

OUR Journal: ODU Undergraduate Research Journal

Volume 2 *Memory & Reflection*

Article 12

2014

Sites of Memory: "Tallitot"

Emma Needham
Old Dominion University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/ourj>



Part of the [Nonfiction Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Needham, Emma (2014) "*Sites of Memory: "Tallitot"*," *OUR Journal: ODU Undergraduate Research Journal*: Vol. 2 , Article 12.

DOI: 10.25778/cqtg-fn72

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/ourj/vol2/iss1/12>

This Reflection is brought to you for free and open access by ODU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in OUR Journal: ODU Undergraduate Research Journal by an authorized editor of ODU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@odu.edu.

Emma Needham

Tallitot

I want to briefly talk about a different perspective that I have of this study abroad course; a Jewish perspective. I just want to start by saying that the melancholy nature of this trip and its experiences were made ten times harder for me because I was the only Jewish student in my class. That is not to say that this was not a hard trip for everyone, but I experienced it in a very different way. My classmates were all very kind and supportive of me, but I had no one with the same religious and spiritual connection to bond with. Perspective is always something to consider throughout history and throughout all disciplines. Besides having to go through this difficult process, essentially on my own, I also had a different level of understanding because of my Jewish background and faith.

The toughest part of Auschwitz was remembering the victims who lived and died within those unnatural gates, and having to constantly recognize that their deaths were for no reason. In order to remember the fallen victims, rooms in the camp were dedicated solely for the purpose of storing personal belongings. As a class, we saw a room full of hair, suitcases, prosthetics, eye- glasses, and prayer shawls called *Tallitot*. This is where I found that different level of understanding. I am not sure the other students in the class could fully appreciate the significance of these prayer shawls to me. In my opinion, Tallitot are the most holy and intimate belongings a Jewish person can have in life. Wearing them in synagogue is a direct connection to G-d, and one cannot read the Torah without wearing one. Even the thought of someone snatching mine away from me breaks my heart. Looking upon the Tallitot and knowing how personal and sanctified they are gives a whole new experience to the story, as some may have found when seeing the hair or suitcases. I hope that I was able to give a different perspective to my classmates, for we are the ones who will spread this gained knowledge with the world. *L'dor va'dor*; From generation to generation. It is our job to spread these experiences, not only to remember, but to also prevent them from happening again.