumatic event, the emotive role of silence becomes more apparent. Roderick in *The Little Stranger* used to be a character that consistently employed this pause after each sentence. He is constantly uneasy, and he is unable to even face the visitor at his home. Because of the doubts he had about his abilities, he saw everything negatively. "I've told you... I won't... I can't... I've got a bad feeling, Faraday. A very bad feeling..." (Abrahamson, 2018, 22:51-23:09). The entire conversation focuses on the negatives, such as won't, can't, and bad feeling, and the speaker frequently pauses (...) or is silent while discussing these. He seems to be trying to keep his fears and uncertainties hidden from those around him by being silent. Greta, the protagonist in *The Boy*, employs the same silence, despite being fatigued by the events at the castle, even though she is also exhausted. In the scene in which Mr. and Mrs. Heelshire advised Greta on how to manage the house and Brahm, Greta felt the strangeness of the Heelshire, but she did not ask any questions. Instead, she stood silently by, obeying them due to her anxiety about the outside world and the terror that awaited her there, as well as her fear of losing her job, which could lead her back to her past life. In the same way as discourses are linked to trauma, silence is too; it is the language of persons who are experiencing mental trauma.

In the clinical realm of trauma, language is the primary tool for determining the severity of a patient's stress. The majority of psychiatrists use open communication as a method for diagnosing and treating their patients' issues. The only way to express emotion is through language, and expressing the emotion to another person or sharing one's suffering with others can provide mental relief. "While language analysis programs could be an effective means for tentative self-diagnosis and mental health screening, the development of such programs is impeded by the gaps and inconsistencies in our current understanding of the links between language usage and mental illness" (Todorov, 2020).

4. Conclusion

Trauma is brought on by mental instability carried on by unforeseen events. However, depending on the mental fortitude of the individual, recovery from trauma may be managed. Personal care, or the presence of someone who can understand and care for them, is necessary in addition to clinical treatment. *The Boy* and *The Little Stranger* are two films which indicate the same trauma that was ignored by the people enclosed by that person. In *The Boy*, Brahm's possessiveness of his parents is not noticed until his trauma spread his mind uncontrollably, leading to the death of Emily Cribbs. In the case of Dr Faraday in *The Little Stranger*, his aversion to social discernment

and his desire to be a member of an honourable mansion like Hundred Hall was ignored by his mother, who considered it an ingenuous act. If these acts are controlled or counselled at the beginning the devastation may not occur. Mental trauma emerges in many ways some of them are not preventable like losing someone vital in life forever or the mental uncertainty caused due to any accident like Mrs Ayres and Roderick respectively. Averting such type of incident from disturbing one's psychology is not a laid-back task, here clinical treatment and mental support may only help them to move on to normal life. These films it specifies the effect of two characters whose mental volatility was hiding from society by themselves or by someone else. These films not only masterfully convey the new horror movie trend by avoiding supernatural monsters, but they also create masterful conversations that convey the terrible environment. *The Boy*, more than *The Little Stranger*, was the film that deftly incorporated traumatic discourses. The traumatic setting of the film is masterfully depicted through the ideal use of silence, repetition of phrases, and avoidance of open communication in the majority of the scenes. Both these movies indicate the two major types of communication when one is afraid to express their feeling, they use the silent one, while those who want to express their stress but don't know the words which can help them to do the same by using the broken language or use some words or sounds to link their broken idea. Even the movie dialogue and how these discussions were delivered had their eerie to maintain ghostly presence until the conclusion.

In the conclusion of many modern horror thriller films, the idea of the ghost is questioned, and it is subtly implied that all these eerie ghostly occurrences result from people's dread of the future and inability to live in the present. These films are distinctive in that they challenge the conventional notions of paranormal or otherworldly creatures. The current generation is compelled to doubt everything whose existence has not yet been established, and modern films exhibit this tendency as they change to reflect the changing attitudes of succeeding generations. The interrelationship between consciousness and language is evident in the characters of both films, demonstrating the significance of language to humans. These films illustrate how each anomalous occurrence is accompanied by a corresponding mental illness or mental aberration in humans, as well as a change in their language.

Through both the films it is depicted the importance of communication in one's life to recover from the trauma or to reduce the growing trauma in one's mind. The fear of expressing their feelings or mingling with society make them live with their inner fear that will carve their life forever. It is not only the case of traumatic situations but also in every case, good communication can destroy great trouble. In *The Little Stranger*, if the family have good communication with each other, they may prevent the awaited danger in front of them. *The Boy* also express this problem in the lack of communication in the Heelshire family, who are isolated from society to protect their son. Here this study indicates that language is not only an indicator of one's inner trauma but also a tool to cure the same. Each genre's concept and aesthetic are evolving in line with societal trends, such as the decreased significance of paranormal entities in horror thrillers. In addition to providing amusement, the media has recently begun to shed light on modern problems including trauma, class inequality, violence against women, suicides, etc., which will be useful for future studies. A fresh line of inquiry may be to examine these horror films from the standpoint of death studies, a recently popular movement in the humanities. The study of death is still relevant today since gothic works and horror thrillers both often use death as a significant theme.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my guide for the successful completion of this manuscript. I am also grateful to my colleagues for their instructions, feedback and moral support. Lastly, I would be remiss in not mentioning my family, especially my parents for motivating me during this process.

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