

[Memory in Transition: Intersections, Contestations, Futures](#)

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Conference

Date:

January 22, 2022

Location:

India

Subject Fields:

Colonial and Post-Colonial History / Studies, Cultural History / Studies, Humanities, Literature, Oral History

In humanities and social sciences, engagements with memory cut across disparate fields from the cognitive, and affective processes of recollection to the narrative and aesthetic acts of simulation and reinterpretation in both private and public spheres. In recent times embodied and somatic histories are widely discussed while documenting the past through registers such as trauma or nostalgia, where memory once again comes to the forefront. Memory and its fraught negotiations between past, present and future, between remembering and forgetting, become a crucial site of contestations and reimaginations of personal and collective subjectivities. The critical and complex role of memory, particularly of traumatic memory, comes to the fore especially in experiences and histories of displacement, re/dislocation, physical, emotional and cultural, like migration, uprootedness, loss of home, and in histories of collective violence and dislocation of communities like war, genocide, disasters as well as more diffused long-term histories of systemic violence like colonialism, racism and caste.

The multidirectional explorations into memory encompass a wide array of thematic concerns from trauma, loss, rehabilitation and postmemory, urban memorial configurations including foodways and cultures, memory and its entanglements with material objects, the study of the aural landscape and its embeddings in literary and public memory, historical migrations and journeys of expatriation to memory's function in the radical shifts wrought by the global pandemic on communities and customs. The layered relationships of memory with place (in its multiple intersections of space, geography, cultural milieu, and its connotations of the physical and the digital), with the multifarious experience of 'home', and the vexed relationship between memories of individuals and collectives with official and/or 'documented' histories also become important focuses in the explorations surrounding memory.

Memory is, thus, widely argued and contested in fields of philosophy, anthropology, politics, literary and material culture, embracing multifarious forms of commemorative practices and mourning to mark past events that are either celebratory or traumatic in nature. Likewise, it has a dominant role in museums, archives, oral testimonies, the heritage industry, and its

checked associations with institutionalized history is imbricated in specific forms of remembrance and forgetting.

The proposed conference hopes to create an important platform for transdisciplinary dialogue around memory and its multiple knottings with motility, displacement and movement, environment, physical and virtual ecosystems, sustainability, cultural expression, affect and mental health. It seeks to understand the ways in which we may conceptualize and interpret this “multidirectionality” of memory against the contemporary historical milieu.

The conference also attempts to bring together an urgent constellation of critical thinking by braiding theory and praxis around “environmental memory” to interrogate urban development in the context of the Anthropocene and anthropogenic activities that have deleteriously impacted the natural world leading to the depletion of biodiversity to various manifestations of “eco-sicknesses”. Holding a conference around memory in Bhopal in this context bears a special significance. The Bhopal Gas Tragedy of 1984, which scarred the city and the nation at large irreparably, became pivotal in framing environmental questions in India across the board—from postcolonial studies to public policies and civil society movements. Still known as the city of the gas disaster, almost four decades after the incident, it is necessary not only to review the ways in which the city negotiates with its traumatic past that looms large in public memory but to also initiate fresh ecocritical conversations on vulnerable and disenfranchised communities, resource management, restoration and healing. Finally, memory, both personal, collective and intergenerational, and mnemonic practices, become a potent framework to articulate the relationship between people, their habitats and the environment that wraps them and fosters the very sense of being.

We invite proposals for individual presentations and panels for a **three-day interdisciplinary international virtual conference** with the attempt of examining a spectrum of experiences and expressions to unfold memory’s layered entanglements with biocultural, political and material practices.

Conference dates: 3-5 March, 2022

Potential areas of investigation include, but are not limited to:

Memory, archive and oral history

Memory and diaspora

Memory and mental health

Memory and trauma

Memory and disaster

Memory and/of crises

Memory, migration and displacement

Memory and the environment

Memory and performance

Memory, health and the pandemic

Memory and food

Memory and isolation

Memory, time and technology

Memory, spectrality and postcoloniality

Collective and personal memory

Institutionalization of memory

Memory and materiality

Memory and the digital

Inter-generational memory and postmemory

Please send proposals including a title, an abstract of no more than 300 words, and a short biographical statement of no more than 100 words to memoryconference22@gmail.com. The last date for receiving abstracts is **22 January 2022**. Acceptance will be intimated to selected participants by 31 January 2022.

The conference will be conducted in the **online mode**. Keeping the pandemic and the concomitant restrictions on travel in mind, speakers will join us online via Zoom/Google meet.

Selected paper presenters will be invited to contribute to a volume of essays emerging out of the conference, which will be submitted to an international publisher of repute for publication.

Conference conveners: Dr Antara Chatterjee & Dr Anuparna Mukherjee, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IISER (Indian Institute of Science Education and Research) Bhopal, India.

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