How do traumas affect our everyday lives?

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What is trauma?

Trauma is a response to an overwhelming stress that exceeds a person's ability to cope with. It can affect emotions, cognition, and even physical health and like a ghost, these experiences usually come back to haunt you, which can lead to depression and even self-harm. You can seek help, which is even recommended, or you could fight alone.

There are a lot of ways to get trauma, most common is by an experience, but you could get it witnessing something. A murder as an example, if you saw a man killing another person in front of you, you probably would get traumatized. A life-threatening experience like a car crash could make you traumatized as well.

Depending on the experience, it could make you terrified of doing things. Let's create a scenario:

You are driving back home and your friend who's sitting in the passenger's seat is already asleep. You are so tired, you end up sleeping too and as soon as you open your eyes you realize that you are about to crash. It is too late to stop the car; you can only sit there and accept the fact that you're about to crash. After the crash, you were able to survive but your friend was not as lucky as you were. With all the guilt on your shoulders you would most likely get depressed and could even get PTSD responses from seeing cars considering they are a living reminder of what happened.

A way to cure it is to overcome your past, which you could do by talking to family, friends or a therapist since his job is to help you overcome the overwhelming fear that haunts you. The point I was trying to make is that trauma is not only an emotional reaction to a terrifying experience but a whole package of overwhelmingly distressing mental conditions.

Self-experience

Since I'm talking about traumatic experiences I started to question if I had any and unfortunately, I did. When I was about 7 years old, my parents got invited to a barbeque since I wasn't that old to stay alone at home, I was forced to go with them. Since the barbeque was at a big parc, I wasn't very sad.

The barbeque started and I went to play on the huge slides, but there was one big slide and to get there you had to cross a little wooden bridge, but at this bridge there was a long branch kind of blocking the way. It wasn't necessary to push the branch down to be able to pass, but as a 7-year-old kid it would be a crime not to. As soon as I lifted the branch, a chill went down my spine, I heard more than 12 Bees buzzing around me. Panic started to kick in; I never felt such fear in my life. My mom had told me before that if I didn't move, they wouldn't sting, so that's what I did. I stood there petrified; I didn't move,

but I screamed as loud as I could, but no one could hear me. Tears running down my cheeks, I didn't know what to do. I tried waiting, but I couldn't take the buzzing sounds any longer, so I tried to escape: ,,Maybe if I could run fast enough and slide down, I could escape the bees.", I thought to myself and it sounded like a good plan too, so that's what I did but instead of successfully escaping I was stung, not by one bee but by a dozen. It hurt; it really did hurt, I cried and ran as fast as I could. The tears didn't stop at any moment. When my mom noticed me, she looked worried when I explained what had happened, so we went home. There she calmed me down and took care of me. For the rest of that summer, I was terrified by the bees. Whenever I saw them, I would start crying but fortunately I overcame my fear by myself.

I think this story still counts as trauma; it was nothing like the extreme example I gave before, but it doesn't always need to be an extreme experience to be a traumatic experience.

Different Trauma types

Trauma is classified by the duration and type of exposure. There are three main types of trauma including acute trauma, chronic trauma, and complex trauma. There are two other classifications, such as secondary or vicarious trauma, developmental trauma, "Big-T" vs. "Little-t" Trauma, and historical or generational trauma.

1. **Acute trauma** comes from one single distressing event, like an accident, natural disaster or violent attack.
2. **Chronic trauma** comes from continuous or repeated distressing events, so it comes from something that happens in your everyday life, like domestic violence, child abuse, bullying, or long-term illness.
3. **Complex trauma** comes from multiple or repeated traumatic events such as child abuse, ongoing domestic violence or being a victim of sex trafficking. Complex trauma can be a combination of chronic and developmental trauma.
4. **Secondary or vicarious trauma** is when a person gets trauma symptoms after close contact with someone who has experienced a traumatic experience, these can come from family members, mental health professionals or first responders who work with trauma survivors and others.
5. **Developmental trauma** are traumatic experiences that happened during childhood that affected or are affecting emotional, cognitive, and social development. These come from experiences like physical, sexual, or emotional abuse; neglect; or exposure to violence during childhood.
6. **"Big-T" vs. "Little-t" trauma** categorizes based on perceived severity. Big-T is the classification for a life-threatening trauma experience, while little-T is the classification for a less severe but distressing experience.

7. **Historical or generational trauma** is a traumatic experience that targets or is passed to a specific group of people throughout generations, such as racism, slavery or forced displacement

PTSD

PTSD means Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder; you usually get PTSD by having a traumatic experience. People who are affected by PTSD often tend to relive their traumatic experience through nightmares and flashbacks. They also may experience feelings of isolation and guilt. PTSD can be triggered by a smell, sound, or a certain memory. For some people, PTSD disappears after some weeks or months of traumatic experiences. PTSD has five main cognition and mood symptoms. These are:

- You may have trouble remembering important information about traumatic events; these memory gaps are common due to stress and dissociation.
- You may start having negative thoughts about yourself or the world depending on what happened. If I saw someone murder a person in front of me, I too would be disgusted by the world.
- You may start having exaggerated feelings of guilt toward yourself or others. If we take the car example from the first chapter, you could feel blamed or guilty for what happened to the friend even though it was an accident and no one's to blame.
- You can have various ongoing negative emotions, such as fear, anger, guilt, or sometimes even shame toward something or someone.
- You may lose interest in previous activities, once again taking the car example from the first chapter, you may lose interest in cars after the accident, since they're a reminder of what happened.

Researchers also recently found out that you don’t need to have had a traumatic event to get PTSD as you could get it also by experiencing a divorce or loss, which are not necessarily traumatic experiences.

Different types of PTSD

There is no exact number of different types of PTSD, but they are usually identified between four and six more commonly different types of PTSD, and just like trauma, they too are classified by duration and the type of exposure. The six types are uncomplicated PTSD, complex PTSD (CPTSD), acute stress disorder (ASD), dissociative PSTD, comorbid PTSD, delayed-onset PTSD.

1. **Uncomplicated PTSD** usually develops with one distressing event.

2. **Complex PTSD or CPTSD** usually comes after prolonged or repeated distressing events like abuse or domestic violence; it also can lead to more complex symptoms like self-worth and relationships.
3. **Acute Stress Disorder or ASD** has similar symptoms to PTSD, but they usually occur one month after the traumatic experience and may resolve itself on its own.
4. **Dissociative PTSD** is when someone starts to feel detached from oneself also known as derealization or the trauma also known as depersonalization. Depersonalization is when someone feels like an outsider or observer in his own body, thoughts, and/or feelings. Derealization is when you feel that the world isn't real, foggy, or even distorted. These symptoms may make you zone out during stressful moments.
5. **Comorbid PTSD** is when you get PTSD while or when you are suffering with other mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, or substance use disorder which only tends to complicate treatment. It can happen because trauma overwhelms the brain, causing difficulty to process certain emotions. This process leads to symptoms that mimic or develop such mental disorders.
6. **Chronic/Delayed-onset PTSD** is the type of PTSD that persists in its symptoms for several months or years after the traumatic event or simply appears long after the traumatic event.

Difference between PTSD and Trauma

The difference between Trauma and PTSD is that Trauma is more of an emotional response to an awful or distressing experience, while PTSD is more of a diagnosable mental health condition that can develop if your brain doesn't process the trauma properly. PTSD persists in disorders that significantly affect your daily life. Basically, trauma is the experience itself and the first reaction to it, whereas PTSD is the ashes of the experience so a disorder that could follow up. Not everyone that suffered from trauma develops PTSD.

Why is trauma so common?

The reason why traumatic events happen so often is because of the way our brain is wired. The brain is designed to prioritize survival, which activates reactions such as fight, flight or/and freeze responses. These responses can become stuck if the threat is too intensive. Another reason for trauma is environmental dangers such as accidents, any type of violence, domestic, sexual or societal violence, and natural disasters. Children are also very vulnerable to trauma, making childhood traumas very common. They are often met with neglect, abuse, or simply fail to meet basic needs, which leave long lasting wounds.

Why is trauma so complex?

The problem with trauma is that it disrupts not only the body but the brain as well, changing the nervous system into permanent survival mode instead of just creating a bad memory out of the experience. Because of this shift it can cause diverse emotional, behavioral, and physical symptoms that also expand into dissociation, chronic anxiety, and/or addiction; they are often mistaken for other conditions. Another reason for being so complex is that it can stem for different factors

Psychological impact: The trauma tricks the brain into keeping the amygdala (our danger detection sense) constantly on high alert. It also inhibits the frontal lobes; that part of the brain is responsible for calming down, thinking logically and processing an experience. Because trauma inhibits or weakens this part of the brain, it becomes harder for us to regulate our emotions. It also becomes harder to think logically and make sense of our current experiences or make sense of what happened.

This creates a loop; the trauma activates the amygdala. That makes us feel unsafe and feeling unsafe suppresses the frontal lobe, causing difficulties to process the traumatic experience. Because the trauma is not fully processed, our amygdala stays on creating a never-ending loop. That's why trauma feels "stuck" in our brains.

Body memory: Trauma often gets stored in your body too; it manifests physical symptoms such as sweating and pain. So basically, when something scary happens, your brain and your body remember it, meaning your body could suddenly start a reaction as if you're experiencing the trauma again, making it hard to manage simply through talk therapy.

Complex or Developmental Trauma: There are many types of traumas. The single-event trauma comes from one experience like a car accident, a natural disaster or an assault. In the other hand the complex and developmental trauma come from repeated traumatic experiences, it usually lasts longer, it comes from people you depend on and it usually happens during childhood. Instead of storming one day and never again, it is as if it would storm every day. Since the child is still developing, such trauma can reshape their view on the world and other people. If the child is raised in such terms, the brain tends to develop survival instead of safety.

The "Split" Experience: After the traumatic experience, a person may feel like they are living in two different realities. The past where the traumatic experience took place, and the present where they are safe from the experience. It could be that something triggers

their body into reacting the same way it did when the trauma occurred, basically making them react as if they are experiencing the trauma again, even though their brain knows exactly that they aren't. That is the "split".

Epigenetic Effects: Our DNA is like a big manual, and our genes are little recipes in this big manual; genes expression is whether a gene is being used or not. Trauma doesn't affect your DNA, but it affects how these genes expressions get used.

If someone suffered an intense trauma experience, their body adapts to survival mode, making them: stress hormones stay high constantly, the nervous system becomes more alert, and genes related to stress responses may become more active. Researchers found out that these increased stress related genes changes can pass on to their children, meaning that the child's body may react more strongly to stress, meaning that the memories of the trauma itself is not passed on and the child is not "scared" or "damaged" with the traumatic experience.

These are the factors that not only make the trauma more complex but also make it more difficult to get over the experience since it keeps coming back and keeps repeating itself in every inch of your body.

Why is trauma therapy so exhausting?

The reason why trauma therapy is so exhausting is because it forces you to relive and confront the awful experience that you went through, and not only through your brain but body as well. By confronting the trauma that is often avoided for years, you will be able to finally release all the painful memories, emotions and physical tension you have been keeping away. It requires a lot of physical, emotional, and cognitive energy to be able to unpack a trauma. Unlike talking about a bad day, trauma requires you to re-process the whole experience. This re-process can feel like a "Trauma hangover" and it is when you feel sluggish, vulnerable and drained after the therapy, so after therapy you usually feel worse before feeling better.

Since the brain avoids or shutdown these traumatic experiences, it makes trauma therapy more exhausting since you are forcing your brain to reprocess these memories it has been trying so hard to ignore and forget. The brain needs to come out of this "shutdown" state it has been creating, making you feel intense emotions which make it more physically exhausting.

Since the trauma in not only stored in the mind but in the body as well, trauma therapy may also trigger physical sensations like muscle tension, fatigue or even pain

In the process of confronting awful and terrifying memories and/or experiences we may break down barriers containing hidden emotions that were previously unsafe or uncertain to acknowledge, making you feel them now in the present.

Ways to fight against the exhaustion are scheduling naps during your day or doing gentler activities after the therapy session. You could use grounding exercises to calm you down and manage emotions if they start to feel intense during or after a session. You need to always just stay patient especially because the increased exhaustion or feeling worse after the therapy are only a sign that the deep healing is working.

Can therapy make PTSD worse?

One of the side effects of trauma therapy is that PTSD could get worse but only temporarily, especially therapy that involves facing memories and triggers. Since you are re-processing and unburying your trauma to face it, your memories and feelings may feel fresher and stronger at first, making you feel more upset and tired. This may increase symptoms such as getting more nightmares, stronger anxiety, more flashbacks, and mood dips. These temporarily increased symptoms are called therapeutic dips. Another reason for worsening symptoms is overcoming avoidance. Therapy forces you to stop using unhealthy coping mechanisms and provides you with better and healthier mechanisms, but this change could cause temporary discomfort for some individuals. If the reprocessing is done without appropriate grounding techniques or if the therapist is not trained in trauma-specific care, it could lead to re-traumatization rather than helping and healing you. Other symptoms such as overwhelming panic, worsening depression, or persistent feelings of being unsafe are very common and depending on how intense they are it is important to speak with your therapist about adjusting your pacing in the sessions.

How does child neglect affect trauma?

For this chapter I am going to try something new, I am going to make an analysis in Jack Stauber's short film: OPAL. OPAL is a twelve-minute-long, short film by Jack Stauber that focuses on themes such as child neglect, reality, coping, and trauma. I would really recommend watching the short film to better understand what will be covered in this chapter.

Video: https://youtu.be/-1pVLJl_snc?si=rKneBrGBmtT6k9rW

Jack Stauber: Jack Stauber is an American musician and animator and filmmaker. He is known for his weird and creepy yet strangely beautiful animating style and for his music that is trended on the platform TikTok. His animating style is different depending on the message and vibe of the video, ranging from the usual cartoony animated style to stop motion.

Summary of the video

The opening sequence of the video shows an ash tray filled with already burned cigarettes and a TV, followed by measuring tapes and mirrors, and at last empty pill bottles with some pills and alcohol bottles. This starting sequence ends with a window that is high above another smaller house opening and zooming in on the other smaller house. The starting sequence doesn't make sense at the moment, but later it will be a key point to the story or rater to say a foreshadow of what awaits Opal.

The film shows us a hamburger followed by a happy and healthy family greeting our protagonist, Opal. The mother, father and grandpa of Opal start singing about ow they see her, after that every single one of them compliments her.

Her mother says: There she is

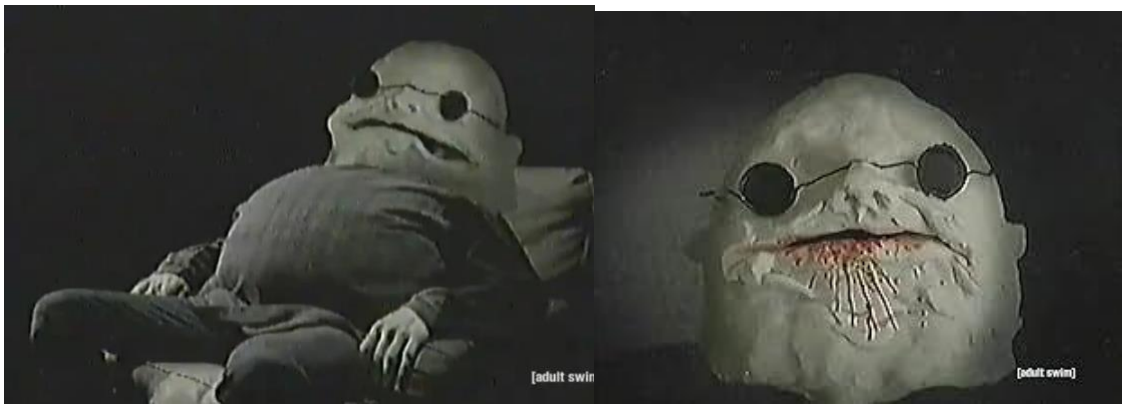
Her dad says: That's my girl

Her grandpa says: Hi, Opal

She struggles to grab the hamburger in front of her and after a while she manages to do it and is filled with happiness randomly starts to dance. She turns to every family member that encourages her and shows her their pride toward her, when suddenly her focus is shifted to the house on the other side. A dark, big old house, her full attention focused on the window on the higher end of the house. Her mother closes the window, and her father tells her not to look stare at the house, and she is put in bed. She sneaks out of her bed to stare a while longer at the window of the house on the other side. The window suddenly opens and "ghosts" followed by a heavenly yet disturbing music exit from this mysterious window. Opal looks sad and eventually she decides to leave her house and wander to the house across the street. A big flash followed by loud ringing appears behind her, without second thought she rushes into the mysterious house.

She closes the door with relief, but that relief doesn't last long because when she looks upfront, she sees an overweight man staring at the static image on the TV screen. Opal tries to stay quiet, but accidently steps on a bag of chips, the old man turns to face her, he is wearing sunglasses indoors indicating that he is blind. He asks her if she's Claire and that he needs her to grab him his cigarettes, he also tells her to not hide them again indicating that this Claire person is trying her best to help this old man. He also explains that it is evil to help people that don't need help, followed by his coughing blood. He then says struggling to breathe that she's interested in him just like the people on TV and starts to sing a song about how it seems so easy to breathe on TV. Indicating that he not only is blind, but has a cigarettes addiction, and also a breathing problem.

Song: Easy To breathe by Jack Stauber: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RO-_T-nIh3k



Opal grabs the cigarettes and is heading to the old man, when he realizes that she smells weird and isn't saying anything, so he assumes that it isn't Claire. He tries to get up to chase her while screaming for her to get out but falls off the couch screaming. Opal terrified runs up the stairs. She ends up in a corridor and at the end of this corridor there's a slightly open door and out of the door comes the "ghosts" followed by a heavenly yet disturbing music exit from before, indicating that she needs to go in that room. While she is walking toward that door, she is suddenly a voice comes from the room beside her, and she is stopped by another resident of this cursed house.

A man with mirrors surrounding him, calls Opal calling her Claire asking if she's planning on walking by without talking to him. Before Opal even gets the chance to respond he start complimenting himself and making him look superior to Opal by insulting her saying things like "I am glad I don't have your ancles." He keeps complimenting himself and adjusting the tens of mirrors surrounding him; he doesn't even notice that he is not talking to Claire but Opal. He starts to say that she is treating him like a stranger, he comes to a realization he says hold on and grabs the mirror in front of him. Opal frets but turns out he was just adjusting the mirror to see himself better. He asks himself why people look at him weirdly and then he starts singing.

Song: Mirror man by Jack Stauber: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gGRfWhUWb5Q

He sings how people rejected him for his looks and how he then decided to enclose himself to “fix” him so that all can savor his beauty. Making not only narcissistic but also giving him a god complex by making him think that with his beauty he can safe all, that is implied by the line “God is in my skin” and “Crafting the world its next new savior”. He sits in his reflection chamber fixing every single inch of his face until he turns into a perfect being. A strange noise catches Opal's attention, she looks at the stairs from where she came from and there, she sees the old man struggling and screaming getting up the stairs. Frightened, she ran away to the room at the end of the hall. The mirror man notices she is running away and shouts her to wait. She closes the door as soon as she enters the room. She looks around, a bedroom with empty alcohol bottles everywhere, at the end of the room there is a staircase leading up to the room with the mysterious window. She slowly makes her way to the staircase when suddenly something or rather someone grabs her by her the ankle, making her fall over.

A woman's face appears rising above Opal in an attempt of intimidation. She appears to be heavily drunk, so drunk that she ends up calling Opal Claire like everyone else. Demonstrating that no resident in that house pays attention to anyone but themselves. The woman continuously calls Opal Claire while saying how terrible she feels of what happened. She starts trauma dumping and starts singing about how she needs a little girl to lean on or to fall on her arms, so basically someone to trauma dump on (trauma dump is a term used to describe dumping/telling your trauma to someone without considering their binderies and mental capacities).

Song: Virtuous Cycle by Jack Stauber: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tA_eQqF7XJw

She continues by saying that this Claire girl is just like her, a helpless girl that isn't strong enough to defend herself. Opal terrified manages to escape the woman's grip and runs up the stairs, the only safe way.

The woman tries to grab Opal's ankle, but Opal is too fast. The staircase leads to the attic and Opal locks herself in this attic, what appears to be the only save space in this cursed house. When Opal finally calms down enough to look around, she sees the window. Her mission was complete; she finally found the window she was looking for, the whole reason for her misfortune. She makes her way to the window and instead of seeing her house across the street she only sees a Billboard advertising a restaurant called "Opal's Burgers". On the advertisement there is her family smiling at a girl holding a burger, Opal. The door begins to tremble; every resident is trying their best to get hold of Opal, and Opal finally realizes or rather accepts her reality. She is Claire, not Opal; she is part of this cursed household. She is the old man's eyes, she is the mirror man's mirrors, and she is the woman's pills. She screams and escapes to her imaginary family, they start singing about how they see her, and the camera zooms outside the door, and we see Claire's family thumping on the door to get hold of her.

Analysis of the video

This film is filled with symbolism, misfortune and allot of things that only make sense after watching it for a second time, like the beginning sequence was a flash forward to

every resident’s problem. This section will be a deep analysis in the characters their representation and what this all has to do with child neglect and trauma; there will be a lot of interpretation and theories so not all of it may be true.

In the short film every character, including Claire, uses a form of escapism to escape their harsh reality, their trauma, instead of confronting it and stop running away from their responsibilities. The grandfather uses TV to escape the fact that he has a smoking habit and breathing problems. The father was rejected by society, so he decided to escape into his own world, his reflection chamber. It is implied that the mother caused abuse or was a victim of it, and she escapes that thought by abusing pills and alcohol to make her forget those memories. Claire escapes to an alternate reality where she is seen by his family and isn't neglected. Making this whole story a **Vicious cycle.**

A vicious cycle is a bad action that leads to multiple other bad actions the exact contrary of a **virtuous cycle** (the mom's song title).

Claire's father and grandfather both cannot see her; the grandfather is blind, and the father only focuses on himself. This could be a metaphor for how adults reinforce their own priorities and leave the child at the bottom of their list. The mother is an alcoholic that didn’t want a child to raise but to use recklessly as a therapist flipping the traditional and ideal parent-kid dynamic.

Claire

Claire, also known as Opal, is the main character of the short film Jack Stauber’s Opal. She lives in a horrible household where everyone neglects her and uses her for their own benefit, ignoring her feelings in the process (trauma dumping). She is the grandpas' eyes, the fathers' mirrors and the moms' pills. She escapes this everyday reality by creating a new one in her head, one where her family sees her. Her favorite hobby is sitting in front of her house and stare at a hamburger advertising billboard. There are interesting interpretations that I like to mention:

A reason why Claires' imaginary family calls her Opal may be because she feels the only way of her being seen or validated is by changing identities, so she needs to be someone else to be loved, making Claire the opposite of Opal. It is super sad how Claire doesn't even fantasize about a perfect wealthy family that gives her everything she wants when she wants, but simple parents that make her feel seen in other words acknowledge her. When the billboard lights flicker on, they make her remember her gruesome reality and, in the end, when the imaginary family sings, she covers those lights with hamburgers. When she sees the heavenly yet haunting effect that always comes from the window, we

can see the billboards lights on her eyes. The imaginary parents have a line in their song that says, “your troubles are miles away” and it is ironic because the burger restaurant is miles away from her house.

In the beginning of the short when Claire grabs the hamburger, she randomly starts dancing and that could be because she doesn't know what to do with it. Her head is not round like everyone else this could be a hint of mal fed, meaning she doesn't get enough to eat because no one takes care of her, her mother is an addict, her grandfather can’t even take care of himself and her father is too fixated on himself to care for anyone else.

Claire is desperately trying to help her family but, in the process, makes everything worse, especially because she isn’t any specialist. She ends up talking to the mother, giving the father unnecessary attention and the grandfather his cigarettes. She tiptoes when she first enters the house and it could be because she is trying to avoid her family and getting involved in their affairs, she simply wants to escape to the attic, her safe haven. She also got anxiety and appears to get scared whenever someone starts talking to her.

The grandfather

The grandfather is the first resident of the house across the street that we see; he is blind man with a smoking habit that is causing him breathing problems. He uses TV to escape this reality and when he hears the commercials, he gets the feeling that the people are trying to buy his soul and he likes that attention because it makes him feel important. He uses Claire to get cigarettes and gets mad whenever she hides them in an attempt to help him. He also resents her for trying to help him even though he doesn’t want help.

The grandfather doesn't recognize Claire at the beginning even saying that she smells different. That could be simply to make it more entertaining to watch and build up the suspense, but it could also be because at that moment Claire is impersonating Opal, another person making her inrecognizable.

The father

The father is the second resident that was introduced to us in the house across the street. He is a narcissist with a superiority complex hinted by the line “god is in my skin” from his song “Mirror Man”. The reason for his narcissism is society. He sings that society rejected him because of his looks and now he sits in his reflection chamber perfecting every single detail of his appearance to make it appealing for the rest of the world. His escapism is creating a perfect being out of him whatever the cost, we even see in the song blood coming out of his skin meaning he often hurts himself in the progress. He is always talking about himself and uses Claire as a comparison of how beautiful he is and ugly she is. The father, just like the grandfather, doesn’t want or accepts Claire’s help; he states that saying it is part of his journey.

This hyper fixation on perfecting himself is a disease known as BDD (Body Dysmorphic Disorder). BDD is a mental health condition where the individual becomes extremely worried or obsessed with a certain flaw in their appearance, even if the so-called flaw is very small or not noticeable to most people.

His so-called "reflection chamber” is a metaphor for how caught up he is in his own life.

The mother

The mother is the third and last resident we encountered in the house across the street. She is an alcoholic, drug addict or both, and she talks about how she needs someone to lean on and how she isn’t living but just survives. She is suffering from trauma as implied by the flashback she gets on her song. This trauma may be about some sort of abuse as we can see someone getting slapped and someone typing 911 on a phone.

The mother doesn’t like to admit she is wrong even though she knows how bad her situation is. The name of her song is a virtuous cycle, a virtuous cycle is a good action that leads to other good actions, and the story of the film is a vicious cycle the exact opposite of it. But this could either be a simple word to play as nobody realizes they’re wrong, or it could be that the mother really thinks that this is the right thing to do and

pretends everything is fine because she doesn't want to admit fault. We can hear that when she is about to admit fault, she stutters and changes the question.

It is heavily implied that the mother was the one abusing then suffering from it. She abused the father and deformed his face and then he got suppressed and rejected, so he decided to run away to his own bubble. We assume that the father was the one who suffered the abuse because at the end sequence when Claire sees herself in everyone's coping mechanism, in the frame where the mirror turns to face the camera, we get a glimpse of the father's malformed face.

The Vicious cycle – the conclusion

This short film is a beautiful piece of art that perfectly depicts aspects such as trauma and child neglect. One bad experience can lead to a thousand others if not taken care of. The grandfather uses Claire for his benefit, neglecting her feelings in the process. The father tries to make a perfect being out of himself after having a traumatic experience of how society rejected him, and he uses her to get compliments and attention making his ego stronger. The mother regrets abusing the father and doesn't want to get judged by others for her traumas, so she flips the parent-kid dynamic in the hope of feeling better about herself. They all use and abuse Claire without ever considering her well-being and mental capacities making her like everyone else run away from her responsibilities and trying to fix everything on her own because she has no one else. Every one of them had a traumatic experience and is troubling the others with it making this cursed household a never-ending vicious cycle. This film also shows the realities some kids must go through every day, most of them develop immense anxiety and trauma out of these experiences and lose self-worth.

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