

**Marianne Hirsch Essay—Dr. K’s neatly typed-up and for once spelled-right reading notes for the essay**

<b>Page</b>	<b>Notes</b>
259,60	Headnote. She is a professor at Dartmouth. Studies the family and its representations, in “the family as a concept, as a way of thinking and acting”. Studies pop culture, family records. Argument that memory isn’t personal, in the head, but “an active cultural project.” She’s interested in <b>postmemory</b> —memories caused by the stories and image that circulate from one generation to the next. A kind of memory that requires active participation. Tied to her postmemories of the city where her parents were born but she never saw.
261	Essay begins by talking about three photographs: 1. The boy in the Warsaw ghetto with the Nazi aiming a gun at his back 2. A picture of Anne Frank in a book of poems by Marjorie Agosin 3. Lori Novak’s picture “Past Lives” First two images are very general—most people asked about children in the Holocaust may think of them. Third picture is very specific—the merging of the three pictures (children who will die, Ethel Rosenberg, Lori and her mom) is “an uneasy confrontation of personal memory with public history” (265).
266	Goes from discussion of three pictures to discussion of how memories are <b>constructed</b> —“memory [is] an act in the <i>present</i> on the part of a subject who constitutes herself by means of a series of identifications across temporal, spatial, and cultural divides. It reveals memory to be <i>cultural</i> , fantasy to be <i>social and political</i> , in the sense that the representation of one girl’s childhood includes, as a part of her experience, the history into which she was born”
266	Last paragraph: talks about how novel, poem, photo all invite the reader to collaborate with the audience in a cultural act of recognition and reconstruction—i.e. to let the memories in the art trigger other memories and to layer the memories on each other.
267	<b>Second big section: Postmemory and “heteropathic identification”</b> Last para on page: her definition of <b>postmemory</b> . “the relationship of children of survivors of cultural or collective trauma to the experiences of their parents, experiences that they ‘remember’ only as the stories and images with which they grew up, but that are so powerful, so monumental, as to constitute memories in their own right....secondary or second-generation memory....its basis in displacement, its belatedness.” End of paragraph is very important—creates a memory for people who can never experience what is being ‘remembered.’
268	Emphasizes the point that this is not personal but public and shared memories—the way people are multiply connected.
268	Adds the concept from Kaja Silverman’s book of <b>heteropathic memory</b> : “The ability to say, ‘It could have been me; it was me, also,’ and, <i>at the same time</i> , ‘but it was not me.’”
269	Photos particularly good for postmemory because they make us feel we were somewhere at sometime that we were not. They <i>project</i> memories.

269ff	<p><b>Third big section: Images of Children</b></p> <p>Goes back to the first picture of the boy in the Warsaw ghetto and how the picture has been used. Goes on to talk about other scholars and artists who use images of children to make us understand the horrors of the Holocaust. “Why children?...images of children bring home the utter senselessness of ...destruction. Who could see the enemy in the face of a child?”</p>
272	<p>Think about how images of children are used to get us to empathize—create heteropathic identification. Talks about the film <i>Hatred</i> at great length. Says that when we look at the pictures of children who were witnesses to horror, we become witnesses to that horror in our own right.</p>
274	<p>“It is my argument that the visual encounter with the child victim is a triangular one, that identification occurs in a triangular field of looking. The adult viewer sees the child victim through the eyes of his or her own child self.” Thus actor and spectator blur, and photographs make this even more complicated. They displace the “otherness,” the sense of not being there.</p>
275	<p><b>Fourth section: (Im)Possible Witnessing</b></p> <p>Identification and transfer may be necessary to work through trauma. Distinguish between ‘acting out’ and ‘working through’ using pictures. Danger may be that we see some images too often, make ourselves into surrogate victims. But they may also be useful—the case of the picture of Menachem S. in Dori Laub’s book. We aren’t looking at the picture Menachem had in the camps—that was lost. We are looking at the picture of the person the story is about, not the story, and trying to read into his eyes what he experienced. Talks about how the picture is used in several different essays and how students reacted differently in each class. P. 279: the photo remains <i>other</i> because it is <i>not</i> the picture of the child suffering but a school picture—divorced from the experiences the picture also makes us remember.</p>
280	<p><b>Final Section: Two Endings</b></p> <p>Talks about the film <i>Hatred</i> where a house of suspected terrorists is destroyed and a little girl in a pink skirt holding a doll walks out of the wreckage—child used as alibi to screen out “context, specificity, responsibility, agency.” Then talks about Dori Laub saying that Menachem represents the woundedness we are trying to heal.</p>
Summary	<p>OK, so many “memories” are composed not of our own experiences but of the experiences of others passed down to us. Photos are one tool of this. The thing we have to deal with is how we construct and hold those memories—do they shape us and in what way? (And, though Hirsch doesn’t say so, for what purpose?) To what extent are we there and not there in postmemories? Essay really makes me think about how my pictures of what happened in the past have been shaped by others and how the conclusions I have based on those pictures are really based not on what happened but on how the interpreters saw the event for me. A lot more goes into making memories than just being there or looking at pictures of the past. Requires me to think about the <b>filters, barriers, impediments</b> Nosich talks about and how they have shaped who I think I am.</p>