

Post-Memory and Family Bonds: Trauma Transmission in the Orphan Train Narrative

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Abstract: The concept of post-memory, introduced by Marianne Hirsch, offers a framework for understanding how collective memory is transmitted across generations. This study examines intergenerational trauma through a qualitative descriptive analysis of Christina Baker Klein's novel *Orphan Train*. It focuses on Vivian Daly's traumatic experiences as an orphan train rider and their impact on her identity and familial memory. The research aims to explore how Vivian's past shapes her understanding of her history, her role within her family narrative, and how family narratives and inherited objects contribute to preserving memory and transmitting trauma intergenerationally. Findings reveal that family narratives and objects play a critical role in maintaining memory and shaping familial identity. These elements not only preserve individual experiences but also act as conduits for transmitting collective trauma across generations. Contextually, this study highlights the broader relevance of post-memory in social situations such as migration or cultural conflict, where trauma influence's identity formation and community ties. By situating its findings within the discourse on collective memory and trauma, this research contributes to understanding how personal and familial histories intersect to shape intergenerational identities. This study underscores the importance of considering intergenerational trauma in analysing collective memory processes.

Keywords: *Collective Memory; Family Narratives; Intergenerational Trauma; Post-Memory*

Abstrak: Konsep *post-memory* yang diperkenalkan oleh Marianne Hirsch menawarkan kerangka kerja untuk memahami bagaimana memori kolektif ditransmisikan lintas generasi. Studi ini meneliti trauma antargenerasi melalui analisis deskriptif kualitatif terhadap novel *Orphan Train* karya Christina Baker Klein. Penelitian ini berfokus pada pengalaman traumatis Vivian Daly sebagai penumpang *orphan train* dan dampaknya terhadap identitas serta memori keluarganya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana masa lalu Vivian membentuk pemahamannya tentang sejarah pribadinya, perannya dalam narasi keluarganya, serta bagaimana narasi keluarga dan objek yang diwariskan berkontribusi dalam menjaga memori dan mentransmisikan trauma secara antargenerasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa narasi keluarga dan objek memiliki peran penting dalam mempertahankan memori dan membentuk identitas keluarga. Elemen-elemen ini tidak hanya melestarikan pengalaman individu tetapi juga berfungsi sebagai penghubung untuk mentransmisikan trauma kolektif lintas generasi. Secara kontekstual, studi ini menyoroti relevansi konsep *post-memory* dalam situasi sosial lain, seperti migrasi atau konflik budaya, di mana trauma memengaruhi pembentukan identitas dan hubungan komunitas. Dengan menghubungkan temuan ini ke dalam diskursus tentang memori kolektif dan trauma, penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pemahaman bagaimana sejarah pribadi dan

keluarga saling berinteraksi untuk membentuk identitas lintas generasi. Studi ini menekankan pentingnya mempertimbangkan trauma antargenerasi dalam menganalisis proses memori kolektif.

Kata Kunci: *Identitas keluarga; Kenangan Kolektif; Konsep Post-Memory; Trauma antar Generasi;*

INTRODUCTION

The transmission of collective memory across generations has long fascinated scholars seeking to understand the intricate dynamics that shape individuals' relationships with the past. Marianne Hirsch's concept of post-memory offers a compelling framework to explore the profound influence of personal, collective, and cultural traumas on subsequent generations. Post-memory refers to the mediated process through which memories are passed down, fundamentally shaping an individual's comprehension of history and identity. Hirsch (2008) emphasizes that post-memory is not a direct recollection but rather a mediated experience shaped by family narratives and objects. Central to this concept is the familial transfer of embodied experiences, which creates continuity across generations and underscores the enduring legacy of trauma (Hirsch, 2008). By delving into the interdependence of generations, post-memory sheds light on how past traumas reverberate through subsequent generations, influencing their understanding of history and identity through familial narratives and tangible artifacts (Choudhury, 2012).

This study applies Hirsch's framework to Christina Baker Kline's novel *Orphan Train*, which explores the life of Vivian Daly, a protagonist profoundly affected by her traumatic experiences as an orphan train rider. The orphan train system in the United States transported orphaned or abandoned children to rural families in the Midwest for adoption, often leaving lasting psychological impacts on those involved (Kline, 2013). Vivian's story underscores how personal belongings, such as a silver locket and a family photograph, serve as symbolic links to her past and family. These objects play a crucial role in preserving memory and shaping identity, supporting the analysis of how family narratives and artifacts influence Vivian's understanding of her history (Simsek, 2017).

Vivian's traumatic past presents challenges in forming meaningful relationships with her husband and daughter. However, through her interactions with Molly, a foster child, and later with Sarah, her biological daughter, Vivian gradually overcomes these challenges. This transformative process is facilitated by family narratives and objects that act as conduits for intergenerational memory transmission (Wolf, 2019). For instance, cherished items like photographs enable Vivian to preserve her family's memory while fostering emotional connections across generations (LitCharts, 2017). Such elements underscore how familial frameworks relate to post-memory by emphasizing the importance of family bonds in shaping individual identities and preserving collective memory.

This study explores several key questions within the context of *Orphan Train* and Hirsch's concept of post-memory. First, it examines how Vivian's experience on the orphan train shapes her sense of identity and influences her understanding of the past. Second, it analyses how shared traumatic experiences impact familial relationships—particularly between Vivian and Sarah—and evaluates how family narratives and objects contribute to healing processes. By addressing these questions, this study aims to uncover how Hirsch's concept of post-memory provides insights into intergenerational trauma transmission and its implications for familial connections.

This study explores several key questions within the context of Christina Baker Kline's novel *Orphan Train* and Marianne Hirsch's concept of post-memory. First, the study

seeks to understand how Vivian Daly's experience on the orphan train shapes her sense of identity and influences her understanding of the past. Another significant aspect is the impact of traumatic events on individuals, specifically how characters in the novel navigate the aftermath of trauma and cope with its enduring effects. Additionally, this study analyses the relationship between Hirsch's concept of post-memory and familial structures of memory, aiming to uncover how this concept contributes to our understanding of intergenerational memory transmission. Through the lens of Hirsch's theory, the study examines how familial structures shape an individual's perception of the past, drawing on examples from the novel. Moreover, it delves into how *Orphan Train* underscores the importance of family relationships in shaping post-generational memory and how shared traumatic experiences foster connection and aid in the healing process (Lincoln, 1985).

In the context of Marianne Hirsch's work, the family framework serves as a crucial lens for exploring post-generational memory. This framework emphasizes the importance of family narratives and objects in shaping individual identities and preserving family memory. Hirsch's concept of post-memory describes the relationship that the "generation after" bears to personal, collective, and cultural trauma experienced by those who came before them (Simsek, 2017). Post-memory is a transgenerational transmission of memory that shapes an individual's understanding of history through family narratives and objects. Family memory, as conceptualized by Shore (2017), occupies a unique space between personal and collective memory, existing within a distinct framework with its own modes of production, transmission, and remembering. This dynamic construct organizes individual identities around narratives, places, objects, and routines while engaging in constant interplay between families as collective entities and individuals who shape—and are shaped by—these shared memories (Shore, 2017).

The passing down of specific objects appears to play as much of a role in maintaining family identity over time as kinship bonds (Koefoed, 2021). Post-memory is grounded in the familial transfer of embodied experiences to future generations, making it inherently intergenerational. Family stories provide individuals with a sense of identity while creating a narrative framework for transmitting memories to new generations. Memory work within families plays a central role in negotiating personal identity by establishing emotional connections with past events (Wolf, 2019).

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In Christina Baker Kline's novel *Orphan Train*, the protagonist Vivian Daly exemplifies how traumatic experiences shape identity and relationships. Vivian's journey on the orphan train—a historical system in the United States where orphaned or abandoned children were transported to rural families for adoption—disconnects her from her past and family, profoundly affecting her sense of self (Kline, 2013). This experience underscores the importance of preserving family narratives and objects in shaping individual identities and

maintaining family memory (Eng, 2002). Through her relationships with Molly, a foster child, and later with her biological daughter Sarah, Vivian gradually overcomes the lingering effects of her past traumas. This transformative process is facilitated by shared narratives and objects that act as conduits for memory transmission.

The family framework is a valuable lens for exploring post-generational memory in the context of intergenerational trauma. While Hirsch (2008) emphasizes that familial relationships play a pivotal role in forming an individual's understanding of the past, other scholars have broadened this view. Fivush et al. (2011) found that adolescents who engage in family narrative sharing exhibit higher emotional well-being and stronger family cohesion. Similarly, Yehuda and Lehrner (2018) highlight how epigenetic mechanisms contribute to the intergenerational transmission of trauma, demonstrating that familial storytelling is not only essential for identity formation but also critical for mental health. These findings suggest that family narratives serve as more than just historical records; they are instrumental in fostering psychological resilience across generations.

The transmission of trauma across generations underscores the enduring impact of past events on the present. Familial narratives, cultural symbols, and tangible objects act as carriers of memory, shaping individuals' understanding of history and identity. These carriers transmit not only stories but also the emotional and psychological residues of historical traumas. Dalgaard and Montgomery (2015) emphasize that open and modulated storytelling fosters resilience, while dysfunctional communication styles—such as silencing or over-disclosure—can perpetuate unresolved trauma. Similarly, the conceptualize artifacts like photographs or heirlooms as extensions of human memory systems, integrating biological memory with cultural identity to create distributed networks of remembrance (Heersmink, 2021). These findings highlight the dual role of intergenerational memory transmission, where both trauma and resilience coexist.

In Christina Baker Kline's novel *Orphan Train*, the protagonist Vivian Daly exemplifies how traumatic experiences shape individual identity and relationships. Her journey on the orphan train—a historical system in the United States that transported orphaned or abandoned children to rural families for adoption—disconnects her from her past and family, profoundly affecting her sense of self (Kline, 2013). However, through her relationships with Molly, a foster child, and her biological daughter Sarah, Vivian gradually overcomes the lingering effects of her trauma. Family narratives and objects—such as a treasured photograph and a silver locket—serve as conduits for memory transmission, helping Vivian reconnect with her past (Merrill & Fivush, 2016). This dynamic reflects Shore's (2017) assertion that family memory exists in constant interplay between collective identity and individual recollection, preserving both personal history and familial continuity.

The interdisciplinary nature of research on post-memory enriches our understanding of its implications. Psychologists explore how unresolved parental trauma impacts caregiving behaviors and shapes descendants' emotional responses (Gravener et al., 2012). Sociologists analyze how collective memory influences societal attitudes toward historical events, revealing its role in reinforcing or challenging dominant narratives (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). Meanwhile, cultural studies scholars investigate how post-memory is represented in literature and art to address historical erasure (Kirmayer et al., 2014). In *Orphan Train*, these themes intersect as Vivian's journey illustrates how familial relationships mediate the legacy of trauma while fostering resilience. By integrating insights from psychology, sociology, and cultural studies, future research can better address the complexities of post-memory transmission while exploring strategies for healing intergenerational trauma.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive methodology to analyse Christina Baker Kline's novel "Orphan Train" in conjunction with Marianne Hirsch's concept of post-memory. Qualitative methods are chosen for their ability to provide rich, detailed descriptions of written text and human behaviour, allowing for a comprehensive examination of natural data within its contextual framework. The research object of this study is the novel "Orphan Train" and Hirsch's concept of post-memory, which serves as a theoretical framework for analysing the novel's depiction of memory, trauma, and familial relationships. Data collection involves gathering information pertinent to the research objectives, focusing on Vivian's life experiences, particularly her traumatic encounters as an orphan train rider, her relationship with Sarah, and the influence of family narratives and objects on her perception of the past.

This study employs a qualitative descriptive methodology to analyse Christina Baker Kline's novel *Orphan Train* through the lens of Marianne Hirsch's concept of post-memory. Qualitative methods are chosen for their ability to provide rich, detailed descriptions of written texts and their contextual meanings, making them particularly suitable for literary analysis (Creswell, 2014). The primary object of analysis is the novel *Orphan Train*, while the formal object involves examining its narrative elements from the perspective of post-memory theory. Hirsch's concept of post-memory serves as the theoretical framework to investigate how traumatic experiences are transmitted across generations through family narratives and objects (Hirsch, 2012). The study focuses specifically on Vivian Daly's traumatic experiences as an orphan train rider, her relationship with Sarah, and the role of family narratives and inherited objects in shaping her sense of identity and connection to the past.

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The data analysis process involved several steps. First, relevant narratives and objects in the novel were identified through a close reading of the text, highlighting instances where Vivian's memories, interactions with family members, or references to material objects (e.g., photographs, heirlooms) played a role in preserving or transmitting trauma. Second, textual elements were evaluated based on their relevance to post-memory using specific criteria, such as their connection between past trauma and present identity or their contribution to intergenerational memory transmission. Third, Hirsch's concept of post-memory was applied by categorizing textual evidence into themes such as "trauma transmission," "family identity," and "memory preservation." These themes were then analysed to understand how personal trauma becomes embedded within collective family memory. Finally, content analysis techniques (Miles & Huberman, 1994) were used to systematically code and categorize data based on its alignment with research objectives. This process involved breaking down text fragments into smaller units of meaning and interpreting them within the context of post-memory.

Descriptive qualitative methods were selected because they enable a nuanced interpretation of literary texts. Unlike quantitative approaches that focus on measurable variables, qualitative methods allow for an exploration of complex themes such as trauma and memory within their narrative context. This approach is essential for understanding how literary works like *Orphan Train* depict intergenerational trauma through symbolic elements like family narratives and objects. By applying this rigorous methodological approach, the study provides a comprehensive analysis of how trauma, memory, and familial relationships are portrayed in *Orphan Train*. However, it is important to note that this study is limited to a single novel and theoretical framework. As such, its findings may not be generalizable to other texts or contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Family Narratives and Objects Shape Vivian's Understanding of the Past

Vivian's experience on the orphan train affects her sense of identity by making her feel disconnected from her past and her family. However, family narratives and objects play a significant role in shaping Vivian's understanding of the past and preserving family memory. The role of family narratives and objects in shaping individual identities is well-documented in academic literature. This literature highlights how familial artifacts, such as heirlooms or photographs, serve as powerful tools for preserving intergenerational memory, particularly in contexts of trauma and displacement (Karimullah, 2023).

"Vivian Daly, holds onto a few precious objects from her past, including a photograph of her family and a silver locket" (Kline, *Orphan Train*, 2013, p. 236)

This analysis further supports the importance of family memory in understanding Vivian and shared memories within a family context and shaping collective identities. This object serves as a link to her past and help her preserve her family memory. By highlighting Vivian's attachment to specific objects from her past, such as the photograph and silver locket, the analysis underscores the role of tangible items in preserving family memory. These objects serve as powerful connections to Vivian's family and enable her to maintain a sense of her identity and personal history. They represent tangible manifestations of her family's story and allow her to keep their memory alive. These objects not only preserve Vivian's family memory but also embody the resilience of familial connections across generations.

This also reinforces the significance of family objects in shaping individual understanding of the past and contributing to the formation of collective identities within a family context, as exemplified by the relationship between Vivian and her daughter, Sarah. Vivian, who gave Sarah up for adoption after the death of her husband, Luke Maynard, experienced a profound connection with Sarah later in life, highlighting the enduring power of family ties and the significance of shared history, even in the face of separation and loss.

"What a journey Vivian and this necklace have taken, ... from a cobblestoned village on the coast of Ireland to a tenement in New York to a train filled with children, steaming westward through farmland, to a lifetime in Minnesota. And now to this moment, nearly a hundred years after it all began, on the porch of an old house in Maine" (Kline, *Orphan Train*, 2013, p. 221)

The analysis highlights the journey taken by Vivian and the necklace, tracing her path from an Irish village to New York, a train journey, and ultimately to Minnesota. It emphasizes that this moment, occurring almost a century later on a porch in Maine signifies the culmination of her shared experiences. The significance lies in the connection between Sarah and Vivian, the necklace serves as a tangible link to their shared history, symbolizing the endurance of family connections and the power of objects in carrying personal and familial significance across generations. It demonstrates how family narratives and objects, such as

the necklace, play a significant role in shaping Vivian's understanding of the past and preserving family memory.

Furthermore, the excerpt highlights Vivian's separation from her family and her displacement during the Great Depression as part of the orphan train program. This experience creates a sense of disconnection from her past and her family, leading to feelings of loss and a fragmented sense of identity. Christina Baker Kline's research adds depth to the analysis. It reveals that despite the restrictions on bringing personal belongings, some children managed to smuggle small keepsakes with them. These items become increasingly significant to them over time, indicating their importance in preserving personal connections and memories. (Kline, *The Orphan Train: Summary & Analysis*, 2016). Children need to grow and develop naturally, children should be allowed to grow and develop at their own pace, free from external pressures and influences. This is a critical aspect of child development, as it allows children to form their own identities, make their own decisions, and develop their own values and beliefs and facilitating personal growth and transformation, which is essential for children to grow and develop naturally, free from external pressures and influences (Salabi, 2016).

The novel and the research reinforce the notion that Vivian's experience on the Orphan Train, a historical system in the United States where orphaned or abandoned children were transported by train to rural families in the Midwest for adoption, has a lasting impact on her sense of identity. It emphasizes the role of personal belongings and keepsakes as symbolic links to her past and family, further supporting the analysis of family narratives and objects shaping Vivian's understanding of the past and preserving family memory. Although the objects she holds onto serve as a link to her past and help her preserve her family memory, Vivian's experience on the Orphan Train is a journey of self-discovery that is entirely her own. As a young Irish immigrant orphaned in New York City, Vivian's experience on the Orphan Train is a significant part of her personal history, shaping her identity and worldview.

“And not so unusual in the Irish tenements in New York, but certainly not acceptable anywhere the train might take me” (Kline, *Orphan Train*, 2013, p. 29)

Vivian's experience on the orphan train is a reminder of the ways in which children were treated as commodities and shipped across the country to be placed with families. Moreover, over the course of the novel, Vivian moves from shame about her past to acceptance, eventually coming to terms with what she has been through. In the process, she learns about the regenerative power of claiming – and telling – one's life story

“... If there is one thing she hates most about being in the foster care system, it's this dependence on people you barely know, your vulnerability to their whims. She has learned not to expect anything from anybody...” (Kline, *Orphan Train*, 2013, p. 14)

Through sharing their pasts, both Vivian and Molly, a teen foster child, grow and change. Molly helps Vivian heal from her traumatic past and reconnect with her still-living relative. In turn, Vivian's experience on the orphan train is a reminder of the importance of preserving family narratives and objects in shaping individual identities and preserving family memory.

In conclusion, Vivian's experience on the orphan train affects her sense of identity by making her feel disconnected from her past and her family. However, the objects she holds onto serve as a link to her past and help her preserve her family memory. Through sharing their pasts, both Vivian and Molly grow and change, and Vivian's experience on the orphan train is a reminder of the importance of preserving family narratives and objects in shaping individual identities and preserving family memory.

Vivian's Relationship with Sarah is shaped by Their Shared Traumatic Experiences

Vivian's relationship with Sarah is shaped by their shared traumatic experiences. They are able to form a bond and reconnect through their mutual support and understanding. Hirsch's concept of post-memory relates to Vivian's life and experiences in several ways. Vivian's traumatic experiences are transmitted to her daughter Sarah through family narratives and objects. Sarah "remembers" these experiences through the stories and objects that Vivian shares with her.

Shared traumatic experiences can foster strong emotional connections and facilitate mutual healing, as exemplified by the relationship between Vivian and Sarah. Despite the complexities introduced by grief and loss, such as Vivian's decision to give Sarah up for adoption, their bond is ultimately strengthened through their shared experiences of trauma and loss. Moreover, many child-serving professionals have their own histories of trauma, which can both inform their practice and present potential challenges (DeVlieger, 2023). In Vivian and Sarah's case, their shared grief becomes a foundation for emotional connection, allowing them to navigate the complexities of their relationship and find mutual understanding. This dynamic reflects the broader role of familial relationships in processing trauma and rebuilding trust, further emphasizing the importance of shared narratives in fostering reconciliation and healing (Russin, 2022).

Additionally, Vivian's traumatic experiences shape her understanding of the past and her sense of self. She is shaped, however indirectly, by traumatic fragments of events that still defy narrative reconstruction and exceed comprehension. However, her relationship with Sarah, her biological daughter, is shaped by their shared traumatic experiences. Experiencing trauma can create a distorted lens through which Vivian views the world and her own identity. Traumatic events can shake one's sense of security, trust, and self-worth. These experiences may lead Vivian to question her own choices, doubt her ability to be a good mother, and struggle with feelings of guilt or shame. Her traumatic past may also affect her ability to form healthy attachments and relationships, including her relationship with Sarah.

"Vivian finally shares the truth about the birth of her daughter and her decision to put May up for adoption, she tells Molly that she was "selfish" and "afraid." But Molly defends her and affirms Vivian's choice... She sent her child to be adopted after her own experiences with the Children's Aid Society... Children's Aid Society, a place staffed by friendly social workers who keep the children in their care warm and dry and fed" (Kline, Orphan Train, 2013, p. 216)

Vivian Daly's experience on the orphan train affects her sense of identity by making her feel disconnected from her past and her family. Overwhelmed by grief, Vivian gives her daughter up for adoption. When Vivian gives her daughter up for adoption, their shared traumatic experiences can further complicate their relationship. The act of relinquishing a child can be an incredibly painful and difficult decision for a parent, often accompanied by feelings of grief, loss, and a sense of powerlessness (Frank, 2016). Vivian may experience a profound sense of emptiness or regret, while Sarah may grow up feeling abandoned or rejected, even if the decision was made with the best intentions.

In some cases, Sarah, the daughter of Niamh (whose birth name is Vivian), grows up yearning to know her birth mother's identity and story. Sarah's biological father, Dutchy, dies in battle while Niamh is pregnant with her. This loss, coupled with Sarah's own experience of losing her fiancé in the 9/11 attacks, profoundly shapes her understanding of the world. As Kline (Kline, Orphan Train, 2013) poignantly describes, when Sarah gazes upon Vivian,

"—Her eyes are wide open, searching, and when her gaze alights on Vivian's face, it is startling in its intensity, stripped of any pretense or convention." (Kline, Orphan Train, 2013, p. 220)

This powerful connection, forged through shared experiences of loss and grief, allows Vivian and Sarah to form a deep emotional bond. Vivian's journey on the Orphan

Train serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of preserving family narratives and objects in shaping individual identities and preserving family memory. Sarah's experience of loss resonates with Vivian's own, highlighting the enduring impact of grief and loss on individuals' lives.

"I always wondered about you, Sarah writes. I'd given up hope of ever finding out who you are and why you gave me away"(Kline, Orphan Train, 2013, p. 218)

Following this analysis Vivian's relationship with Sarah is shaped by their shared experience of trauma and their efforts to overcome it. Moreover, Sarah's search for her birth mother is a journey of self-discovery that is similar to Vivian's experience on the orphan train. Through their shared experience of loss and grief, Vivian and Sarah are able to form an emotional connection and develop a relationship. In summary, Vivian's relationship with Sarah is shaped by their shared traumatic experiences. Sarah's search for her birth mother is a journey of self-discovery that is similar to Vivian's experience on the orphan train. Through their shared experience of loss and grief, Vivian and Sarah are able to form an emotional connection and develop a relationship. Vivian's experience on the orphan train is a reminder of the importance of preserving family narratives and objects in shaping individual identities and preserving family memory.

The Regenerative Power of Storytelling and Self-Acceptance

Vivian's journey in "Orphan Train" reveals the regenerative power of storytelling and self-acceptance in facilitating her healing process and fostering deeper connections with others. Despite initially feeling shame and disconnection from her past, Vivian's gradual acceptance of her experiences and her willingness to share her story with Molly and Sarah contribute to her healing process. Through storytelling, Vivian not only comes to terms with her traumatic past but also fosters deeper connections with those around her, leading to mutual growth and understanding within her familial relationships.

This discussion highlights the regenerative power of storytelling and self-acceptance in Vivian's journey, illustrating the transformative potential of embracing one's past and sharing it with others. Through storytelling and mutual understanding, Vivian and Sarah exemplify the enduring influence of familial connections in navigating and overcoming shared experiences of loss and grief, and delivered in this table below:

No	Finding Aspect	Discussion
1	Vivian's Storytelling	<p>Vivian's willingness to share her story with Molly and Sarah plays a critical role in her healing process. By recounting her experiences, she gains a deeper understanding of her past and strengthens her connections with others. Storytelling is widely recognized as a transformative practice that builds trust, fosters empathy, and facilitates emotional unlearning. As Neimeyer (2001) notes, "sharing experiences through narrative builds trust, cultivates norms, transfers tacit knowledge, facilitates unlearning, and generates empathy" (Neimeyer, 2001).</p> <p>In Vivian's case, storytelling serves as a medium for processing and making sense of her traumatic experiences, allowing her to connect with others and find a sense of belonging. The importance of authenticity and vulnerability in storytelling is also emphasized in research, as it creates opportunities for others to engage deeply</p>

		with the storyteller. Vivian's willingness to share her story despite its painful nature-demonstrates her emotional growth and acceptance of her experiences.
2	Self-Acceptance	<p>Vivian's gradual acceptance of her past is a cornerstone of her healing journey. Self-acceptance enables her to reconcile with painful memories and find inner peace. Research highlights that self-acceptance is essential for individuals dealing with trauma, as it fosters resilience and emotional well-being.</p> <p>In Vivian's case, self-acceptance is closely tied to storytelling. By openly sharing her story, she embraces vulnerability and creates opportunities for deeper connections with others. This process not only facilitates her own healing but also inspires empathy and understanding in those around her.</p>
3	Regenerative Power	<p>The concept of regenerative power is also linked to the idea of community dialogue and the importance of sharing personal stories as a means of building empathy and understanding. By sharing their stories, individuals can create a sense of connection and community, which can be a powerful tool for healing and growth (Pennebaker, 2018).</p> <p>In the context of Vivian's journey, the regenerative power of storytelling and self-acceptance is evident in her ability to find a sense of purpose and meaning through her experiences. By claiming and telling her own life story, Vivian is able to transcend her past and find a sense of acceptance and peace. This finding highlights the importance of narrative and authenticity in the healing process and suggests that storytelling can be a powerful tool for facilitating personal growth and transformation.</p>
4	Familial Relationships	<p>Vivian's storytelling and self-acceptance lead to mutual growth and understanding within her familial relationships, highlighting the importance of open communication and acceptance in building strong family bonds.</p> <p>The finding suggests that Vivian's storytelling and self-acceptance lead to mutual growth and understanding within her familial relationships. This implies that by sharing her story and embracing her experiences, Vivian is able to connect with her family members on a deeper level, fostering empathy and understanding. This finding is supported by research that emphasizes the importance of open communication and acceptance in building strong family bonds (Bowen, 1978).</p> <p>By sharing her story and embracing her experiences, Vivian demonstrates how honest self-disclosure and acceptance can bridge gaps and strengthen family</p>

		connections, fostering a deeper level of understanding and empathy among family members.
5	Healing Process	<p>Vivian's healing process is facilitated through her storytelling and self-acceptance, demonstrating the importance of narrative and authenticity in the healing process.</p> <p>The finding indicates that Vivian's healing process is facilitated through her storytelling and self-acceptance. This suggests that by claiming and telling her own life story, Vivian is able to process her traumatic experiences and move towards acceptance and peace. This finding is consistent with research that highlights the regenerative power of storytelling and self-acceptance in facilitating personal growth and transformation.</p> <p>Together, these findings suggest that storytelling and self-acceptance are crucial components of the healing process, not only for individuals but also for their relationships with others. By sharing their stories and embracing their experiences, individuals can create a sense of connection and understanding with others, leading to mutual growth and healing within familial relationships.</p>
	Empathy and Understanding	<p>Vivian's healing process is deeply rooted in the interplay between storytelling and self-acceptance. By reclaiming ownership of her life story, she processes traumatic experiences while moving toward acceptance and peace. Through storytelling, Vivian not only heals herself but also creates opportunities for collective understanding within her relationships. Her journey exemplifies how narrative practices can facilitate personal growth while fostering stronger interpersonal bonds.</p> <p>The concept of empathy and understanding is closely tied to the idea of storytelling and its ability to facilitate a deeper connection between individuals. By sharing their stories, individuals can create a sense of connection and understanding with others, leading to empathy and compassion, such as '<i>active listening and open communication</i>'. The importance of active listening and open communication in building strong relationships is also highlighted in this finding. Active listening involves fully engaging with the speaker, both verbally and non-verbally, to understand their perspective (Pennebaker, 2018). Open communication, on the other hand, involves creating a safe and supportive environment where individuals feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings.</p>

Table.1 Conclusion of the Finding's discussion

The findings underscore the profound role of family narratives and objects in shaping individual understanding of the past and in preserving familial connections across

generations. Despite the challenges posed by traumatic experiences, Vivian's reliance on tangible artifacts and her bond with Sarah highlight the resilience of familial relationships in overcoming past traumas and forging deeper connections rooted in empathy and understanding.

The analysis reveals the profound influence of family narratives and objects on Vivian's understanding of her personal history and identity. Despite the disconnection she feels from her past and family due to her traumatic experiences on the orphan train, Vivian's reliance on tangible artifacts such as a photograph and a silver locket underscores their significance in preserving familial connections and anchoring her sense of identity within her familial narrative. These objects serve as tangible links to her family's history, allowing Vivian to uphold their memory and to maintain a sense of continuity across generations.

Moreover, the journey symbolized by a necklace's passage from an Irish village to a train filled with children emphasizes the enduring legacy of familial connections and the power of objects in carrying personal and familial significance over time. This journey serves as a poignant testament to the resilience of family narratives and objects in preserving the collective memory of past experiences within a family context. The relationship between Vivian and Sarah is deeply influenced by their shared traumatic experiences, fostering a bond rooted in mutual understanding and support. Vivian's traumatic past, including the relinquishment of her daughter for adoption, underscores the complexities of their relationship and its lasting impact on their sense of identity. Despite the grief and loss engendered by these experiences, Vivian and Sarah's shared journey of self-discovery and reconciliation highlights the transformative potential of familial connections in overcoming past traumas. Finally, the analysis highlights the regenerative power of storytelling and self-acceptance in Vivian's journey, illustrating the transformative potential of embracing one's past and sharing it with others. Through storytelling and mutual understanding, Vivian and Sarah exemplify the enduring influence of familial connections in navigating and overcoming shared experiences of loss and grief.

Furthermore, the analysis elucidates the regenerative power of storytelling and self-acceptance in Vivian's journey. Despite initially feeling shame and disconnection from her past, Vivian's gradual acceptance of her experiences and her willingness to share her story with Molly and Sarah contribute to her healing process. Through storytelling, Vivian not only comes to terms with her traumatic past but also fosters deeper connections with those around her, leading to mutual growth and understanding within her familial relationships.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Marianne Hirsch's concept of post-memory proves highly relevant in understanding the intergenerational transmission of trauma as depicted in *Orphan Train*. Vivian Daly's traumatic experiences as an orphan train rider profoundly shape her understanding of the past, her sense of self, and her relationships with others. Family narratives and objects, such as a photograph and a silver locket, serve as powerful tools for preserving memory and fostering connections across generations. These elements not only help Vivian reconcile with her past but also enable her to form a meaningful bond with Sarah, despite the shared trauma of giving Sarah up for adoption. Their mutual experiences of loss and grief create an emotional connection that underscores the role of shared trauma in shaping family dynamics.

From a theoretical perspective, this study highlights the relevance of post-memory in analysing collective trauma and its impact on familial relationships. The findings demonstrate how personal trauma becomes embedded within family narratives and objects,

contributing to a broader understanding of how memory is preserved and transmitted across generations. This underscores the importance of post-memory as a framework for studying collective trauma in other contexts, such as migration or cultural conflict. Practically, the findings offer valuable insights for cross-generational memory studies and family therapy. Understanding how narratives and objects facilitate emotional healing and identity formation can inform therapeutic practices aimed at addressing intergenerational trauma. For instance, incorporating family storytelling or symbolic objects into therapy sessions may help individuals process inherited trauma and strengthen familial bonds.

However, this study is limited by its focus on a single novel and theoretical framework. Future research could expand on these findings by analysing additional literary works or exploring other theoretical perspectives on memory transmission. Furthermore, empirical studies could investigate how post-memory operates in real-life contexts, such as families affected by historical traumas or forced migration.

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