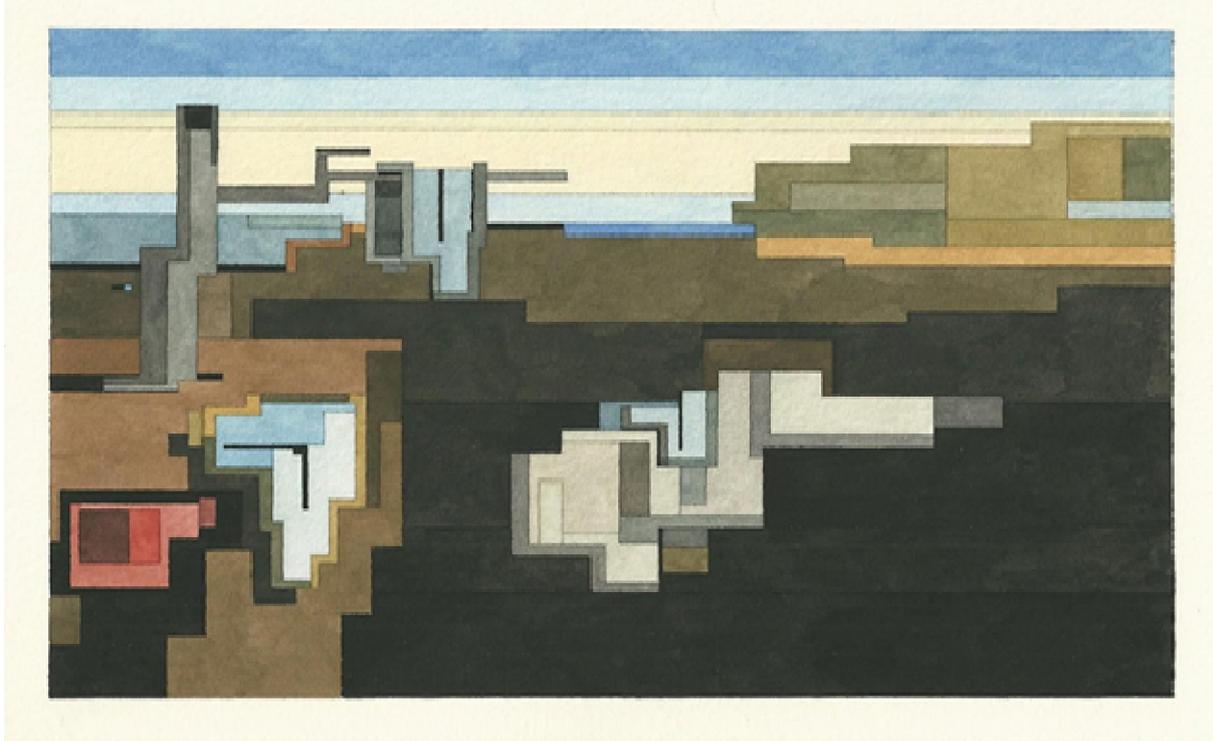


**Department of Germanic and Romance Studies  
University of Delhi  
CALL FOR PAPERS:  
International Conference: Of Remembering and Forgetting:  
Perspectives on History and Memory  
7- 9 March 2019**



Though history and memory have always grown in each other's shadows, from 1970's onwards the academic 'turn to memory' has developed a somewhat antagonistic relationship between the two. Since then, subjective or collective, social or personal, blocked, manipulated or obligated, public or private, official or counter, memories have become new sites of investigation for a number of disciplines such as History, Anthropology, Sociology, Literary and Cultural Studies. There has been a steady investment and reappraisal of memorial consciousness in opposition to academic historical discourses that have often relegated memory to a secondary quasi-mythical status.

The newfound interest in memory can be traced to three phenomena. Firstly, Structuralist scholars such as Halbwachs, Klein and Schudson shifted the emphasis away from individual, subjective memories to collective memory. According to them though remembering is an individual activity, it is conditioned by certain mnemonic practices, rituals and patterns inscribed in the society. The collective roots of memory define the elements that are to be preserved or effaced, in contrast to earlier psychoanalytical beliefs that remembering depends on subjective capacity of an individual's consciousness. Halbwachs even claimed that it is the present that shapes our understanding of the past and orients the way we constitute our identities. Secondly, postmodern and postcolonial cultural critics, challenged the hegemony of western positivist historiography that deems communitarian memory of the past, the customs, belief systems and genealogies of the indigenous population as dubious. The

Eurocentric approach to record history based on objective documentation was dismantled paving the way to a critical appraisal of local and regional commemorative practices in order to dissociate from the victor's history by putting forward alternative versions of history from the margin. Thirdly, studies in memory started being recognised as an important tool to denounce the efforts of official history to silence the memories of past injustices meted out by the ruling establishments. Thus counter-memories in opposition to official memory were studied with greater sincerity in order to understanding how people lived through the dark times that political institutions tried hard to hide and communicated those memories to future generations.

Memory has thus become a multifarious term, often difficult to define due to the ambivalent status that it has been invested with by various disciplines. Nevertheless, in recent times, memory has emerged as an efficient tool to trace history, being a powerful reservoir of counter knowledge, a counter discourse, that offers a voice to the "Others" of the Western phallogocentric academia.

Just as its content, nature and scope, Memory Studies have also been concerned with the mediums through which individual, social or collective memories are recorded and transmitted. Memory can be stored through numerous kinds of cultural mediums, such as customs, rituals, music, art, photography, cinema, memorials, museums and a range of literary forms. The critic Paul Ricœur showed how memory represents itself through two modes, analytical and narrative, while the former is the domain of the historian and the critic, the latter is that of writers. Testimony, Autobiography, Biography, Memoir, Diary, Chronicle, Journal, Confession, Log, Letters and Correspondences, Story, Anecdote along with traditional shorter and longer fictions are some of the literary genres that have established themselves as effective mediums to narrate recollections of the past. In the past one century, a number of authors have explored the effective means of remembering and have also highlighted the gaps, holes, silences and missing links through which memory operates. They have drawn our attention to a series of questions such as, what to do when memory fails? How to retrieve memory that has been affected by traumatic experiences? When there is an excess of memory, how do we make a selection?

The present conference seeks to investigate such complex issues involved in remembering and forgetting at individual, cultural and collective levels. It will be also useful to examine in what way memory studies provides us with an alternative vision to analyse our past and present. We invite papers from different disciplines to reflect on various possibilities to reimagine the troubled relationship between memory and history in the contemporary period.

[Deadline for submission of abstracts (200-300 words): 15 January 2019]

The abstracts should be sent to: Manmohan Singh: [manmohan981@yahoo.com](mailto:manmohan981@yahoo.com) and Ena Panda: [enarish.jnu@gmail.com/](mailto:enarish.jnu@gmail.com/)