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REMEMBERING AS RESURRECTION: TRANSGENERATIONAL TRAUMA AND
MEMORY IN J.K. ROWLING'S HARRY POTTER SERIES

by

Erika Beckstrand

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

English

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2017

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ABSTRACT

Remembering as Resurrection: Transgenerational Trauma and Memory in J.K. Rowling's

Harry Potter Series

by

Erika Beckstrand, Master of Science

Utah State University, 2017

Major Professor: Dr. Shane Graham

Department: English

What does it mean to bear witness to the memories of previous generations' trauma victims? What lessons should we learn from those who came before us to ensure a happier future?

This thesis explores postmemory and transgenerational trauma in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. I intend to analyze the character of Harry Potter as he interacts with the memories of the previous generation, which he is able to resurrect in embodied forms through the use of magic. By testifying to the memories of the previous generations' trauma, Harry is able to break the cycle of violence and create a seemingly happy ending to his life's story. Through critically studying *Harry Potter* as a transgenerational narrative, readers are able to learn how to bear witness to the memories of those with whom they associate in their own lives and create a more empathetically inclined world.

(54 pages)

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

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Rowling's *Harry Potter* Series

Erika Beckstrand

What does it mean to bear witness to the memories of previous generations' trauma victims? What lessons should we learn from those who came before us to ensure a happier future?

This thesis explores the trauma and memories of the deceased or older generation found in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. I intend to analyze the character of Harry Potter as he interacts with the memories of the previous generation, which he is able to resurrect in embodied forms through the use of magic. By testifying to the memories of the previous generations' trauma, Harry is able to break the cycle of violence and create a seemingly happy ending to his life's story. Through critically studying *Harry Potter* as a transgenerational narrative, readers are able to learn how to bear witness to the memories of those with whom they associate in their own lives and create a more empathetically inclined world.

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Erika Beckstrand

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Remembering as Resurrection: Transgenerational Trauma and Memory in J.K. Rowling's

Harry Potter Series

“Beside him, making scarcely a sound, walked James, Sirius, Lupin, and Lily, and their presence was his courage, and the reason he was able to keep putting one foot in front of the other” (*Hallows*, 700).

One of the most prominent themes in the *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling is the theme of memory, which is often tied to traumatic events occurring throughout the novels. While it is a major theme, not until recently has scholarship addressed why memory is such an active agent in these books. In her essay “Harry Potter and Memory: The Power of the Past,” Dr. Elizabeth Morrow Clark states, “Memory is manifested in three main areas: family relationships, legends and history, and the function and location of memory itself” (77). In a similar vein of thought, scholar Bryce Langford's essay titled “Archives of Memory: Visualizing the Pensieve and Prophecies” explores the morality tied to memory. He writes, “What matters most about memory in Harry Potter is not merely *how* memory is stored throughout the series, but what matters is *how* and *why* themes of memory speak so deeply to the reader” (131). In 2010, Rachel Cox wrote her dissertation “Freud, Lacan, and Harry Potter: Two Readings of Trauma,” wherein she explored Harry's own trauma through the particular memory scholarship put forth by Freud, Lacan, and Cathy Caruth. Cox specifically examines the *Harry Potter* series by reading it through first a Freudian and then Lacanian point of view. Cox does this as a framework to explore “the representation of trauma and trauma's effects on identity formation” (Cox ii). Heather Debling also explores trauma and memory in her article “‘You Survived to Bear Witness’: Trauma, Testimony, and the Burden of Witnessing in

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix.” Debling’s research connects the importance of bearing witness via courtroom trials to Harry’s generation and their trauma experienced in their fifth year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. In this essay, I intend to add even more critical analysis to this emerging trend of memory and trauma scholarship on the *Harry Potter* series by exploring the idea of remembering as a form of resurrection.

Memory is continually advancing and morphing as history is rewritten over and over again by whoever is in power at that current moment in time, which makes it ambiguous but not impossible to classify. In his essay “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” historian Pierre Nora defines memory as “in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived” (8). It is the fluidity of memory that makes it an enigma, but according to Nora, memory can be compartmentalized.

Nora proposes that there are two distinct categorizations of memory, *lieux de mémoire* and *milieux de mémoire*. *Lieux de mémoire* are sites of memory that are calcified and symbolize a historical moment, such as monuments and museums. *Milieux de mémoire* are not sites of memory, but rather real environments of memory, or settings in which memory is an authentic part of the everyday experience. On the one hand, we have real memory that is anchored to different societies or groups of people and remains unblemished, and on the other hand we have history, “which is how our hopelessly forgetful modern societies, propelled by change, organize the past” (8). Untouched memory binds groups of people together in a sacred way, while history is accessible to all

and is open to scrutiny and censure. History attempts to organize and classify the past, and as a result it also seeks to “suppress and destroy” (9) memory. Nora postulates, “The gulf between the two has deepened in modern times with the growing belief in a right, a capacity, and even a duty to change. Today, this distance has been stretched to its convulsive limit” (8). Attempting to preserve memories in one specific location often has the opposite effect, because as time progresses, future generations are asked to remember a past of which they have no living memory. As a result, these memories lose their significance over time and the experiences that they are meant to convey to the living become nonessential. If history succeeds in externalizing memory into monuments and museums, it annihilates the reality of the event being memorialized. If all we have are *lieux de mémoire*, or places of broken memories, how can we bridge the gap and once again find real environments of memory? Carrying these concepts over to the *Harry Potter* series, Harry Potter must testify to memories that he doesn’t have or to memories that have been suppressed, and he does this by interacting with animated memories of the previous generation through supernatural means.

I propose that J.K. Rowling has created a character that is able to transcend this paradox of remembrance by allowing Harry to reanimate these crystalized memories through the use of fantastical magic. Harry resurrects these transgenerational memories in many different supernatural forms from inert objects and monuments, which would normally be seen as objects of calcified memory. Harry must do this in order to bear witness, to testify to the memories of the generation that came before him, and to change his future. Harry’s attempt to weld past memories to the present can be labeled as

prosthetic memory¹, because it is like he is trying to remember a phantom limb by reconstructing and attaching a new one. I intend to explore the elusive nature and many facets of memory as they appear in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series.

Another term that can define Harry's predicament is postmemory, which is defined as the relationship between two generations where the "generation after" bears witness to the individual, group, and cultural traumas of those who came before. The generation that is called to bear witness to the previous generation's trauma can only "remember" these memories through stories and different artistic mediums. Harry Potter's world, being classified as a fantasy, allows postmemory to be seen as living or interactive memory, since the world is full of ghosts and unexplainable magical elements. These supernatural elements represent embodied memories that return from the unknown to interact with the living, whether it be to warn, protect, or because of unfinished business during their earthly existence. In this way they can be perceived as "living" memories. Often these memories are resurrected through magical items and spells. Harry is able to connect the past with the present through these magical means, thereby bearing witness to the lives of the previous generation.

What does it mean to bear witness? Bearing witness is a responsibility; it is an unspoken contract between victim and witness that if the victim's trauma is silenced, the witness will carry on the victim's memory. In his book, *Communities of Memory: On Witness, Identity, and Justice*, memory theorist W. James Booth identifies bearing witness as "*labor*":

¹ See Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory*

“bearing witness” points to a weight being carried as a duty perhaps but by no means joyously, or even with the bittersweet pleasures of nostalgia. What is borne or carried by the witness is a remembrance, often one without which her life would be better. This suggests that there is something dutiful, even heroic, about the witness. It is not just the trying circumstances and obstacles that stand in her way, but her determination, despite all, to shoulder and move forward with her burden. (86; emphasis added)

Bearing witness can then be seen in two different metaphorical ways. Witnesses can carry the weight and responsibility of memory as a burden placed upon their shoulders, as well as bring forth those lost memories into the light as a form of rebirth. One can bear witness to many different events. Jeffrey Blustein tackles the many reasons one might have to bear witness to a person’s life or an event. In his book *The Moral Demands of Memory*, Blustein explains, “As we commonly think of the situations that call for bearing witness, what one bears witness to is the suffering of others, or the circumstances of their deaths: to their having been murdered, persecuted or tortured, oppressed, dispossessed of their property, or in some other way grievously injured or harmed, all of which attest to their vulnerability” (303). Testifying to someone’s suffering affirms that the lost life has not been lived in vain; Harry is able to do this by remembering every life he is called to bear witness to.

I propose that Harry is the keystone to memory in the series because he must reconstruct and recreate the past, thereby bearing witness to those who have lived and died. By doing so he is able to change his present. Harry is able to resurrect the past because he is a Savior-like figure, or prophesied “Chosen One,” in winning the second

wizarding war. He is the link through which the previous generation's memories will live on in the future. Looking to the previous generation of victims and perpetrators, I will examine Voldemort and his followers, known as the Death Eaters. I will then turn to Lily Potter and the Marauders, a secret club, which includes James Potter, Sirius Black, and Remus Lupin. Finally I will look at the pivotal memory scenes of the character Severus Snape.

By studying *Harry Potter* as a transgenerational trauma narrative, we can see the act of bearing witness is not only a duty to never forget the previous generation, but also an obligation to disrupt any renewed attempts at mass destruction. Alison Landsberg notes, "Attempts at historical revisionism themselves share the logic of the 'final solution': not just to annihilate all the [victims] but even to annihilate all the traces of the annihilation" (113). This double annihilation happens in the world of *Harry Potter* where we see memory being calcified and silenced in the present, and by extension the memories of the victims being extinguished. It is Harry who must act as a witness to counteract this obliteration of memory as he tries to assemble and honor the lives of the past. Harry is able to testify to the trauma of the previous generation, and transmigrate those memories into the future generations with the goal that they will also learn from these memories. The memories that Harry collects from the previous generation not only help him make decisions in the present but also make him a symbol of hope for a *better* future. By testifying to and carrying on the memory of the lost, the witness chooses to provide healing and closure to the wound that has been inflicted, and protects future generations by breaking the cycle of violence. I propose that by critically studying the characters and objects of the previous generation of victims and perpetrators, we can see

that Harry Potter is the chosen link that must revive the memories of the past and bear witness to its traumas. By examining Harry Potter and his interactions with trauma and memory, we as readers are able to apply the lessons that Rowling puts forth in her novels in our own lives and learn the importance of bearing witness and testifying to the lives and memories of those we hold most dear.

To understand trauma that is passed between generations, it is important to know what trauma is being inherited and why. In J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, readers are thrown into the wizarding world eleven years after the first evil uprising of Lord Voldemort. We begin to understand what this first wizarding war entailed as the series journeys onward. The first wizarding war was an attempt at wizard purification. Lord Voldemort and his Death Eaters declare that any wizard who is half-Muggle or non-magic should be considered a "Mudblood" and should be exterminated. The Death Eaters wreaked havoc on the wizarding community and left green skull-shaped marks in the sky to show off their villainous deeds. Ron's Weasley's father, Arthur, explains to his son, "You-Know-Who and his followers sent the Dark Mark into the air whenever they killed... The terror it inspired...you have no idea, you're too young. Just picture coming home and finding the Dark Mark hovering over your house, and knowing what you're about to find inside... Everyone's worst fear...the very worst..." (*Goblet* 142). The Death Eaters kindle terror among the wizarding communities, but it is the horrific crimes perpetrated by their leader Voldemort that inspires the most fear and attention from the characters in the novels.

During this gruesome time of mass extermination and torture, Voldemort casts a curse from his wand that murders both of Harry Potter's parents, Lily and James Potter. However, Voldemort's attempt to kill one-year-old Harry fails. The baby boy receives a lightning-shaped wound on the forehead after Voldemort attempts to kill him, but the curse is rebounded back onto Voldemort, killing him instead. This also causes a piece of Voldemort's soul to split off and live within Harry's body. This act of splitting one's soul to live within objects is called creating a Horcrux, which Voldemort does seven times previously to this interaction to ensure that he will regenerate. While Harry's scar becomes a physical reminder of the first rising of Voldemort for those currently living, for Harry it also acts as a link to the previous generation's trauma. To gain a full understanding of the past, we must also attempt to understand the perpetrators and victims of transgenerational trauma. By understanding both perspectives, humankind is able to stop the trauma from continuing its crippling cycle by allowing the perpetrators to bear witness to their own stories, as well as giving more remembrance and sympathy to the victims. Readers are able to grasp the weight and significance of bearing witness that is placed upon Harry's shoulders once Voldemort and his ideals are understood.

In the *Harry Potter* series, the wizarding characters' refusal to use Voldemort's name is a form of silencing memory, because the witches and wizards live in fear that to say Voldemort's name out loud would cause him to be resurrected and regenerate. The first time Harry bears witness to Voldemort is in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* when Harry decides to use Voldemort's name as opposed to calling him "You-Know-Who." Dumbledore counsels Harry on the matter and says, "Call him Voldemort, Harry. Always use the proper name for things. Fear of a name increases fear of the thing itself"

(*Sorcerer's* 298). There are two consequences that may arise with silencing memories of past traumas. The first consequence is the trauma doesn't actually disappear from the collective mindset because it is merely repressed and still exists beneath the surface. One simply chooses to ignore the problem until it reappears. Transgenerational trauma theorist and author Gabriele Schwab studies the negative inherited aftermath of traumas in her book *Haunting Legacies: Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma*. Schwab explains the destructive nature of forced forgetfulness by stating, "The falsification or disregard of the past of the destruction and silencing of collective memories...is the breeding ground for the phantomatic return of shameful secrets on the level of individuals, families, communities, and possibly even nations" (57). In the British wizarding world, the community attempts to eradicate Voldemort's name and by doing so unintentionally creates fear and ignorance in the next generation.

The next consequence that comes from silencing traumatic memories is that by not speaking Voldemort's name, his victims' names and lives are silenced from collective memory. Consequently, Harry and his friends must work together as a team to understand the fractured history and memories of the lives of the previous generation. Jeremy Waldron makes a compelling argument for a society's responsibility to never forget victims of abuse in his essay, "Superseding Historical Injustice." Waldron emphasizes, "When we are told to let bygones be bygones, we need to bear in mind also that the forgetfulness urged on us is seldom the blank slate of historical oblivion...[O]nly the deliberate enterprise of recollection can sustain the moral and cultural reality of self and community" (6). When the wizarding community forgets both the perpetrators and the victims, their forgetfulness can be seen as a kind of catalyst to and sustaining of the

prior wrongdoing. Blustein claims, “Not only are the original victims dead, but there is not even a trace of them left behind in the memories of those who came after.

Remembrance therefore can have powerful symbolic significance for the descendants of the victims of injustice in that it serves as a form of resistance to the triumph of injustice and the nullification of its victims” (162). Harry attests to Voldemort’s existence by saying his name, and as a result he is able to access the memories of the previous generation of victims. Harry is able to see Voldemort for what he truly is – a parasitic man who is living a destructive lifestyle – by remembering the past and not fearing Voldemort’s name.

Harry must bear witness to Voldemort as an instigator of terror by observing past memories of Voldemort that slowly reveal his parasitic nature and the dehumanization caused by the trauma he inflicts upon other wizards. Rowling portrays Voldemort as animalistic through his physical appearance and his inhumane acts. There are interesting parallels with French author Aimé Césaire’s discussion in *Discourse on Colonialism* of the nature of perpetrators and how they are able to carry out their vicious acts in what they see as a justifiable manner. Césaire explains that a perpetrator “in order to ease his conscience gets into the habit of seeing the other man as *an animal*, accustoms himself to treating him like an animal, and tends objectively to transform *himself* into an animal” (41; Césaire’s italics). Voldemort lives off of his followers’ bodies to slowly regain his own strength throughout the Harry Potter series. In *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, Voldemort regenerates enough to have his own body, and his physical appearance is described as “whiter than a skull, with wide, livid scarlet eyes and a nose that was flat as a snake’s with slits for nostrils...” (*Goblet* 643). It is appropriate for his role that

Voldemort is cast as snake-like because he is so venomous and deceptive to all around him. Not only does Voldemort brutally torture and murder many wizards and magical creatures throughout the course of his existence, but in the genre of fantasy, Rowling is able to portray Voldemort as we abstractly think of perpetrators in reality, that is, as dehumanized or animalistic in nature. It is this lack of remorse and inability to accept responsibility that Harry must bear witness to, and it is these attributes that increase our understanding of Voldemort as a perpetrator of violence.

Voldemort is unable to accept responsibility for his actions, and it is with this understanding that Harry is led to become a witness to his demise. In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, Voldemort commands Nagini the snake to attack Professor Severus. The deadly encounter leaves Snape bleeding out on the floor. Voldemort coldly states, “I regret it” and then “he turned away; there was no sadness in him, no remorse” (*Deathly* 656). It is this lack of feeling and cold detachment to the value of life that continues to push the cyclical nature of trauma forward onto the next generation. Blustein postulates, “The person who fails to take responsibility for an important aspect of his past, even when wrong-doing is not at issue, might very well have only a superficial understanding of himself, his abilities, interests, and concerns, and a life led under these conditions is not a life well led” (87). Voldemort’s two main obsessions are pursuing immortality and an insatiable need for power. It is his manic fixation on nothing but ruling the world with no regard to the lives ruined in the process of getting there that causes Voldemort to lead an unfulfilling life. In regards to Voldemort’s nature, Dumbledore explains, “That which Voldemort does not value, he takes no trouble to comprehend. Of house-elves and children’s tales, of love, loyalty, and innocence, Voldemort knows and understands

nothing. *Nothing*. That they all have a power beyond his own, a power beyond the reach of any magic, is a truth he has never grasped” (*Deathly* 709). Throughout the novels it can be seen that Voldemort’s life is a half-life because of his physical reliance on others, but it is this absence of remorse and compassion which makes him a truly terrifying force of nature. It is Voldemort’s attempted ethnic cleansing that Harry must bear witness to and defeat, but what happens to the second generation of perpetrators who subscribed to and carried out Voldemort’s ideals?

Many of the next generation of perpetrators to whom Harry must bear witness eventually change and break the cycle of trauma, specifically the Malfoy family. Their examples shows us that memory can become subjective and dependent on circumstance when looking at the scale of a collective group. In the article “From the House of the Dead: On Modern European Memory,” historian Tony Judt explores these foggy boundaries of memory. Judt asserts, “Memory is inherently contentious and partisan: one man’s acknowledgement is another’s omission” (16). The Malfoys are always portrayed in the series as being cruel and snobbish. Critically, they agree with Voldemort’s idea that the wizarding world should only consist of pure bloods. By the seventh novel, the Malfoys become disenchanted with Voldemort’s tyranny and have to fight in the final battle at Hogwarts. Draco’s mother, Narcissa Malfoy, ends up being the one to save Harry’s life in the Forbidden Forest when Voldemort attempts to kill him. Narcissa does this by lying to Voldemort and the Death Eaters by telling them that the spell Voldemort cast killed Harry, when in reality it failed. In the final battle at Hogwarts, Lucius and Narcissa Malfoy end up “running through the crowd, not even attempting to fight, screaming for their son” (*Deathly* 735). Blustein explains that when a person or group of

people switch sides of a fight, they undergo what is identified as “membership shame” (153). When a perpetrator experiences membership shame, they “may experience shame because of collective wrongdoing: some members may be ashamed of the active part they played in what the collective did” (153). Draco Malfoy is able to change in the end and deal with the trauma that his parents actively participated in doling out. Harry is able to bear witness to this change and acknowledges Draco in the epilogue as having a wife and a boy of his own. Draco is able to stop the cycle of trauma. It is hoped the members of the next generation will continue his legacy of change. I next turn to Lily Potter and the Marauders to evaluate Harry Potter as a witness to the previous generation of those who fought against Voldemort.

Harry Potter bears witness to his mother, Lily Potter, who is a representation of incompleteness in memory. This phenomenon is manifest when the witness testifying about a tragedy can see the void or the silence left behind by the victim. It is similar to reading an English sentence where all the vowels have been taken out of the individual words. The reader recognizes that the vowels should be there, but as they are not present, their absences are noted and missed. Referring to these silent victims, Booth writes, “They wait for their witnesses, yet at the same time these absences or silences are like the hollows of our experience in that even in their absence they shape what is present and experienced” (74). Harry Potter’s is a complicated case of bearing witness because he is an orphan who has no memory of his parents, because they were killed when he was only a baby. Harry’s abusive caregivers, Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon Dursley, lie when

they tell him that his parents were killed in a car crash and that they don't have any photographs of Lily and James.

Once Harry goes to Hogwarts, a wizarding school, he starts to register the void that has been left by his mother. Booth argues death and the act of bearing witness are "intimately related" because "every death leaves a void, a vacant place" (98). Lily's death leaves a noticeable vacancy in Harry's life. If one applies Schwab's work to Harry's feelings of incompleteness, we can see his burden of carrying this absence and testimony of violence shows the trauma's "lingering toxic effects and its transmission to those forced to suffer the silence" (56). It is up to the witness to bear the memory of this vacancy, no matter how bittersweet the burden may be. While Lily's death is indeed a toxic event, the silence she has left behind may be interpreted as equally toxic.

Harry's first encounter with the incompleteness his mother's absence has brought upon him happens in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, when he stumbles upon the Mirror of Erised and sees his parents seemingly alive, standing beside him as he gazes at his reflection. The Mirror of Erised is an ancient mirror stored away at Hogwarts that has the magical ability to show a person what his/her heart desires. It is not explained where the mirror came from or why it shows a person what their heart wants most: but Dumbledore eventually uses the Mirror of Erised as a hiding place for the resurrection stone. On Rowling's *Pottermore*, a website to clarify and further explain and examine concepts found in the novel, she writes, "The mirror's inscription ('erised stra ehru oyt ube cafru oyt on wohsi') must be read backwards to show its true purpose" (*Pottermore*). Read backwards, this translates to "I show not your face but your hearts desire." Harry's greatest desire is to have a loving family.

Harry acts as a witness to his family's physical appearances as he gazes into the mirror. When Harry looks for the first time, his mother and father appear, as well as other people who look like him, and he infers that these are his extended family members. Harry doesn't even know at his initial glance they are his parents until he realizes their physical attributes are just like his, specifically his father's unruly hair and his mother's eyes. As Harry looks into the mirror, "the Potters smiled and waved" and "he stared hungrily back at them, his hands pressed flat against the glass as though he was hoping to fall right through it and reach them" (*Sorcerer's* 209). Harry also "had a powerful ache inside of him, half joy, half terrible sadness" (209). Harry must bear witness to both voids his parents' deaths have created in addition to the emotional pitfalls of realizing their absences. Trauma scholar Eric Doise observes that as a witness to transgenerational trauma, Harry "must patch together a family history, and in order to do so, [he] must invent the cloth that will cover the holes [he] inherit[s]" (98). The Mirror of Erised is the first source of resurrected memories that Harry uses to begin to understand his identity and role as witness. The mirror reflects the thing he desires most is the family that he will never have due to their terrible and untimely demise. This constitutes the incipient stages of bearing witness to the void his mother's death has created.

The memories of Harry's family have not been extinguished because the mirror is their physical embodiment, and the revival of these memories leads to a changed perspective in Harry and the bearing witness to their reality. Thinking in terms of Nora's argument, Harry's *milieux de mémoire* or environment for living memory has been completely eradicated by the Dursley family because they destroyed all the physical evidence of the Potters' existence. The Mirror of Erised presents Harry with an

opportunity to create a *lieux de mémoire* because it is acting as a solid object of remembrance. The mirror acts as a stagnant container of past memory until Harry looks into it and is able to reanimate it into living memory. When one looks into a mirror, the reflection that their eye takes in is an observation of reverse space, so what the observer is seeing in the mirror is not actually how others perceive him or her. Harry's reality hasn't conveyed any memories of a loving family, but in this moment his eyes bear witness to a different "I." The mirror shows him a different perspective and the memories of the people who have loved him the most. This resurrection of calcified memory gives Harry a new perception of his identity as he bears witness to the fact that he is also an embodiment or physical reflection of the parents he has never seen.

Harry stares at the manifestation of his family in the mirror, and for the first time in his life he is forced to confront the trauma and memory of what happened to his parents. Harry's emotions of joy and sadness are the direct results of the void created by the premature deaths of his parents. In an attempt to explain how memories are transmissible to children with traumatic pasts, Schwab writes, "Traumatic historical legacies may be transmitted individually via unconscious fantasies of parents and grandparents as well as collectively through the cultural unconscious" (77). Harry's fast integration into the wizarding world and inheriting his fame as "the boy who lived" (*Sorcerer's* 17) leaves him with little time to comprehend the magnitude of his parents' murder, but he is still able to recognize the empty space their absences have made in his life.

The metaphorical embodiment of Harry's mother and other family members in the Mirror of Erised are silent, thereby implying memory can be muted or silenced.

Harry's family can only stand and lovingly gaze back at Harry. Regarding silence and muteness, Booth observes: "The past, and the inscriptions or traces it has left, stand in need of witnesses....They stand in need because being absent, they are mute and unfound. That silence and the resulting need to be heard again are part of a mesh of obligation, the 'terrible responsibility,' the 'quasi-contract' that stands at the heart of the act of bearing witness" (95). Mere reflections, Harry's family cannot tell him anything that would help him patch the holes in memory their absences have caused. They are unable to communicate verbally but are able to show they are an unseen strength to him through their smiles and waves. Harry can only reflect inwardly on what he is seeing through his own eyes while gazing upon the reflection. Dori Laub provides insight on restrained silences of trauma victims: "While silence is defeat, it serves them [victims] both as a sanctuary and as a place of bondage... a fated exile, yet also a home, a destination, and a binding oath" (58). For the witness and victim relationship to work, the witness must be able to listen to both the words and the silences of the trauma victim. In this case, the mirror traps the voices of the victims, leaving Harry with the responsibility of interpreting the "scandalous silence" and acknowledging the muteness. As Harry stares into the mirror, he is overcome with a terrible sadness as he translates his parents' memories into daily existence. Harry must take on the obligation or responsibility to remember his parents' murders, and to carry their legacies of fighting against evil on into the future.

As one who bears witness, Harry now has a responsibility to the memories he has experienced. As a chosen witness, "he is the living mirror, the vehicle for a reality beyond himself" (Booth 95). Harry is the genetic model of James's physique and Lily's

eyes, which causes other members of the wizarding community to look upon him as the hope and life-breath of the Potter legacy. This responsibility to his parents is outwardly reflected in his appearance, but inwardly the reflected images of his parents cause Harry to become obsessed with seeing these resurrected figments of his parents produced by the magic of the mirror. Dumbledore states the Mirror of Erised “shows us nothing more or less than the deepest, most desperate desire of our hearts.... However, this mirror will give us neither knowledge or truth. Men have wasted away before it, entranced by what they have seen, or been driven mad, not knowing if what it shows is real or even possible” (*Sorcerer’s* 213). If Harry were to sit forever in front of the mirror, his family’s memory would eventually force him into an eternal state of madness and divert him from learning the reason they were killed. Dumbledore insists, “It does not do to dwell on dreams and forget to live, remember that” (214). Having Dumbledore pose these thoughts causes Harry to be reflective and analytically look at the mirror for what it is, an addicting idealization of the memory of his parents.

Harry learns in his adolescence the cautionary side of memory and becoming overly obsessed with nostalgia for the past. We know that memory is an occurrence that is experienced by individuals, but when it comes to historical events of the past, individual memory and cultural memory seem to be intrinsically connected. When nostalgia overtakes the cultural memory, the traumas that have been experienced can become forgotten or ignored. Svetlana Boym states in her book *The Future of Nostalgia*, that nostalgia bears two key attributes: a deep love for the past, and a longing “for a home that no longer exists or *has never existed*” (Boym xiii). We see this longing in our political arenas constantly. Governments and media outlets push the agenda that we can

be great as a society or nation *again*, but never set the precedent of when we were truly great before the current time period. Harry learns at a young age that to truly live means to accept the dark and the light of his past. Instead of only desiring an idealized past, Harry grasps that to bear witness to the family that he is seeing in the Mirror, he must be able to resurrect memory and still be able to live his own life to the fullest degree.

The dichotomy that Harry must face is that he must remember and bear witness to these memories, but he also must not be overcome by the past and forget to live and create his own memories. Dumbledore's wise words push Harry to choose to soldier on through life as a living reflection of his dearly departed mother. Throughout the series, Harry is often told that he has his mother's eyes. In the third book in the series, Dumbledore states, "I expect you'll tire of hearing it, but you do look *extraordinarily* like James. Except for the eyes... you have your mother's eyes" (*Prisoner* 427). As Harry's eyes take in his mother's reflection, his own eyes become a reflection or a living memory of Lily to those who knew her personally. After seeing her reflection in the Mirror of Erised, Harry bears witness to her by realizing he is also a physical reflection of Lily, and he becomes the resurrected embodiment of the incompleteness or partiality of her memory.

Harry does have other mother figures, such as Molly Weasley and Minerva McGonagall, who come into his life as the series progresses, but they are unable to fill the void left by Lily's death. Molly Weasley is an obvious mother figure to many characters throughout the story and willingly takes Harry into her home. One of the less studied characters that steps into the mothering role for Harry is Professor Minerva McGonagall. In *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, the narrator states,

“Dumbledore had gone, Hagrid had gone, but he had always expected Professor McGonagall to be there, irascible and inflexible, perhaps, but always dependably, solidly present” (*Order* 730). These female characters become the adult women on whom Harry relies, but they are fallible because they can never truly replace the loss of Lily. They are unreliable stand-ins for Lily because they can be subject to loss as well. These women, while very important to Harry, are not permanent fixtures in his life and demonstrate the inadequacy or vacancy of memorialization. As a witness to a lost generation, Harry is constantly trying to fill the incompleteness in his life caused by Lily’s death with whatever memory he can collect or substitute for her absence.

Bearing witness is a labor that can cause the individual to experience a wide range of emotions, such as Harry simply longing for the stability provided by Professor McGonagall’s presence. Schwab studies children who inherit trauma and asserts, “these children need to patch a history together they have never lived by using whatever props they can – photographs and stories or letters but also, I would add, silences, grief, rage, despair, or sudden unexplainable shifts in moods handed down to them by those who bring them up” (14). Memory that is passed down or inherited can be both tangible and intangible. It is up to the witness to bear both of these aspects of memory because they are inseparably connected. These emotions are also proven to be bittersweet as evidenced by Harry’s attempts to testify to his father’s life through different forms of memorialization.

Looking closer at memorialization, memory scholarship tries to comprehend the impact that memorializing memory through monuments has on a community. Turning once again to Pierre Nora’s term *lieux de mémoire*, he notes that when some memories

can be located geographically, such as in a historic landmark or building, these spaces become intentionally marked-out sites of memory. Memory scholarship often scrutinizes museums and monuments as a way to control memory, or rather to censor and contain whatever is being memorialized. This control means if a tragedy is made into a monument it can become neutralized and eventually ignored or forgotten by the community where it resides. The act of memorializing allows viewers to examine history and trauma at a safe distance. When memory is appropriated or controlled, it is more apt to undergo a sort of cultural amnesia. Spatial and structural memorialization face resistance because, as Booth states, “It is we, in the present, who decide which dead, which injuries and traumas, are to be remembered and how. Once they have been created, others in the future will be free to take up the task of assigning meaning to the monuments, museums, and so on that we bequeath to them” (105). To reiterate, it is the present generation’s political leaders who get to decide what and who is remembered. When viewers go to visit museums or monuments, it must be noted the exhibit has been curated by a specific viewpoint, or the statue might only celebrate the victors or victims. Memory becomes subject to its perceived importance and community opinion. This can lead to the exclusion of many memories, leaving the world with many silenced voices.

In the *Harry Potter* series, J.K. Rowling explores the ideas both that memorialization leads to static or fixed memory in a community, and that these sites of remembrance can be reanimated if experienced by a viewer who has a personal connection with whatever is being memorialized. In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, the lives of Harry’s parents are remembered through an actual memorial statue found in Godric’s Hollow, the place where James and Lily were murdered. When Harry

and Hermione first come upon the statue in the town square, Harry believes it to be a forgotten war memorial and almost passes right by it. This particular moment confirms the words of Robert Musil: “The most remarkable thing about monuments is that no one notices them” (qtd. in Booth 107). Once a memorial is strategically placed as a memory on daily display, everyday observers can ignore the importance of the memory. However, as a witness to the previous generation, Harry looks closer and observes, “Instead of an obelisk covered in names, there was a statue of three people: a man with untidy hair and glasses, a woman with long hair and a kind, pretty face, and a baby boy sitting in his mother’s arms. Snow lay upon all their heads, like fluffy white caps” (*Deathly* 324). For Harry and perhaps the local community, the statue in memory of the Potters is both a celebration of life and a reminder of past tragedy.

For memorials to be impactful and the memories they represent to be resurrected, the viewer must actively and intimately respond to the memorial and act as a witness to whatever is being remembered, as is the case for Harry in this moment. Harry draws closer and “never imagined that there would be a statue.... How strange it was to see himself represented in stone, a happy baby without a scar on his forehead” (324). Harry bears witness to the life of his father and mother and actively responds to the obligation to remember the sacrifice for which the monument demands remembrance. Monuments attempt to force an exchange in everyday onlookers, no matter how brief, because they are an intentional alteration of space into a place for remembrance and testimony. Harry is able to resurrect the memory of his parents by gazing upon this stone monument and recognizing their deaths by the hand of Voldemort. The narrator says, “As they [Harry and Hermione] crossed the road, he glanced back over his shoulder; the statue had turned

back into a war memorial” (324). Harry’s parents are martyrs of the first uprising and their statue becomes a reminder that Harry must take up arms against the darkness if he wishes to continue their legacy. The monument is both a celebration and a remembrance of past lives, and Harry must continue on in his journey as witness by becoming a living form of memorialization.

Just as Harry was able to reanimate his mother’s memory, he is also able to resurrect and bear witness to the memory of his father James Potter. Harry does this through monumentalization (establishing an embodied memorial) and by embodying a living memorial through his physical appearance. Harry is not only a reflection of his mother, but also bears a striking resemblance to his father, thereby becoming a living memorial to his father’s memory. Humans often embrace this idea of monumentalization by observing holidays or historic dates that allow them to become living memorials. Booth explains this holiday memorialization: “But those who, for example, on November 11 (Remembrance Day or Veteran’s Day) wear red poppies in their lapels also testify, inasmuch as they transform themselves into living reminders of a past and in doing so appeal to others to remember” (73). In living memorialization, memory may become intrusive as memory is forced upon the community on a specified day. With an abundance of museums, statues, and memorial holidays, it is almost as if we live in a surplus of memory, rather than a shortage. This figurative suffocation of enforced memorialization can often bring about forgetfulness or a form of societal amnesia. The normalization of memory can cause the memory of the trauma to become desensitized over time. However, in the United Kingdom wizarding community, no one can escape the

memory of James Potter, because Harry is such a physical reminder of him and continues to interact with the survivors who knew his father.

Living memorialization in *Harry Potter* is found in the Pensieve, a magical bowl-shaped object that allows wizards to review their memories by magically placing the desired memory inside the basin. Then one looks inside the bowl and is mystically transported into the memory of another. In one passage where Harry is gazing into the Pensieve, he happens upon his father. The narrator describes the physical appearance of James:

James's eyes were hazel, his nose was slightly longer than Harry's, and there was no scar on his forehead, but they had the same thin face, same mouth, same eyebrows. James's hair stuck up at the back exactly as Harry's did, his hands could have been Harry's, and Harry could tell that when James stood up, they would be within an inch of each other's heights. (*Order* 641)

It is in this interactive, living memory that Harry is able to realize that he has become a living memory of his father, thereby resurrecting the memory of James. Harry's observance of his father always seems to emphasize the difference in his father's look because he doesn't carry a lightning-shaped scar on his forehead. But as a bearer of trauma, Harry not only carries the physical resemblance of his father into the future, he also bears the scar that is a constant physical reminder of the night that James was murdered.

Harry bears witness to his father's memory by memorializing him through a magic spell that produces what is called a Patronus, a magical protection spell that is often used to ward off magical creatures called Dementors. Dementors "are among the

foulest creatures that walk this earth. They infest the darkest, filthiest places, they glory in decay and despair, they drain peace, hope, and happiness out of the air around them” (*Azkaban* 187). Dementors live by sucking away the happy memories of others, and Harry finds himself deeply affected by them. Harry viscerally relives the death of his parents every time he encounters a Dementor. In opposition to the Dementors, “the Patronus is ‘a kind of Anti-Dementor – a guardian which acts as a shield between you and the Dementor.’ It’s also ‘a kind of positive force, a projection of the very things that the Dementor feeds upon – hope, happiness, the desire to survive – but it cannot feel despair, as real humans can, so the Dementors can’t hurt it’” (*Pottermore*). The Patronus spell is considered advanced magic because it requires the wizard casting the spell to outwardly project happiness in fearful situations.

Our understanding of the significance of Harry’s Patronus increases when we look at the origins of the word “Patronus.” On its etymology, scholar KJ Swanson argues, “The interpretive possibilities of the spell’s incantation reveals the Patronus charm as best understood in a dual meaning: ‘I expect my father’ and ‘from my soul I send a protector’” (103-104). The Patronus can be seen as a form of his father’s protection. As readers, we are not surprised that Harry’s Patronus is manifested in the form of a stag, which was also his father’s animagus, an animal form wizards can transform into, called “Prongs.” This understanding of the word Patronus strongly reinforces the idea that Harry carries the memory of his father within him.

Harry’s first successful conjuring of his Patronus becomes a living memorialization of his father. When Harry first conjures his Patronus, he mistakenly thinks it is his father who summons it. While talking about this event with Dumbledore,

Harry says, “Last night...I thought it was my dad who’d conjured my Patronus. I mean, when I saw myself across the lake...I thought I was seeing him...It was stupid, thinking it was him, I mean, I knew he was dead” (*Azkaban* 427). Dumbledore corrects Harry by saying, “You think the dead we have loved ever truly leave us? You think that we don’t recall them more clearly than ever in times of great trouble? Your father is alive in you, Harry, and shows himself most plainly when you have need of him. How else could you produce that *particular* Patronus? Prongs rode again last night” (427-28). In the wizarding world, James’s memory is able to become a living memorial in the form of Harry’s Patronus. Harry must act as a witness to his father’s memory, and by doing so the act of living memorialization offers safety and protection to Harry when he finds himself in perilous circumstances. Harry not only bears witness to his father through his physical reflection, he also reflects the memory of his father and the protection he tried to provide during the traumatic event.

In the *Harry Potter* series, the wizard prison Azkaban is the embodiment of memories that have been all but annihilated and where the only protection a victim has is to become less than human. In *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, Sirius Black is introduced as Harry’s godfather who was imprisoned in the wizard prison, Azkaban, for twelve years on the false charges of killing twelve Muggles and fellow wizard Peter Pettigrew. While in Azkaban, Black is tortured by Dementors. Black eventually escapes and proves his innocence to Harry by exposing Peter Pettigrew as the one who betrayed Lily and James to Voldemort. Harry must act as a witness to Black by listening to the dehumanizing experiences Black went through in Azkaban prison. In a conversation between Black and Harry, Rowling’s formatting of pauses through the use of ellipses in

Black's language highlights the unspeakable trauma of the experience. To Harry, Black explains,

"I don't know how I did it," he said slowly. "I think the only reason I never lost my mind is that I knew I was innocent. That wasn't a happy thought, so the Dementors couldn't suck it out of me...but it kept me sane and knowing who I am... helped me keep my powers... so when it all became... too much... I could transform in my cell... become a dog. Dementors can't see, you know..." He swallowed. "They feel their way toward people by sensing their emotions... They could tell that my feelings were less – less human, less complex when I was a dog... but they thought, of course, that I was losing my mind like everyone else in there, so it didn't trouble them. But I was weak, very weak, and I had no hope of driving them away from me without a wand." (*Prisoner* 371)

Often in trauma narratives, we find that the victims were made to feel less-than-human or like animals without feelings. It is natural for trauma victims to want to try and protect the humanity that is within them. Rowling articulates this well in her fantasy novels by having Black turn into a large black dog as a form of protection against the deprivation of memory that happens at Azkaban prison. While Black is able to feel less emotionally violated by becoming an animal, he also realizes that it is his memories and feelings that make living worthwhile in human form. Harry also knows how it feels to encounter Dementors, thereby creating empathy and a transcendent connection to his godfather. Harry becomes the testimony to Black's innocence and also to his moments where his happiest memories were preyed upon. Black is not only a survivor for whom Harry

testifies, but also eventually becomes the first person that dies of whom Harry has a living memory.

When Sirius Black dies, Harry becomes so overcome with grief that he tries to find different embodiments of Black's memory that Harry tries and fails to resurrect. In his book *Species of Space and Other Pieces*, writer Georges Perec tries to describe the helplessness that comes when trying to gather as many memories as possible of someone who has recently passed on: "Space melts like sand running through one's fingers. Time bears it away and leaves me only shapeless shreds: to try meticulously to retain something, to cause something to survive, to wrest a few precise scraps from the void as it grows, to leave somewhere a furrow, a trace, a mark or a few signs" (91-92). This intense need and desire to gather memories before they fade to the passing of time is what leads us to preserve memory in and through physical objects. The obligations to always remember and to never forget are time-sensitive promises. Those called to bear witness must then pull together as many memories as possible to save the victim's life from the oblivion of forgetfulness. Once the survivor of tragedy is lost, the witness must undertake the weight of remembrance, no matter how painful. This doesn't exempt the witness from the burdensome stages of grief, including denial.

With Black's death still fresh in his mind, Harry returns to Hogwarts where he receives a package that Black had mailed to Harry before his death. This package contains one of a set of mirrors that can be used as two-way communication for those who have the mirrors in their possession. Harry "remembered seeing his dead parents in the Mirror of Erised four years ago. He was going to be able to talk to Sirius again, right now, he knew it—" (*Order* 858). The mirror doesn't work and Harry wrestles with his

denial: “*Sirius didn’t have his mirror on him when he went through the archway*, said a small voice in Harry’s head. *That’s why it’s not working*” (858). The Mirror of Erised was a reflection of memories that were magically reanimated because they were the desire of Harry’s heart. Such mirrors are merely used as a form of communication. Still, Harry doesn’t abandon this hope of being able to see Sirius again, which causes Harry to go in search for other ways to resurrect Black’s memory.

Harry struggles emotionally while dealing with his denial of Black’s death, and he is conflicted with an ongoing desire to resurrect Black and find a way to still interact with him through living memorialization, except this time he turns to the supernatural rather than the magical. Exhausting all possibilities, Harry is unable to speak to Black through the two-way mirror, so he considers the possibility of Black coming back as a ghost. Harry seeks out the Hogwarts ghost Nearly Headless Nick where he discusses the possibility of Sirius Black returning as a ghost. Nearly Headless Nick explains that wizards rarely come back as ghosts because it is a “feeble imitation of life” (861). Harry doesn’t accept this, “and so strong was his belief that Harry actually turned his head to check the door, sure, for a split second, that he was going to see Sirius, pearly white and transparent but beaming, walking through toward him” (861). When Harry realizes no ghost is coming, he “felt almost as though he had lost his godfather all over again in losing the hope that he might be able to see or speak to him once more. He walked slowly and miserably back up through the empty castle, wondering whether he would ever feel cheerful again” (862). Instead of the moments of resurrection that Harry has become accustomed to throughout the series, Harry is left alone to bear witness to Sirius Black on his own. Regarding the intense burden of bearing witness, Laub explains,

The listener, however, is also a separate human being and will experience hazards and struggles of his own, while carrying out his function as witness to the trauma witness. While overlapping, to a degree, with the experience of the victim, he nonetheless does not become the victim – he preserves his own separate place, position and perspective; a battleground for forces raging in himself, to which he has to pay attention and respect if he is to properly carry out his task. (58)

Harry's depression at the thought of never seeing Sirius Black again becomes the overlapping trauma of being victim and witness, concurrently. Harry has thus far symbolized a blank canvas or soundboard to the previous generation's traumas. Up to this point Harry's role as witness to these memories has been too passive and now he must act on the knowledge that he has gained. At the beginning of the series we watch Harry bear witness to the trauma of his parents' death. When he discovers he has a godfather, Harry starts to emotionally attach himself to Black because he is both Harry's godfather and James's best friend. When Black is murdered, Harry loses connection to his godfather and by extension Black's death once again breaks the connection between Harry and James. Not only is a new proxy father figure lost, his real father is figuratively murdered all over again. With Black's death, Harry must begin to ascertain who he is as a witness to his own traumas, while also bearing witness to other survivors of the previous generation.

Bearing witness to trauma is essential not only so that the memories can be made known, but also more primarily so that the bearer can come to know and deal with the incident. When witnesses become too engrossed in the trauma, such as Harry dealing with Black, it can become hard to extricate their own feelings and psyche from the event.

In essence, when the witnesses become hypersensitive to the immensity of the trauma, they become traumatized as well. The witness “can be subject to a flood of affect, which can stimulate defensive reactions such as a sense of paralysis, outrage, anger, withdrawal, numbness, awe, fear and/or hyperemotionality” (Laub 72-73). Harry wanders around in this depressed state looking for someone to share the weight of his own trauma, but ironically goes looking for his dead godfather’s embodied memory to act as his testifier. Perhaps one of the reasons that humanity is so obsessed with memorialization is because we feel the need to archive trauma and index survival to sort through any residual emotional scarring. To dissect the trauma of the past and the present, we calcify or embody it to create emotional distance. However, we know that musealization of memory can cause traumatic events to become buried underneath layers of mythology and misrepresentation. To truly testify and remember, the witness must do as Laub suggests and “transfer it...outside oneself and then take it back again” (69). Harry’s acceptance of Black’s death comes with time and space, and eventually lets him properly bear witness to Black’s life and death.

Harry also bears witness to the seclusion and death of his other father figure, Marauder Remus Lupin, whose memory is best embodied in the form of the Shrieking Shack, a house in Hogsmeade where Lupin retreats when he turns into a werewolf. Lupin is traumatized by the societal isolation he experiences because of the disease that afflicts him. Lupin’s trauma starts at a young age, when he is attacked by Fenrir Greyback and becomes afflicted with lycanthropy, a disease that causes him to transform into a werewolf during the full moon. The Shrieking Shack is where Lupin is forced to go during his transformations into a werewolf. Many of the Hogwarts students go and

observe the Shrieking Shack as a location of ghostly folklore. Harry hears no shrieks when he goes, and realizes the reason is because the screams were Lupin's wails of torment. Lupin states, "My transformations in those days were – were terrible. It is very painful to turn into a werewolf. I was separated from humans to bite, so I bit and scratched myself instead. The villagers heard the noise and the screaming and thought they were hearing particularly violent spirits" (*Prisoner 353*). In a broader sense, looking at Lupin as someone who has been victimized for being seen as "diseased" gives readers more insight into why specific people become targets for perpetrators. Harry must bear witness to Lupin's exile but in doing so he realizes that he must rely on his own group of friends that are under attack.

I propose that the reason that J.K. Rowling has Harry bear witness to the lives and postmemory of these specific Marauders is because their memories teach Harry about having a loving support system in the face of trauma and tragedy. Just as Mrs. Weasley and McGonagall were potential maternal stand-ins for Lily's memory, so too are Black and Lupin for James' memory. However, remembering that they are fallible because postmemory and living memory are subject to voids and change, Harry must learn from the previous generation to trust in the help of his living best friends, Hermione and Ron. Judith Lewis explores these similar group relationships and the impacts that they have on victims and witnesses to traumatic events:

The solidarity of a group provides the strongest protection against terror and despair, and the strongest antidote to traumatic experience. Trauma isolates; the group re-creates a sense of belonging. Trauma shames and stigmatizes; the group

bears witness and affirms. Trauma degrades the victim; the group exalts [him].

Trauma dehumanizes the victim; the group restores [his] humanity. (295)

In the world of *Harry Potter* there are memory protection spells that can distort, shield, and obliterate memory. In terms of trauma protection, the defense to traumatic events seems to be a safety net of friends that band together in times of trial. The Marauders provide Lupin with the solidarity, belonging, and humanity to which Herman refers. Harry must also find a support system in carrying the weight of both generations' traumas. Finding a strong support system that is full of trust and love allows men and women to lead happy and fulfilling lives. Without a support system, people are vulnerable to loneliness and can become ostracized by those who oppose their beliefs or identity.

People attack other people for many different reasons, such as religion, sexual orientation, different values or political beliefs, race, and sometimes the idea that someone's blood is seen as inferior or unclean. When asked about Lupin on her *Pottermore* website, J.K. Rowling explains, "Lupin's condition of lycanthropy was a metaphor for those illnesses that carry a stigma, like HIV and AIDS. All kinds of superstitions seem to surround blood-borne conditions, probably due to taboos surrounding blood itself" (*Pottermore*). By having Harry bear witness to the prejudice and hysteria that follows Lupin around, Rowling gives us a glimpse into the desperation and loneliness that comes from victimization. It is a highly applicable crossover between the wizarding world and the Muggle world, as both are prone to fight against things that they blindly hate and do not understand.

Like Sirius Black, Lupin becomes the final connection to Harry's father that is tragically lost in the final battle at Hogwarts, which causes Harry to go in search of the memory that will lead him to defeating Voldemort. When Harry sees Lupin's body, "the Great Hall seemed to fly away, become smaller, shrink, as Harry reeled backward from the doorway... he turned away and ran up the marble staircase. He yearned not to feel... He wished he could rip out his heart, his innards, everything screaming inside him" (*Deathly* 661-62). Lupin's death is once again like losing James to Harry, and it is in this moment with conviction and determination that Harry decides to honor their memories and lives by developing a strategy that will defeat Voldemort. In his effort to discover the means to vanquish Voldemort, and perhaps to find a reprieve from the emotions he is feeling, Harry decides to plunge into the memories of Severus Snape. This decision to delve into Snape's memories in the Pensieve reveals the most misunderstood character of the *Harry Potter* series. Snape's actions are redeemed and Harry understands what he needs to do in order to triumph over Voldemort and his Death Eaters.

Harry bears witness to the perpetrator-turned-hero Severus Snape, whose own memories are not only pivotal in revealing Harry's destiny, but also in showing the traumatic effects of childhood bullying. In a private tutoring session, Snape attempts to teach Harry the magical art of Occlumency, which means being able to close one's mind against being magically invaded and investigated by another wizard. In a fit of passion, Harry penetrates Snape's mind and witnesses a memory of Snape's childhood at Hogwarts. Harry immerses himself into Snape's memories and sees James Potter and the other Marauders mercilessly bullying Snape to the point where he was "hanging upside down in the air, his robes falling over his head to reveal skinny, pallid legs and a pair of

graying underpants” (*Order* 647). When Lily, who at the time is Snape’s best friend, tries to intercede on his behalf, Snape states, “I don’t need any help from filthy little Mudbloods like her!” (648). This encounter results in the severing of Snape and Lily’s friendship.

As one who bears witness to the previous generation, Harry realizes many things as a result of this memory. First, the roles of perpetrator and hero are not always clearly defined. Harry’s father and his closest friends are cast in a darker light, making Harry realize that everybody has the potential to enact immoral deeds. This memory also reveals the childhood trauma of Snape being humiliatingly bound and bared in front of his fellow students. Avishai Margalit helps us understand the significance of this kind of humiliation: “Taking away a creature’s control by tying or locking it up is clearly a manifestation of cruelty to animals, but what is unique to loss of control as a way of humiliating humans is not merely the cruelty of physical confinement but the symbolic element, which expresses the victim’s subordination” (146-47). James’s spell that he casts on Snape is an act of establishing dominance with destructive results. Harry is a witness to Snape being magically restrained and exposed to his peer group, and as a result Snape lashes out at Lily. The loss of Lily’s love and friendship causes Snape to become a perpetrator in Voldemort’s first uprising. When Voldemort murders Lily Potter, Snape’s deep grief leads him back to a path of good intentions and working for Dumbledore.

Harry must also become a witness to Snape’s inability to let go of the memory of Lily as he delves into Snape’s memories. Harry bears witness to Snape’s inability to properly mourn for Lily Potter after she is brutally murdered, inasmuch that Snape entombs her existence within his memory and his magical abilities. In their work on

melancholia and grieving, *The Shell and the Kernel*, Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok develop a theory of “cryptonymy,” meaning that a person who fails to properly mourn can psychically build a crypt within themselves in an effort to keep their loved one with them always. The crypt is “a burial place inside the self for a love object that is lost but kept inside the self like a living corpse...[it] is a melancholic, funereal architectonic in inner space, built after traumatic loss” (Abraham 45-46). Snape undergoes cryptonymy by encrypting Lily’s memory within his own body, and he manifests this by revealing he magically shares Lily’s Patronus, a doe. Snape’s psychic crypt is exposed when Dumbledore questions Snape’s reasoning for protecting Harry, and Harry witnesses this interaction via memory in the Pensieve. Snape casts a spell as a result of this questioning and the narration states,

From the tip of his wand burst the silver doe. She landed on the office floor, bounded once across the office, and soared out the window. Dumbledore watched her fly away, and as her silvery glow faded he turned back to Snape, and his eyes were full of tears.

“After all this time?”

“Always,” said Snape. (*Deathly* 687)

Throughout most of the series Snape is portrayed as a villain, but we can see in this magical exchange of memory that he has kept the memory of Lily alive and has used that experience to help Harry in many of the perilous situations to which he has been exposed. Snape helps him one last time by giving Harry his memories in the final moments of his life.

At the time of his death by Nagini, Snape bleeds forth not only blood, but a secret memory, which becomes essential to Harry's understanding of what he is to do in order to finally defeat his greatest enemy, Voldemort. In *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, Harry witnesses Snape's brutal death caused by Voldemort's snake companion. As Snape lies bleeding out on the floor, the narration continues,

Harry bent over him, and Snape seized the front of his robes and pulled him close.

A terrible rasping, gurgling noise issued from Snape's throat.

“Take...it...Take...it...” Something more than blood was leaking from Snape.

Silvery blue, neither gas nor liquid, it gushed from his mouth and ears and his eyes, and Harry knew what it was, but did not know what to do – A flask,

conjured from thin air, was thrust into his shaking hands by Hermione. Harry

lifted the silvery substance into it with his wand. (657)

This scene creates an intense, visceral moment that shows the combined impact of trauma and memory. The imagery of Snape's throat being viciously ripped out and his wound causing him to make rasping and gurgling sounds is as grotesque as it is powerful. Snape drowns in his own blood and memories. Harry collects the memories that emerge from Snape's orifices, and the memories reveal to Harry that he must sacrifice his own life in order for Voldemort to die.

In what is perhaps the most heartbreaking moment of all, Harry must witness Snape's final moments in which his psychic crypt to Lily is finally broken open. As Snape looks into Harry's eyes, his final moment of remembering is encapsulated in Harry's resemblance to Lily's facial features. The narration states,

When the flask was full to the brim, and Snape looked as though there was no blood left in him, his grip on Harry's robes slackened. "Look... at... me..." he whispered. The green eyes found the black, but after a second, something in the depths of the dark pair seemed to vanish, leaving them fixed, blank, and empty.

The hand holding Harry thudded to the floor, and Snape moved no more. (658)

The memories Harry collects from Snape not only show fate, but also Snape's love for Lily and eternal mourning at the loss of her life. Blustein further explores how "passionate grief" can be the result of the survivor clinging to the memory of a departed loved one. Blustein explains, "If we persist in clinging to our memories with passionate grief, or if we repress our memories of the dear departed, we cannot properly work through our loss, and this will have a corrosive effect on our capacity to move on with our lives" (265). In transgenerational trauma, the result of not working through grief and loss results in the trauma being transferred on to the next generation. Schwab notes, "The basic premise is that unless trauma is worked through and integrated, it will be passed on to the next generation. If this happens, the next generation will inherit the psychic substance of the previous generation and display symptoms... haunted by ghosts of the past" (49). Harry witnesses Snape's heroic moments amid his shortcomings, and Harry realizes he must accept his fate and offer his own life as a sacrifice to save all of the people that he loves.

Once again, then, Harry is met with an object, the Resurrection Stone, which resurrects the embodied memory of his parents and his two father figures. Harry's final resurrection of past memories occurs in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, when Harry finally accepts he must die in order to defeat the trauma which has plagued him

and his family for so long. In accepting his fate, Harry knows he must die in order to kill Voldemort. He goes to the Forbidden Forest alone and uses the Resurrection Stone he finds in the golden snitch Dumbledore bequeathed to him to summon his loved ones. The narrator states,

He [Harry] opened his eyes and looked around. They were neither ghost nor truly flesh, he could see that. They resembled most closely the Riddle that had escaped from the diary so long ago, and he had been memory made solid. Less substantial than living bodies, but much more than ghosts, they moved toward him, and on each face, there was the same loving smile. (699)

Harry gazes on all of the people who have meant so much to him, and observes they look younger and healthier than when he last saw them. However, they are just shades of memory or echoes of the dead, and are not substantial enough to be considered living entities. When Harry looks at his mom with the eyes which are so often noted as a living reminder of her, “his eyes feasted on her, and he thought that he would like to stand and look at her forever, and that would be enough” (699). Harry still can’t deny what his heart desired so strongly when he first gazed into the Mirror of Erised, this being his intense need to see and be with his family.

Understanding the origin of the Resurrection Stone can lead us to a greater understanding of its implied use and importance in memorialization. For Harry, the Resurrection Stone is a supposedly made-up object in a children’s fairytale book called *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*. Its origins are found in “The Tale of the Three Brothers,” a story where three brothers meet and trick Death along the side of the road. For their trickery, the brothers demand magical objects from Death. The second brother “decided

that he wanted to humiliate Death even further, and asked for the power to recall loved ones from the grave. So Death plucked a stone from the river and offered it to him” (*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*). The second brother goes on to resurrect his lost lover, but finds her to be only a shade of her original self, so the brother hangs himself to be with her. The symbol of the Deathly Hallows, an emblem that is interpreted as having power over death, is deeply etched into the Resurrection Stone. However, the Resurrection Stone only produces echoes of memories from beyond the grave, proving the stone to be inefficient and fallible.

Our understanding of the connotations of the word “stone” combats the inadequate results of the Resurrection Stone. In today’s society, we use the word stone as a symbol for things that are considered definitive, irrefutable, and powerful. When we use the phrase “set in stone” it is meant to emphasize that something is unalterable, permanent, and everlasting. For centuries we have chiseled our histories onto walls and tablets in the hopes that the memories will be sustained through the passing of time. In Christianity, we commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter morning, and remember the stone that sealed his tomb was rolled away to indicate that he forever triumphed over death. It is just as Percy Shelley observes in his sonnet “Ozymandias,” when he writes,

My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;

Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!

Nothing beside remains. Round the decay

Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare. (Shelley)

We learn from this sonnet that we can attempt to build magnificent monuments and try to sculpt our own immortality, but time and decay are inevitable. Carving stone is a planned and calculated action that takes time and a lot of effort, whereas graffiti and paint can be erased even more quickly by erosion and natural elements. Yet we still attempt to preserve all of these efforts to embody the past for as long as we are able.

Memorial stones are often used in museums, monuments, and graveyards, and are engraved with a memory that is meant to last forever. On the World War II Memorial in Washington D.C., an inscription by Admiral Chester W. Nimitz reads, “They fought together as brothers-in-arms. They died together and now they sleep side by side. To them *we have a solemn obligation*” (Nimitz; emphasis added). The 9/11 Memorial in New York City has a quote by the Roman poet Virgil that states, “No day shall erase you from the memory of time” (Maro). Finally, in the former German Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau there is a plaque featuring a quote from philosopher George Santayana’s *The Life of Reason* that says, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it” (284). Monuments, memorials, and museums containing pieces of the past implore their visitors to remember, to never forget. While today’s society struggles to fulfill these obligations, Harry Potter is able to resurrect his loved ones from the Stone’s etchings because he has proven himself to be the testifier to their memories. Harry has patched together enough memory to understand his responsibility to the postmemory of the previous generation.

Harry proves that he can bear the weight of the past, and this acceptance leads to the healing that can come from true reconciliation. In a moment of reinvigoration from the trauma of knowing all of his resurrected ghosts died in an effort to fight for his

survival, Harry says, “I didn’t want you to die. Any of you. I’m sorry – ” (700). Unable to let go of his ghosts, Harry asks, “You’ll stay with me?” to which his father replies, “Until the very end” (700). The Marauders and Lily walk with Harry as he seeks out Voldemort to offer up his life as a sacrifice to save his friends. The Resurrection Stone slips through Harry’s fingers, and his ghosts are finally put to rest moments before joining them. When Harry peacefully gives up his life to kill the festering piece of Voldemort’s soul that is inside of him, the lightning-shaped scar that connects the generations heals, and Harry’s sacrifice leads to his own resurrection. As a result of this healing, Harry’s generation is able to defeat the Dark Lord and his Death Eaters, and continue bearing witness to this transgenerational trauma by naming their children after the martyrs of the first generation.

This raises the question: has the need for Harry to bear witness to the trauma and memory of the previous generation been completely eviscerated from the wizarding world? In the final chapter titled “Nineteen Years Later,” we read that Harry names his children James Sirius, Albus Severus, and Lily Luna. Remus Lupin’s son Teddy Remus is also with them and is considered a cousin to the family. Remembering that bearing witness is both carrying a weight and figuratively giving birth, as the chosen bearer of memory, Harry has resurrected and given rebirth to the generation that came before his time. By naming his children after Lily and the Marauders, Harry continues to bear witness to the memories and traumas he has inherited. Harry stands at King’s Cross Railway Station and watches this next generation head off to Hogwarts to learn magic. As Harry watches the train pull away, “he lowered his hand absentmindedly and touched the lightning scar on his forehead...the scar had not pained Harry for nineteen years. All

was well” (*Deathly* 759). The transgenerational trauma has reached a moment of stasis in this particular snapshot of time, but it is unclear how it will go on to affect this next generation of children.

Rowling is presenting her readers with a contained memory in her epilogue of a future moment that is optimistic, but the memory is also static. Pat Rogers describes epilogues as the “Parthian dart,” an old military tactic used by archers where they would seemingly retreat and then turn around and deliver one last parting shot. It is a literary mode used to provide emotional satisfaction. Mike Cadden states an epilogue is a final moment where “the reader is eased into the static infinity” (349). We, who have invested time into the *Harry Potter* series, are like Harry when he stands before the Mirror of Erised, except this time it is Harry and his current family members standing and waving back at us.

In the end we are presented with a “happily ever after” scene where our conquering hero Harry extends his role as a witness to the readers. Why should we care to remember the lives and the deaths of these fictional characters? Perhaps it isn’t so much the character that we should remember as much as the empathy we feel as we read about their lives. By applying this learned empathy to our reality, we are able to show understanding to victims who have experienced atrocities and feel compassion towards them. In regards to remembering the dead and the lives that they lived, Blustein states, “Remembering the dead serves as a way of acknowledging the significance of their lives (and so of their having lived)...not to the world or to society, but to *them* in a way that each of us can appreciate because it is natural to take ourselves seriously. In this way, we declare that it really does matter that *they* lived, and we affirm that their lives had point

and meaning” (270). Harry bears witness to the deaths by resurrecting the memories of a previous generation and memorializes the bittersweet lives that they have led.

By studying Harry Potter as a transgenerational trauma narrative, we can see the act of bearing witness not only is a duty to never forget the previous generation, but also an obligation to disrupt any renewed attempts at mass destruction. By doing this, the witness chooses to provide healing and closure to the wound that has been inflicted, and also protects future generations by breaking the violence cycle. History shows mass violence comes in cycles and waves. Rowling’s ending, albeit rose-tinted, lulls her readership into a false sense of security. Rowling definitely created a romanticized ending for her readers. One can’t help but wonder if it would have been more appropriate to end the novel with the sentence “All was well...for now.” While that ending would be a little more realistic and jarring, it leaves Harry’s future more open to the likelihood that he will be called to bear witness to the memories of the previous generation multiple times throughout the entirety of his life.

Those who have invested their time in the *Harry Potter* series become witnesses to the characters’ lives by extension, which will hopefully lead to real world application of bearing witness to the lives around them. In her speech at the London premiere of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*, J.K. Rowling gave a speech declaring, “The stories we love best do live in us forever, so whether you come back by page or by the big screen, Hogwarts will always be there to welcome you home” (“J.K. Rowling Emotional Speech”). Not only should the epilogue be seen as a contained memory for Harry and the lives of the characters, the books can be seen as a contained memory for an

entire generation of readers who hopefully learn how to bear witness to the lives of those around them.

Like Harry Potter, we must choose to testify and bear witness to previous generations' travesties because inherited memories inevitably lead to an examination of one's own mortality. The cycle of violence can only be potentially broken when an individual examination of values and beliefs takes place. If a person chooses to become a witness to postmemory, they must face the impermanence of the human race and figure out their own role in the grand scheme of the universe. The witness can no longer disregard the larger questions "of facing death; of facing time and its passage; of the meaning and purpose of living; of the limits of one's omnipotence; of losing the ones that are close to us; the great question of our ultimate aloneness; our otherness from any other; our responsibility to and for our destiny; the question of loving and its limits; of parents and children; and so on" (Laub 72). If we are to bear the memories of inherited trauma in our own history, such as listening to testimonies of the Holocaust and many other mass human rights violations that survivors have lived to tell about throughout history, we must be able to understand and embrace our own empathy and humanity. The value of life can be extracted from children's literature such as *Harry Potter*, and can be called to remembrance when the time comes for the readers to bear witness to their own inherited memories.

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