

**International Webinar on  
Processes of Memory: Toward a New Understanding**

**Conference Dates: 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

*Organised by: The Department of English, Bodoland University*

**Concept Note:**

Our modern society is scarred by memories of the past, with each successive generation trying to construct its memory in different ‘vehicles of memory’ - a phrase first used by Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi in his seminal book *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (1989). Studies in ‘memory’ have been dominating the academic scene for the past two decades since the engagement with the past developed in the 1990s. The knowledge of the past becomes accessible through memory. Unlike history, which comes with an idea of being ‘fixed and stable’ once established and sustained by evidence, memories are created and fluid, and affected by the context and concerns of the present.

As human beings have always participated in a complex network of memories (Aleida Assmann), investigations into the processes of memory hold fascination and significance. For one, it is a subject that accommodates ‘aparadigmatical’ and interdisciplinary studies and interpretations; and second, it is a subject that shall continue to hold interest because so long as human civilization survives, there will be events bound to people’s memories in different ways. In much the same way as a single historical event is remembered in different ways through dissimilar narratives, the memory of historical figures also become unstable depending upon the presentist aspect. For instance, Abraham Lincoln’s image shifts from the Great Emancipator to the Reluctant Emancipator and opportunist in the Slave Narratives as evidenced in Barry Schwartz’ work “Collective Memory and History: How Abraham Lincoln Became a Symbol of Racial Equality”.

Whereas ‘commemoration’ is internal and situated within groups, facts are external and situated above groups, according to Maurice Halbwachs. Looking at collective memory as a socially constructed notion, Halbwachs observed, “Every collective memory requires the support of a group delimited in space and time (*Collective Memory*. 48).” Halbwachs’ contribution to the

study of collective memory continues to hold a major impact in Memory Studies , especially since the past decade, which has witnessed what is termed as ‘ academic boom of memory research’.

Recent theoretical advances in the study of cultures have provided innovative ways in understanding the processes of the workings of cultures, among which the study of memory continues to be increasingly fascinating for academic enquiry. What is of interest in contemporary research is not only the processes of remembering but also the conditions by which people develop what Gyorgy Konrad calls the ‘interest in losing memory’ and the reconstructions of memories. There are contesting and shifting memories depending on not only private desires to remember or forget but also on cultural obligations to remember or forget, which brings us to the emergent concept of cultural memory. Geographical locales, artifacts, motifs on textiles, objects of nature including trees become sites of memory that shape cultural identity. It is also interesting to interrogate how the memories of survivors of traumatic historical events act as signifiers of cultural values.

Concepts like ‘Collective memory’, ‘cultural memory’, ‘social memory’, ‘ethnic memory’, ‘communicative memory’ and ‘autobiographical memory’ need serious investigation across academic disciplines from the Natural and Social Sciences to Humanities and the Arts. The application of memory as an approach in the studies of culture, history, literature, anthropology, gender and politics is worth looking into. The postcolonial situation opens up possibilities of recovering indigenous memory.

When we look at the politics of identity formation, it is interesting to see how memory research contributes to the understandings of ways in which certain social systems or cultural/political mechanisms ‘facilitate the remembering or silencing of historical events’. The need for scientific engagement in the study of memory has arisen also due to political exigencies of the use of the past and the stakes memory holds. The contemporary technological advancements in digital media, by inhabiting virtually every aspect of our lives, create a visual culture that offers fertile ground for academic investigation. Thus the field holds endless potentials in different fields of enquiry. The seminar will be an excellent platform for scholars to interrogate the processes by which individuals and groups engage with memory, analyze relevant approaches and examine methodological pluralisms that can be used.

**Sub- Themes:**

- Memory and Literature
- Memory and History
- Memory and Nation
- Memory and Culture
- Memory and Performing Arts
- Memory and Folklore
- Memory and Identity
- Memory and Politics
- Memory and Gender
- Memory and Media
- Pandemic and Shifting Memories

**Speakers:**

1. P.K Patra (Keynote)  
Professor, Bodoland University, India
2. Mark Bender  
Professor, The Ohio State University, USA
3. Margaret L Pachuau  
Professor, Mizoram University, India
4. Simi Malhotra  
Professor, Jamia Milia Islamia University, India
5. Faheem Shahed  
Associate Professor, Brac University, Bangladesh
6. Meryam Bulut  
Associate Professor, Ankara University, Turkey
7. John Charles Ryan  
Associate Professor, Southern Cross University, Australia

**Important Dates:**

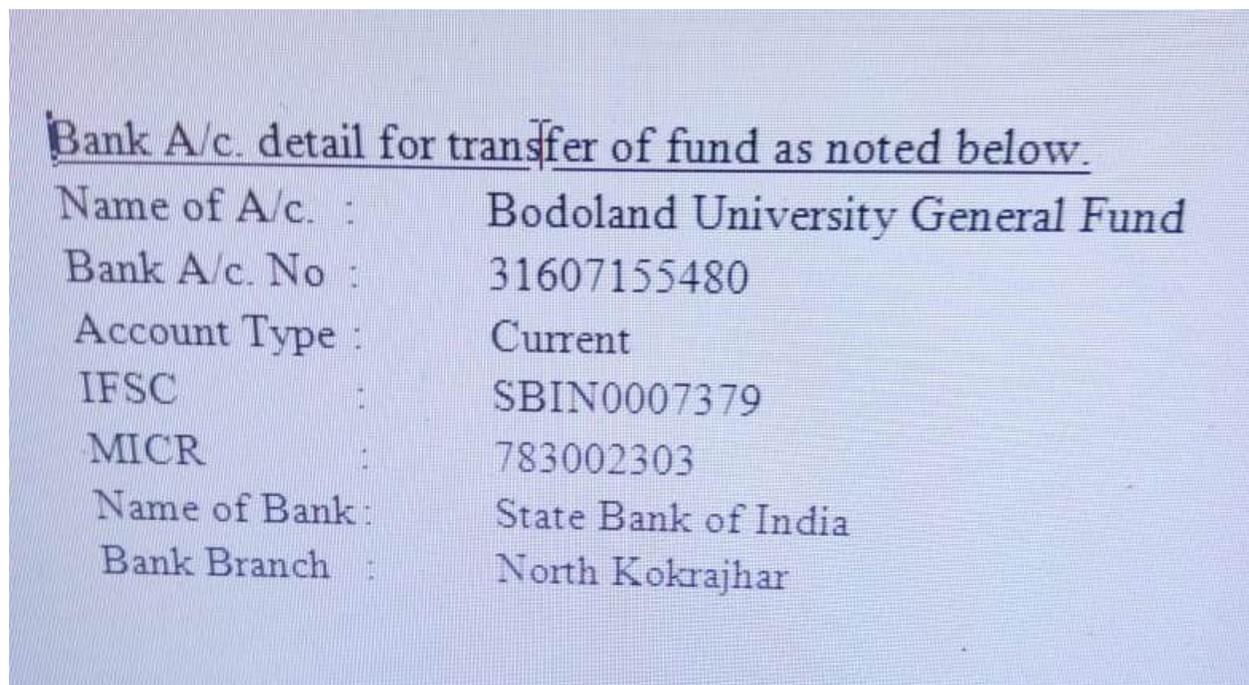
Abstract Submission Last Date: 10th April

Announcement of Abstract Acceptance: 15th April

Full Paper Submission Last Date: 20th May

Last Date of Registration: 20th April

Unpublished research papers are invited for a 15 minute presentation. An abstract of 250 words with 5 keywords should be sent at [memoryseminar2021@gmail.com](mailto:memoryseminar2021@gmail.com) on or before 10th April 2021. You are also requested to send a short bio-note (100-150 words) indicating Institutional affiliation, designation, email address, contact number, publication details and research experience. Full Papers that would be considered for publication should be between 5000 to 6000 words. 7th edition of APA style sheet should be used for articles. Please use end-notes instead of foot-notes. Margins - 2 cm on all sides, Font - Times New Roman, 12 points.

**Registration Details:**

A payment of INR 700 for Indian participants and \$15 for foreign participant to be credited in favour of

Bodoland University General Fund.

State Bank of India, North Kokrajhar Branch.

Account Type: Current. IFSC code: SBIN0007379. MICR: 783002303

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The receipt should reflect the name of the participant, transaction ID and date of transfer.