

Trauma, Possession, and PTSD: Exploring Nogitsune Arc in MTV's *Teen Wolf*

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Abstract

As a genre, supernatural teen television often engages with complex psychological themes pertaining to adolescents and their lives. One such show is MTV's Teen Wolf (2011), centered around Scott McCall, a teenager coming to terms with his recent transformation into a werewolf. Teen Wolf, specifically Season Three, Part Two, exhibits these aspects, focusing on trauma using the background of spiritual possession based on Japanese mythology. The paper attempts to explore the Nogitsune arc as a metaphorical depiction of traumatic symptoms and, essentially, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

This article focuses on the character of Stiles Stilinski, a close friend of Scott's and his mental combat with the Nogitsune and how this possession manifests itself into symptoms like night terrors, recurring nightmares, dissociation, repression of memory and depersonalization. Drawing on Herman, Caruth, Balaev and other theorists' literary and psychological trauma theories, the paper highlights the impact of traumatic triggers (here, possession) and the influence of social support in healing of said trauma. This article offers a nuanced perspective to understand the extent of trauma by integrating the mythical element of spiritual possession, adding to the understanding of supernatural teen television's depiction of trauma and adolescence.

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Introduction

From the slow-burn romances of eternally adolescent vampires to werewolves who struggle with their homework and saving the world, supernatural teen television as a genre holds its stature as a popular and widely-consumed genre of media in today's world, appealing to the viewing sensibilities of millions worldwide (Diviny 25). While considered to be highly unrealistic and thus reductive (Mathis 1), owing to its diversion from the semblances of reality, the genre has seen a recognised fantastical intervention, obtaining the majority of its inspiration from mythical creatures and urban legends prevalent in cultures from all around the world (Martin Ferrando 6). Supernatural teen television, with its convincing characters, realistic portrayals of adolescent relationships and deeply personal themes, seemed to be growing predominance in the 1990s, especially in the United States and United Kingdom, with shows such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *The Vampire Diaries*, *Teen Wolf*, *Merlin*, *Supernatural*, etc. gaining loyal viewership (Diviny 25); however, it is imperative to clarify that these supernatural entities and symbols that have been moulded for their loyal 'fandoms' predate this colossal boom. It can be argued that the integration of supernatural elements into teenage television has its roots, not solely in pop culture, but also in mythologies and tales of folklore from around the world. The CW's *Supernatural*, for instance, released in 2005, amidst the uncertainty that followed the aftermath of 9/11, is a television show of the horror genre that takes inspiration from American folklore and urban legends such as "Bloody Mary, the vanishing hitchhiker, the woman in white, Hookman or the Scarecrow", shaping these tales to suit the needs of contemporary viewership (Gonçalves 4). *Supernatural* teen television, along the lines of *The Vampire Diaries*, *True Blood*, *Supernatural*, or *Merlin*, attempts to showcase a fictionalised version of reality where partial coexistence seems to be the norm (Gonçalves 8). Considering that these creatures seem to be living a life of normalcy in these shows, it can be said that the integration of supernatural creatures, according to Susannah Clements, stands as a metaphor for the human condition and expresses a latent desire to explore the same (Gonçalves 8). By depicting these creatures in normalised settings, one can imbue the idea that these characters and their supernatural adversaries are representative of real-life problems and scenarios that plague human life and the mind, such as trauma.

On a similar tangent, one can refer to *Teen Wolf* (2011), MTV's attempt at reconstructing the 1985 film harbouring the same title, to explore the utilisation of folklore in modern, familiar settings. MTV's *Teen Wolf*, released in 2011 sees protagonist Scott McCall and his band of friends and allies attempt to navigate high school with the burden of being a werewolf. As a show depicted as a typical high-school drama with witty one-liners and protagonist Scott McCall, with his closest

confidant, Stiles Stilinski, deals with the precarious consequences of the werewolf bite on platonic, romantic, and familial relationships. Early seasons of the show seemingly anchor themselves on Scott's eventual transformation into a werewolf and natural leader, battling fictional creatures such as the Alpha Werewolf (Season 1) and the Kanima (Season 2), while attempting to maintain secrecy and academic consistency in high school. It is in Season 3 of the show that the plotline takes a darker, more morbid turn, with the inclusion of Celtic folklore and external, older entities, with a keener focus on mental health troubles and the devastating consequences of experiencing traumatic episodes. While *Teen Wolf*, in general, does focus on ideas of identity and the transformation of the self, Season 3 revolves around the manipulation of the mind to form its foundational plot structure.

Divided into two parts, Season 3 of MTV's *Teen Wolf* was marketed to explore darker, complex psychological themes, especially in the case of Season 3, Part 2: Lose Your Mind, which is centered primarily on ideas of bodily possession and loss of identity and self. Season 3, Part 1 establishes the foundational structure for the plotline and eventual psychological crisis depicted in the second half of the season with the introduction of a Celtic dark druid, monikered the Darach ("Unleashed" 00:38:31-00:39:06) that threatens the unstable peace of the town. Set in Beacon Hills, the fictional town that serves as the show's setting, the season revolves around the actions of the Darach, whose ritualistic killings become the season's primary conflict. These ritualistic killings, orchestrated by the Darach, are carried out by a series of human sacrifices, appropriating ancient druidic rituals to carry out these destructive acts. Scott McCall and his pack are inevitably roped in when the teens' parents are abducted to be sacrificed. To save them from this tragic fate, Scott, Stiles and Allison must become "surrogate sacrifices" ("Alpha Pact" 00:33:35-00:00:33:44) in their parents' stead and thus, lose a part of themselves, leaving their minds permanently scarred, defenseless and available for appropriation ("Alpha Pact" 00:33:06-00:34:58). While this remedial action is met with success, it leaves Stiles Stilinski, the token human, psychologically impaired in the aftermath of this action, leading him to cope with the trauma of almost losing a parent and being exposed to acts of supernatural violence.

It is based on this foundational structure that Season 3, Part 2 forms its primary plotline. Season 3, Part 2 is characterized by a significant thematic and tonal shift from external, tangible threats to the adversary being the mind itself. In this season, creator Jeff Davis, through the mouthpiece of the character, Stiles Stilinski, attempts to showcase the journey from the eventual succumbence to traumatic experiences to gradual transformation and healing. However, considering the nature of the teen television show, there is an added element of the otherworldly that perpetrates this journey. In the show, creator Jeff Davis attempts to shape and reconfigure the myth of the kitsunes to suit the plot structure of the season. The narrative of Season 3, Part 2 is cemented in the exploration of the possession of Stiles Stilinski by a malevolent spirit, emerging from Japanese mythology, called the Nogitsune, which feeds off of chaos and mischief, often resorting to bewitchery

(Nozaki 15), owing to Stiles' mind being cataclysmed by traumatic experiences, leading to a constant state of paranoia, insomnia, nightmares, loss of identity and division of the self- amongst other symptoms. This shape-shifting fox is often embodied as a prominent figure in Japanese and East Asian folklore, and as theorized by early scholars, seems to resort to possession of the human body to the point of madness (Cardi 4). Scholars opine that possession of the human mind by the Nogitsune entails bouts of insomnia and, therefore, hallucinations and night terrors, and incongruous behaviors (Cardi 4); both now considered as symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Lee 2, Nader 11). Thus, what this paper attempts to explore is the idea of possession of the Nogitsune and its connection with deep-rooted trauma and PTSD experienced by the character, Stiles Stilinski, illustrating how trauma manifests as a psychological invader that distorts identity, memory, and agency.

Theoretical Background

Etymologically, the term 'trauma' has its origins in Greek, often meaning 'wound' or 'alteration.' (Lee 2) Trauma, often understood as an emotional response to some unexpected or overwhelming violent event or circumstance that is not fully comprehended as it occurs but leaves individuals with "speechless fright that divides or destroys identity" (Balaev 150), is evidently espoused in the character development of the character selected for this paper. Trauma essentially explores the depiction of certain emotionally distressing situations that seem to have a negative impact on the characters as well as the young adults who idolise them, by essentially challenging their "previous formulations of self" (Balaev 150), thereby implying that there is a need for them to reinvent themselves or construct newer personas, upon the foundational structure. Additionally, the pain and subsequent 're-invention' caused by this traumatic event or experience creates a life experience that is disorganizing and debilitating to the individual undergoing this process, consequently leading to a case of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to be developed in the individual (Stroińska et al. 14). Trauma essentially arises from an experience that threatens the mortal life of the individual, leaving them susceptible to the development of symptoms that metaphorically 'open up the existing wound' thus, bringing to the mental forefront an intense fear, helplessness akin to paralysis (Stroińska et al. 13). As far as psychology is concerned, many early (and contemporary) theorists have associated traumatic disorders with the idea of spiritual possession. The relation between the two has seen predominance in multiple cultures (Hecker et al. 2) with references to early European and South Asian mental health narratives which underscores the belief that supernatural or demonic powers could be attributed as the reason for erratic behaviour (Subu et al. 1). This interconnected idea of possession and its relation to mental health struggles forms the corollary that spirit possession leads to a significant alteration of the behaviour and personality of the individual being possessed, thereby leading to a distinct loss of original identity of the subject (Hecker et al. 2). This is closely connected to the concept of Possession Trance Disorder, as detailed by the Diagnostic Statistical

Manual-5 which suggests that this loss of identity or Dissociative Identity Disorder may be explained using the cultural beliefs of possession. Underpinning this idea, the ICD-10 defines possession trance disorder as a state that is accompanied by a loss of surroundings and sense of surroundings (Hecker et al. 2).

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, interdisciplinary textual analysis to examine the third season of MTV's *Teen Wolf*, situating the Nogitsune arc within the frameworks of trauma theory. The analysis emphasizes narrative structure, visual symbolism, and theoretical connections to investigate how spiritual possession functions as a metaphor for trauma.

The primary method involves close analysis of both textual and visual elements, with particular attention to dialogue, character development, recurring symbols such as doors, dream sequences and nightmares and tonal and behavioral shifts. The study examines how these elements convey internal psychological degradation, bringing forth symptoms of fragmented identity, dissociation, intrusive memories, and loss of control. These are interpreted through theories of trauma to assess the representation of PTSD through the recurring theme of possession. In addition to this, the analysis explores the introduction of the Nogitsune, foregrounding it in Japanese folklore and its subsequent adaptation in a Western teen drama context. By integrating literary theory, trauma studies, and genre analysis, the study contends that possession serves as a metaphor for psychological invasion.

By integrating theoretical frameworks with close analysis, the present study demonstrates how the series employs myth to articulate the complexities of post-traumatic experiences.

Discussion

Considering that MTV's *Teen Wolf* is based on the foundational pillars of Japanese folklore which sees spirit possession as a norm, it is not inaccurate to propose that the plot arc of Season 3, Part 2, of the Nogitsune possessing Stiles' body and mind is perhaps the primary cause of his PTSD-esque symptoms, and the act itself becomes an act of psychological invasion. The repercussions of this intrusion often include nightmares and recurring dreams (Barrett 2). The possession by the Nogitsune effectuates a series of haunting dreams which often manifest themselves in various forms, even as hallucinations when he is awake. Stiles' dreams and recurring nightmares cause him to experience gaps in his memory, hallucinations during broad daylight, lack of object perception and frequent panic attacks, all symptoms of being diagnosed with PTSD. Part Two of *Teen Wolf's* third season dictates its early episodes towards Stiles' dreams, which warn him of the chaos and tumult that is to follow, by dedicatedly reiterating "The door is ajar," referring to his mind/subconscious that has allowed the Nogitsune to take root within. These dreams, from a psychological perspective, are sometimes reenactments of the traumatic episode (Barrett 3), with Stiles finding himself at the

pivotal moment where he sacrificed a part of himself to save his father.

Early theories of psychology posited by Sigmund Freud claim that trauma arises out of confrontation of death; yet modern models suggest that the root cause of trauma stems from the challenge to one's safety (Gordon & Szymanski 250). Additionally, studies in psychology show that children or adolescents that have been exposed to traumatic occurrences such as hospitalisations, disasters, witnessing violence, community violence, amongst others are more likely to suffer from nightmares or night terrors (Nader 9). Moreover, Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection, and meaning. They confront human beings with the extremities of helplessness and terror and evoke responses of catastrophe. At the moment of trauma, the victim is rendered powerless" (Judith Herman 33). According to Dr. Deaton, a pivotal mentor-like character from the show, Scott, Stiles and Allison's sacrifice in Season 3, Part One had deeper consequences than solely inducing nightmares. It also opened a door within the minds of those involved, a door, or a psychological floodgate that required closure in fear of 'losing one's mind.' "Psychological trauma shatters the construction of the self that is formed and sustained in relation to others. Traumatic experiences create a sense of disconnection and fragmentation, where the individual struggles to maintain a coherent sense of identity" (Judith Herman 51). While Scott and Allison are able to do so, Stiles seems unable to obtain the psychological closure requisite for coping with the situation; thereby giving the Nogitsune the impetus and fissure to take root and feed on his pre-existing anxiety, stress and mental dis-organization, causing symptoms akin to symptoms of PTSD.

The traumatic event is not assimilated fully at the time of its occurrence, but returns later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and intrusive thoughts. Trauma is experienced belatedly, as the mind attempts to process an event that was too overwhelming to comprehend initially. (Cathy Caruth 4)

Stiles' vividly hallucinatory dreams are accompanied by extreme anxiety, panic attacks which have manifested as a post-traumatic stress response. Bessel van der Kolk says:

Trauma survivors frequently experience intrusive memories, nightmares, and emotional distress. These reactions reflect the mind's continued attempt to process overwhelming events, often leading to anxiety, hypervigilance, and symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress disorder. (21)

One cannot deny that the show itself operates on a fictionalized, supernaturally charged setting, yet, the markers of trauma mimic real life symptoms, making it apparent that this possession which is a consequence of Stiles' trauma is the supernatural manifestation of his PTSD. "The experience of trauma repeats itself in the form of dreams, hallucinations, and emotional disturbances, revealing the mind's struggle to comprehend and integrate overwhelming experiences" (Sigmund Freud 13). Stiles' dreams form an integral part of his descent into what he assumes to be insanity, becoming more realistic and vivid with the passage of time. It is this

distinction that blurs in the case of Stiles Stilinski, where the vividness of dreams makes it difficult to distinguish between reality and nightmares. Such blurring of lines can be explicitly seen in Season 3, Episode 18, titled "Riddled," where a panicked and seemingly injured ("Riddled" 00:08:19-00:10:24) Stiles believes that he is trapped with a murderous entity; the physical manifestation of the Nogitsune, in an industrial basement ("Riddled" 00:04:18-00:04:53), which contrasts with the reality of him sleepwalking through the forest, owing to his nightmares ("Riddled" 00:00:55-00:02:51; 00:). Such an instance, while explained as a side effect of the intrusion of the Nogitsune, psychologically can be corroborated with reports of children attempting to leave their homes while sleeping after suffering through a traumatic incident (Nader 11).

As is the case with traumatic experiences, the severity of the dreams is directly correlated to the extent of the experiences (Nader 10). Considering that Stiles is a pivotal element in the wolf pack and accustomed to danger at every turn, it puts him in a psychologically vulnerable position with each passing event, heightening the severity of his dreams. His sacrifice in Season 3, Part 1, while not physically strenuous, displays a considerable amount of mental and sub-conscious stress that left 'the door ajar,' ("Anchors" 00:27:48-00:28:36) leaving it open for the Nogitsune to fester in, akin to an open wound, as is foreshadowed early, in the second half of the third season, with Stiles' dreams often prominently featuring open doors or dream-sequences where attention is focused dramatically on the idea of an open door, accompanied by a sense of intense foreboding. ("Anchors" 00:03:35-00:05:10). It can be argued that there were two other characters facing the same degree of trauma namely, Scott and Allison, who with Stiles undertook the role of the sacrificial lamb; yet the Nogitsune does not directly impact the former. This can be attributed to the idea of trauma affecting different sorts of people owing to underlying factors (Hartmann 105). In the *Teen Wolf* context, these factors could allude to the supernatural status of Scott McCall who is a werewolf, or the resilient figure of Allison Argent, who belongs to a hereditary lineage of hunters. Stiles, on the contrary, is decidedly a human being embroiled in the conflicts of the supernatural. Considering this, he is more likely to experience symptoms of PTSD, resulting in night terrors and nightmares that are essentially memory intrusions (Hartmann 105) by the Nogitsune, cementing the idea that the possession of Stiles by the Nogitsune is a metaphor for PTSD.

While the Nogitsune's impact on Stiles' dreams and consequent nightmares is profound and intimately connected to the idea of trauma, the wild spirit also impacts various aspects of Stiles' mind, the implications of which closely resemble symptoms of PTSD. One of these symptoms includes the loss of identity and the feeling of depersonalisation and derealisation. Any analysis of PTSD, brings to the forefront certain considerations of identity and free will (Lee 6), and as postulated by Cathy Caruth's traditional trauma model, PTSD becomes an event that "shatters consciousness" (Caruth, as referenced by Lee 9) and thus, causes a distinct loss of identity. Subtitled with the phrase, "Lose your Mind," Season 3, Part 2 of *Teen Wolf*

attempts to explore this loss of identity, with a keen focus on loss of memory, fragmentation of the mind and the control exhibited by the Nogitsune, that accompanies this trauma. To quote philosopher, Charles Taylor says: “What I am as a self, my identity, is essentially defined by the way things have significance for me. To ask what I am in abstraction from self-interpretation makes no sense” (34).

As per the lore of the show itself, the intrusion of the Nogitsune causes Stiles to behave in immoral and unethical ways conflicting to his constitution, showcasing the extent of influence exhibited by the Nogitsune. However, this possession that essentially has entrapped Stiles, causes him to lose significant fragments of his memory, which could be akin to the idea of repression that is quite frequently recognised in individuals with a history of traumatic experiences (Lee 95). Jason Lee in his work, ‘Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Film and Media’ explores the character Teresa Lisbon from the *Mentalist*, to showcase this repression of memory, as a result of deep-rooted trauma, causing Lisbon to move away from the traumatic incident by simply forgetting its existence (Lee 94) This can be further explicated by exemplifying a plot point used in MTV’s *Teen Wolf* where under the influence of the Nogitsune, Stiles commits acts that are starkly contrasted from his moral code; however, the trauma of feeling fragmented from his own identity causes an inability to remember the incidences occurred under the influence of the dark spirit; including creation of life-threatening bombs, issuing death threats and setting up fatal traps to revel in chaos. Repression of memory, thus, stems from a place of detainment and constriction, where such painful reminders of events are staved off from actual memories (Herman 60).

Repression of memories as a result of trauma is closely connected to the idea of captivity as Judith Herman explores in her work, ‘Trauma and Recovery.’ Taking into consideration the primary postulation of this paper; possession as a metaphor for trauma and PTSD; the idea of captivity, with reference to *Teen Wolf*, refers to the Nogitsune being the perpetrator of intense psychological damage, holding Stiles captive within his own mind, as a prisoner, unable to flee, owing to the presence of the captor (Herman 93). As the season progresses, Stiles undergoes potent psychological unravelling and viewers are offered visual insights into his mental prison, which as seen in the antepenultimate episode of the show, ‘De-Void,’ is an intertwining, expansive labyrinth, within Stiles’ mind, with every poignant location signifying important juncture in the teenager’s life. The idea of spiritual possession often involves the hijacking of an individual’s body or mind, thus, causing behaviours inconsistent to their disposition, without any consent of their own; quite akin to being held captive. In view of this paper considering the act of possession as deeply connected to PTSD; the assumption of the Nogitsune holding Stiles captive or hostage can be taken into account. It is in this mental prison, that Stiles finds himself unable to flee, under complete control of his captor (Herman 89), that is, the Nogitsune, who ingrained within Stiles’ mind assumes the role of a poignant entity that is seemingly inescapable, as is the case in instances where individuals are forced into captivity (Herman 94). This captor, here, the Nogitsune, asserts control

by instilling within the captive individual (here, Stiles) the fear of rebellion by evidencing strength and omnipotence, to quell any resistance to said captivity (here, possession and compliance) (Herman 97). Stiles is coerced into accepting the Nogitsune to resist causing harm to others around him, therefore resulting in a complete loss of agency. Reiterating an aspect mentioned earlier, this causes a deviation within Stiles' self, creating an alternate identity: Void Stiles, which occurs owing to a psychological invasion of the Nogitsune, leaving his mind decidedly not his own, prompting him to act contrastingly to his disposition and mirror symptoms of PTSD. Psychologically, this coercion leads to a sense of internalised loathing and fragmentation directed towards the self, thus, resembling the signs of traumatised victims (Herman 103). In the light of the premise that the Nogitsune arc is a metaphor for PTSD, it is imperative to explicate the divide between the two selves created within Stiles' psychological enclave, owing to the Nogitsune's influence. As the season moves towards the conclusion, this fragmentation between the two conflicting halves of the mind are clearly illustrated using physical settings. A plotline that furthers the season emerges when social support in the form of close friends, is introduced to initiate the expulsion of the spirit from Stiles' mind and body. In order to ensure Stiles' movement towards recovery, Scott, the alpha of their pack and Lydia, a banshee who has formed a deep interpersonal connection with Stiles physically attempt to reach within Stiles' hijacked mind to reconcile the fragmented segments of his mind; where they are met with the image of the possessed Stiles engaged in a game of checkers with his opponent, the Nogitsune; a game Stiles seems unfamiliar with. Eventually, as Scott and Lydia succeed in exorcising the spirit from Stiles' body, a physical manifestation of a healed Stiles is expelled out of the host's mouth, wrapped in bandages, signifying healing ("De-Void" 00:37:18-00:41:00).

Possession therefore, creates a split in identity; where the individual (here, Stiles) does not remain the same person he was before. Thus, possession is definitely a physical embodiment of PTSD/Trauma as like trauma and traumatic experiences, it creates a divide within the self, thereby reconfiguring it completely. Healing does not imply creating a new persona but is simply an attempt to regain the old one. Stiles emerging from the bandages, after being jolted out of being possessed could be considered as a metaphor for healing and regaining his bodily autonomy, which is a part of his post-traumatic growth and recovery. This healing, perpetrated by the efforts of Stiles' friends, begins prior to Scott and Lydia's attempt to exorcise the spirit from Stiles' mind. As the symptoms of Stiles' possession intensify, the 'pack' comprising Stiles' friends attempt to offer support during this highly difficult time. Initially illustrated as undergoing symptoms of early onset fronto-temporal dementia, a disorder that claimed his mother, there is an attempt by Scott, Stiles' closest companion and the Alpha of the wolf pack to offer a supernatural alternative to heal Stiles; the wolf bite, essentially turning him into a werewolf, thus, rendering him invulnerable to any diseases or disorders. Furthermore, this sense of camaraderie is heightened when the 'pack' is made aware of the possession. While it

seemed difficult to believe that Stiles would be the unwilling yet guilty perpetrator of the chaos permeating through Beacon Hills, the pack goes to great lengths to elicit the real Stiles from his possessed body, appealing to his humanity and sense of friendship. Social support like so, is instrumental in post-traumatic recovery. It could be arguably said that peer friendships and relationships could mediate traumatic symptoms and thereby aid in the process of recovery (Turbyfield 19). Research conducted in relation to films such as *Breathe* (Özgen & Kaatsız 238) and young adult novels like *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky (Rosen 58) postulate that post-traumatic recovery is a social process, thus, emphasising the necessity of social relationships, as is supported by Balcev's claims of the need of direct contact with the trauma survivor as integral to their healing process. While *Teen Wolf* takes this postulation quite literally, by physically entering Stiles' mind, the foundational idea remains constant, thereby proving consistent with the earlier stated thesis statement.

Conclusion

MTV's *Teen Wolf* with its fictionalised plot arcs, attempts to offer a nuanced perspective of traumatic occurrences as seen in the development of the third season of the show, especially through the Nogitsune plotline. While being set in a highly unrealistic world, the show attempts to integrate real-life issues of trauma and psychological unraveling through a fantastical lens, thereby equating the possession by the Nogitsune; the perpetrator of violent actions, with the gravity of traumatic responses or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. As the show progresses, viewers are offered a panoramic view of the deterioration of Stiles Stilinski's psychological well-being, propelled by the intrusion of a spiritual entity, that acts as an aggressor, disrupting memory, fragmenting identity, causing night-terrors and depriving Stiles of his agency and sense of reality, akin to, as established earlier, victims and survivors of PTSD. By deeming trauma as a supernatural yet tangible entity, *Teen Wolf* challenges the notions of psychological struggles, seemingly offering a semblance of hope to viewers, of emerging resilient and recovered, despite facing intense psychological battles. The physical expulsion of the Nogitsune, thereby provides viewers a sense of hope of reclaiming former selves and identities. Additionally, this research examines the nature of positive character development as a response to a traumatic experience, which might enable students and future researchers interested in this sphere of academia to explore newer tropes in understanding supernatural teen television, unique techniques of studying complex characters, or archetypes that arise in such bodies of work. Therefore, the possession arc in *Teen Wolf* is not solely an entertaining plotline but a complex, extended metaphor for trauma itself, the resolution of which signifies healing, recovery, growth and thus, eventual reclamation of the self.

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