0WRT 105 | ***History & Memory***: *for Akiko and Takashige* (Rea Tajiri, 1991) | Viewing Sheet

As you watch Tajiri’s ***History & Memory***, do your best both to follow the substance / content of the various arguments that the film presents and the manner in which the film makes those arguments. Documentaries are a form of visual argument, and they use a set of devices and methods that differ from the more conventional written and spoken arguments with which we are familiar.

Put succinctly: ***History & Memory*** as a hybrid documentary will make various arguments, and support those claims, with evidence that is ***visual*** and ***kinetic*** (i.e. moving, as in moving-image). Similarly, the film will also make use of voice-over, screen text, and a film score in a unique way that may be (I hope) will be new in your viewing experience. (You may also consider comparing the film to our ***This I Believe*** template.)

As you watch, then, take notes, but keep these questions foremost in mind:

* What, exactly, do you feel is Tajiri’s central argument / claim?
* How does this film, as a documentary, differ from your expectations (be specific in your notes)?
* What comprises evidence for the film? What types of evidence does Tajiri use as support of her claim?
* How does the film structure / set out its argument?
* What does the film ask you as a viewer to do as you watch?

Take notes as you screen the film, but try to be observant for the key details referenced by the questions below. Make quick notations for each question, but withhold fully answering them until later – you can download the question sheet (a Word file), fill in your responses, and then cut and paste them to your, and our, blog sites.

1) How does the film open (literally)? That is, what do we se / hear, how doe we see /hear it, and in what order?

2) Why does Tajiri tell us about her sister and her photography obsession?

3) Tajiri makes regular mention throughout the film of a recurring image that she has in her head. Why / what is that image and how is it significant?

4) Across one section, the film tells us that there are three (3) types of images, preface by the phrase “There are Images …” As best as you are able, tell/describe what those types are.

5) What types of evidence / artifacts does the film present as its proof? Be as specific and inclusive as possible.

6) How does the film use its sense of “history” and “memory” to structure its argument?