



RALEIGH **LITERARY SOCIETY**

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY

**A NATIONAL
INTERDISCIPLINARY ONLINE
STUDENTS CONFERENCE**

**ON
'TRAUMA, MEMORY, AND
POSTMEMORY'**

UNDER THE AEGIS OF



RALEIGH
LITERARY FESTIVAL

CONCEPT NOTE

Renate Lachmann (2002) and Birgit Neumann (2005) have established mnemonics as an important function of literature. Memory and processes of remembering have always been an important, indeed a dominant, topic in literature. Numerous texts portray how individuals and groups remember their past and how they construct identities on the basis of the recollected memories. They are concerned with the mnemonic presence of the past in the present, they re-examine the relationship between the past and the present, and they illuminate the manifold functions that memories fulfill for the constitution of identity. Such texts highlight that our memories are highly selective, and that the rendering of memories potentially tells us more about the rememberer's present, his or her desire and denial, than about the actual past events.

However, a revisit to Cathy Caruth's edited collection of essays *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) also adds an interesting layer to this subject. According to the normative understanding of the relation between Trauma and Memory, there is a fundamental enigma. When the present was present, it could not be recalled; once it is past, its presence is only in recall. This means that the act of recalling involves the construction of a past that was never present, however Caruth takes this to another level. According to Caruth, in traumatic situations, the present was never present, not because it did not happen but because in happening it exceeded the capacity of the individual to register and understand. If it has not been fully present, it cannot become past; it cannot even attain a presence in recall. Caruth provides a model of trauma that powerfully disrupts and revises our understanding of memory.



There is yet another dimension to the recording of traumatic experiences in literature as memory. While Caruth might assert that a perfect recall of the traumatic past is impossible, theorists like Marianne Hirsch do not look at this as a disadvantage or limiting factor to rethink memory as a carrier of trauma. In fact, in coining the term ‘Postmemory’, Hirsch completely avoided the pitfall of the accuracy of recall. In her book *The Generation of Postmemory* (2012) she defines ‘Postmemory’ as ‘the relationship that the “generation after” bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before— to experiences they “remember” only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up.’ These experiences, according to Hirsch, were transmitted to them so deeply and effectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right. Postmemory’s connection to the past is thus actually mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation. To grow up with overwhelming inherited memories, to be dominated by narratives that preceded one’s birth or one’s consciousness, is to risk having one’s own life stories displaced, even evacuated, by our ancestors. It is to be shaped, however indirectly, by traumatic fragments of events that still defy narrative reconstruction and exceed comprehension.

With these developments in the field of memory studies in our view, we call for papers for the first edition of Raleigh Literary Society’s Paper Presentation Competition, under the following sub-themes but not limited to-

1. Cultural consciousness and collective memories
2. Postmemory and the re-experiencing of the past
3. Characterisation of Trauma
4. Encoding trauma into mnemonic devices
5. Memory as a parallel to History
6. Conflict, migration and memory
7. Traumatic memories and Gender
8. Memory and Identity
9. Politics and politicisation of memory
10. Rituals of memory transfer

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- The conference is only open to **UG** and **PG** students.
- An abstract in not more than **300 words** is to be submitted as a docx. file, with font **Times New Roman**, size **12**, and line spacing **1.15**.
- The deadline for submission of abstracts is **15th May, 2023**.
- If your abstract is selected, you will be intimated via email by **17th May, 2023**, following which you will have to submit a manuscript of **1500-2000** words and PowerPoint presentation latest by **23rd May, 2023**.
- In the event of selection, further presentation guidelines will be communicated to you via email.
- Abstract selection procedure will be managed by a panel of professors.

REGISTRATION FEES DETAILS —

1. Within AMU:

- Attendee:** Rs. 50/. INR.
- Single Presenter:** Rs. 300/- INR.
- Two presenters:** Rs. 250/- INR each, i.e. Rs. 500/- INR total.

2. From Outside AMU:

- Attendee:** Rs. 100/- INR.
- Single Presenter:** Rs. 500/- INR.
- Two Presenters:** Rs. 350/- each, i.e. Rs. 700/- INR total.

TO REACH US



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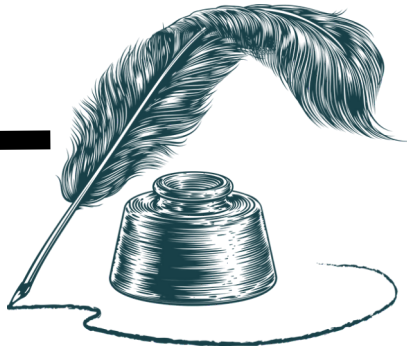
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